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For immediate release

Unique Double-bill of Tragedy and Comedy - *Pagliacci* & *Gianni Schicchi*

Calgary, AB – Calgary Opera opens its 40th Anniversary season with a perfect combination of tragedy and comedy – *Pagliacci* / *Gianni Schicchi* composed by Ruggero Leoncavallo and Giacomo Puccini – **November 12, 16 & 18** at the **Jubilee Auditorium**. Tickets available through the Calgary Opera box office at (403) 262-7286 or online at www.calgaryopera.com.

"It is hard to imagine a better and more musically and emotionally satisfying double-bill than *Pagliacci* & *Gianni Schicchi*. Both operas are so incredibly concise in their musical and dramatic ideas and flow perfectly from first note to last," says Conductor **Robert Tweten**. "*Pagliacci* is probably the most beloved verismo opera, and rightly so with its emotional punch and endless string of incredible melodies. *Gianni Schicchi* is one of Puccini's most beautifully crafted scores and is most touching in the humanness of its comedy. They each are great show pieces for both the singers and the orchestra. I am very excited to be conducting this double bill for the first time in Calgary!"

Instantly recognizable, the white-faced clown of *Pagliacci* is an iconic opera image that has come to represent the entire art form in movies and television, put in second place only by the horn-helmeted Brunhilde. Canio, leader of a troupe of traveling performers, becomes suspicious that his wife Nedda is cheating on him. When he confronts her on stage, she denies it, and, thrown into a rage he kills her in front of the horror-stricken audience.

On the lighter side, Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* revolves around a family that is mourning their recently deceased patriarch. There is a rumour that he has left everything to the church. When their worst fears are confirmed, they call on the clever Gianni Schicchi to fix their problem. Little do they know that he has more interest in lining his own pockets than solving their petty squabbles.

"*Pagliacci* and *Gianni Schicchi* are like reflections in a mirror, one a drama that ends in death, the other a comedy that begins with death," says Stage Director **Alain Gauthier**. "They perfectly compliment each other in an evening of opera and make for excellent drama."

In the role of the tragic clown Canio is Tenor **Marc Hervieux** who was last with Calgary Opera for *Faust* (2008). Baritone **John Fanning** will be performing the role of the ever scheming *Gianni Schicchi*. Also starring is **Sally Dibblee** as Nedda/Lauretta, **Kurt Lehmann** as Beppe/Rinuccio, **Peter McGillivray** as Silvio/Betto, **Elizabeth Turnbull** as Zita, **Taras Kulish** as Simone as well as Emerging Artist alumni **Michelle Minke** as Nella, **Dionne Sellinger** as Ciesca, **Andrew Love** as Marco, **Brent Calis** as Amantio and **John Conlon** as Spinelloccio. *Pagliacci* / *Gianni Schicchi* is conducted by **Robert Tweten** and directed by **Alain Gauthier** who is making his debut with Calgary Opera in a production he created for Opéra de Montréal.

Calgary Opera acknowledges the support of Season Sponsor **The Calgary Herald** and Production Sponsor **BMO Financial Group**.

Pagliacci/Gianni Schicchi is sung in Italian with English text projected above the stage.

See below for artist biographies

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Biographies

ROBERT TWETEN

CONDUCTOR

Conductor Robert Tweten has been described as leading with “verve and precision,” his pacing as flawless,” and having a “musicality and near symbiotic accord with singers.” The Canadian native recently returned to Canada to conduct *Don Giovanni* for Opera Ontario, *Rigoletto* for Edmonton Opera, and *Tosca* for Vancouver Opera. Other recent engagements include *Falstaff* for Utah Opera, *Le nozze di Figaro* with the Santa Fe Opera, and *Die Zauberflöte* for Sarasota Opera. Upcoming he will return to Utah to conduct *Rigoletto* and to Vancouver for *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. He was last with Calgary Opera for *The Barber of Seville* (2009).

