



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Virginia Opera Announces Online Broadcast Presentation of
the complete 2015 Performance of Puccini's *La Bohème*
featuring the Virginia Symphony Orchestra conducted by Adam Turner
With Introduction and Chat Segments Hosted by Adam Turner
April 30, 2020, 7 PM (EST)**



VO YouTube performance event to include live chat between Maestro Adam Turner, Stage Director Kyle Lang, and others from critically acclaimed 2015 production

Hampton Roads, Richmond, Fairfax, VA (April 21, 2020)—Virginia Opera, *The Official Opera Company of the Commonwealth of Virginia*, is pleased to announce the live streaming presentation of its critically acclaimed **2015 performance of Puccini's *La Bohème*, Thursday April 30, 2020**. The production—broadcast in its entirety—will be hosted on **YouTube beginning at 7:00 p.m. (EST)**, complete with an introduction by VO's **Artistic Director and *La Bohème* conductor Adam Turner**, and an interview segment with VO veteran and ***La Bohème* Stage Director Kyle Lang**.

***La Bohème* begins at 7:30 p.m.** and will feature the musicians of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. The Virginia Symphony has been collaborating in opera production with Virginia Opera for over thirty years.

In addition to the introductory remarks, a live chat is also planned, along with a fifteen-minute intermission during which selected artist interviews will be broadcast. The streaming of *La Bohème* and commentary will be of approximately three-hour duration.

Maestro Turner: “In this most unprecedented time, I thought it imperative that Virginia Opera provide our loyal patrons and fans with both a welcome distraction and a reminder of what we experience together each season at the VO. What better than Puccini and *La Bohème* to unite us? And, with our longstanding and valued partners the Virginia Symphony Orchestra in the pit, you have, as always, a complete feast for the ears, the eyes, and you’ve also got the best seat in the house.”

Karen Philion, President and CEO of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, commented: “As all of the arts work to present online content in the absence of live performance, what better opportunity to be able to present a full performance of one of the most beloved operas of all time. The Virginia Symphony musicians and management are pleased to participate in this broadcast.”

Russell P. Allen, President and CEO of Virginia Opera, commented: “In this stressful time, it is important for friends to stick together. This beautiful example of local artistry and collaboration between the Virginia Opera and the Virginia Symphony emphasize the importance of live performance to all communities.”

Following is the original 2015 Virginia Opera press release, with details on the cast and production. *La Bohème* will remain on YouTube on demand through May 14, 2020.

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October 26, 2015 – Virginia Opera, *The Official Opera Company of the Commonwealth of Virginia*, will wax poetic with a brand-new production of one of opera’s timeless classics, “*La Bohème*.” With a lush score by Giacomo Puccini, the composer of “*Madama Butterfly*,” audiences across the Commonwealth will be immersed in some of the most lyrical and memorable music on the opera stage. “*La Bohème*” is one of the most frequently performed operas in the world today and still strongly resonates with people in the 21st Century.

Bringing youthful energy and vision to the stage, first-time Virginia Opera Director Kyle Lang, known to Virginia Opera audiences for his recent co-directorial work on last season’s smash hit “*Sweeney Todd*,” says audiences should expect a “*La Bohème*” that stays true to the original because, “Why would anyone want to even try to tamper with perfection?” Lang goes on to say, “...the production itself relies on the traditional text and libretto informing and connecting the large cast of diverse characters. In preparing for this undertaking, an opportune moment in time presented itself to change the setting slightly to a more nostalgic and relatable moment for modern audiences, notably, the Phoney War time period of pre-war Paris in 1939.”

“*La Bohème*” is a tale of the power of love, set to a mesmerizing score of heartrending melodies with both a memorable and enduring quality. The story follows young lovers in Paris who make a living as best they can creating poetry, painting street scenes, sewing and singing in the local

cabarets. As “bohemians” they do not value the material things they cannot hope to afford, but seek a higher purpose in art, and through the crucible of passionate love.

Under Adam Turner, Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor, conductor of this production of “**La Bohème**,” a stellar cast has been assembled of young, vivacious artists who have made their mark in the world of opera, performing the same roles on stages around the globe. Lead soprano, Elaine Alvarez, performed the coveted role of Mimí on the stage of the Chicago Lyric Opera, where the Chicago Tribune praised her performance noting, “Conveying lyric pathos seems to come as naturally to Alvarez as breathing.” As her leading man, tenor Jason Slayden, who has a significant resume performing Puccini tenor roles, brings acclaim from a prior performance of Rodolfo; the Vancouver Sun said “he’s absolutely right for the character, and demonstrates considerable subtlety as an actor.” Ms. Alvarez and Mr. Slayden will be a dazzling couple onstage, and are joined by the amazing team of Zulimar López-Hernández, soprano, as the fiery Musetta, paired with the passion of Edward Parks, baritone, as her love-interest, the ever-suffering Marcello. Reprising the role that won her acclaim on the stage at the Royal Albert Hall in 2013, Ms. López-Hernández was celebrated for her lustrous timbre and charismatic portrayals while displaying a “lovely soprano and winning acting skills.” Opera News hails Mr. Parks’ Marcello as “The most compelling performance of the night, whose warm, velvety baritone filled the house as he portrayed the frustrations of a passionate man.” Truly, Virginia Opera has an ensemble cast of the very best of the best singers performing these roles in the world today!

Turner stated, “It’s always wonderful to revisit one of the masterworks of the operatic repertoire, and with this fresh, new production of “**La Bohème**,” Virginia Opera audiences will revel in stunningly dramatic performances. This marvelous cast and ensemble, featuring four mainstage debuts from world-class artists new to Virginia, also features the fantastic Virginia Opera Chorus, including a very special 12-voice children’s chorus. Rounded out by the glorious playing of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, our audiences are sure to enjoy remarkable performances at the Opera!”

Jake Gardner, a perennial Virginia Opera favorite, returns to our stages singing two new roles to his repertoire, Benoit, the landlord, and Alcindoro, Musetta’s elderly lover. Following on the heels of his acclaimed performances last season as the leery Judge Turpin in “**Sweeney Todd**,” and the bumbling Sir Joseph Porter in the hilarious “**HMS Pinafore**,” enjoy his comic creations adding merriment to this lovely “**La Bohème**.”

President and CEO Russell Allen stated, “Puccini’s masterwork will be incredibly well represented by the fresh young cast and direction that Virginia Opera brings to the stage this November. This exciting new production of “**La Bohème**” will gorgeously represent the classic scenes that opera audiences have come to love over the past 100 years.”

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About Virginia Opera

Virginia Opera Association, Inc., was founded in 1974, 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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