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POPULAR OPERETTA *DIE FLEDERMAUS*, STARRING CANADIAN TENOR MICHAEL SCHADE, RETURNS TO COC STAGE AFTER MORE THAN 20 YEARS

Toronto – Johann Strauss II’s popular operetta, *Die Fledermaus*, returns to the Canadian Opera Company after an absence of more than 20 years with a new production this fall. Strauss II outdid his own reputation as the “waltz king” of Vienna with *Die Fledermaus* by composing some of opera’s most enduring dance music for this hilarious comedy with its screwball plot of elaborate revenge, disguises and mistaken identity. A largely Canadian cast, led by internationally renowned tenor **Michael Schade** in a role debut, comes together in this new COC production by innovative director **Christopher Alden** with COC Music Director **Johannes Debus** conducting. *Die Fledermaus* is sung in German with English SURTITLES™ and runs for 11 performances at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts on **Oct. 4, 9, 12, 14, 17, 20, 24, 27, 30, Nov. 1 and 3, 2012.**

Known as one of the leading Mozart tenors on the stage today, internationally acclaimed Canadian singer **Michael Schade** branches off in a new repertoire direction with this role debut. Last with the COC in 2011’s *The Magic Flute*, **Schade** returns to perform the role of Gabriel von Eisenstein, an affluent gentleman who delays serving a short prison sentence by way of a quick frolic at an extravagant party. American soprano **Tamara Wilson**, last with the COC in 2010’s *Idomeneo*, returns to treat audiences to her “striking timbre” (*Opera News*) as Rosalinde, Eisenstein’s long-suffering wife, whose disguised appearance at the same party has mischievous consequences for her husband.

Sharing the role of the saucy maid Adele are COC Ensemble Studio sopranos **Ambur Braid** (Oct. 4, 9, 14, 20, 27, Nov.1) and **Mireille Asselin** (Oct. 12, 17, 24, 30, Nov. 3). The two rising opera stars recently split the title role in a special Ensemble Studio performance of *Semele* with Braid singled out for her “coloratura fireworks” and Asselin praised for her “soft-grain soprano and lovely stage presence” (*Opera*). COC Ensemble Studio graduate tenor **David Pomeroy** is Rosalinde’s former suitor, Alfred. He returns to the company after two recent performances in the title role of *The Tales of Hoffmann* for the COC as well as performances with New York City Opera and Metropolitan Opera. Mezzo-soprano **Laura Tucker**, whose operatic engagements have taken her Seattle Opera, New York City Opera and the Spoleto and Wexford festivals since last appearing with the COC in 2004’s *Die Walküre*, returns as Prince Orlofsky, the host of the elaborate costume party.

Current and former COC Ensemble Studio artists make up several of the operetta’s comedic characters: new Ensemble Studio member soprano **Claire de Sévigné** makes her mainstage debut as Adele’s sister, Ida; Ensemble Studio graduate baritone **Peter Barrett**, last with the COC in 2011’s *Ariadne auf Naxos*, is Dr. Falke; and Ensemble Studio graduate baritone **James Westman**, last with the COC in 2009’s *Madama Butterfly*, is Frank, the prison’s governor.

American tenor **David Cangelosi**, who sang Spoletta in the COC’s recent *Tosca*, returns as Dr. Blind, and German actor **Jan Pohl** is Frosch, the jailer.

Consistently committed to keeping the operatic art form challenging and vital, director **Christopher Alden** follows his recent company productions of *The Flying Dutchman* and *Rigoletto* with this new COC production of *Die Fledermaus*. Inspired by the operetta’s larger questions about a society dancing on the edge of ruin,

Alden sets this production in early 20th-century Vienna. He conjures up a glamorous world bubbling with extravagance and sophisticated wit, while gently mocking the duplicity of people and the larger social hypocrisies they inhabit. He's joined by set designer **Allen Moyer**, most recently with the COC for *Nixon in China*; costume designer **Constance Hoffman**, last with the COC for 2002's *Julius Caesar*; and lighting designer **Paul Palazzo**, who was also with the company for its 2011 production of *Nixon in China*.

COC Music Director **Johannes Debus** leads the COC Orchestra and Chorus through a score that has come to embody high-spirited celebration since the operetta's premiere in 1874. Johann Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus* is considered a masterpiece in terms of plot and musical composition, with a use of song and spoken word that exemplifies the operetta tradition through its light subject matter and witty libretto. The music is infectious, filled with one memorable melody after another, including the famous "Fledermaus Waltz" with its lilting refrain, and the comic aria popularly known as Adele's "Laughing Song" that offers plenty of opportunity for both vocal display and coy flirtatiousness.

Johann Strauss II was an Austrian waltz composer who struggled early in his career due to a rivalry with his father, Johann Strauss I, the "waltz king." Upon his father's death, Johann Strauss II's career as a composer and conductor flourished, and he inherited his father's title. An immediate success from the time of its premiere in Vienna in 1874, *Die Fledermaus* went on to be seen in over 170 German-language theatres within the next six years. Its popularity endures as *Die Fledermaus* is one of the most performed operas in the world.

The COC last performed *Die Fledermaus* in 1991. It returns to the company's stage in a new production, co-produced with English National Opera.

TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets for *Die Fledermaus* are **\$12 – \$325** (includes applicable taxes) and go on sale as of **August 27, 2012**. Tickets are available online at coc.ca, by calling **416-363-8231**, or in person at the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts Box Office**, located at 145 Queen St. W., Monday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Standing Room

Sixty **\$12** Standing Room tickets are available at 11 a.m. the morning of each performance, in person only at the Four Seasons Centre Box Office. Limit of two tickets per person. Subject to availability.

Young People

Special young people's tickets are priced from **\$23** to **\$110** (includes applicable taxes). These ticket prices apply to those who are 15 years of age or under, accompanied by and sitting next to an adult.

