



DENNIS HANTHORN - Zurich General Director

## IO-II NEWS

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### THE ATLANTA OPERA TO PRESENT HIGH DEFINITION *PORGY AND BESS*

#### Images Projected by Rear Projection Video System and Screen Units Will Substitute for Traditional Sets

**Atlanta, GA** – Zurich General Director Dennis Hanthorn announced today that The Atlanta Opera's 2011 presentation of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, scheduled for February 27, March 1, 4 & 6, 2011 at the Cobb Energy Centre, will be a new production using an innovative high-definition projection technology developed by The University of Kentucky's Center for Visualization and Virtual Environments (VIS Center). The technology, originally developed for a non-theatrical use, incorporates projections and screen units that will take the place of traditional scenery and sets. The Atlanta Opera's new *Porgy and Bess* production is a co-production with University of Kentucky Opera Theatre. This collaboration marks the second time The Atlanta Opera has partnered with an academic institution to create a new production. The first collaboration was last season's *The Magic Flute*, a co-production with Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music that incorporated puppetry and storybook-like movable sets.

"We have been investigating projection technology for some time," comments Dennis Hanthorn, but it has been too costly until now. The VIS Center's cutting-edge technology is easily applicable to a stage environment and will allow us to create unique productions that I believe will be very engaging for audiences.

We are thrilled about this new production and hope to be able to use this technology many times in the future.”

### **How the technology works**

The VIS Center has developed a method of rear projection called SCRIBE (an acronym for self-contained rapidly integratable background environment) that creates very large rear projections using only minimal backstage area. The technology utilizes a software system that allows multiple projectors to re-create three-dimensional renderings. Multiple projectors, attached to two large movable fabric screen units, take up less than five feet of stage space, freeing the rest of the stage for singers, and ensuring that stage light will not be disrupted. The uniqueness of this technology lies in the fact that the rear-projection system utilizes such a small amount of stage space. Older rear-projection technologies required a great deal of backstage space or a complicated system of mirrors to create large images. Traditional front-projection systems often left performers “wearing the scenery”.

### **New production concept**

The projections used for this new production of *Porgy and Bess* will depict images of real locations in Charleston, South Carolina and the barrier islands off the coast of North Carolina. Actual hurricane footage from The Weather Channel will be used in the hurricane scene. Combining these images with a minimal amount of three-dimensional pieces of scenery will create a vibrant and exciting production. The new production of *Porgy and Bess* is being designed by Richard Kagey, the stage director of The Atlanta Opera’s 2009 new production of Philip Glass’s *Aekhnaten*. Also this season, Kagey will direct The Atlanta Opera Studio Touring production of *The Pirates of Penzance*.

The Atlanta Opera’s new production of *Porgy and Bess* is generously sponsored by the John H. and Wilhelmina D. Harland Charitable Foundation, the David, Helen and Marian Woodward Fund, and an anonymous donor.

[SEE VIDEO ABOUT THIS PROJECT](#)

[SEE VIDEO OF REAR-PROJECTION UNITS BEING ASSEMBLED](#)

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## **PORGY AND BESS**

Music by George Gershwin  
Libretto by DuBose Heyward  
Lyrics by Ira Gershwin and DuBose Heyward

Sung in English with English Supertitles

Previous Atlanta Opera Performances: 2005  
Approximate Running Time: 3 hours 15 minutes

### **Four Performances at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre**

**Saturday, February 26, 2011 at 8 pm**

**Tuesday, March 1, 2011 at 7:30 pm**

**Friday, March 4, 2011 at 8 pm**

**Sunday, March 6, 2011 at 3 pm**

#### **Creative Team**

Conductor	Keith Lockhart*
Stage Director	Larry Marshall
Set Designer	Richard Kagey

#### **Cast**

Bess	Laquita Mitchell*
Clara	NaGuanda Nobles*
Porgy	Michael Redding*
Sportin' Life	Chauncey Packer
Crown	Timothy Blevins*
Serena	Aundi Marie Moore

#### **Description**

In 1930s Charleston, the struggling occupants of Catfish Row live a life of hard work and violent crime all the time yearning for a better life and great love. Get to know Porgy, Bess, Crown, Sportin' Life and Serena the amazing characters in this quintessential American opera. Based on DuBose Heywoods first novel and composed by the forever-young George Gershwin. This Atlanta Opera revival features the company debut of conductor Boston Pops conductor Keith Lockhart.

\*Denotes Atlanta Opera debut.

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## TICKET INFORMATION

### **Single Tickets go on sale September 16**

\$25 - \$140 plus tax, convenience and venue fees

**Online** -- Visit [www.atlantaopera.org](http://www.atlantaopera.org)

**By Phone** -- Call 404-881-8885 or 1-800-35-OPERA

**In-person** -- Visit the Bank of North Georgia Box Office at the Cobb Energy Centre (Mon-Fri, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; and one hour prior to a performance on day of show).

### **Season Tickets – Season Tickets Still Available**

Season tickets to The Atlanta Opera's 2010-2011 Season at the Cobb Energy Centre are still available. Ticket prices for a three-opera package including *La bohème*, *Porgy & Bess* and *Così fan tutte* range from \$75 to \$459.

**Online** -- Visit [www.atlantaopera.org](http://www.atlantaopera.org)

**By Phone** -- Call 404-881-8885 or 1-800-35-OPERA

**In-person** -- Visit The Atlanta Opera Center at 1575 Northside Drive NW, Building 300, Suite 350 (Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.).

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