

For Immediate Release

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Christine Goerke and Denyce Graves Among Performers at DiChiera Grand Salute Legacy Concert

American Ballet Theatre Principal Dancer Veronika Part to perform

Presenters include industry and civic leaders to honor Michigan Opera Theatre founder

May 19 at the Detroit Opera House

Detroit, April 13, 2017 - Renowned opera singers Christine Goerke and Denyce Graves are among the artists scheduled to perform in a special Michigan Opera Theatre DiChiera Grand Salute concert May 19 at the Detroit Opera House. The legacy concert honors MOT Founder and Artistic Director David DiChiera as he prepares for retirement at the end of the 2016-17 season. The concert will feature performers, conductors and presenters whose careers have been impacted by DiChiera.

Graves and Goerke are among the most celebrated singers of the 21st century with significant connections to MOT. Graves originated the title role in MOT's world premiere of "Margaret Garner" in 2005. Goerke starred in MOT's 2014 production of "Elektra" and the company's 2013 production of "Fidelio."

The Grand Salute will also include performances by American Ballet Theatre Principal Dancer Veronika Part, mezzo-soprano Irina Mishura and baritone Burak Bilgili. It will feature singers from MOT's current season, including "The Girl of the Golden West's" Mark Delavan and Marian Pop and Sarah Joy Miller from DiChiera's own work, "Cyrano." Pop had originated the title role in MOT's world premiere in 2007. Artists will perform works from composers including Bizet, Verdi, Wagner and Leoncavallo with the MOT Orchestra and Chorus and additional choral forces from Rackham Choir. The concert is under the musical leadership of MOT's newly appointed principal conductor, Stephen Lord, and longtime chorus master and conductor Suzanne Mallare Acton.

“David’s passion for opera and dance encompass not just the art form but the individuals within it,” said MOT CEO and President Wayne S. Brown. “The remarkable roster coming to pay tribute to David DiChiera is an indication of the influence that he has made for the art and the larger community.”

In addition to the performances, the multi-media DiChiera Grand Salute will include presentations from community leaders including Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and former Michigan Senator Carl Levin.

The full line-up of performers and presenters includes:

- Suzanne Mallare Acton - Conductor, MOT Chorus Master
- Martina Arroyo - Soprano
- Burak Bilgili - Baritone
- Jonathan Boyd - Tenor
- Wayne Brown - MOT President and CEO
- Mark Delavan - Baritone
- Mike Duggan - Mayor of Detroit
- Emily Fons - Mezzo-Soprano
- Christine Goerke - Soprano
- Denyce Graves - Mezzo-Soprano
- Carl Levin - Former Michigan Senator
- Stephen Lord - Conductor, MOT Principal Conductor
- Sarah Joy Miller - Soprano
- Irina Mishura - Mezzo-Soprano
- Veronika Part - Principal Dancer with American Ballet Theatre
- Marian Pop - Baritone
- Stephen Powell - Baritone
- Ron Raines - Actor, Singer
- Marc Scorca - President/CEO of OPERA America
- George Shirley - Tenor
- Russell Thomas - Tenor
- Bernard Uzan - Cyrano Librettist and Director
- Dona Vaughn - Opera Director, Administrator and Teacher
- Ashley Wheater - Joffrey Ballet Artistic Director

The concert is a celebration of DiChiera’s achievements over his remarkable career, with emphasis on his accomplishments as a composer, impresario, advocate for and presenter of dance, civic leader and champion of diversity.

DiChiera founded MOT in 1971 with a mission to create a first-rate opera company that served and represented the diverse community in which it resided. Priorities included providing Detroit with artists from the region and throughout the world of exceptional abilities,

championing artists of color, mentoring the next generation of opera singers and supporting Detroit's revitalization.

DiChiera personally nurtured the careers of numerous African-American artists such as Kathleen Battle, Maria Ewing, Leona Mitchell and Vinson Cole. He prioritized presenting operas of our time that represent the diverse cultures of our nation such as "Margaret Garner," "Treemonisha," "Anoush" and "Frida." He established the MOT Studio residency program, providing advanced training and performance opportunities for significant young artists who are on the brink of successful careers. In Detroit, DiChiera revitalized two abandoned theaters, first Music Hall and then the Detroit Opera House in 1996. These investments ignited the growth of the city's entertainment district and the development of numerous businesses, restaurants and residences.

In addition to Michigan Opera Theatre, DiChiera was the founder of Opera Pacific (CA) and served as artistic director of Dayton Opera (OH). He also served as president of the national service organization OPERA America. With such wide-spanning influence, DiChiera has been one of the leading advocates of opera in America.

The performance will be followed by a patron dinner at the Detroit Athletic Club. Due to the special occasion of DiChiera's retirement, the Grand Salute will encompass MOT's traditional "Bravo Bravo" event with a "Bravo Salute" party following the concert. Similar to Bravo Bravo, the Bravo Salute will feature three levels of lavish food, drinks and entertainment, including a lineup of Detroit's best DJs and bands. These festivities coincide with the final weekend performances of "Cyrano" to conclude the 2016-17 season.

Ticket prices for the Grand Salute range from \$59 to \$150. Bravo Salute tickets, which include the performance and the after party, are \$150 for general admission or \$225 for VIP access and valet. Tickets may be purchased online at www.MichiganOpera.org, by calling (313) 237-7464 or in person at the Detroit Opera House (1526 Broadway, Detroit). Sponsorship dinner information is available by calling 313-237-5307.

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About Michigan Opera Theatre

Michigan Opera Theatre (Wayne S. Brown, President and CEO; Dr. David DiChiera, Founder and Artistic Director, and Stephen Lord, Principal Conductor), 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.