Opera Under 30

Patrons between the ages of 16 and 29 may purchase **\$22** Opera Under 30 tickets as of **September 15, 2012** at 10 a.m., online at coc.ca, or in person at the Four Seasons Centre Box Office. Program patrons may opt to pay \$35, whereby their tickets are automatically upgraded to the best available the morning of the performance they are attending. Opera Under 30 is presented by TD Bank Group.

Student Group Tickets

Student group tickets are **\$22** per student and may be purchased by calling **416-306-2356**.

Rush Seats

Rush seats, starting at \$22 and subject to availability, go on sale at 11 a.m. on the morning of each performance at the Four Seasons Centre Box Office. Limit of two tickets per person.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The COC's new production of *Die Fledermaus* has been generously underwritten by **The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation**

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The COC Ensemble Studio is Canada's premier training program for young opera professionals and provides advanced instruction, hands-on experience, and career development opportunities. The Ensemble Studio is supported by the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage, RBC Foundation and other generous donors.

COC ANCILLARY EVENTS AND INFORMATION

BMO Financial Group Pre-Performance Opera Chats

Free to ticket holders, the COC offers 20-minute introductions to the opera and its themes in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts 45 minutes prior to every performance.

Celebrating Culture Days at the COC – September 28, 2012

As part of **Culture Days**, the COC offers an exclusive opportunity to attend a portion of a rehearsal of its new production of Johann Strauss II's madcap comedy *Die Fledermaus* at the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts** (145 Queen St. W.) The rehearsal process is rarely open to the general public but on **September 28, 2012**, 500 people can catch a first glimpse of this effervescent operetta of mistaken identity and glamorous parties set in elegant, early 20th-century Vienna. A pre-rehearsal chat in the Four Seasons Centre's Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre will give audience members insight into the popular work, as well as the process of bringing an operatic production to the stage. Tickets to the event are **FREE** and will be distributed at the Four Seasons Centre starting at **6 p.m.** on a first-come, first-served basis with an allowance of one ticket per person. Doors open at **6:15 p.m.**, the pre-rehearsal chat starts at **6:30 p.m.** and the rehearsal begins promptly at **7:30 p.m.** Admission is limited to 500 patrons. **Tickets are not available in advance.** For more information call **COC Ticket Services** at **416-363-8231**.

Opera Talks at North York Central Library – October 4, 2012

On **October 4, 2012** at **7 p.m.**, a new season of **Opera Talks** begins by examining the COC's brand new production of Johann Strauss II's effervescent operetta *Die Fledermaus*. Taking place at the **North York Central Library** (5120 Yonge St.), a member of the COC's Education and Outreach team will lead the talk, mixing tantalizing tidbits of opera history with guided listening, images and insider information to explore how this production by director Christopher Alden conjures a fantasy world of madcap lunacy in elegant, early 20th-century Vienna. A Q&A session concludes the evening talk. **Opera Talks** is a **FREE** interactive series

of dynamic chats on the art of opera, presented by the COC Toronto's **North York Central Library**. For more information and to register, please call the Languages, Literature and Fine Arts department at North York Central Library at **416-395-5639**.

Opera Exchange: *Let's Lighten Up* – October 13, 2012

The COC's renowned **Opera Exchange** series kicks off a new season on **October 13, 2012** by exploring Johann Strauss II's popular operetta *Die Fledermaus*, being presented this fall in a new COC production. The appropriately titled ***Let's Lighten Up!* Opera Exchange** event takes a look at the social, political and artistic contexts of the light-hearted musical genre known as operetta, with main speaker **Dr. Derek Scott**, professor of critical musicology at the University of Leeds, helming the discussion. On hand to complement the symposium are COC Music Director **Johannes Debus**, who conducts the company's production, and Ensemble Studio soprano **Mireille Asselin**, who portrays the coquettish maid Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, who will share insights about operettas and present musical selections. The Opera Exchange runs from **9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.** at the **University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, Edward Johnson Building** (80 Queen's Park Cres). Tickets are **\$10 - \$20** per person and available online at **coc.ca**, by calling COC Ticket Services at **416-363-8231**, or in person at the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts Box Office**, located at 145 Queen St. W., Monday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets can also be purchased at the door on the morning of the event. Discounts are available for university students.

Die Fledermaus Interactive Features on COC Radio

Through COC Radio, visitors to **coc.ca** can find, in one place, a variety of audio and digital features available for streaming, all aimed at exploring an opera and its background as well as the artists appearing with the COC. Among the resources on *Die Fledermaus*, visitors will find a podcast series sponsored by Decca: The Opera Label. Hosted by the COC's Cecily Carver, Gianmarco Segato and Gianna Wichelow, the podcasts explore the opera and its background, featuring discussions with opera enthusiasts and experts as well as interviews with members of the production's cast and creative team. COC Radio podcasts are also available for free download through iTunes.

About the Canadian Opera Company

Based in Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company is the largest producer of opera in Canada and one of the largest in North America. The COC enjoys a loyal audience support-base and one of the highest attendance and subscription rates in North America. Under its leadership team of General Director Alexander Neef and Music Director Johannes Debus, the COC is increasingly capturing the opera world's attention. The COC maintains its international reputation for artistic excellence and creative innovation by creating new productions within its diverse repertoire, collaborating with leading opera companies and festivals, and attracting the world's foremost Canadian and international artists. The COC performs in its own opera house, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, hailed internationally as one of the finest in the world. Designed by Diamond and Schmitt Architects, the Four Seasons Centre opened in 2006, and is also the performance venue for The National Ballet of Canada. For more information on the COC, visit its award-winning website, **coc.ca**.

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For more information or to request production photographs, please contact:
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