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MONUMENTAL MUSICAL JOURNEY COMES TO AN END WITH CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY'S *GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG*

Toronto – The Canadian Opera Company enters the twilight of the gods with the revival of its acclaimed production of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* directed by Toronto-area resident **Tim Albery**. COC Music Director **Johannes Debus** conducts his first *Götterdämmerung*, at the helm of the internationally acclaimed COC Orchestra and Chorus with a cast of generation-defining voices led by powerhouse American soprano **Christine Goerke** in her debut as *Götterdämmerung*'s Brünnhilde. *Götterdämmerung* is sung in German with English SURTITLES™ and runs for seven performances on **February 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 25, 2017**.

Wagner's *Ring Cycle* is commonly described as “the Everest of opera.” The largest work in the history of Western music, the *Ring Cycle* includes four operas: *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. In the fourth instalment of Wagner's heroic *Ring*, after poisoned drinks, mistaken identities and much deception, Brünnhilde and Siegfried are reunited in love and death as the worlds of both men and gods go up in flames only to rise again in an unforgettable affirmation of rebirth and renewal.

Götterdämmerung is the most epic of Wagner's tetralogy with some of the most complex and riveting music in the operatic repertoire. Many famous passages make up the final instalment of Wagner's monumental musical journey, including Siegfried's “Funeral March,” an orchestral showcase offering a musical retrospective of the *Ring* itself, and Brünnhilde's “Immolation” scene, an immensely powerful aria in which she restores order to the world and joins Siegfried on his burning pyre in an act of love.

Director **Tim Albery**'s vision for the COC's conclusion of Wagner's masterpiece has been proclaimed as “the most inventive of all” (*New York Times*). First presented by the COC in winter 2006, and then in fall 2006 as part of the company's full *Ring Cycle*, this *Götterdämmerung* is “as stunning a feat of staging as [has been] seen in Toronto” (*National Post*), with critics singling out that “the great virtue of Albery's production is the urgency and absolutely clarity of the storytelling” (*Opera News*), while also noting the presentation as a whole represents “the COC's proudest hour” (*Globe and Mail*). Production designer **Michael Levine**'s compelling interpretation of *Götterdämmerung* moves the action forward to the contemporary corporate landscape of the mortals who now rule the world and brings the cycle to a commanding and dramatic close. The lighting design is by acclaimed designer **David Finn**, who won back-to-back Dora Awards for his work in *Die Walküre*'s 2015 revival and the 2016 remount of *Siegfried*. Choreography is by **Patti Powell**.

Few roles in opera are more unique or challenging than those of *Götterdämmerung*'s Siegfried and Brünnhilde. They are among the most demanding tenor and soprano roles in all of opera, requiring voices of steel and sensitivity alongside super-human stamina to deliver the opera's awe-inspiring musical drama. Austrian tenor **Andreas Schager** is establishing himself as one world's leading heroic tenors and makes his COC debut as Siegfried—a role for which he's been proclaimed a “discovery” (*The Arts Desk*) and “a big star in the making” (*The Independent*). American soprano **Christine Goerke** is the most sought-after Brünnhilde in the world today, her performances heralded for how her “gleaming tones sliced through the glittering orchestra” (*New York Times*) and possess “everything a great Brünnhilde must have: dignity, stature, and a voice of molten gold” (*Toronto Star*) as well as delivering “a once-in-a-decade experience” (*Globe and Mail*). **Goerke** returns to sing *Götterdämmerung*'s Brünnhilde for the first time, previously debuting each instalment of the character in the recent COC revivals of *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*.

Internationally renowned German baritone **Martin Gantner** is Gunther, Siegfried's rival. Estonian **Ain Anger**, “one of the great opera basses of our time” (*The Guardian*), makes his Canadian and role debut as Gunther's half-

brother, Hagen. Canadian bass **Robert Pomakov**, “a talent to watch” (*Washington Post*), is Alberich, whose greed for the Rhinegold began this epic saga. COC Ensemble Studio graduate soprano **Ileana Montalbetti**, whose performance as Ellen Orford in the COC’s recent *Peter Grimes* was “in the realm of greatness” (*Toronto Star*), returns as Gutrune, Gunther’s sister and Siegfried’s bride.

As the three Norns, daughters of Erda the Earth Goddess who are spinning the rope of destiny, is a trio of new and familiar voices. American mezzo-soprano **Lindsay Ammann** (Schwertleite in 2015’s *Die Walküre*) is the First Norn; Scottish mezzo **Karen Cargill** makes her COC debut as the Second Norn; and soprano **Ileana Montalbetti** takes on a second role as the Third Norn.

In their COC mainstage debuts as water-nymph Rhinemaidens are two COC Ensemble Studio singers, soprano **Danika Lorèn** as Woglinde and mezzo-soprano **Lauren Eberwein** as Wellgunde. Mezzo-sopranos **Lindsay Ammann** and **Karen Cargill** are also heard as the Rhinemaiden Flosshilde and the Valkyrie Waltraute, respectively.

The COC performs *Götterdämmerung* at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. The COC’s 16/17 season marks the 10th anniversary of the Four Seasons Centre, Canada’s first purpose-built opera house, which opened in fall 2006 and has been hailed internationally as one of the finest in the world.

TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets for *Götterdämmerung* range from **\$35 – \$235** and box seats, when available, are **\$350**. Tickets are now on sale, 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.). For more information on **specialty 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

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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 coc.ca.

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