



For Immediate Release

September 12, 2018

Contact: Lana Sadowski,

Director of Marketing, Hampton Roads

P.O. BOX 2580 • Norfolk, VA 23501

PHONE: 757.627.9545 X 3316

EMAIL: LANA.SADOWSKI@VAOPERA.ORG

44th Virginia Opera Season Debuts with *Street Scene*: Kurt Weill's Acclaimed "American Opera for Broadway"

2018–2019 production sees premiere podium appearance of Virginia Opera Maestro Adam Turner as Artistic Director; company wins second Kurt Weill Foundation Award for its production of composer's work

Hampton Roads, Richmond, Fairfax, Virginia (September 12, 2018) — Beginning its 44th season, **Virginia Opera** announces the debut of its production of composer Kurt Weill's "American opera for Broadway," *Street Scene*, which will enjoy scheduled statewide performances beginning September 28, 2018, and concluding October 14, 2018 (*please see complete list of venue locations below*). With *Street Scene*, Virginia Opera debuts **Adam Turner (formerly Principal Conductor)** to the podium as **VO Artistic Director**. Maestro Turner will conduct all four operas in the 2018–2019 VO Season.

Based on American playwright Elmer Rice's original 1929 Pulitzer Prize-winning play, legendary composer Kurt Weill's adaptation of *Street Scene* features a musical score steeped in jazz, Broadway show-stoppers, and full-throated passages of *verismo* lyricism penned by renowned African American, Harlem Renaissance-era poet and writer Langston Hughes. Mixing comedy, romance and, ultimately, tragedy, *Street Scene* presents a cast of characters as they live, love, and strive for happiness in the shadow of a New York City tenement in the sweltering summer heat, all the while affirming German-born Weill's profound belief that any "real" American opera must, like the American society that spawned it, represent a melting pot of diverse styles and voices where even seemingly minor characters play vital roles. Of *Street Scene*, Virginia Opera Artistic Director Adam Turner relates: "*Street Scene* is considered one of the first truly "American" operas, following in the footsteps of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, but it actually enjoyed a longer Broadway run in its time and won the very first Tony Award for Best Original Score (1947). I'm absolutely thrilled to offer our audiences the Kurt Weill masterpiece as we continue our company's commitment to such timely and resonant works."

Virginia Opera gratefully acknowledges support of the Kurt Weill Foundation, which has awarded a generous grant award for this production. This award is the second gift the VA Opera has received from the Kurt Weill Foundation, having been awarded its first for the innovative 2016–2017 production of Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins*.

Virginia Opera President and CEO Russell Allen comments: "It's wonderful to conclude our First of Firsts programming initiative with this masterpiece of the stage—what a great opener for the 2018–2019 Sea-

son! VA Opera, so well known for innovative and exciting productions, has assembled a show-stopping cast for this fresh, new production of *Street Scene*.”

ADDITIONAL STREET SCENE PRODUCTION | PERFORMANCE NOTES

For *Street Scene*, the Virginia Opera welcomes back acclaimed Director Dorothy Danner for what is her sixteenth VO production. *Street Scene* stars sopranos Maureen McKay as Rose (debut) and Jill Gardner (Minnie in the 2017–2018 VO season’s *The Girl of the Golden West*) as Rose’s mother, Anna Maurant. Tenor, and former VA Opera Herndon Foundation Emerging Artist David Blalock returns to Virginia stages as the idealistic Sam Kaplan. Additional roles will be filled by several members of the Herndon Foundation Emerging Artists Program, two Broadway dancers/singers, local Virginia-based actors with speaking roles, a 24-voice adult chorus, and a children’s chorus of sixteen—including eight members of the Governor’s School for the Arts Vocal Music Program. *Street Scene* will be sung in English with English Supertitles.

About Maestro Adam Turner, Virginia Opera Artistic Director

One of America’s most acclaimed young conductors, Maestro Adam Turner first came to Virginia Opera in 2010 as Resident Conductor and Chorus Master. For four seasons he served as VO Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor and helmed the company’s performances of such varied repertory as Weber’s *Der Freischütz* and Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd*, as well as such standard repertory as *Carmen* and *La Bohème*. Maestro Turner was appointed as Artistic Director beginning with the 2018-2019 Season.

Maestro Turner is a graduate of Morehead State University (Bachelor of Music/Piano Performance) and the Catholic University of America (Master of Music/Conducting). He is a recipient of the Julius Rudel/Kurt Weill Conducting Fellowship (2016–2017) and the “50 for 50 Arts Inspiration Award” for Emerging Artists, bestowed by the Virginia Commission for the Arts. He has served as an assistant conductor with Seattle Opera, the Central City Opera (Colorado), and the Florida Grand Opera (Miami), among others. In past appearances with Virginia Opera—as well as both past and upcoming appearances with such companies as San Diego Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre (Honolulu), Central City Opera, and New York’s American Lyric Theater, Maestro Turner has devoted special attention to 20th-century and contemporary works by composers such as Kurt Weill, Stephen Sondheim, Benjamin Britten, Jake Heggie, and Mark Adamo.

About Virginia Opera

Virginia Opera, now in its 44th Season (2018–2019), 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 or call 866.673.7282.

2018–19 Virginia Opera Season Subscriptions

Virginia Opera’s complete season includes Kurt Weill’s *Street Scene*, Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love*, and concludes with Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Subscription tickets for all 4 productions are on sale for performances in Norfolk, Richmond, and Fairfax starting as low as \$71. For more information please visit vaopera.org.

Street Scene Statewide Productions Schedule

The Edythe C. and Stanley L. Harrison Opera House – Norfolk – September 28, 30, & October 2, 2018

George Mason University’s Center for the Arts – Fairfax – October 6 & 7, 2018

The Carpenter Theatre at Dominion Energy Center – Richmond – October 12 & 14, 2018

The Edythe C. and Stanley L.
Harrison Opera House
Norfolk, VA
866.673.7282
vaopera.org

George Mason
University’s
Center for the Arts
Fairfax, VA
703.993.2787
cfa.gmu.edu

The Carpenter Theatre at
Dominion Energy Center
Richmond, VA
866.673.7282
vaopera.org

###