



NEWS RELEASE

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2008-2009 SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT

MADAMA BUTTERFLY *Giacomo Puccini*
THE PEARL FISHERS *Georges Bizet*
COSI FAN TUTTE *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*

All productions are new to Opera Colorado

Featured Singers: David Cushing, Michael Fabiano*, Daniel Fosha, Kevin Glavin, Jacques Imbrailo*, Ana Maria Martinez*, Mary Ann McCormick, Susanne Mentzer*, Anthony Michaels-Moore*, Brian Mulligan*, Adina Nutescu*, Sean Panikkar, Norman Reinhardt, Heidi Stober, Leah Summers*.

Featured Directors: Ron Daniels*, Andrew Sinclair*, James Robinson.

Featured Conductors: Sebastian Lang-Lessing*, Stephen Lord, Carlo Montanaro.

Featured Designers: Allen Moyer, Zandra Rhodes*, Michael Yeorgan*.

* = Opera Colorado Debut

Denver, Colo.— Executive Director **Greg Carpenter** is pleased to announce the 2008-2009 season. Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* opens the season in November of 2008 in a stunning staging that was highly successful in San Francisco in 2007. For the first time in company history Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers* takes the stage in February of 2009. The final offering of the season is Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, a James Robinson production from Santa Fe Opera, in the spring of 2009.

Carpenter comments, "I am very pleased with how the season has come together. I believe an opera season should unite the best the art form has to offer and should excite audiences from one production to the next. All of the 2008-2009 productions are new to Denver and we have a wealth of debuts. From directors and designers, to singers and dancers, and even titles, Opera Colorado will have a fresh and vibrant feel next year."

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

Composer: Giacomo Puccini

Librettist: Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

Debut: Milan's Teatro alla Scala, February 17, 1904

Production owned by: San Francisco Opera
Sung in Italian with subtitles in English and Spanish

Conductor – Stephen Lord
Director – Ron Daniels*
Set Design – Michael Yeargan*
Costume Design – Michael Yeargan*
Wigs/Make-up - Ronell Oliveri

Cio-Cio San – Adina Nitescu*
Suzuki – Mary Ann McCormick
B.F. Pinkerton – Michael Fabiano*
Sharpless – Anthony Michaels-Moore*
Goro – Daniel Fosha
Bonze – David Cushing

Madama Butterfly Performance Schedule:

Saturday, November 8, 2008, 7:30 pm
Tuesday, November 11, 2008, 7:30 pm
Friday, November 14, 2008, 7:30 pm
Sunday, November 16, 2008, 2:00 pm

Madama Butterfly is a tale about love, betrayal and honor set in early 20th century Japan. It follows the rise and fall of the marriage between a vulnerable geisha, Cio Cio San (Madama Butterfly), and her disengaged American husband, Naval officer Lt. Pinkerton. The lush musical score employs Japanese themes and includes such favorite arias as “Un bel di vedremo.” Puccini’s opera with text by Giacosa and Illica was ill-received upon its premiere at La Scala in Milan in 1904. Revisions were made and within three months the opera was hugely successful and today it is one of the most popular pieces in the operatic genre.

This production was created for San Francisco Opera and will be staged by its original director, **Ron Daniels***. Mr. Daniels has a distinguished history with the Royal Shakespeare Company and the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge. His recent work includes productions for the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain, The Shakespeare Theatre of Washington, D.C., The Public Theatre of New York and the Dallas Theater Center. The scenic design incorporates bold color with traditional concepts and costumes created by **Michael Yeargan***. A popular guest artist with Opera Colorado, Maestro **Stephen Lord** (*La Traviata*, 2007; *Norma*, 2006) returns to the podium to conduct *Madama Butterfly*. Mr. Lord will make his conducting debut at the Metropolitan Opera leading the Met Orchestra in the Winners Concert of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions this coming February.

Praised for her performances with the Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Opera and many great opera houses of the world, Romanian soprano **Adina Nitescu*** makes her company debut as Cio Cio San (Madama Butterfly). This past season she sang the role at the Nederlandse Opera and Moscow’s Bolshoi Theater, as well as performing the title roles in *Tosca* at Naples’ Teatro San Carlo and *Manon Lescaut* with Berlin’s Deutsche Opera. Tenor **Michael Fabiano*** debuts as Butterfly’s love interest, U.S. Navy Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton. Mr. Fabiano was a