ALAIN GAUTHIER

STAGE DIRECTOR

Alain Gauthier earned his bachelor’s degree in theatre from the Université du Québec à Montréal. He has directed several productions for Opéra de Montréal including *Suor Angelica/Il Tabarro*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *La Bohème*. He successfully remounted the Glimmerglass Opera production of *L’Étoile* for Opéra de Montréal, Cincinnati Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, and New York City Opera. Among other projects, Gauthier is preparing a new production of *Faust* for Opéra de Montréal, and will be presenting *Pagliacci/Gianni Schicchi* at Cincinnati Opera in June 2012. This is his debut with Calgary Opera.

HARRY FREHNER

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Harry Frehner has designed more than 40 productions for Calgary Opera dating back to 1992. In the past six years, five of these productions have been nominated for Betty Mitchell Awards, of which, two have won. Last year’s three world premieres: *Before Night Falls* (Fort Worth Opera), *Lillian Alling* (Vancouver Opera) and *The Inventor* here in Calgary were all critical successes. He has lit productions for Edmonton Opera, Arizona Opera, Opera Lyra, Vancouver Opera, Opera Colorado, Utah Opera, Opera Ontario, Manitoba Opera and Pacific Opera Victoria. His work has been seen across the country at such companies as The Banff Centre, Theatre Calgary, Alberta Theatre Projects, Decidedly Jazz Danceworks, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, The Stratford and Shaw Festivals, Ballet BC and Neptune Theatre.

CAST LISTED IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

JOHN FANNING

BARITONE

TONIO/GIANNI SCHICCI

Recently invested as a Member of the Order of Canada, John Fanning is a veteran of nine seasons at the Metropolitan Opera; roles there include John Plake in *Sly*, co-starring with Placido Domingo, Mr. Astly in *The Gambler*, Faninal in *Der Rosenkavalier* and the Four Villains in *Les Contes D’Hoffmann* conducted by James Levine. Recent credits include the title role in *Casanova’s Homecoming* (Minnesota Opera), Musiklehrer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Houston Grand Opera), di Luna in *Il Trovatore* (Opéra de Québec), and Kr. Kolenaty in *Makropoulos Case* (Nantes/Angers in France). He was last with Calgary Opera for *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (2008).

MARC HERVIEUX

TENOR

CANIO

Since being personally chosen by Valery Gergiev for a production of *La Traviata* in St. Petersburg, Marc Hervieux's career has reached a new level. His 2010-2011 season was highlighted by appearances with Opera Lyra Ottawa as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, the title role in *Pagliacci* for Opera Hamilton and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* for Opéra de Québec. He has also been heard in Montreal and Quebec in 'Salute to Vienna' and is in demand for personal appearances in Kuala Lumpur, Toronto and Montreal following the release of his chart-topping CDs; *Après Nous* and *Italian Arias* with Nezet-Seguin. He was last with Calgary Opera for *Faust* (2008).

PETER MCGILLIVRAY

BARITONE

BETTO/SILVIO

Peter McGillivray, who joined the Metropolitan Opera roster for the first time in the 2010-2011 season, won 1st Prize in the CBC Competition, Deuxieme Grand Prix and Chalmers Award at the Montreal International Competition, and the Silver Medal at the Queen Sonja competition in Oslo, Norway. Recent credits include Schaubard in *La Bohème* and Dolokhov/General Belliard in *War & Peace* (Canadian Opera Company), Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus* (Opera Hamilton), *Messiah* (National Arts Centre Orchestra and Winnipeg Symphony), Raoul in *The Shadow* (Tapestry) and *Carmina Burana* (Brott Festival) and his Solo CD *Summer Schemes*. He was last with Calgary Opera for *Manon* (2009).

SALLY DIBBLEE

SOPRANO

NEDDA/LAURETTA

Soprano Sally Dibblee enjoys success on opera stages and concert halls throughout North America. Recent highlights include Pat Nixon in the Canadian debut of *Nixon in China* with Vancouver Opera, her role debut as Cio-Cio San in *Madama Butterfly* with Pacific Opera Victoria, a Toronto Symphony debut singing opera highlights and performing Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Orquesta Sinfonica de Minería in Mexico City. Ms. Dibblee looks forward to another Donizetti role debut this season when she sings Elizabetta in *Maria Stuarda* with Pacific Opera Victoria. She was last with Calgary Opera in the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* (2010).

