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Virginia Opera Announces the 2012-2013 Season

The Pearl Fishers • Die Fledermaus • A Streetcar Named Desire • The Marriage of Figaro

NORFOLK, Va. (Jan. 17, 2012) – Virginia Opera, *The Official Opera Company of the Commonwealth of Virginia*, announced its 2012-2013 season today, featuring four operas that delve into themes of love, jealousy, and revenge. The season opens with ***The Pearl Fishers*** in September, followed by ***Die Fledermaus*** in November, ***A Streetcar Named Desire*** in February, and closes with ***The Marriage of Figaro*** in May 2013.

"The new season has been designed to build on the momentum of Virginia Opera's rekindled artistic profile by providing you even more tempting variety of musical and dramatic experiences. Next season's repertory will touch the hearts and minds of first time attendees and seasoned opera-goers alike." said Robin Thompson, Virginia Opera's Artistic Advisor.

The company begins the season with the Virginia Opera Premiere of ***The Pearl Fishers*** opening on Saturday, September 29, 2012 at Norfolk's Harrison Opera House. Georges Bizet's classic tale of the forbidden love shared by two friends for the same woman unfolds on an island fishing village cloaked in mystique. ***The Pearl Fishers*** will launch Virginia Opera's "First of Firsts" series: new season opening productions that have never before been produced by Virginia Opera. The opera will be conducted by **Anne Manson** and directed by **Tazewell Thompson**, both of whom will be making their Virginia Opera debuts. Anne Manson was the first woman ever to conduct at the Salzburg Festival. In-demand soprano Georgia Jarman makes her Virginia Opera debut as the mysterious veiled priestess, "Leila." ***The Pearl Fishers*** will be sung in French with English supertitles. Virginia Opera will once again partner with the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, who will provide orchestration for ***The Pearl Fishers***, as well as ***Die Fledermaus*** and ***A Streetcar Named Desire***.

Just in time for the holiday season, Virginia Opera will produce ***Die Fledermaus*** by Austrian composer Johann Strauss II. ***Die Fledermaus*** is the most widely loved of Strauss's operettas because of its gorgeous, effervescent music and lilting arias. Virginia Opera last produced ***Die Fledermaus*** in 2003 to rave reviews. The Virginian-Pilot said of the production, "Virginia Opera unveiled a sparkling and successful new production of Johann Strauss' operetta *Die Fledermaus*... giving it the deluxe treatment it would lavish on Verdi or Puccini." The Washington Post said, "...*Fledermaus* was one of the most thoroughly enjoyable operatic experiences I have ever had." **Gary Thor Wedow** makes his Virginia Opera debut conducting the opera, while Virginia Opera audience favorite, **Dorothy Danner** will direct. Danner has recently directed *Madama Butterfly* and *The Daughter of the Regiment* and will direct *The Mikado* in March at Virginia Opera. Starring as the scheming lead couple, critically acclaimed baritone Philip Cutlip will sing the role of Eisenstein and soprano Christina Pier makes her Virginia Opera debut as his wife, Rosalinde. Ms. Pier been hailed by Opera News for her "big, gleaming soprano and impressive coloratura...." The opera will be sung in English with English supertitles.

The Virginia Premiere of André Previn's ***A Streetcar Named Desire*** is scheduled for February 2013. Virginia Opera Artistic Advisor Robin Thompson said, "Virginia Opera launches its "Made in America" series with ***Streetcar***. This series will explore the American opera that reflects our country's unique take on the art form." The opera, which premiered in San Francisco in 1998, is a faithful adaptation of Tennessee Williams' play of the same title which received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1948. Previn's melodic and appealing score contains luscious arias and moody orchestral interludes. Kelly Cae Hogan will sing the role of Blanche DuBois. Hogan, familiar to the Virginia Opera audiences was last seen in 2011 as Brunnhilde in *The Valkyrie*. The Washington Post said of her performance, "Kelly Cae Hogan's Brunnhilde thrills with the seeming ease of her pure, pinging high notes." ***Streetcar*** will be conducted by **Ari Pelto** and directed by **Sam Helfrich** who is currently making his company debut directing *Orphée*. Set in New Orleans, ***A Streetcar Named Desire*** will be sung in English with English supertitles.

The season finale, in April 2013, will be Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's comic opera ***The Marriage of Figaro***. Arguably one of the greatest operas ever written, ***The Marriage of Figaro*** is a witty, yet profound tale of love, revenge and forgiveness. The opera features brilliant solo and ensemble numbers set to Mozart's sublime music. The title role, Figaro,

will be performed by Richmond native, Matthew Burns. Music Director of the Richmond Symphony and ASCAP award-winning composer **Steven Smith** will conduct the Richmond Symphony. Virginia Opera veteran **Lillian Groag** will direct, adding **Figaro** to a long line of successes that includes *Don Giovanni*, *Cosí Fan Tutte*, *The Valkyrie*, and *Aida*. This is a revival of the 2006 Virginia Opera production which was hailed by the Richmond Times-Dispatch as "...a production you can love." **The Marriage of Figaro** is sung in Italian with English supertitles.

"The 2012-2013 season represents the beginning of a number of new artistic initiatives that we believe will be attractive to our statewide audiences and help Virginia Opera move forward artistically. The journey begins with this opera season, comprised of operas new to Virginia Opera and classic operas that showcase emerging talent so much a part of Virginia Opera's heritage," says Russell P. Allen, Virginia Opera's President and CEO.

Each performance will feature a free pre-opera discussion 45 minutes before curtain by Virginia Opera's Dr. Glenn Winters. Subscriptions for the new season in Norfolk and Richmond are available by calling Virginia Opera's Box Office at 1-866-OPERA-VA (1-866-673-7282). Subscriptions in Fairfax will be available on Thursday, April 12, 2012 through George Mason University's Center for the Arts, which may be reached at 703-993-ARTS.

Following are the performance dates for Virginia Opera's 38th Anniversary Season during 2012-2013:

<p><i>The Pearl Fishers</i> <u>Norfolk</u>: Sept. 29 & Oct. 3, 5, & 7 2012 <u>Fairfax</u>: Oct. 12 & 14, 2012 <u>Richmond</u>: Oct. 19 & 21, 2012</p>	<p><i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> <u>Norfolk</u>: Feb. 16, 20, 22 & 24, 2013 <u>Fairfax</u>: March 1 & 3, 2013 <u>Richmond</u>: March 8 & 10, 2013</p>
<p><i>Die Fledermaus</i> <u>Norfolk</u>: Nov. 10, 14, 16 & 18, 2012 <u>Richmond</u>: Nov. 23 & 25, 2012 <u>Fairfax</u>: Nov. 30 & Dec. 2, 2012</p>	<p><i>The Marriage of Figaro</i> <u>Norfolk</u>: April 6, 10, 12, & 14, 2013 <u>Fairfax</u>: April 19 & 21, 2013 <u>Richmond</u>: April 26 & 28, 2013</p>

For more information, media may contact Director of Marketing and Communications Anna Russell at 757.213.4553 or via e-mail at Anna.Russell@vaopera.org or Communications Specialist Katie Shubert at 757-627-9545 ext. 3323, or via e-mail at press@vaopera.org.

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About Virginia Opera

Virginia Opera Association, Inc., in its 37th year of operation, 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. The Company has a working budget of \$5.4 million with 32 mainstage performances in three markets reaching nearly 50,000 attendees. 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.