

# MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Michigan Opera Theatre's 2016-17 Opera and Dance Seasons Announced**

*Landmark Season Celebrates Legacy of Founder and Artistic Director, David DiChiera*

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*Expanded Community Partnerships Offer New Opportunities to Patrons*

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*Company Reveals New Corporate Logo*

**Detroit, March 30, 2016** - Michigan Opera Theatre Artistic Director David DiChiera today announced details of the company's 2016-17 season, his last as Artistic Director of the company he founded and has nourished since 1971. The company's 46<sup>th</sup> season includes five opera productions and five dance presentations in a season that celebrates the legacy of David DiChiera.

The Opera Series opens with Georges Bizet's *Carmen* and will culminate with DiChiera's own opera, *Cyrano*. In addition, Mark Adamo's *Little Women* will be produced at the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts as the third installment of MOT's popular community outreach initiative.

MOT's Dance Series features a return of audience favorite Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Royal Winnipeg Ballet's retro take on the classic fairy tale, *A Cinderella Story*, and a co-presentation of Mark Morris Dance Group's *Layla and Mainum* with the University Musical Society (UMS) of Ann Arbor. The partnership between MOT and UMS is supported by the Southeastern Michigan Community Foundation.

"This will be a bittersweet but very special season for me personally," said DiChiera, "but I think it will be a great season for the company and for our audiences with a lineup of beloved operas and dance performances that will have broad appeal. I chose some powerful new works to balance the season, and these productions reflect my belief that producing new work is vital to the survival of the performing arts. I hope to expose our audience to works that are new to them, but reminiscent of the familiar styles they've grown to love. Of course, I'm especially honored to be able to bring back *Cyrano* as our season finale."

With the 2016-17 season, Michigan Opera Theatre continues its commitment to patrons from across Southeastern Michigan through its ongoing partnerships with UMS and the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts. "David was a sparkplug in igniting Detroit's rebirth two decades ago with the opening of the Detroit Opera House in the downtown corridor," says Wayne S. Brown, MOT President and CEO.

Adds DiChiera, "Now that the Detroit recovery is going strong, we want to continue playing a significant role and to do everything we can to help the region achieve its full potential. That's always been my dream."

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In conjunction with the announcement of the 2016-17 season, MOT also introduces its new look and logo, which features a livelier, more contemporary interpretation of Michigan Opera Theatre and Detroit Opera House identities. The new MOT logo is complimented by an interlocking MOT monogram, inspired by a decorative architectural element found in the ceiling of the Vincent lobby. The new logo was designed by New York-based MING Utility and Entertainment Group.

“This rebranding is subtle. It’s an *evolution*, not a *revolution*, of our existing identities,” said Brown. “We truly believe that like the city itself, MOT is undergoing significant growth, and as the season approaches, it’s the right time to freshen our identity.”

## OPERA SEASON

### Georges Bizet’s CARMEN

October 15-23, 2016

*Performed in French with English supertitles*

Bizet’s *Carmen* seduces audiences with its celebrated music and femme fatale title character. Carmen’s sensuousness captivates all who meet her, and though she is a pawn of fate, she effortlessly leads a lowly corporal and a suave bullfighter into a bitter rivalry for her affection. Every beloved melody, from the Habanera to the Gypsy Song, blazes anew.

#### Production Highlights\*

- Michigan Opera Theatre’s 2001 co-production with Houston Grand Opera. Sets designed by Riccardo Hernandez, costume design by Constance Hoffman, lighting design by Kendall Smith, and hair and makeup design by Elizabeth Geck.
- American mezzo-soprano **Ginger Costa-Jackson** (Oct. 15, 19, 22) alternates in the role of Carmen with **Sandra Piques Eddy** (Oct. 23) alongside Argentinian tenor **Marcelo Puente** (Oct. 15, 19, 22).
- Conducted by **Valerio Galli**, and directed by **Ron Daniels**.

### Kevin Puts’ SILENT NIGHT

November 12-20, 2016

*Sung in multiple languages (French, German, English) with English supertitles*

This opera received the Pulitzer Prize for music in 2012, and is taking opera houses around the world by storm. Influenced by (the novel) true events from World War I, *Silent Night* tells of a spontaneous cease-fire between French, Scottish and German soldiers on Christmas Eve, 1914. Filled with music, sung in the multiple languages of its characters, this opera reminds us that war is unsustainable when we come to know our enemy as a friend.

#### Production Highlights

- Company premiere.
- This is the same production of the world premiere by Minnesota Opera in 2011, which was telecast nationally by National Public Television.
- Acclaimed Canadian soprano **Erin Wall** will sing the lead role of Anna Sorensen, and American tenor **Chad Johnson** will sing the role of Nikolaus Sprink.
- Conducted by **David Charles Abell**, and directed by **Eric Simonson**.

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## Mark Adamo's LITTLE WOMEN

March 11-12, 2017

Presented at the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts  
*Sung in English with English supertitles*

Louisa May Alcott's classic tale of life in New England after the Civil War, revived and told through the music of American composer Mark Adamo.

### Production Highlights

- Features the artists of MOT's resident artist program, **Michigan Opera Theatre Studio**, in lead and supporting roles.
- The third opera of MOT's annual community initiative to bring opera directly to audiences in Southeastern Michigan through partnerships with community organizations.

## Giacomo Puccini's THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST

April 1-9, 2017

*Performed in Italian with English supertitles*

Puccini's opera, set in the American West during the Gold Rush, brings to life the story of Minnie. She's a gun-toting, saloon-owning Sunday school teacher, and all the cowboys want to marry her. An opera worth going all-in for, *The Girl of the Golden West* contains the most romantic serenades from a bandit-turned-lover you'll ever hear, and a high-stakes poker game.

