

THE ATLANTA OPERA

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RENOWNED ATLANTA OPERA CHORUS MASTER DEPARTING AFTER 28 YEARS

Walter Huff to Step Down from His Role with The Atlanta Opera in January

ATLANTA - December 22, 2016 – Maestro **Walter Huff** has announced that, after decades of service to The Atlanta Opera, he will be leaving his position as Chorus Master to focus on his duties at Indiana University. Mo. Huff will start his tenure process in Indiana this coming April. His last day with the Atlanta Opera will be January 1.

“My admiration of Walter cannot be quantified or expressed in words,” said **Tomer Zvulun**, General and Artistic Director of The Atlanta Opera. “We have worked together for the past 12 years, first as a stage director and chorus master, and then as a general director and chorus master. I truly believe that his professionalism and brilliant leadership of our esteemed chorus are unparalleled.”

Mo. Huff joined the company in 1988 and for 28 seasons made The Atlanta Opera Chorus one of the finest, most renowned choruses in the country. He led the Atlanta Opera Chorus in over 110 productions from the Alliance Theater to Symphony Hall, to the Fox Theater and Atlanta Civic Center, to touring select opera houses of Europe with the 2008 *Porgy and Bess* tour, and, most recently, at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. Huff is currently an Associate Professor of Music (Choral Conducting) in the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University.

Conductors, stage directors, and principal singers from the world over consistently praised the ensemble for its characteristic sound, range of color, and consistent precision under Huff’s leadership. The chorus has received critical acclaim in the United States and abroad. In 1996, The Atlanta Opera Chorus was invited to perform in the Cultural Olympiad concert series, as part of the Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta. This invitation resulted in two memorable performances, seen by a distinguished international audience: Gershwin’s delightful musical comedy *Of Thee I Sing* and An Opera Gala Evening, featuring the Atlanta Opera Chorus with famed soprano Dame Gwyneth Jones. In 2008, The Atlanta Opera Chorus sang over 20 performances of *Porgy and Bess* at the Opéra-Comique in Paris and on tour in Spain, Normandy, and Luxembourg. In the 2014-15 season, The Opera recognized Mo. Huff’s 25-year anniversary with A Choral Silver Celebration.

“I am very grateful for the opportunities and experiences I have had with The Atlanta Opera,” Mo. Huff said. “I want to thank all of the chorus members who I had the honor to lead for the past 28 years. I am confident that The Atlanta Opera will continue to build great programs and deliver world-class performances.”

Mo. Huff saw hundreds of Atlanta-area singers contribute their talents to the ensemble. Through his 28 year tenure, many alumni of the chorus went on to significant national and international solo careers, singing at leading opera houses around the nation and the world – including the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, Los Angeles Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, and others.

Maestro **Rolando Salazar**, current assistant conductor, assistant chorus master, and music administrator for the Atlanta Opera, will serve as Chorus Master for *Don Pasquale*. Salazar has been with the Atlanta Opera for 4 years. Previously engagements include serving as assistant conductor and pianist at the Bellingham Festival of Music, as assistant conductor at La Musica Lirica in Novafeltria, Italy, and as assistant conductor of the Festival of International Opera of the Americas. For the elaborate production of *Turandot*, Maestra **Lisa Hasson** will assume the duties of Chorus Master. Hasson currently leads the choruses at Kentucky Opera and The Des Moines Metro Opera Festival. The Opera will launch a local and national search to fill the permanent role and plans to announce the new Chorus Master in the summer of 2017.

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 2014-2015 season, the company launched the acclaimed Discoveries series of operas staged in alternative theaters around Atlanta. The series 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 2016-2017 season, the company expanded its main stage 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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