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VIRGINIA OPERA ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT OF PRESIDENT & CEO RUSSELL P. ALLEN

Fifteen-year leadership tenure to conclude following 2019–2020 45th Anniversary Season



NORFOLK, VA (September, 25, 2019)—Today, the **Virginia Opera**, *The Official Opera Company of the Commonwealth of Virginia*, announces the retirement of current **VO President & CEO Russell P. Allen** at the conclusion of the current 2019–2020, 45th Anniversary Season. Mr. Allen quietly informed the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors in January that this season will be his last, allowing ample time to identify and recruit a worthy successor to continue the strong leadership he has provided. Virginia Opera debuts four statewide main stage productions beginning with **Puccini's *Tosca*** on Friday, October 4, 2019, at the Edythe C. and Stanley L. Harrison Opera House in Norfolk, VA, and continuing on to Fairfax, VA and Richmond, VA.

During two tenures, Allen served first as General Manager (1994–2000), and was recruited back to the organization as President and CEO beginning with the 2011–12 season. Both of his tenures were periods of growth and artistic development, the latter period focused on improving institutional stability while ensuring high artistic standards. The **VO Transition Committee** is actively engaged in identifying and selecting Allen's replacement.

Board Chair and Spokesperson, Paul Winslow: “On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Virginia Opera, I express our collective gratitude to Russell P. Allen for his dedicated service to our organization and his spirited guidance in raising its profile not only across the state of Virginia, but in the world of opera itself. The Board recognizes Russell’s passion and dedication in championing our amazing company and the execution of his responsibilities and accomplishments in the leadership of the company. We thank him, and look ahead to announcing the appointment of a candidate who will continue the legacy of excellence that Russell has upheld for Virginia Opera.”

Retiring President & CEO, Russell P. Allen: “It has been my sincere privilege to help lead the Virginia Opera’s Board, staff, and artists, and to assist each in achieving the glowing successes realized over the years by our wonderful statewide Virginia Opera company. I have been fortunate to be a part of a group of incredibly talented people who regularly make it the company you know today, and to have done so alongside two very strong **Artistic Directors** —**Peter Mark** and **Adam Turner** — who, together with all those talented and creative singers, artists, musicians, directors, stage, crew, and back-of-house personnel, have made it easy to promote the company’s artistic accomplishments to people across The Commonwealth, and to increase involvement of Virginia’s citizens statewide. In everyone’s life there comes a time when moving on to the next phase of one’s life is a logical transition. As I start this fifteenth year of service, I feel grateful, honored, and privileged that my last season is Virginia Opera’s 45th Anniversary Season — truly a time for celebration. I am pleased that this season signals many more years of celebrations ahead for both Virginia Opera and for the art form we all love best — opera.”

Artistic Director Adam Turner: “It is hard right now to imagine Virginia Opera without Russell’s steady leadership. Russell’s commitment to quality opera production, his understanding of the Virginia Opera’s three main stage markets, and his almost thirty years of institutional knowledge leave enormous shoes to fill.”

Virginia Opera’s 45th Anniversary Season (2019-2020)

***Tosca* – Giacomo Puccini**

Norfolk - OCT 4, 6 & 8, 2019 | Fairfax - OCT 12 & 13, 2019 | Richmond - OCT 18 & 20, 2019

***Il Postino (The Postman)* – Daniel Catán**

Norfolk - NOV 8, 10 & 12, 2019 | Fairfax - NOV 16 & 17, 2019 | Richmond - NOV 22 & 24, 2019

***Cinderella (La Cenerentola)* – Gioachino Rossini**

Norfolk - JAN 31, FEB 2 & 4, 2020 | Fairfax - FEB 15 & 16, 2020 | Richmond - FEB 21 & 23, 2020

***Aida* – Giuseppe Verdi**

Norfolk - MAR 20, 22 & 23, 2020 | Richmond - MAR 27 & 29, 2020

Subscription Information

Subscription tickets for all 4 productions are on sale now for performances in Norfolk and Richmond starting as low as \$75. Subscription tickets and ticket information at:

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

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

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

About Virginia Opera

Virginia Opera Association, Inc., in its 45th 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 or call 866.673.7282.

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