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**Opera Colorado presents
The Rocky Mountain Regional Premiere of Bizet's
THE PEARL FISHERS
Opening Valentine's Day at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House**

Opera Colorado presents
The Pearl Fishers
By Georges Bizet

Ellie Caulkins Opera House
at the Denver Performing Arts
Complex in downtown Denver,
14th and Curtis Streets

Sat., Feb. 14, 7:30pm
Tues., Feb. 17, 7:30pm
Fri., Feb. 20, 7:30pm
Sun., Feb. 22, 2:00pm

Prices: \$29--\$157

Tickets online:
www.OperaColorado.org

Tickets by phone:
800-982-ARTS (2787)

The Pearl Fishers is sponsored by:
The Bonfils Stanton Foundation,
Dave and Pam Duke,
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Opera Colorado's
2008-09 Season sponsored by:
Ellie Caulkins,
Charles and Ursula Kafadar,
Susan and Jeremy Shamos

DENVER, CO—Opera Colorado presents the rarely performed Bizet masterpiece *The Pearl Fishers* for four performances only at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, **opening Valentine's Day.**

The production features lush and colorful sets and costumes designed by renowned British fashion designer **Zandra Rhodes**. Set in a fantasy vision of ancient Ceylon (current-day Sri Lanka), the opera is directed by its original creator **Andrew Sinclair**. **Sebastian Lang-Lessing** conducts the opera, featuring the Colorado Symphony Orchestra.

An all-star cast recreates Bizet's tragic love triangle: Soprano **Heidi Stober** sings the role of Leïla the Brahmin priestess. Tenor **Sean Panikkar** sings Nadir the fisherman and Leïla's lover. Baritone **Brian Mulligan** creates the role of Zurga, Nadir's childhood friend. Bass-baritone **David Cushing** sings the role of the high priest Nourabad.

"The storybook production by Zandra Rhodes was a fantasy of color glowing with vermilion, cerise, aquamarine, tangerine, mustard, and saffron," raved the *San Francisco Classical Voice*, calling the sets "opulent, illustrating a fairy-tale Ceylon." The production was

originally created by San Diego Opera and has appeared to great acclaim across the country with recent performances at the Washington National Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre. *The San Francisco Chronicle* praised the production, saying “*The Pearl Fishers* delivers eye candy by the pound...the colors just won’t quit.”

Zandra Rhodes: set and costume designer

Dramatic, glamorous and extroverted, Zandra Rhodes has stamped her identity on the international world of fashion. She was one of the new wave of British designers who put London at the forefront of the international fashion scene in the 1970s. Zandra designed for the late Diana, Princess of Wales, and continues to design for royalty and the rich and famous across the globe. She has a loyal cult following in the USA and is known as much for her fashion and jewelry design as she is for her vivid personal fashion sense, which usually includes bright pink hair.

Andrew Sinclair: stage director

Australian stage director Andrew Sinclair makes his debut at Opera Colorado with this production, which he originated for San Diego Opera for their 2003-2004 season. In addition to frequent productions at The Australian Opera, Mr. Sinclair has directed major productions for the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. His U.S. credits include productions at San Diego Opera, Seattle Opera, San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera, The Washington National Opera and many others.

Sebastian Lang-Lessing: conductor

Maestro Lang-Lessing also makes his Opera Colorado debut with this production. Considered by many to be one of Germany’s leading young conductors, he is chief conductor and artistic director of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. He had conducted with leading opera houses in Europe and the United States, including the Opéra Bastille, Hamburg State Opera, Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, and Los Angeles Opera, among others. During the summer of 2008, he conducted *Porgy and Bess*, the first production on the stage of the new opera house in Oslo, Norway.

John Malashock: choreographer

Mr. Malashock recreates the dances he fashioned for *The Pearl Fishers* at San Diego Opera. Mr. Malashock is the creator and artistic director of San Diego’s Malashock Dance, a company currently in its 21st season. The company’s repertoire includes over sixty original works. Mr.

Malashock has also created dances for *Aïda* at San Diego Opera as well as *Souvenir de Florence* for the San Diego Symphony.

Heidi Stober sings the role of Leïla

Ms. Stober made her Opera Colorado debut as Pamina in the 2006 production of *The Magic Flute*, a role she recently reprised for the Deutsche Oper Berlin. Other recent career highlights include her debut at New York City Opera in Handel's *Agrippina*, an appearance at The Santa Fe Opera as Tigrane in *Radamisto*, and her performance of Blonde in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* at Houston Grand Opera.

Sean Panikkar sings the role of Nadir

An American tenor of Sri Lankan descent, Mr. Panikkar recently made his Metropolitan Opera debut in the role of Edmondo from *Manon Lescaut*. A recent graduate of the San Francisco Opera's Adler Fellowship Program, Mr. Panikkar sang the role of Chaplitsky from *The Queen of Spades* with San Francisco Opera. Other recent appearances include Alfredo in *La traviata* at Arizona Opera and his European opera debut at the Aix-en-Provence Festival.

Brian Mulligan sings the role of Zurga

Mr. Mulligan may be familiar to Denver audiences from his recent appearance with Central City Opera in the role of Tarquinius from *The Rape of Lucretia*. Other recent engagements include San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, New York City Opera and Houston Grand Opera. Mr. Mulligan made his English National Opera debut as Sharpless in Anthony Minghella's acclaimed production of *Madama Butterfly*.

David Cushing sings the role of Nourabad

Mr. Cushing returns to Opera Colorado after his debut as Count Horn in the 2007 production of *Un ballo in maschera* and his recent appearance as The Bonze in the 2008 production of *Madama Butterfly*. He has also appeared with Boston Lyric Opera, Florentine Opera of Milwaukee and Baltimore Opera, among others.

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