

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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Manitoba Opera Celebrates 40th Season with Two Verdi Masterpieces

Manitoba Opera (MO) announced today that in the 2012/13 season, its 40th season, two Verdi masterworks – *Rigoletto* and *Aida* – will be the featured main stage productions presented at the Centennial Concert Hall.

Rigoletto, the richly layered tale of the court jester and his daughter, with its veritable hit parade of arias, duets, and ensembles, will open the season November 24, 27, and 30, 2012.

The grandest of grand operas, with spectacular pageantry and emotional intimacy, *Aida* (pronounced EYE E DUH), returns to Manitoba Opera for the first time in over a decade with performances April 13, 16, and 19, 2013.

“We celebrate our 40 years with the grandest of seasons featuring Giuseppe Verdi’s *Rigoletto* and *Aida* - two magnificent operas chosen to mark the 200th anniversary of Verdi’s birthday in 2013,” commented Larry Desrochers, General Director and CEO. “*Rigoletto*, deeply rooted in the bel canto tradition of opera, is the first of his three great operas written mid-career (with *La Traviata* and *Il Trovatore*). *Aida* represents Verdi’s movement to through-composed operas and is the first of the three operas written at the end of his career (with *Otello* and *Falstaff*).”

The tradition of great singing continues next season with some very exciting artists on the roster. Confirmed thus far for *Rigoletto* is Winnipeg’s dynamic **Tracy Dahl** starring as Gilda - her first time singing this role with Manitoba Opera. The acclaimed American baritone **Todd Thomas** returns to sing the title role (Count de Luna in 2008’s *Il Trovatore*); the brilliant tenor **David Pomeroy** (Don José in *Carmen*, 2010) returns as the Duke of Mantua; and the always-expressive **Lauren Segal** (Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, 2009) will also be making a return to sing Maddalena.

The incredible Canadian soprano **Michele Capalbo**, who first captivated MO audiences with her Leonora in *Il Trovatore* in 2008, will sing the title role in *Aida*. Joining her will be the incomparable **Phil Ens** (Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, 2011) in the role of Ramfis and Winnipeg’s own **Gregory Dahl** (Jokanaan in *Salome*, 2011) making his role debut as Amonasro.

Tyrone Paterson will conduct both productions. **Rob Herriot** will direct *Rigoletto* and **Brian Deedrick** is on board as director of *Aida*.

For the 2012/13 season, there have been no price increases and subscriptions will remain at last year’s prices. A two-opera subscription can be purchased for as low as \$59.50. Subscribers can save up to 30% over casual ticket prices and subscriptions are now on sale. Casual tickets will go on sale in the fall.

2. MB Opera 12/13 Season Announcement

RIGOLETTO

Verdi's dark story of passion, vengeance, and murder in a sixteenth-century court is as heartbreaking as it is ironic. When a bitter court jester pits himself against his master in an effort to protect his daughter's virtue, he inadvertently and tragically destroys all that is dear to him.

This captivating tale of a father's devotion, a daughter's innocence, and a duke's lechery is set to some of most brilliant tunes, from the Duke's rousing aria, "La donna é mobile" to the famous Quartet, and Gilda's wistful "Caro nome." You'll recognize melody after haunting melody.

ARTISTS:

Rigoletto **Todd Thomas**

"...He simply is Rigoletto. His is a poignant performance to remember." - *Des Moines Register*

Gilda **Tracy Dahl**

"Her extreme high notes, and she threw in a lot of them, are easy and spectacular." - *Boston Globe*

Duke of Mantua **David Pomeroy**

"...a youthful, swaggering Duke, with the kind of vocal ease that is essential to the character of the part." - *Calgary Herald*

Maddalena **Lauren Segal**

"...beautifully expressive tone and solid technique, and was totally at ease, dramatically and musically." - *Opera Canada*

AIDA

At the centre of the pageantry lies an intimate love triangle where passions have crossed enemy lines to forge a secret forbidden romance. Aida, Ethiopian princess and Amneris' slave girl, longs to be with Radames, leader of the Egyptian army that conquered her homeland. Amneris, the jealous daughter of the Pharaoh also yearns for Radames. Under the starry skies of an Egyptian night, Radames must choose between his love for Aida and his loyalty to the Pharaoh.

Impassioned arias, surging choruses, and exhilarating orchestral music show Verdi at the peak of his powers – masterfully balancing pomp and pageantry with a deeply moving personal tragedy.

ARTISTS:

Aida **Michele Capalbo**

"...performed a world-class Aida, passionate, subtle and vocally satisfying." - *Opera News*

Ramfis **Phillip Ens**

"...it was a stupendous sing, oozing malevolence, stoking up the tension bar after bar..."
– *MusicalCriticism.com*

Amonasro **Gregory Dahl**

"Dahl's lusty, powerful voice holds true from top to bottom, and his stage presence is commanding and secure." - *Times Colonist*

Both operas will be sung in Italian with projected English translations.