

THE ATLANTA OPERA

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The Abduction From the Seraglio Opens the 2016-17 Opera Season

Mozart's Comedic Gem Features Adventure and Intrigue in a Mediterranean Palace

ATLANTA – (July 20, 2016) – The Atlanta Opera opens its 2016-17 season with *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, a love story with adventure, intrigue and comedic turns. This farcical, colorful romance was one of Mozart's first commercial successes as a composer and makes for an exotic evening of theatre.

The Atlanta Opera presents *The Abduction from The Seraglio* on October 8, 11, 14 and 16 at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. Single tickets are on sale August 23 and can be purchased online at atlantaopera.org or by calling 404-881-8885. The opera will be performed in German with English supertitles.

The Atlanta Opera has previously presented *Abduction* in 1986 and 2006.

Abduction opens with Belmonte, a Spanish nobleman, searching for his beloved fiancée Konstanze, who was captured by pirates and sold to Pasha Selim along with Belmonte's servant Pedrillo and his betrothed, Blonde, Kostanze's maid. Shortly after arriving at the Pasha's palace on the Mediterranean sea, Belmonte finds Pedrillo and the two faithful lovers plan the rescue of Konstanze and Blonde.

"From the first notes of the overture, one of Mozart's most recognizable, audiences will know they are in for an evening of wonderful music and tremendous performances from this dynamic cast," said Opera music director **Arthur Fagen**, who will conduct The Atlanta Opera Orchestra for these shows. Fagen will conduct *Abduction* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin this November and December.

Mozart composed the opera in 1782 when he was engaged to a young woman named Constanze. He married her shortly after the opera debuted. It is widely agreed that he penned the role of the heroine after his beautiful fiancée.

Comedic opera star **Kevin Burdette**, who wowed Atlanta Opera audiences last season as the Pirate King in Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*, returns to play the role of Osmin, the surly overseer of the Pasha's palace. *The New York Times* dubbed Burdette as "the Robin Williams of opera." In 2015-16, in addition to *Pirates*, Burdette recently sang in *La fille du régiment* and the world premiere of *Cold Mountain*, both with Santa Fe Opera, roles that he reprised with Opera Philadelphia earlier this year.

Tenor **Ben Bliss** will reprise the role of Belmonte, which he recently performed for audiences in New York and England with The Metropolitan Opera and Glyndebourne Festival. His work with the Met over the last four years was recognized with the Lincoln Center's 2016 Emerging Artist Award. This is his debut with The Atlanta Opera.

As Konstanze, soprano **Sarah Coburn** makes both her role debut and Atlanta Opera debut with this production. Over the last several years, she has performed with the Glimmerglass Festival Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Seattle Opera, Boston Lyric Opera and Washington National Opera, building a reputation as a singer with exceptional promise.

Tenor **Matt Grills** sings Pedrillo, a role he last performed for Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, Germany, where he was a member of the ensemble for the 2015-16 season. A former resident artist with Santa Fe Opera and a 2012 grand prize winner of The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Grills has performed across Europe and with several prestigious American opera companies. This is Grill's debut with The Atlanta Opera.

A resident artist with the Portland Opera since 2014, soprano **Katrina Gilka** will perform the role of Blonde in both a role debut and The Atlanta Opera debut. Over the last year, Katrina was awarded in competitions through the Jensen Foundation, Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, National Opera Association, and the Mario Lanza Institute.

Atlanta's own **Tom Key** rounds out the main cast as Pasha Selim, a non-singing role. An actor and artistic director of Theatrical Outfit, the city's second oldest continuously operating professional theater company, Key has performed on stages across the country, from Los Angeles to off-Broadway, and remains one of Atlanta's most celebrated performers. This is Key's debut with The Atlanta Opera.

Chris Alexander will make his debut with Atlanta as Production Director of *Abduction*. Alexander has directed in major houses all over Europe and the US, including frequent returns to Seattle, Dallas, Cincinnati, San Francisco, Washington National Opera and Pittsburgh. He most recently directed *Fidelio* at Cincinnati Opera.

About The Atlanta Opera

The Atlanta Opera is one of the finest regional opera companies in the nation. In 2013, the company recruited internationally recognized stage director Tomer Zvulun as its General and Artistic Director. In the 2014-15 season, the company launched the acclaimed Discoveries series of operas staged in alternative theaters around Atlanta. The program was recognized by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* as part of its Best of 2015 awards and the company was nominated for the International Opera Awards in London in 2016. In the 2016-17 season, the company expanded its mainstage season from three to four productions at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre while ushering the Discoveries series into its 3rd season for a total of six productions. The Opera works with world-renowned singers, conductors, directors, and designers who seek to enhance the art form and make it accessible for a sophisticated, 21st century audience. The Atlanta Opera was founded in 1979 and to this day adheres to its mission to enrich lives through opera.

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The Atlanta Opera recognizes The Coca-Cola Company as the Opening Night Sponsor of the Opera.

The Abduction from the Seraglio

By W. A. Mozart

Libretto by Bretzner/Stephanie

Creative Team

Conductor

Arthur Fagen

Production Director

Chris Alexander

Cast

Belmonte

Ben Bliss*

Osmin

Kevin Burdette

Pedrillo

Matt Grills*

Konstanze

Sarah Coburn*

Pasha Selim

Tom Key*

Blonde

Katrina Galka*

** Atlanta Opera debut*