



MANITOBA OPERA

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
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Literary Classic *Of Mice and Men* to be presented in Manitoba Opera's 2015/16 Season

Manitoba Opera's 43rd season will feature two full-length productions: a **Mozart** masterpiece, *The Marriage of Figaro* November 21, 24, and 27 and the Manitoba Opera premiere of Carlisle **Floyd's Of Mice and Men**, based on the novella and play by John **Steinbeck**, April 23, 26, and 29. Both productions will be presented at the Centennial Concert Hall.

"Next season offers a balance between works that are the foundation of standard repertoire with something new for our patrons," commented Larry Desrochers, General Director and CEO. "These pieces are contrasting in musical styles, tone, language, and period, and represent an exciting range of opera's examination of the human condition."

Mozart's glorious comic tour-de-force of manners, love, politics, and class showcases the composer at his best. From the famous overture to the final glorious ensemble, Mozart's music sparkles with intelligence and wit.

The story follows Figaro, the former barber, and now valet to Count Almaviva, on the eve of his wedding to the lovely Susanna, a maid in the household. Alas, Susanna has caught the attention of the Count's wandering eye. The day is soon turned upside down as the servants set about to outwit their masters with clever twists and turns, disguises and intrigue. This hilarious and tender exploration of love, infidelity, and forgiveness is considered to be Mozart's finest work.

The Marriage of Figaro was last presented by the company in 2006 and will be sung in Italian with projected English translations. It will be set in late 18th century Spain.

Of Mice and Men is the faithful retelling of John Steinbeck's tragic tale of George and Lennie, two itinerant ranch workers in 1930's California in pursuit of a simple dream: to own a small house and farm of their own. It was composed by the revered American composer Carlisle Floyd, who also wrote the libretto. Premiered in 1970 by Seattle Opera, *Of Mice and Men*, with its timeless exploration of the bonds of friendship, has become an essential part of the American repertoire and has been performed throughout the US and all over the world.

"Floyd takes this already incredibly powerful and tragic story of two migrant workers pursuing a dream of owning a piece of land and infuses it with music that is at once dramatic and striking, but also haunting and lyrical," explains Desrochers. "Floyd's music creates an underscore for the action of the opera, slowly intensifying our fears that something very bad will happen."

2015/16 SEASON ARTISTS

The Marriage of Figaro

Two of Winnipeg's finest young singers today, **Andriana Chuchman** and **Lara Ciekiewicz**, will be scheming together as Susanna, the Countess's maid and Countess Rosina, respectively. The wonderful Canadian bass **Daniel Okulitch** returns to Manitoba Opera after a long absence (he last sang Schaubard in *La Bohème* in 2005) to sing the role of the Count. **Gordon Bintner** makes his Manitoba Opera debut as Figaro and Cherubino, the Count's page, will be sung by **Alicia Woynarski**, also making her company debut. Both singers hail from Saskatchewan. **Tadeusz Biernacki** will conduct.

Of Mice and Men

Winnipeg-born baritone **Gregory Dahl** will be singing the role of George and **Anthony Dean Griffey** will be making his Manitoba Opera debut as Lennie, a signature role for this acclaimed American tenor. Curley will be sung by American tenor **Joel Sorensen** and St. Paul, Minnesota native, soprano **Sara Gartland** is cast as his wife. Both singers are making their debuts with the company. Candy will be sung by the acclaimed American bass-baritone **Peter Strummer**, who last appeared with Manitoba Opera as Don Pasquale in 2013.

Of Mice and Men will be directed by former Winnipegger, **Michael Cavanagh** with **Tyrone Paterson** on the podium. The **Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra** will be in the pit for both productions.

Tickets are currently available by subscription only; single tickets will be available beginning in September. For more information, contact the Manitoba Opera Box Office, 204-957-7842.