

THE ATLANTA OPERA

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The Atlanta Opera Returns to Four Mainstage Performances in 2016-17 Season

Three Historic Works and One Contemporary Pulitzer Prize Winner

The Discoveries Series Reimagines Two Operas Following a Successful 2015

ATLANTA, GA - February 5, 2016 – For the first time in six years, **The Atlanta Opera** will offer four mainstage operas as part of its 2016-17 mainstage season. And, as it did in the current season, the Opera will offer two Discoveries productions with fresh takes on rare operatic gems.

The Mainstage season will include *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (Mozart), Pulitzer Prize-winning *Silent Night* (Puccini), *Don Pasquale* (Donizetti), and *Turandot* (Puccini), all presented at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. The Opera's successful Discoveries series will stage *Maria de Buenos Aires* (Piazzolla) and *The Secret Gardener* (Mozart).

"In the past two seasons we have seen an enthusiastic response from audiences to our efforts to bring to Atlanta colorful, dynamic, large-scale productions that feature some of the greatest singers of our time," said Tomer Zvulun, CEO, General & Artistic Director of The Atlanta Opera. "Our mission to establish Atlanta as one of the leading opera houses in the United States will be bolstered by our growth to no less than six productions next season. We are continuing to increase our artistic profile by collaborating with companies such as Wexford, Minnesota and Glimmerglass Festival and bringing some of the magnificent voices in the world to Atlanta."

The decision to expand the mainstage season to four productions demonstrates that interest in opera and live theater continues to thrive in Atlanta. In the three seasons since Zvulun joined The Atlanta Opera, production nights have grown from twelve in the 2013-14 season to twenty-two in the 2016-17 season, counting both mainstage and Discoveries shows.

The Atlanta Opera last offered four mainstage productions in the 2009-10 season.

"It has been incredible to be part of the development and expansion of the Atlanta Opera," said Arthur Fagen, Music Director of The Atlanta Opera. "Next season's offerings have something for everyone, from the epic and exotic *Turandot* to the Bel Canto comedy of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, from the horrors of World War I in *Silent Night* to the charming tale of shipwrecked Europeans on the coast of Turkey in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. In addition, we are presenting great, cultural entertainment with *Maria di Buenos Aires* by the scintillating tango composer Astor Piazzola, and Mozart's *The Secret Gardener*, an effervescent, obscure masterpiece written by the young genius at 18-years old. Come and join us!"

Mainstage Season at Cobb Energy Centre

The Mainstage season opens with *The Abduction from the Seraglio* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart on October 8, 11, 14, and 16, 2016. This farcical, colorful romance was one of Mozart's first successes as a composer and makes for an exotic evening of theatre. The comedic genius **Kevin Burdette** will return to Atlanta as Osmin, the ill-tempered overseer of his master's Turkism harem. Burdette, the acclaimed operatic talent cut in the mold of Buster Keaton, sings the role of The Pirate King in this season's *The Pirates of Penzance*. He will be joined by **Amanda Woodbury** and **Ben Bliss** as the lovers Konstanze and Belmonte. Music Director Fagen will conduct. *The Abduction from the Seraglio* was last seen in Atlanta in 2006.

Silent Night, **Kevin Puts'** retelling of the famous, spontaneous Christmas truce between French, Scottish and German soldiers during World War I, makes its Atlanta debut in November. **Matthew Worth**, last seen in *Soldier Songs*, returns to The Atlanta Opera as Lt. Audebert, the role he performed at Wexford Festival Opera. **Craig Irvin** (Lt. Horstmayer), **Troy Cook** (Father Palmer) and **Andrew Wilkowske** (Ponchel) will perform the roles they originated in the world premiere of *Silent Night* at Minnesota Opera. Artistic Director Zvulun will direct.

This version, a co-production of the Wexford Festival Opera, Glimmerglass Opera and The Atlanta Opera, was initially directed by Zvulun and debuted at the esteemed Wexford Festival Opera to critical acclaim, winning the Audience Choice Award and Best Opera Award at the Irish Times Theatre Awards. *Silent Night*, which won Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2012, will be presented on November 5, 8, 11 (Veterans Day), and 13, 2016.

For the first time in its history, The Atlanta Opera will bring the bel canto jewel *Don Pasquale* to the stage. Donizetti's comic opera will be hilariously transposed to 1950s Hollywood and the transition to color film. Bass-baritone **Burak Bilgili**, last seen in Atlanta in 2013's *Italian Girl in Algiers*, returns in the title role, with charismatic tenor **Ji-Min Park** in the role of Pasquale's nephew Ernesto. This production was most recently presented in Arizona and Cincinnati to great acclaim. Director **Chuck Hudson**, who apprenticed under Marcel Marceau in Paris, will bring his physical, pantomime style to the production. *Don Pasquale* will be presented on March 25, 28, 31, and April 2, 2017.

Turandot closes the season on April 29 and May 2, 5, and 7, 2017. Puccini's epic tale centers around a proud Chinese princess whose riddles doom every suitor but one. Italian tenor **Gianluca Terranova**, who made his debut earlier this season as Rodolfo in *La bohème*, will make his role debut as Calaf opposite soprano **Marcy Stonikas** in the title role. Production by the famed French-Canadian duo Renaud Doucet and André Barbe, and conducted by Fagen. This production of *Turandot*, a co-production of Minnesota Opera, Cincinnati

Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Utah Opera and Seattle Opera, was selected by *Seen and Heard International* as one of the best shows of 2015, calling it "[one for the books](#)." *Turandot* was last seen in Atlanta in 2007 when it opened the Cobb Energy Centre.

The Discoveries Series

The Discoveries series debuted in Atlanta two season ago with an emphasis on presenting new works, new ideas and fresh perspectives on great Atlanta-area stages. The 2015 productions of *Three Decembers* and *Soldier Songs* were highlighted in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* Best of 2015 list. During the 2016-17 season, The Atlanta Opera will give audiences fresh looks at two rarely presented gems.

Maria de Buenos Aires, by composer Astor Piazzolla, follows a young prostitute who falls in love with tango dancing in the heart of Buenos Aires. Composed and first presented in 1968, the sexy *Maria de Buenos Aires* makes for a vibrant evening of opera by combining sensual tango from the steamy clubs of Argentina with surreal adventure.

The Discoveries series partners with New York-based On Site Opera to bring Mozart's *The Secret Gardener* to life in a new site-specific co-production. Performances will mark a bi-city first for the series. Written by an 18-year-old Mozart, *The Secret Gardener* is a story of love, madness, and redemption that unfolds in the lush setting of a beautiful garden. Now in its fifth season of producing immersive site-specific opera, On Site Opera has been praised by *BBC News* as "innovative" and *The New York Times* as a "vital" and "visionary company." More details will follow as the collaboration develops.

The singers, locations and dates of the Discoveries series in 2016-17 are to be announced.

About The Atlanta Opera

The Atlanta Opera is one of the finest regional opera companies in the nation. The Opera presents four mainstage productions at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre and two productions at satellite theaters as part of the Discoveries series. The Opera works with world-renowned directors, actors and designers who seek to enhance the art form and further the current renaissance of opera. Atlanta has a strong history of opera, dating back to the early 1900's when the Metropolitan Opera's annual tour was a major social event. The Atlanta Opera was founded in 1979 and to this day adheres to its mission to enrich lives through opera.

The Discoveries Series

The Atlanta Opera Discoveries series is dedicated to audience members who are seeking new works, new ideas and fresh perspectives. As a part of the Atlanta Opera's efforts to bring opera to new audiences all over the Atlanta Metro area, these productions will be performed in exciting alternative venues.