

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Thursday, December 10, 7:00 am, 2020**

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**The Dallas Opera brings live opera back to the Winspear on March 5, 2021, as it begins its 2020/2021 season with the world premiere of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (March 5, 7, 13), followed by 90-minute abridged productions of *Don Carlo* (March 27, 31; April 3), *The Marriage of Figaro* (April 9, 11, 14, 17), and *Tosca* (April 16, 18, 21, 24, and May 2). Social distancing and strict safety protocols in place both onstage and off, no intermissions, and hall capacity no greater than 30%. On-demand videos of productions to be made available free of charge to subscribers not wishing to attend in person. **The Hart Institute for Women Conductors Showcase Concert** to take place with the Dallas Opera Orchestra as planned on **Friday, February 19, 2021; National Vocal Competition proceeds on May 1, 2021; Joyce DiDonato concert remains on May 10, 2021; Benjamin Appl recital**, part of the Robert E. and Jean Ann Titus Art Song Recital Series, **rescheduled to January, 2022.****

DALLAS, TX, DECEMBER 10, 2020 – The Dallas Opera’s 2020/2021 season, postponed earlier this year because of COVID 19, will commence on March 5, 2021, with three performances of the world premiere *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (March 5, March 7 (matinee), March 13) composed by Joby Talbot to a libretto by Gene Scheer. Completing the mainstage season will be

abridged productions of Verdi's *Don Carlo* (March 27 (matinee), March 31, April 3 (matinee); Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* (April 9, April 11 (matinee), April 14, and April 17); and Puccini's *Tosca* (April 16, April 18 (matinee), April 21, April 24; May 2 (matinee)—all presented in stagings of approximately 90 minutes in length.

Ian Derrer, The Dallas Opera's Kern Wildenthal general director and CEO, said audiences can look forward to dramatically and musically exciting performances—albeit different from what they have experienced in the past and will see in the post-pandemic future. “We have charged our world-class artistic teams with bringing all their creativity and fresh thinking to productions that provide a thoroughly rewarding artistic experience for audiences, while adhering to COVID-related safety and social distancing requirements.”

“The first opera in the season, Joby Talbot's *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, is under 90 minutes in length, and the three operas that complete the season—*Don Carlo*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Tosca*—will all be abridged to approximately 90 minutes in length,” Derrer says. “Most of the famous arias and ensembles in these final three operas will be maintained,” Derrer says, “but without the chorus because of social distancing requirements.” Derrer explained that the Winspear's orchestra pit will be expanded to allow for maximum distance between the orchestral players.

Says Emmanuel Villaume, TDO's Mrs. Eugene McDermott music director, “Our souls need Art in these difficult times, and our hearts, especially, are craving music. For this special season, TDO audiences will have the opportunity to be in the exceptional company of Talbot for his new opera, and our old friends Mozart, Verdi, and Puccini. We will present internationally celebrated singers in a format that will respect the safety of all. This will present some challenges, but we know that artistic quality and emotion will be present in the Winspear more than ever.”

A specially designed set will allow for the creation of a unique visual landscape for every production, with a multitude of projections and lighting used to create and support each story's atmosphere and dramatic action. Costumes, makeup, and hair design will be streamlined—conveying the essence of each individual character without requiring elaborate costumes and wigs. “The goal,” Derrer says, “is to create a stunning visual landscape without a multitude of complex sets that require large numbers of backstage personnel to operate the show. Directors will have full use of the stage to create the drama and action, but social distancing is a mandatory requirement for creating the season, with a reduction in scale necessary in areas of each production.”

Derrer stated that all of the directors in the TDO season are rising to the challenge of producing their respective operas in a time of pandemic. For example, Kyle Lang, who will direct Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, explains that “foremost in my mind as I prepare to stage this masterpiece in a socially distanced setting is maintaining intimacy without the ability to have the performers touch one another. I lean into the story for guidance and think of the isolation the Countess (one of the opera's major characters, who is estranged from her philandering husband) must feel, and the accompanying longing of emotional distance. If I can encourage performers to translate emotional distance and longing into the tension of the negative space between them onstage, we have the opportunity to create touching art that reflects the isolation so many of us have felt in this time.”

Derrer said that for months, he has been receiving enthusiastic encouragement from audiences asking TDO to “try our very best to get live opera back on our stage this spring.” He said that “people understand that we as producers and they as audience members will have to make ‘COVID compromises’ for us to have a spring season—and everyone understands that a good portion of our audience will wait to come back until there is widespread vaccination.”

Derrer emphasized that safety measures for artists, audiences, and TDO personnel are paramount. To adhere to social distancing guidelines, a maximum of 30 percent of the theater's seating

capacity will be used. Masks for everyone except for singers in performance will be compulsory; temperature checks and hand sanitizing will be mandatory for everyone entering the theater. Special ventilation protocols will be instituted in the Winspear to ensure maximum air circulation and outdoor air intake in the theater, lobbies, and backstage. There will be no intermissions in any of the operas. A full list of safety guidelines can be found on the [AT&T Performing Arts Center website](#). All safety measures will be in compliance with mandated [State Health and Human Services](#) regulations for Fine Arts Performance Halls.

Derrer said that subscribers for the 2020/2021 season would be the first to be accommodated in the greatly reduced capacity. “We will be doing our best to seat people as close as possible to their original seats locations, realizing that changes will need to be made to allow for social distancing.” Subscribers will be contacted in the new year regarding exact seating details.

