



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Virginia Opera Concludes 2016-2017 Season with Puccini's *Turandot***

February 15, 2017- Virginia Opera, *The Official Opera Company of the Commonwealth of Virginia*, drops the curtain on the 2016-2017 opera season with Giacomo Puccini's final opera, *Turandot*. Based on the ancient fable set in China, this story of legendary Princess Turandot weaves the quest for love with the ultimate consequences. Puccini's extravagant and exotic score - featuring 'Nessun Dorma' - one of the most stirring opera arias of all time - throws the audience into a world of suspense and horror.

Virginia Opera's Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor, Adam Turner, commented "this extraordinary final masterpiece of Giacomo Puccini will positively delight our audiences, particularly with the immense vocal and instrumental forces assembled for our production. *Turandot* is always a spectacle, with an intensely colorful score, featuring some of the most breathtaking and dramatic music in all the repertory. With a cast of internationally acclaimed performers, a massive chorus of adults and children, and the fabulous Richmond Symphony in the pit, this will prove to be a stunning theatrical experience."

Selected for the role of the ice-cold princess Turandot, Virginia Opera is thrilled to welcome back soprano Kelly Cae Hogan in the challenging role (*Salome* 2015). "The Met-experienced American soprano, Kelly Cae Hogan, has enormous vocal power and glistening brilliant high notes in the title role (*Turandot*)." - Goettinger Tageblatt (Michael Schaefer - April 1, 2015). In the role of Prince Calaf, who has the formidable task of transforming Turandot's cold heart, is tenor Derek Taylor (*La Bohème* 2009). Taylor's "ringing top" and "blazing good looks" have garnered much excitement in houses in the United States and Europe.

As the heart broken and emotionally tortured Liu, soprano Danielle Pastin makes her Virginia Opera debut. Praised by Opera News as having "one of the most sheerly beautiful voices on the scene today", Pastin continues to gain critical acclaim for her engagements across the country.

With a "resonant" bass sound, Puerto Rican bass Ricardo Lugo is a versatile international artist in demand on the operatic and concert scene. Lugo will debut with Virginia Opera as Timur, the vanquished king of Tartary, who meets his long-lost son, Prince Calaf again. Having made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Un Barnabotto in *La Gioconda*, Ricardo has since been involved in multiple productions with the company.

John A. McGuire debuts as the Emperor, Turandot's father, in the production. Currently Assistant Professor of Voice at Christopher Newport University, McGuire is an active teacher, director and performer. McGuire performed extensively with several opera companies and orchestras throughout the United States.

Beloved Director Lillian Groag, no stranger to Virginia Opera, leads the cast of *Turandot* with her signature style on this epic production. Groag is well-known for her creative and highly acclaimed productions (*La Traviata* 2015). "It's thrilling to revisit this classic and discover new factors - which have always been in this bejeweled score but easy to miss due to the extraordinary richness of the music to which Puccini set this eternal fable about man, woman and love," says Groag. Virginia Opera also welcomes back internationally-acclaimed conductor John DeMain (*Carmen* 2014), who is currently in his 22nd season as Music Director of the Madison Symphony Orchestra.

Adding to the grand production, the marvelous Virginia Opera Chorus and Children's Chorus will thrill audiences with their rousing and entertaining performance. The orchestra for this production is provided by The Richmond Symphony.

President and CEO Russell P. Allen stated that "*Turandot* is an opera wherein the music itself can overwhelm the senses. Sung with the incredible forces that Virginia Opera provides, directed by the master stage craftsperson Lillian Groag, and conducted by world-renowned musician John DeMain, *Turandot* will be the consummate conclusion to Virginia Opera's dazzling 2016-17 Season."

### Performance Details and Ticket Information

For more information or for inquiries about media coverage of "*Turandot*," please call Lana Sadowski at 757.627.9545, ext. 3323, or email [ana.sadowski@vaopera.org](mailto:ana.sadowski@vaopera.org)

"*Turandot*" will be performed in Italian with English supertitles. Most performances will feature a free 30-minute pre-opera discussion by Virginia Opera's Dr. Glenn "Dr. Opera" Winters. Tickets start at just \$19 and are available at [vaopera.org](http://vaopera.org) or by calling 866.673.7282. "*Turandot*" opens Friday, March 17, 2017, at the Harrison Opera House in Norfolk, Va., followed by additional performances in Fairfax and Richmond as follows:

Harrison Opera House  
Norfolk, VA  
866.673.7282  
[vaopera.org](http://vaopera.org)

GMU's Center for the Arts  
at George Mason University  
Fairfax, VA  
888.945.2468  
[vaopera.org](http://vaopera.org) or [Tickets.com](http://Tickets.com)

Carpenter Theatre at  
Dominion Arts Center  
Richmond, VA  
800.514.3849  
[vaopera.org](http://vaopera.org) or [Etix.com](http://Etix.com)

Fri., March 17, 2017 at 8:00pm  
Sun., March 19, 2017 at 2:30pm  
Tue., March 21, 2017 at 7:30pm

Sat., March 25, 2017 at 8:00pm  
Sun., March 26, 2017 at 2:00pm

Fri., March 31, 2017 at 8:00pm  
Sun., April 2, 2017 at 2:30pm

### Student Tickets

Virginia Opera will offer a special *Student Night at the Opera* performance of "*Turandot*" in Norfolk, Va. on Wednesday, March 15, 2017 at 7:00pm. *Student Night at the Opera* allows students and chaperones to experience the power of live opera, with unparalleled access at reduced ticket prices, in order to broaden appreciation for cultural arts in our community.

## **About Virginia Opera**

Virginia Opera Association, Inc., in its 42nd season, is known and respected nationwide for the identification and presentation of the finest young artists, for the musical and dramatic integrity of its productions, and for the ingenuity and variety of its education and outreach programs. Mainstage performances in three markets across the Commonwealth reach nearly 50,000 attendees annually. In March of 1994, by unanimous vote of the Virginia General Assembly, Virginia Opera was named The Official Opera Company of the Commonwealth of Virginia in recognition of the organization's contribution to the state as well as to the world of opera. For tickets and information visit [vaopera.org](http://vaopera.org) or call 866.673.7282.