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ATOM EGOYAN PLAYS WITH FARCE, FOLLY, LOVE AND FIDELITY IN COC'S NEW PRODUCTION OF MOZART'S *COSÌ FAN TUTTE*

Toronto – The **Canadian Opera Company** opens its 2013/2014 winter season with *Così fan tutte* (or *The School for Lovers*), Mozart's wry comedy about romantic love, fidelity and temptation. Sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™, the COC's *Così fan tutte* comes to the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts for 10 performances on **January 18, 24, 29, February 1, 6, 7*, 9, 15, 18, 21, 2014**.

Renowned Canadian director and filmmaker **Atom Egoyan** directs and COC Music Director **Johannes Debus** conducts this new COC production full of farce and folly. **Egoyan's** staging of this popular Mozart opera celebrates the common human experience of joyful, innocent love while also exploring deeper, more private complexities. Taking his inspiration from the opera's subtitle, *The School for Lovers*, **Egoyan** sets the action in an academy where love is examined, dissected and manipulated to illuminate the characters' struggles with fidelity and temptation. **Debus** leads the internationally acclaimed COC Orchestra and Chorus through Mozart's sublime score. In addition, the sections of recitative in the opera will be accompanied by **Debus** on piano.

Così fan tutte features an exciting cast of opera's up-and-coming talent and established stars. Soprano **Layla Claire**, mezzo-soprano **Wallis Giunta**, tenor **Paul Appleby** and bass-baritone **Robert Gleadow** take on the roles of the four young lovers. World-renowned Canadian soprano **Tracy Dahl** makes her welcome return to the COC stage, after a 19-year absence, as Despina. One of opera's most distinguished and sought-after lyric baritones, **Sir Thomas Allen**, makes his highly anticipated COC debut in the role of Don Alfonso.

Cast as the two sisters entangled in an explicit wager to test their faithfulness are two Canadians, and recent graduates of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Program. Soprano **Layla Claire** (COC debut), hailed for her interpretation of Mozart in performances across North America and Europe, is Fiordiligi. COC Ensemble Studio graduate **Wallis Giunta**, praised by the *New York Times* for her "chocolaty and penetrating mezzo-soprano voice," is Dorabella.

Singing the roles of the sisters' fiancés are two of the most exciting young male voices emerging on the world's leading concert, recital, and opera stages. American tenor **Paul Appleby** (COC debut), also a recent graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Program, is one of the most inspiring new voices of his generation and sings the role of Ferrando. COC Ensemble graduate bass-baritone **Robert Gleadow**, who has continued to make his mark on the operatic and concert stages around the world since his graduation from the Jette Parker Young Artists program of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, is Guglielmo.

As Despina, soprano **Tracy Dahl** helps instruct the young women in the ways of love and fidelity. Over the course of her career, **Dahl** has appeared on the operatic world stages of La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and the Châtelet in Paris, to name a few.

Baritone **Sir Thomas Allen** is the wily Don Alfonso, instigator of the fidelity-testing scheme. An established star of the great opera houses of the world, **Sir Thomas Allen** recently celebrated the 40th anniversary of his debut with Royal Opera House Covent Garden, where he has sung no fewer than 50 roles. Equally renowned on the concert stage, he appears in recital in the United Kingdom, throughout Europe, in Australia and United States and has performed with the world's greatest orchestras and conductors, with many acclaimed recordings to his name.

Award-winning set and costume designer **Debra Hanson** makes her COC debut with *Così fan tutte*, drawing inspiration directly from the action of the opera, and tying the opera's themes to a visual design that is at once

period-specific and historically fluid. **Michael Walton**, whose work has been seen with opera and theatre companies across Canada and the United States, makes his COC debut as the lighting designer.

About *Così fan tutte*

Often described as Mozart's most perfect score, *Così fan tutte* features some of opera's grandest music for ensembles as well as breathtakingly beautiful arias.

Così fan tutte premiered in Vienna in 1790. Due to some critics finding its subject matter too scandalous, the opera was rarely performed in subsequent years and only started to gain in popularity in the middle of the 20th century. It's now one of the most popular operas across the world.

Così fan tutte was last performed on the COC mainstage in 2006.

***ENSEMBLE STUDIO PERFORMANCE OF *COSÌ FAN TUTTE* ON FEBRUARY 7, 2014**

The exciting young singers of the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio perform the lead roles in their own performance of *Così fan tutte* on **February 7, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.** Tickets for the February 7 performance are accessibly priced at **\$25** or **\$55**. See ticket purchasing details below.

TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets for *Così fan tutte* are **\$12 – \$332** (includes applicable taxes). 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.

For more information on **specially priced tickets** available to **young people under the age of 15, standing room, Opera Under 30** presented by **TD Bank Group, student groups** and **rush seating**, visit **coc.ca**.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The COC's new production of *Così fan tutte* is generously underwritten in part by **BMO Financial Group**.

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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.

The COC Ensemble Studio, underwritten in part by Peter M. Deeb and The Slight Family Foundation, 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 also supported by the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage, RBC Foundation and the Hal Jackman Foundation, and other generous donors.

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 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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