Thanks to successful contract arrangements with TDO’s union partners, subscribers not wishing to attend live performances will have the option of seeing all of the season’s operas via on-demand videos. Subscribers choosing not to attend live, or to view the videos, will have the option of having their ticket-purchase price applied to their 2021/2022 season subscription, contributing their purchase amount to TDO’s DOER fundraising campaign, or receiving a refund.

Single-ticket availability for the 2020/2021 season will be announced after all subscribers and donors have been accommodated. On-demand video streams of mainstage productions, which will be free for subscribers, will be available for purchase by individual-ticket buyers.

Ann Stuart, chair of The Dallas Opera board of directors, commends Ian Derrer and Emmanuel Villaume for their thoughtful planning while considering a spring season. “While nothing is certain in this COVID-19 environment, Ian and Emmanuel have chosen to pursue the challenging path that

leads to our enjoyment once again of all that The Dallas Opera brings to our community. We applaud their leadership.”

In other season news, Derrer said that recital with **famed baritone Benjamin Appl**, part of the Robert E. and Jean Ann Titus Art Song Recital Series and originally scheduled for January, 2021, is **being rescheduled to a soon-to-be announced date in January, 2022**. All ticket-holders will be moved to the future date and contacted by Patron Services to confirm the change or request other ticket options.

**The Hart Institute for Women Conductors Showcase Concert** is going ahead as planned on **Friday, February 19, 2021 at 7:30 pm in the Winspear**. The Dallas Opera Orchestra will be conducted by Elizabeth Askren and Stephanie Rhodes Russell, with program details to be announced this coming January. Also proceeding as scheduled are the **The Dallas Opera National Vocal Competition on May 1, 2021, at 7:30 pm; and the Joyce DiDonato concert with Maestro Emmanuel Villaume and The Dallas Opera Orchestra, on May 10, 2021, at 7 pm**, with amended plans for the onstage dinner to be announced in the new year.

Casting details for the Dallas Opera’s 2020/2021 mainstage season are as follows:

***The Diving Bell and the Butterfly/World Premiere***

Composed by Joby Talbot to a libretto by Gene Scheer

March 5, March 7 (matinee), March 13/2021

*In English with English Supertitles*

Jean-Dominique Bauby – Lucas Meachem

Abbe Faria – Richard Croft

Sandrine/Mercedes – Andriana Chuchman

Sylvie – Sasha Cooke

Claude – Deanna Breiwick\*

Papinou – Clifton Forbis  
Doctor – Andrew Bidlack  
Lea – Jocelyn Hansen  
Creative Team  
Emmanuel Villaume – Conductor  
Leonard Foglia – Director  
Russell H. Champa – Lighting Designer  
Elaine McCarthy – Projections Designer

***Don Carlo*** / Giuseppe Verdi  
March 27(matinee), March 31, April 3(matinee)/2021  
*In Italian with English Supertitles*

Philip II – David Leigh  
Don Carlo – Gwyn Hughes Jones  
Elizabeth de Valois – Leah Crocetto\*  
Princess Eboli – Jamie Barton\*  
Rodrigo – Lucas Meachem  
The Grand Inquisitor – Morris Robinson

Creative Team  
Conductor – Emmanuel Villaume  
Director – Edward Berkeley  
Lighting Designer – Krista Billings

***The Marriage of Figaro*** / Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
April 9, April 11(matinee), April 14, April 17/2021  
*In Italian with English Supertitles*

Figaro – Kyle Ketelsen

Susanna – Madison Leonard\*  
Countess Almaviva – Sara Gartland  
Count Almaviva – Andrei Bondarenko  
Cherubino – John Holiday  
Dr. Bartolo – Kevin Burdette  
Marcellina – Lucy Schauer  
Don Basilio – David Cangelosi

Creative Team

Conductor – Lidiya Yankovskaya\*  
Director – Kyle Lang  
Lighting Designer – Thomas C. Hase

***Tosca*** / Giacomo Puccini

April 16, April 18(matinee), April 21, April 24; May 2(matinee)/2021

*In Italian with English Supertitles*

Floria Tosca – Jennifer Rowley\*  
Mario Cavaradossi – Gianluca Terranova  
Baron Scarpia – Ambrogio Maestri\*  
Cesare Angelotti – Adam Lau  
Sacristan – Dale Travis  
Spoletta – David Cangelosi

Creative Team

Conductor – Keri-Lynn Wilson\*  
Director – Jose Maria Condemi\*  
Lighting Design – Thomas C. Hase

\*The Dallas Opera debut



## ABOUT THE DALLAS OPERA

One of the leading opera companies in the country, The Dallas Opera has an extraordinary legacy of world-class productions and thrilling premieres featuring the greatest operatic artists of our time. Inaugurated in 1957 with a concert featuring the incomparable Maria Callas, The Dallas Opera is known for the notable U.S. debuts of a host of legendary artists including Dame Joan Sutherland, Plácido Domingo, Jon Vickers, Franco Zeffirelli, and Sir David McVicar. The company has long been an industry leader and innovator through groundbreaking initiatives including the Hart Institute for Women Conductors, TDO Network, free public simulcasts, acclaimed art song recitals, the national vocal competition, special concerts, and outstanding family and award-winning education programs. The Dallas Opera's home is the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, a jewel in the Dallas Arts District. As one of the largest performing arts employers in North Texas, The Dallas Opera is proudly committed to diversity, both onstage and off, and is a major contributor to the economic vitality and international cultural reputation of this region.

## SEASON SPONSOR

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and the **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).**

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