KURT LEHMANN

TENOR

BEPPE/RINUCCIO

Tenor Kurt Lehmann has been hailed as "...one of Canada's most dependable tenors. He has the money notes and clear, clean, romantic delivery." His international career has taken him to Carnegie Hall for Verdi's *Requiem* as well as engagements in Toronto, Montreal, Dallas, Calgary, Vancouver, Naples, Pittsburgh, and Detroit in repertoire ranging from Lenski in *Eugene Onegin* to Barinkay in *Der Zigeunerbaron*. Recent credits include Flamand in *Capriccio* for Pacific Opera Victoria, Alfredo in *La Traviata* for Manitoba Opera and Opera Lyra Ottawa and Cassio in *Otello* for Edmonton Opera. He was last with Calgary Opera for *Dead Man Walking* (2006).

ELIZABETH TURNBULL

MEZZO-SOPRANO

ZITA

Elizabeth Turnbull has been hailed by the press as “(one) of this country’s finest singers, luminous and rich-voiced.” Her recent schedule included *Messiah* at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9* with the Regina Symphony, Olga in *Eugene Onegin* for Opera Lyra Ottawa, Mother in the world premiere of *Ines* for Queen of Puddings in Toronto, Emilia in *Otello* for Dallas Opera and Edmonton Opera and Schafer’s *Adieu, Robert Schumann* for the Ottawa Symphony. Ms. Turnbull was featured in the world premieres of Calgary Opera’s *Filumena* and *Frobisher* and was last with the company in *Little Women* (2010).

TARAS KULISH

BASS

SIMONE

Born in Montreal, Mr. Kulish has sung with opera companies and symphonies throughout North America and Europe. Recent engagements include Leporello in *Don Giovanni* under Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Ruslan in *Ruslan & Ludmilla* with Toronto’s Opera in Concert, First Soldier in *Salome* with Opéra de Montréal. Upcoming engagements include Pistola in *Falstaff* with Opéra de Québec. Mr. Kulish is the founding Artistic Director of the Green Mountain Opera Festival in Vermont, and he is General & Artistic Director of Opera Piccola, Montreal’s professional summer opera company. He was last with Calgary Opera for *Ariadne auf Naxos* (2009).

DIONNE SELLINGER

MEZZO-SOPRANO

CIESCA

Dionne Sellinger was a member of Calgary Opera’s Inaugural Emerging Artist Development Program and has since returned to perform Maman in Ravel’s *L’Enfant et Sortilèges*. She performed Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* with Burnaby Lyric Opera, and toured *The Barber of Barkerville* as Rosie, a role reprised with Edmonton Opera. Ms. Sellinger has performed Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Vancouver Opera. She performed in Opera on the Avalon’s production of *Albert Herring* as Nancy and next season will be back in Edmonton as Peep-Bo in *The Mikado*. She was last with Calgary Opera for *Manon* (2009).

ANDREW LOVE

BARITONE

MARCO

Andrew Love received University of Toronto’s ARIAS Distinguished Graduate Award in Operatic Performance in 2010. He was an inaugural member of the Calgary Opera Emerging Artist Development Program, and has won accolades for his performances as Marcello (*La Bohème*, Highland Opera Studio), Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*, Opera NUOVA) and Sid (*Albert Herring*, Opera on the Avalon). Mr. Love covered the role of Phillippe in Rufus Wainwright’s opera *Prima Donna* at Luminato Festival. Recent and upcoming debuts include Opera Hamilton (Silvio, *Pagliacci*), the title role in Opera Saskatoon’s *Le nozze di Figaro*, and in 2012, Dancaïre in Pacific Opera Victoria’s *Carmen*.

