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VIRGINIA OPERA PRESENTS DANIEL CATÁN'S *IL POSTINO* COMPANY FIRST LAUNCHES NEW "FROM SCREEN TO STAGE" INITIATIVE



Photo: Robert Millard/Los Angeles Opera

Production sees premiere of late composer's work in collaboration with Virginia Opera partners Chicago Opera Theater and Opera Southwest

NORFOLK, VA (October 11, 2019) — **Virginia Opera**, *The Official Opera Company of the Commonwealth of Virginia*, is pleased to announce its main stage production of composer/librettist Daniel Catán's three-act opera *Il Postino (The Postman)*, the second opera in the company's 2019-2020, 45th anniversary season. *Il Postino* will enjoy a full statewide run, debuting with Friday, Sunday, and Tuesday performances (November 8–12), 2019, at the Edythe C. and Stanley L. Harrison Opera House (Norfolk); Saturday and Sunday, November 16–17 performances at George Mason University's Center for the Arts on (Fairfax); and Friday, November 22nd and Sunday the 24th performances at the Carpenter Theatre at Dominion Energy Center, (Richmond). This is the Virginia Opera's first presentation of *Il Postino*, and, notably, the first of the VO's new "From Screen to Stage" initiative—which will continue to feature operatic works adapted from the world of movies for VO audiences. It is presented in collaboration with both **Chicago Opera Theater** and Albuquerque's **Opera Southwest**. Notably, *Il Postino* will be performed in Spanish with English Supertitles.

First commissioned by the Los Angeles Opera in co-production with Vienna's Theater an der Wien (Vienna) and Théâtre du Châtelet (Paris) in 2010, and debuted that same year, *Il Postino (The Postman)* is based in part on the 1994 Oscar-winning film of the same title (directed by Michael Radford), as well as the novel *Ardiente Paciencia [Burning Patience]*, or, alternately, *El Cartero De Neruda [Neruda's Postman]* by Antonio Skármeta. The opera explores the imagined life of

exiled Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, as he provides his love-struck postman Mario with the words to reveal his heart to the woman he loves (Beatrice). A universal story of love longed-for and won, this timeless tale of friendship, passion, loyalty, and conviction contains elements of drama and comedy, and presents audiences with a poetic story set against the spiritual and political conflicts of a small Italian village during the 1950s.

The production marks the Virginia Opera debut of stage director **Crystal Manich**. Manich is currently Artistic Director of Minneapolis's Mill City Summer Opera. Among her many recent and diverse projects and accomplishments, Manich was winner of the Audience Award at the 2018 Great Lakes International Shorts Festival for her first short film *L'ivresse*, which explores opera in film.

Virginia Opera Artistic Director Adam Turner will return to the podium for this production and will conduct the **Virginia Symphony Orchestra**. Turner conducts the full complement of 2019–2020 VO productions as it celebrates its 45th Anniversary. Among the nation's most acclaimed young conductors, Maestro Turner joined the Virginia Opera in 2010 as Resident Conductor and Chorus Master and served for four years (2014-2018) as Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor before his appointment to Artistic Director.

Of *Il Postino*, **Maestro Turner** relates: "During summer 2016, I embarked on a nationwide tour of opera festivals, and one of the most beautiful and compelling performances I encountered was Opera Saratoga's performance of *Il Postino (The Postman)*. I have had my sights set on it for the VO ever since. It is a lyrical, romantic and poetic story of love and friendship, and, for those new to Daniel Catán's musical language, it will remind one of Puccini, as well as such composers as Manuel de Falla, Emmanuel Chabrier, and Claude Debussy. I am also excited that we at the VO are co-presenting the production with Chicago Opera and Opera Southwest. As U.S. opera companies partner in presenting such productions, they allow all to excite and foster a new generation of audience members, ensure the future of opera in the United States, and continue to offer audiences the highest quality in artistic standards and production."

Virginia Opera President and CEO, Russell P. Allen: "As The VO celebrates its 45th anniversary season, we are very pleased to offer audiences a wholeheartedly "modern classic" in *Il Postino (The Postman)*. It is a VO first that will certainly not be its sole performance in any of the cities to which it will travel this season. It expands the repertoire of our art form, and will move and delight those raised on classical opera while energizing those who look to opera for storytelling that transcends expectation. As the first in our "From Screen to Stage" initiatives, it is a worthy debut production; sensitive and responsive to the call, and richly deserving of our audience's attention."

Production and technical aspects for *Il Postino* will be handled by San Francisco-based **Scenic Designer Liliana Duque Piñeiro**, whose approach to stage design embraces a background in the visual arts and sculpture, as well as New York-based **Projection Designer Tláloc López-Waterman**, founder of Light Conversations, LLC. Tláloc is a regular collaborator of director Manich and other globally recognized talents. Their dual approach is matched by the skills of **Costume Designer Alice Fredrickson**, whose recent efforts include her work with Manich on Minneapolis's 2019 Mill City Summer Opera production of *Così fan Tutti*.

For *Il Postino*, the VO welcomes tenor **Daniel Montenegro** in his company debut as Mario Ruoppolo; soprano and Arlington, VA, native **Danielle Talamantes** as Beatrice; and tenor **Raúl Melo**, who sings the role of legendary poet Pablo Neruda. Russian-American soprano **Inna Dukach** will sing the part of Matilde Neruda. Dukach performed the title role in *Madama Butterfly* with New York's Metropolitan Opera during its 2017—2018 season.

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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