### Production Highlights

- Company premiere.
- American soprano **Meagan Miller** (April 1, 5, 8) alternates in the role of Minnie with American soprano **Melissa Citro** (April 9). Baritone **Mark Delavan** (April 1, 5, 8) alternates in the role of Jack Rance with baritone **Craig Colclough**.
- Conducted by **Stephen Lord**, music director for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and artistic director of opera studies for New England Conservatory. Directed by **Mario Corradi**.

## David DiChiera's CYRANO

May 13-21, 2017

*Performed in French with English supertitles*

Cyrano, a nobleman with a larger-than-life personality, skilled in both the sword and the pen, is physically plain with a rather large nose. Despite his overwhelming love for the beautiful Roxane, Cyrano agrees to help his younger rival, the handsome Christian, to win her heart. From the renowned balcony scene to the moving climax, the triumph of the spiritual over the corporal is ultimately achieved. Cyrano, similar to Don Quixote and Don Juan, has become one of the world's most enduring and popular literary figures. The capstone to the 2016-17 season, this opera is the master work of Michigan Opera Theatre Founder and Artistic Director David DiChiera.

### Production Highlights

- Michigan Opera Theatre's original co-production with Florida Grand Opera and Opera Philadelphia.
- Baritone **Marian Pop**, who originated the role of Cyrano in MOT's 2007 world premiere, returns to reprise the title role alongside American soprano **Sarah Joy Miller** in the role of Roxanne. Pop alternates with baritone **John Viscardi**.
- Conducted by MOT-favorite **Steven Mercurio**, and directed by the opera's librettist and longtime director, **Bernard Uzan**.

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**Subscription price range:** \$228 - \$507

**Single ticket price range:** \$29 - \$165; on sale to the general public August 26, 2016.

\*All casting is subject to change.

## DANCE SEASON

**Mark Morris Dance Group: LAYLA AND MAINUN**

**October 13-15, 2016**

Featuring The Silk Road Ensemble with Alim Qasimov and Fargana Qasimova

*Performed at the Power Center in Ann Arbor*

*A co-presentation with UMS (University Musical Society)*

*Three Performances*

Mark Morris will present his company of 15 dancers in a new large scale production that will receive its world premiere in September. *Layla and Majnun* is an Arabian love story that originated as a poem in ancient Persia and is well known among many Middle Eastern and sub-continental cultures, including Muslim, Sufi, Hindu, and secular. The music for this new highly anticipated collaboration between the Mark Morris Dance Group and the Silk Road Ensemble is by the Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyli and performed by the revered singer Alim Qasimov. Though the story of Layla and Majnun has been reinterpreted countless times and in countless ways, an adaptation of this scale has never been presented in the West.

**BalletMet Columbus: THE NUTCRACKER**

**November 25-27, 2016**

*Four Performances*

MOT continues its annual holiday tradition with the return of BalletMet Columbus' production of Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*. For four performances, this magical holiday event features a cast of more than 100 professional company dancers and local children, with larger-than-life characters, narration by Sir Roger Moore, and Tchaikovsky's glorious score played by the Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra. **This production is not a part of a subscription series.**

**Batsheva Dance Company: LAST WORK**

**January 7-8, 2017**

*Performed at the Power Center in Ann Arbor*

*Two performances*

UMS presents the North American premiere of *Last Work*, a new evening-length work by Ohad Naharin performed by one of the world's preeminent dance companies. Using the company's famous Gaga technique, a movement language developed by Naharin, *Last Work* is performed by 18 Batsheva Dance Company members and offers a political meditation on futility, shifting from sustained and meditative movement to frenzied, destabilizing bursts of energy that run through a huge range of emotion. **This production is not a part of a subscription series.**

**Eisenhower Dance with State Street Ballet: COMMON GROUND**

**March 4, 2017**

*One performance*

Detroit's Eisenhower Dance and Santa Barbara's State Street Ballet bring classical and contemporary styles together to create *Common Ground*, a stunningly original piece. Visionary choreographer Edgar Zendejas was inspired by Max Richter's re-composition of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, and built *Common Ground* around it.

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**Royal Winnipeg Ballet: A CINDERELLA STORY**

**March 18-19, 2017**

*Two performances*

Set in the 1950s, *A Cinderella Story* adds a retro spin to everyone's favorite rags-to-riches princess, complete with vintage-couture inspired costumes. Val Caniparoli's electric choreography and Richard Rodgers's jazzy music breathes new life into an age-old fairy tale.

**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**

**April 21-23, 2017**

*Four performances*

Cultural ambassadors to the world, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater returns to the Detroit Opera House, performing Ailey classics and new works by contemporary choreographers. Always a favorite of Detroit audiences, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will bring its extraordinary spirit to Detroit for a limited four-performance engagement.

**Subscription price range:** \$130 - \$255

**Single ticket price range:** \$29 - \$100; Mark Morris \$30 - \$60; Batsheva \$30 - \$52; on sale to the general public August 26, 2016.

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**About Michigan Opera Theatre**

Michigan Opera Theatre (Wayne S. Brown, President and CEO; Dr. David DiChiera, Founder and Artistic Director), one of the nation's most vibrant nonprofit arts organizations, is committed to presenting opera and dance of the highest artistic caliber. Founded in 1971, the company's mission is to serve as a major cultural resource to the state of Michigan and the city of Detroit. Visit the website at [www.michiganopera.org](http://www.michiganopera.org). Events, dates, and artists are subject to change.