MICHELLE MINKE

SOPRANO

NELLA

Calgary Soprano Michelle Minke is a graduate of The Royal Academy of Music opera school in London, England, and the University of Toronto. An alumna of Calgary Opera's Emerging Artist Development Program, she debuted as Film person 3 and covered the role of Anna in the world premiere of *Frobisher*. Other highlights include British Youth Opera, Royal Academy Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, Opera NUOVA, the Georg Solti Accademia, and the Center for Opera studies in Italy. She has also performed in The Anghiari Festival (Italy), The Spitalfields Festival (London), and Toronto's International Bach Festival. She was last with Calgary Opera for *Manon* (2009).

MICHAEL MARINO

TENOR

GHERARDO

Tenor Michael Marino is a London native who recently finished a Masters in Performance and Literature at the University of Western Ontario under the mentorship of Baritone Theodore Baerg. Recent performances include Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with Kitchener Opera and Highlands Opera Studio, and Romeo in *Roméo et Juliette* with Opera NUOVA. Other roles include Davey Palmer (*Siren Song*) and the Mosquito/Schoolmaster (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) with The Banff Centre and Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*) with Opera NUOVA. Mr. Marino also performed the roles of Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) and Sam Kaplan (*Street Scene*) while studying at UWO. He is a member of the 2011/12 Emerging Artist ensemble.

JOHN CONLON

BASS

SPINELLOCIO

Metropolitan Opera Auditions winner John Conlon holds a Master of Opera degree from UBC, where he sang many lead roles in operas by Puccini, Massenet, Lehar, and Rossini. Mr. Conlon has appeared several times on the Vancouver Opera stage singing the roles of the Wigmaker in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Sciarrone in Puccini's *Tosca* and Marullo in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. During the 2007-2008 season, Mr. Conlon was a member of Calgary Opera's Emerging Artist program, where he performed two roles in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. Recently he appeared in the Alberta Ballet production of Kurt Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins*.

BRENT CALIS

BARITONE

AMANTIO

Brent Calis recently completed two years with Calgary Opera's Emerging Artist Program and is thrilled to be joining Calgary Opera again for this production. Calgary Opera recently featured Calis as John Keith the world premiere of *The Inventor* by Bramwell Tovey (2011), Ambrogio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (2009), and Dashwood in *Little Women* (2010). Other recent credits include Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Opera NUOVA 2011), Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette* (Opera NUOVA 2010), Jonathan in *Siren Song* and The Forester in *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Banff Centre 2009), and Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* (Banff Centre 2008).

CLARENCE FRAZER

BARITONE
PINELLINO

Hailing from Mississauga, Ontario, Canadian Baritone Clarence Frazer has wowed audiences from Edmonton to London to Florida and the Adriatic coast of Italy. This past year Mr. Frazer finished his musical studies at the University of Western Ontario under the mentorship of Canadian Baritone Theodore Baerg. Recent operatic credits include: Dandini in *La Cenerentola* (Opera NUOVA), Masetto in *Don Giovanni* (Concert Opera Group), Don Giovanni in *Don Giovanni* (COSI), and Falstaff in Verdi's *Falstaff* (Opera NUOVA). Recent concert credits include: Bass Soloist in Bach's *Cantata 205 Der zufriedengestellte Aeolus* with Maestro Timothy Vernon and Orchestra London. He is a member of the 2011/12 Emerging Artist ensemble.

MARK ELLIS GOUGH

BARITONE
GUCCIO

Mark Ellis Gough is a Lyric Baritone from the small town of Mount Brydges, Ontario. His teachers have included Torin Chiles, Theodore Baerg, and Todd Wieczorek and he received his Bachelor of Musical Arts and an Artist Diploma from the University of Western Ontario. Mr. Gough made his European debut in the summer of 2009 as Calchas in *La Belle Héliène*. Most recently he completed a touring production of Anne Hodges' adaptation of *Hansel and Gretel* in the Ottawa area and performed Conte Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* in the inaugural season of the Academia Europea Dell'Opera. He is a member of the 2011/12 Emerging Artist ensemble.