

For immediate release: November 23, 2016

WONDER AND WHIMSY FILL CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY STAGE WITH BELOVED FAIRYTALE OPERA, MOZART'S *THE MAGIC FLUTE*

“Colourful, inventive and whimsical” – *Opera News*

“A wonderful production” – *NOW Magazine*

“Fanciful and pretty” – *Globe and Mail*

Toronto – It's a fairytale start to 2017 with the revival of the **Canadian Opera Company's** playful and whimsical production of Mozart's beloved opera, *The Magic Flute*. **Bernard Labadie**, one of Canada's pre-eminent conductors, makes his COC debut with one of the most popular operas in the world with a cast of international and Canadian rising stars. *The Magic Flute* was last performed by the COC in 2011 and returns for 12 performances on **January 19, 28, 29, February 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 16, 18, 19 and 24, 2017.**

Canadian conductor **Bernard Labadie** is a specialist in Baroque and Classical repertoire who “moulds the phrases, plucks out all-important details in the texture and radiates an infectious joy in the music” (*The Telegraph*). An Officer of the Order of Canada and a knight of Ordre national du Québec, **Labadie** is a regular guest with the premier orchestras across North America and gaining increasing renown in Europe. He now brings his musicianship to the COC for the first time to lead the internationally acclaimed COC Orchestra and Chorus through some of Mozart's most beautiful and infectious melodies.

The COC production was conceived by Tony Award®-winning director **Diane Paulus** with a purposeful sense of fun, playfulness and whimsy in this theatrical version of Mozart's humorous, sometimes profound, exploration of the trials of growing up, seeking ideals and finding love. COC Ensemble Studio graduate and artistic director at the Thousand Islands Playhouse, **Ashlie Corcoran**, makes her COC mainstage debut staging the 2017 revival, based on **Paulus'** original direction. The production is full of wonder and wisdom in following the adventures of Prince Tamino as he undergoes feats of heroism to rescue his love, Pamina, from the forces of evil.

The look and feel of the COC's production evokes an 18th-century storybook sensibility in its costume and set design by acclaimed designer **Myung Hee Cho** with slight contemporary touches in colours and textures. The period feel carries through in the lighting design by **Scott Zielinski** who incorporates such 18th-century performance practices as candles, torches, and reflections off shiny surfaces and mirrors.

The production conjures up a play-within-a-play scenario with the guests of a young girl's name day celebration finding themselves entertained by an opera to only become the characters themselves, with the line between performer and audience quickly blurring. The ensuing trials and tribulations of the play travel through the girl's home and take place over the course of one night, beginning at evening and ending at dawn.

Leading the young cast are two breakout tenors from the COC's own Ensemble Studio, recent graduates **Andrew Haji** and **Owen McCausland**, who share the role of Prince Tamino. They are matched with two sopranos to watch: Russian **Elena Tsallagova** and Canadian **Kirsten MacKinnon**, singing the role of Princess Pamina, in their Canadian and COC debuts, respectively.

Two of the finest baritones of their generation, Canadians **Joshua Hopkins** and **Phillip Addis**, return to the COC to share the role of the bird catcher, Papageno. COC Ensemble Studio graduate soprano **Jacqueline Woodley**, heard last season as the Forest Bird in *Siegfried*, brings her exceptional talent to the role of Papageno's sweetheart, Papagena.

The Queen of the Night is brought to life by the thrilling coloratura of COC Ensemble Studio graduate soprano **Ambur Braid**.

The priest-king Sarastro is sung by Croatian bass **Goran Jurić**, in his Canadian debut, and American bass **Matt Boehler**. The roles of Monostatos and the Speaker are sung by two notable voices on the international opera scene, COC Ensemble Studio graduate tenor **Michael Colvin** and German baritone **Martin Gantner**, respectively.

Rounding out the cast are many new and returning Ensemble Studio members: graduate soprano **Aviva Fortunata**, mezzo-soprano **Emily D'Angelo**, in her COC mainstage debut, and graduate mezzo-soprano **Lauren Segal** are the First, Second and Third Ladies, respectively; tenor **Charles Sy** sings the First Priest and is joined by baritone **Bruno Roy**, in his COC mainstage debut, as the Second Priest. Performing the role of the First Armed Man is tenor **Aaron Sheppard** with graduate bass **Neil Craighead** as the Second Armed Man. Singing the First, Second and Third Spirits are members of the **Canadian Children's Opera Company**.

The Magic Flute was Mozart's final opera, receiving its premiere only three months before his death in December 1791. From the spectacular fireworks of the Queen of the Night to Pamina's anguished lament and Papageno's comic antics, the charm and profundity of Mozart's music has made *The Magic Flute* a timeless classic in the years since with it consistently ranked as one of the most performed operas in the world.

The COC's production of *The Magic Flute* is sung in German with English SURTITLES™.

The COC performs *The Magic Flute* 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 *The Magic Flute* 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 **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

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The COC Ensemble Studio, underwritten in part by **Peter M. Deeb, Marjorie and Roy Linden, RBC Foundation 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, 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. For more information on the COC, visit coc.ca.

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For more information or to request photography, please contact:

Jennifer Pugsley, Media Relations Manager, tel: 416-306-2303, e-mail: jenniferp@coc.ca

Kristin McKinnon, Publicist, tel: 416-306-2383, e-mail: kmckinnon@coc.ca