



For Immediate Release

CONTACT:

Erica Hobbs
(313) 237-3403
ehobbs@motopera.org

**Michigan Opera Theatre 2018-19 Operas Celebrate Literary Masterworks,
"Eugene Onegin," "Candide," "The Grapes of Wrath"**

Season Opens with Renée Fleming Gala

Detroit, April 5, 2018 - Michigan Opera Theatre CEO and President Wayne S. Brown and Principal Conductor Stephen Lord today announced the company's 2018-19 opera season. MOT's 48th opera season will be the second under Lord's artistic leadership and celebrates masterworks of literature turned opera, with "**Eugene Onegin**" (Pyotr Tchaikovsky), "**Candide**" (Leonard Bernstein) and "**The Grapes of Wrath**" (Ricky Ian Gordon/Michael Korie). The season also includes a staple of the opera repertoire, "**The Barber of Seville**" (Gioachino Rossini) and a fairytale opera, "**Hansel and Gretel**" (Engelbert Humperdinck). The season begins Sept. 29 with a gala concert featuring opera superstar **Renée Fleming**.

"I am pleased to welcome Stephen Lord back next season as Principal Conductor of Michigan Opera Theatre," Brown said. "Artists and audiences alike continue to extol their delight with his inspiring artistry."

Of the new season, Lord said many of the great operas are based upon literary works and is enthusiastic to share them with Detroit patrons.

"Opera provides the most powerful medium with which to tell a story," he said. "The idea of taking works by Voltaire, Pushkin and Steinbeck and telling them with music is exciting."

Based upon the classic Russian novel by Alexander Pushkin, "Eugene Onegin" is a story of love and loss among oppressive social conventions. Voltaire's French satire "Candide" challenges the concept of optimism in one man's search to find happiness through a series of mishaps. The operetta, which will feature members of the Michigan Opera Theatre Studio young artists program, is presented in celebration of composer Leonard Bernstein's centenary.

"The Grapes of Wrath," from the great American novel by John Steinbeck, tells the story of the Joad family on their quest for survival during the 1930s Dust Bowl. The opera will be the second work by Gordon performed by MOT, following 2017's successful production of "27."

As the prequel to last season's "The Marriage of Figaro," "The Barber of Seville" is the story of how Count Almaviva wins the hand of his beloved Rosina, with the help of his clever barber, Figaro. "Hansel and Gretel," based on the classic Grimm's fairytale, is a fantasy production that features larger-than-life puppetry and direction by award-winning puppeteer Basil Twist.

In addition to Fleming, featured artists of the season include **Iurii Samoilov, Corinne Winters, Lucas Meachem, Alex Shrader, Daniela Mack, Emily Fons, Deanna Breiwick, Matthew DiBattista, Katherine Goeldner, Tobias Greenhalgh and Deborah Nansteel.** Featured conductors include **Lord, Anne Manson and Michael Christie.** Featured directors include **Tomer Zvulun, Christopher Mattaliano, Twist and James Robinson.**

The 2018-19 season will also feature a single cast for all productions, performing on a Saturday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday performance schedule. The single cast will allow for increased rehearsal time and continuity for singers, as well as additional rehearsal time for the orchestra.

"As part of our commitment to artistic excellence, we continually work to improve the experience for our patrons," said Brown. "These changes continue to allow Michigan Opera Theatre to attract exceptional talent, performing at their optimum level."

The opera season will be complemented by special events including, the return of perennial favorite, "Too Hot to Handel," and the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus production of Dean Burry's "The Secret World of Og."

Subscriptions may be purchased online at up to 30 percent off single ticket prices. Subscription benefits also include free exchanges and exclusive access to pre-paid parking in the Opera House Parking Center. To purchase visit www.MichiganOpera.org, call (313) 237-7464 or come in person to the Detroit Opera House (1526 Broadway, Detroit).

OPERA SEASON

"Eugene Onegin"

Oct. 13-21, 2018

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, composer

Performed in Russian with English supertitles

Compared with "Pride and Prejudice," "Eugene Onegin" is a story of love and loss among oppressive social conventions. Known for its rich orchestration and beautiful melodies, "Onegin" is one of Tchaikovsky's most beloved operas and is the epitome of Russian Lyric Opera.

Production Highlights:

- Based on classic Russian novel by Alexander Pushkin.

- Conducted by MOT Principal Conductor **Stephen Lord**, with stage direction by **Tomer Zvulun**.
- Baritone **Iurii Samoilov** performs title role; Soprano **Corinne Winters** performs Tatiana.
- A new co-production with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Atlanta Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre and Seattle Opera.

