

For immediate release: December 15, 2014

COC DELIVERS OPERA AT ITS MOST EPIC WITH *DIE WALKÜRE* AND THE HOTLY ANTICIPATED ROLE DEBUT OF CHRISTINE GOERKE

Toronto – Richard Wagner’s *Die Walküre* is opera at its most epic with incredible vocal demands, a 110-piece orchestra and a story about gods and mortals, all played out to one of opera’s most powerful and iconic scores. This immense work returns to the **Canadian Opera Company** this winter with a critically acclaimed production by renowned Canadian director **Atom Egoyan**, with COC Music Director **Johannes Debus** conducting, and one of the most hotly anticipated role debuts of the opera world this season: Grammy Award-winning soprano **Christine Goerke** as the Valkyrie Brünnhilde. *Die Walküre* is sung in German with English SURTITLES™ and runs for seven performances at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts on **January 31, February 4, 7, 10, 13, 19, 22, 2015**.

The COC first presented **Atom Egoyan**’s production of *Die Walküre* in 2004 and then in 2006 as part of the company’s full *Ring Cycle*, a demanding four-part opera cycle considered to be Wagner’s defining artistic achievement. **Egoyan**’s internationally renowned production has been described as “powerful and moving” (*Globe and Mail*) and “as thoughtful and poetic as it is gripping” (*National Post*) with Canadian **Michael Levine** designing “striking to behold” (*Opera*, U.K.) industrial-themed sets along with elements of traditional, yet also deconstructed, Victorian-era costumes. Lighting is by **David Finn**. COC Music Director **Johannes Debus** conducts his first *Die Walküre* with this 2015 presentation, leading the COC Orchestra through a score that features some of the most powerful music ever conceived.

A star-studded cast is featured in this masterwork about a passionate, forbidden love igniting a war between gods and mortals, and a warrior goddess who risks everything to preserve the future. One of the most exciting dramatic sopranos in the world, American **Christine Goerke** makes her debut with the COC in her first fully staged performance as the mighty Valkyrie Brünnhilde. Recently named *Musical America*’s Vocalist of the Year for 2015, **Goerke** has been described as the Wagner-Strauss soprano the opera world has been waiting for, a multi-hued miracle of gale-force power, and pinpoint control, effortlessly riding over the most clamouring orchestra. **Goerke** goes on to sing Brünnhilde with Houston Grand Opera immediately following her Toronto engagement, with future plans to reprise the role in full *Ring Cycles* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Metropolitan Opera and Houston Grand Opera. She also returns to the COC as Brünnhilde for Wagner’s *Siegfried* (2015/2016) and *Götterdämmerung* (2016/12017).

Highly sought-after Danish baritone **Johan Reuter**, “fast making a name for himself in the opera world as a singer of extraordinary versatility” (*MusicalCriticism.com*) makes his COC debut as Wotan, king of the gods. American tenor **Clifton Forbis**, “a robust and impetuous Siegmund” (*New York Times*), returns to the COC as the half-mortal son of Wotan – a role he sang to rave reviews with the company in 2004 and 2006. He’s paired with American soprano **Heidi Melton** in her COC debut as Sieglinde, Siegmund’s lover and his unknown twin sister, a role in which she’s been described to “[steal] the show with her huge, expressive voice and powerful singing...[bringing] across Sieglinde’s hope, fear, and grief” (*Operapalais*).

As Brünnhilde’s Valkyrie sisters, the COC has brought together an international roster of some of opera’s most exciting established and emerging voices in the Wagnerian repertoire. COC Ensemble Studio alumna mezzo-soprano **Rihab Chaieb** returns as Waltraute and current Ensemble members, soprano **Aviva Fortunata** and mezzo-soprano **Charlotte Burrage**, are Helmwig and Grimgerde respectively. They are joined by Swiss soprano **Mona Somm** as Ortlinde, British soprano **Elaine McKrill** as Gerhilde, American mezzo-soprano **Laura Tucker** as Siegrune, American mezzo-soprano **Lindsay Ammann** as Schwertleite and Canadian mezzo-soprano **Megan Latham** as Rossweisse.

Die Walküre premiered in Munich in 1870 and is the most popular of Wagner’s four *Ring Cycle* operas: *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. The COC presented Canada’s first full *Ring Cycle* in 2006 to open the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. The opera company previously produced *Die Walküre* in 1962, 1971, 1976, 2004 and 2006.

TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets for *Die Walküre* range from **\$59 – \$424** and 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** (145 Queen St. W.). All evening performances of *Die Walküre* begin at 7 p.m.

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

Die Walküre was originally made possible by **Kolter Communities**.

BMO Financial Group: Title Sponsor of Pre-Performance Opera Chats and Student Dress Rehearsals.

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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, Hal Jackman Foundation, W. Garfield Weston 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. 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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