winner of the Metropolitan Opera's 2007 National Council Auditions and is currently a resident artist with the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. He will make his debut as Alfredo in *La Traviata* this summer with the Stadttheater of Klagenfurt, Austria. British Baritone **Anthony Michaels-Moore*** makes his company debut as U.S. Consul Sharpless. Mr. Moore has had a long and successful relationship with Royal Opera Covent Garden and has appeared with all of the major European opera houses. In the current season he is performing more than nine engagements, including Sharpless with the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich. Additional cast members include mezzo-soprano **Mary Ann McCormick** (*Hansel and Gretel*, 2002) as Butterfly's loyal servant, Suzuki; tenor **Daniel Fosha** (*The Magic Flute*, 2006; *La Traviata*, 2007) as the marriage broker, Goro; and returning artist bass-baritone **David Cushing** (*Un ballo in maschera*, 2007; *La Traviata*, 2007) sings Butterfly's uncle, The Bonze.

Madama Butterfly sponsored by: CIBER, Inc., The Colorado Trust -- Dr. and Mrs. William Maniatis, Hilja K. Herfurth, Joy and Chris Dinsdale, Mr. Hugh Grant and Ms. Merle Chambers.

THE PEARL FISHERS

Composer: Georges Bizet
Librettist: Eugène Cormon and Michael Carré
Debut: Paris' Théâtre-Lyrique, September 30, 1863
Production owned by: San Diego Opera
Sung in French with subtitles in English and Spanish

Conductor – Sebastian Lang-Lessing*
Director – Andrew Sinclair*
Set Design – Zandra Rhodes*
Costume Design – Zandra Rhodes*
Choreographer – John Malashock*
Wigs/Make-up - Ronell Oliveri

Zurga – Brian Mulligan*
Nadir – Sean Panikkar
Leïla – Heidi Stober
Nourabad – David Cushing

The Pearl Fishers Performance Schedule:

Saturday, February 14, 2009, 7:30 pm
Tuesday, February 17, 2009, 7:30 pm
Friday, February 20, 2009, 7:30 pm
Sunday, February 22, 2009, 2:00 pm

The Pearl Fishers is an exotic story about the bonds of friendship and the power of undeniable passion. Set in Ceylon, Zurga and Nadir have vowed to avoid the priestess who came between them years before. When she returns, however, Nadir and the priestess embrace their love, defying her sacred vows and threatening the men's friendship. The lovers' affair is discovered and they are sentenced to death, but are saved by Zurga, whose life the priestess saved years before. Bizet composed the opera in just one month in 1863 and from it we have one of the most famous duets of all time, "Au fond du temple saint."

This production was created for San Diego Opera and the creative team will join Opera Colorado to mount the production. Australian Stage Director **Andrew Sinclair*** has directed his acclaimed production for Michigan Opera Theater, Florida Grand Opera, New York City Opera and San Francisco Opera. Mr. Sinclair is joined by **Zandra Rhodes***, who created the wildly colorful scenic and costume designs for *The Pearl Fishers*. An international fashion and textile designer, Ms. Rhodes founded the Fashion and Textile Museum in London, was Royal Designer for Industry in the UK and was made a Commander of the British Empire by the Queen in 1997. She designed for the late Princess Diana and continues to design for the rich and famous around the world. She has also designed costumes for *The Magic Flute* and *Aida*. The production features the artfully energetic choreography of **John Maleshock***. **Sebastian Lang-Lessing*** makes his company debut as conductor. Mr. Lang-Lessing is Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and has recently conducted with San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Houston Grand Opera and Opéra de Nancy.

The beautiful, young cast stars baritone **Brian Mulligan*** (Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Opera) as the king of the fisherman Zurga. Mr. Mulligan is the winner of the 2006 International Hans Gabor Belvedere Vocal Competition and this season performs with New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera and Central City Opera. He is joined by **Sean Panikkar** (*Norma*, 2006) as his conflicted friend Nadir. Mr. Panikkar, an American tenor of Sri Lankan heritage, made his Metropolitan Opera debut this season in *Roméo et Juliette* and *Manon Lescaut*. He is a graduate of San Francisco Opera's Merola program. Singing the role of Leïla, the Hindu priestess who ultimately comes between the men, is returning artist soprano **Heidi Stober** (*Un ballo in maschera*, 2007; *The Magic Flute*, 2006). In the past season, Ms. Stober has received critical acclaim for her performances with Boston Lyric Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera and New York City Opera. Rounding out the lead cast is bass-baritone **David Cushing** (*Un ballo in maschera*, 2007; *La Traviata*, 2007) as the priest Nourabad. This season Mr. Cushing performs with Florentine Opera, Boston Lyric Opera and Opera Columbus.