"The Barber of Seville"

Nov. 10-18, 2018

Gioachino Rossini, composer

Performed in Italian with English supertitles

"Figaro, Figaro!" The Rossini classic features one of the most well-known pieces of music in history. As the prequel to "The Marriage of Figaro," "The Barber of Seville" is the story of how Count Almaviva wins the hand of his beloved Rosina, with the help of his clever barber, Figaro. Full of laughter and beautiful music, see why "The Barber of Seville" has delighted audiences for more than two centuries.

Production Highlights:

- Conductorial debut by **Anne Manson**, directorial debut by **Christopher Mattaliano**.
- Baritone **Lucas Meachem** performs Figaro; tenor **Alek Shrader** performs Count Almaviva; soprano **Daniela Mack** performs Rosina.

"Candide"

March 9-17, 2019

Leonard Bernstein, composer

Performed in English with English supertitles

In honor of his centenary, Michigan Opera Theatre presents Leonard Bernstein's "Candide," based on the classic Voltaire novella. The coming-of-age story follows one young man's journey to find happiness throughout two continents worth of mishaps, tragedy and over-the-top disasters. The comic operetta will delight opera and musical theater fans alike!

Production Highlights:

- Based on Voltaire's French satire.
- Features performers from the Michigan Opera Theatre Studio resident artist program.
- The fifth opera of MOT's annual community initiative bringing opera directly to Southeastern Michigan audiences through partnerships with community organizations.
- Performed at the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, Macomb, (March 9) and The Berman Center for the Performing Arts, West Bloomfield (March 16-17).

"Hansel and Gretel"

April 6-14, 2019

Engelbert Humperdinck, composer

Performed in German with English supertitles

Engelbert Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel" is the classic fairytale like you've never seen it before! With puppetry by award-winning puppeteer Basil Twist, audiences enjoy a lavish production featuring flying angels, dancing gingerbread and a larger-than-life witch. This magical show is perfect for adults and children alike!

Production Highlights:

- Based on the classic Grimm's fairytale.
- Conducted by **MOT Principal Conductor Stephen Lord**; directed by award-winning puppeteer **Basil Twist**.
- Hansel performed by mezzo-soprano **Emily Fons**; Gretel performed by soprano **Deanna Breiwick**; witch performed by tenor **Matthew DiBattista**.
- Features lavish production of puppets and special effects.

"The Grapes of Wrath"

May 11-19, 2019

Ricky Ian Gordon, composer

Michael Korie, librettist

Performed in English with English supertitles

Following a successful production of "27", Michigan Opera Theatre is excited to present another work by composer Ricky Ian Gordon with "The Grapes of Wrath." The heart-wrenching opera, based on the classic novel by John Steinbeck, tells the story of the Joad family on their quest for survival during the 1930s Dust Bowl. Featuring folksy, jazz-inspired music, "The Grapes of Wrath" has been called "the great American opera."

Production Highlights:

- Based on classic American novel by John Steinbeck.
- Conductorial debut by **Michael Christie**, directed by **James Robinson**.
- Featuring mezzo-soprano **Katherine Goeldner** as Ma Joad, baritone **Tobias Greenhalgh** as Tom Joad, soprano **Deanna Breiwick** as Rosasharn, and mezzo-soprano **Deborah Nansteel** as Granma.
- A new co-production with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

SPECIAL EVENTS

An Evening with Renée Fleming

Sept. 29, 2018

One of the most beloved and celebrated singers of our time, soprano Renée Fleming captivates audiences with her sumptuous voice, consummate artistry, and compelling stage presence. At a White House ceremony in 2013, President Obama awarded her the National Medal of Arts, America's highest honor for an individual artist. Winner of the 2013 Grammy Award for Best Classical Vocal Solo, she brought her voice to a vast new audience in 2014, as the first classical artist ever to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the Super Bowl. The performance features the Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra, conducted by MOT Principal Conductor Stephen Lord.

Too Hot To Handel

Dec. 1, 2018

A holiday tradition too hot to miss! Under the baton of Suzanne Mallare Acton, this soul-stirring, toe-tapping rendition of Handel's "Messiah" never fails to bring audiences to their feet. It's an exhilarating fusion of gospel, jazz and classical music performed by the Rackham Choir, the Too Hot Orchestra and an all-star cast of soloists. This is a celebration unlike any other. The performance features tenor Rodrick Dixon, soprano Alfreda Burke, alto Karen Marie Richardson and pianist Alvin Waddles.

Dean Burry's "The Secret World of Og"

March 23, 2019

The Canadian children's classic comes to life in the opera version of the Pierre Berton novel. Performed by the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus, the opera tells the story of a group of siblings who journey into an underground world of mushrooms in search of their baby brother. The story is a fantasy adventure the whole family can enjoy!