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TOSCA'S TALE OF LOVE, LUST, PASSION AND BETRAYAL RETURNS TO CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY

Two of Opera's Great Divas—Adrienne Pieczonka and Keri Alkema—Star in Title Role

Toronto – The Canadian Opera Company closes its 2016/2017 season with Puccini's beloved *Tosca*. A tense drama of passion and betrayal, *Tosca* returns in a COC production performed with two of today's great divas in the title role: internationally renowned Canadian soprano **Adrienne Pieczonka** and critically acclaimed American soprano **Keri Alkema**. *Tosca* runs for 12 performances at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts on **April 30, May 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 2017**.

Set in Rome amid the turbulence of the Napoleonic Wars, *Tosca*'s story is a melodramatic tale of love, lust, corruption and betrayal as opera singer Floria Tosca fights to save her lover from a blood-thirsty chief of police. The COC revives its lavish production by award-winning Scottish director **Paul Curran**, with sumptuous costumes and stunning sets of chapels, palaces and fortresses of 19th-century Rome by designer **Kevin Knight**, and atmospheric lighting design by **David Martin Jacques**.

Conducting the COC Orchestra, COC Chorus and cast through some of Puccini's most deeply felt and dramatic melodies is Canadian **Keri-Lynn Wilson**. A regular guest conductor at leading international opera companies and orchestras, **Wilson** makes her COC debut with one of the most popular and performed operas in the world.

The title role is one of Puccini's most complex and fascinating heroines and an unforgettable theatrical showcase for a great dramatic soprano, shared in the COC's production by **Adrienne Pieczonka** and **Keri Alkema**. Celebrated on the leading opera and concert stages of Europe, North America and Asia, **Pieczonka** has been described as "**simply magnificent**" (*The Independent*) and "**a revelation, with a lavishly creamy voice**" (*The Financial Times*). She returns to the role of Floria Tosca at the COC after delivering a "**luminous performance**" (*Globe and Mail*) with the company in 2012. **Alkema** returns to the COC after sharing her "**rich, full vocal presence that caresses the score to perfection**" (*Toronto Star*) in 2013's *La clemenza di Tito* and bringing a "**sensuality and a strong presence**" (*NOW*) to 2012's *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Her engagement at the COC comes on the heels of her *Tosca* debut with English National Opera last fall where she was met with lavish praise: "**compelling.... Passionate, teasing, vulnerable, full of love, stirred to vengeful rage and desperate measures, Alkema gets to the heart of Tosca, giving us a poised 'Vissi d'arte' on the way**" (*The Times*).

Making their COC debuts as *Tosca*'s lover, Mario Cavaradossi, are exciting young Argentine tenor **Marcelo Puente** and heroic Bulgarian tenor **Kamen Chaney**. German bass-baritone **Markus Marquardt**, a sought-after interpreter of the Italian repertoire, makes his Canadian debut as the evil police chief, Scarpia. He shares the role with young American bass-baritone **Craig Colclough** who makes his COC debut and is reunited with **Alkema**, having sung Scarpia to her *Tosca* with ENO in fall 2016.

South African bass-baritone **Musa Ngqungwana**, praised for his "**rich, glowing voice and elegant legato**" (*New York Times*) makes his Canadian debut as the escaped political prisoner Angelotti. Italian bass **Donato di Stefano** (2011's *La Cenerentola*) returns to the COC as the Sacristan. The role of Spoletta is sung by American tenor **Joel Sorensen**, in his COC debut.

Canadian-British bass-baritone **Giles Tomkins** sings Sciarrone, in his company debut, and COC Ensemble Studio baritone **Bruno Roy** is the Jailer.

Last performed by the COC in 2012, this production of *Tosca* is a COC co-production with the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet. *Tosca* is sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™.

Tosca premiered to mixed reviews in Rome in 1900, but this thrilling melodrama, with its all-consuming power to stir passion, has since become a staple of the operatic repertoire.

TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets for *Tosca* 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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