***The Pearl Fishers* Sponsored by:** Dave and Pam Duke, and Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Robinson.

COSI FAN TUTTE

Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Librettist: Lorenzo da Ponte

Debut: Vienna's Burgtheater, January 26, 1790

Production owned by: Santa Fe Opera

Sung in Italian with subtitles in English and Spanish

Conductor – Carlo Montanaro

Director – James Robinson

Set Design – Allen Moyer

Costume Design – David C. Woolard*

Lighting Design – Duane Schuler

Wigs/Make-up - Ronell Oliveri

Fiordiligi – Ana Maria Martinez*
Dorabella – Leah Summers*
Guglielmo – Jacques Imbrailo*
Ferrando – Norman Reinhardt
Despina – Susanne Mentzer*
Don Alfonso – Kevin Glavin

Così fan tutte Performance Schedule:

Saturday, April 25, 2009, 7:30 pm

Tuesday, April 28, 2009, 7:30 pm

Friday, May 1, 2009, 7:30 pm

Sunday, May 3, 2009, 2:00 pm

Così fan tutte was first heard in Vienna in 1790; it was the third collaboration between Mozart and his librettist Da Ponte. The opera follows the love interests of two sisters whose fiancés pretend to have gone off to war, but who actually disguise themselves to try to seduce the *other* sister with the help of the cynical Don Alfonso. Numerous songs stand out as some of Mozart's greatest, including "Come scoglio," "Per pietà" and "Soave sia il vento."

Outgoing Opera Colorado Artistic Director **James Robinson** (*La Traviata*, 2007; *Un ballo in maschera* 2007) returns to stage his highly successful production created for Santa Fe Opera. Mr. Robinson will assume the position of Artistic Director of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in September of 2008. Set designer **Allen Moyer** (*Un ballo in maschera*, 2007; *The Elixir of Love*, 2007) places most of the action in a 1950s baroque room with silver-and-white wallpaper. Vibrant costumes are by **David C. Woolard**; **Duane Schuler** completes the lighting design. Opera Colorado is pleased to bring Italian conductor **Carlo Montanaro** (*The Elixir of Love*, 2007) back to lead the opera, which requires impeccable timing and attention. Mr. Montanaro has recently conducted with the major music houses of Europe, including the State Opera of Stuttgart, Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, Teatro Massimo in Palermo, Fondazione Arena in Verona, Deutsche Oper in Berlin and Teatro Communale in Florence.

Grammy Award winning soprano **Ana Maria Martinez*** sings Fiordiligi. Ms. Martinez has sung the role with Santa Fe Opera and Florida Grand Opera and this season performs additional roles with El Teatro Real in Madrid, the Ravinia Festival, Salzburg Festival, Opera de Bastille, Houston Grand Opera and the Orchestra de Paris. Mezzo-soprano **Leah Summers*** sings the role of her sister Dorabella. Her past engagements include principal roles with New York City Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Berkshire Opera, Vienna Staatsoper and the Opera Orchestra of New York. Their conniving lovers are sung by South African baritone **Jacques Imbrailo*** as Guglielmo and tenor **Norman Reinhardt** (*The Magic Flute*, 2006) as Ferrando. Mr. Imbrailo has performed extensively throughout South Africa and England, having sung the role of Guglielmo with the Royal College of Music and the Classical Opera Company. This season he takes on further roles with the Royal Opera Covent Garden. Norman Reinhardt returns to the company

after his portrayal of Tamino in last season's *The Magic Flute*; he is also featured in the current season's *Don Pasquale* as Ernesto. He sang the role of Ferrando in this production in Santa Fe in 2007 and frequently performs with Houston Grand Opera. The opera's supporting comic roles will be performed by mezzo-soprano **Susanne Mentzer*** as Despina and basso buffo **Kevin Glavin** as Don Alfonso. Both are signature roles for the pair who are renowned for their comic stage antics and delightful voices. Ms. Mentzer also wowed Santa Fe audiences in this production in 2007. Mr. Glavin, a veteran of opera buffa, debuts with Opera Colorado in the title role of the current season's *Don Pasquale*.

***Così fan tutte* sponsored by:** Mike and Julie Bock, and Tanya R. Mathews.

Tickets – Subscriptions go on sale to the general public in May, 2008 and Single Tickets go on sale August 25, 2008. Call the Opera Colorado Subscriber Services line at **303-468-2030** or visit www.operacolorado.org.

Opera Colorado is proud to feature the Colorado Symphony Orchestra for the 2008-2009 Season. All performances take place at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House at the Denver Performing Arts Complex, 14th and Curtis Streets in downtown Denver.

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