

ORPHEUS | PDX

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 30, 2022

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THE CURTAIN RISES ON A NEW OPERA COMPANY IN PORTLAND — ORPHEUSPDX

Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* and Glass's *The Fall of the House of Usher* headline the new opera company's inaugural season, both to be performed in the intimate Lincoln Hall, where great music isn't just heard, it's felt.

(Portland, Oregon) Opera producer and international stage director **Christopher Mattaliano** today announced the establishment of **OrpheusPDX**, an opera company created especially for Portland audiences and designed to become part of the community in a variety of new ways.

In the legend of *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Orpheus' singing and playing is so beautiful that even the savage beasts of Hades are moved to tears. Portland's new opera company, **OrpheusPDX**, aspires to do the same—to touch the soul of the community through the power of great music and theater.

"This is a very exciting time," Mattaliano, the new company's Founder/General and Artistic Director, said. "I love opera and I especially love Portland. I look forward to adding to the cultural vitality of this great city. Portland offers a very wide variety of entertainment options for lovers of classical music, dance, visual art, and especially theater. The opera lover has fewer options; we have Portland Opera and a few smaller, adventurous companies. **OrpheusPDX** will complement the work being done by our colleagues and give Portland's opera fans, new and established, a year-round opera season and the chance to enjoy opera from a variety of new perspectives."

Mattaliano went on to explain that the idea for a new opera company sprang from conversations with arts lovers and philanthropists in the Portland area. "It was their encouragement and support—in every sense of the word—that led to the creation of this company," Mattaliano said. He had just signed with a new agent and was beginning to accept directing engagements when the pandemic brought things to a sudden halt. During the pandemic-related time off, he had the time to reflect on the idea of a new company and how to find the balance between high artistic quality and the size and scale of company operations that would be sustainable with available funding.

In addition to the two operas produced in the summer months and presented in the 475-seat Lincoln Hall, **OrpheusPDX** will create a regular community of artists—singers, conductors, directors, and designers—in residence each summer. As a result, the audience will come to know the work of these artists more intimately over time in a variety of settings, to know them as regular community members, and to see their work evolve each season. "We hope to create a unique and special bond between the community and the resident artists of **OrpheusPDX** each summer," Mattaliano said.

Following its inaugural season, **OrpheusPDX** intends to establish a training program in 2023 for 12 gifted young singers selected by nationwide audition. The professional artists engaged by **OrpheusPDX**—the singers, conductors, stage directors, designers—will provide ongoing voice lessons, vocal and dramatic coaching, and master classes in all aspects of opera production to the students selected for the training program. "I love working with gifted young singers. I'm very fortunate to have a career based in both the professional opera world and that of the conservatory," Mattaliano said. Additionally, local student instrumentalists will be selected to perform in the opera orchestra, mentored by professional musicians.

"This new company provides a means to give back to the community that has given so much to me," said Mattaliano. "It brings together two of my greatest loves—producing high-quality professional opera and providing a rich learning experience for gifted young singers and instrumentalists."

For more information and to sign up to receive all the future news from **OrpheusPDX**, patrons should visit www.orpheuspdx.org.

2022 INAUGURAL SEASON PRODUCTIONS

L'ORFEO

August 4, 6, 7, 2022

Lincoln Hall/1620 SW Park Ave., Portland

Composed by Claudio Monteverdi

Libretto by Alessandro Striggio

Sung in Italian with English surtitles

The mythical story of Orpheus and Eurydice is so powerful that it has been the subject of countless works of art in the worlds of literature, dance, visual art, symphony, stage, and film. Composed in 1607, Monteverdi's version remains astonishingly vital and modern. He tells the story with music of such breathtaking beauty that it goes right to the heart. It's opera at its most simple, direct, and transcendent.

Cast:

Orfeo: Conor McDonald

La Musica/Euridice: Holly Flack

Messagiera/Speranza: Hannah Penn

Proserpina/Ninfa: Abigail Renee Krawson
Apollo: Martin Bakari
Caronte: Deac Guidi
Plutone: Zachary Lenox

Conductor: Jory Vinikour
Director: Chas Rader-Shieber
Set Design: Megan Wilkerson
Costume Design: Alison Heryer
Lighting Design: Connie Yun

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

August 25, 27, 28, 2022
Lincoln Hall/1620 SW Park Ave., Portland
Composed by Philip Glass
Libretto by Arthur Yorinks
Based on the short story by Edgar Allan Poe
Sung in English with English surtitles

Edgar Allen Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* is a timeless psychological thriller about the intersection of shame, madness, and imagination. Key character and plot details remain strangely undefined and yet somehow become so unbearably suspenseful that audiences are kept on the edge of their seats. And Philip Glass's music—riveting and hauntingly beautiful—captures the powerful, claustrophobic atmosphere that eventually overwhelms the characters.

Cast:

Roderick Usher: Martin Bakari
William: Timothy McDevitt
Madeline Usher: Hannah Cosenz
Servant: Gregory Brumfield
Physician: Scot Crandal

Conductor: Michelle Rofrano
Director: Kevin Newbury
Set Design: Daniel Meeker
Costume Design: Alison Heryer
Lighting Design: Connie Yun
Video Design: Greg Emetaz

Full cast biographies, photos, and a wealth of information on both operas can be found at www.orpheuspx.org

TICKET INFORMATION

Season subscriptions, ranging in price from \$90 to \$198, are now available at: www.orpheuspdx.org or by calling (503) 308-4828.

Individual tickets, from \$50 to \$110, can be purchased beginning on April 26.

Christopher Mattaliano **Founder/General and Artistic Director**

Christopher Mattaliano has directed opera productions for the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, San Francisco Opera, Washington National Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Minnesota Opera, Dallas Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and Michigan Opera Theater, among many others. A dual citizen of Italy and the United States, he has also worked internationally at L'Opera de Nice, L'Opera de Montreal, Spoleto's Festival dei Due Mondi, and the Norwegian National Opera.

He has directed the world premieres of Hugo Weisgall's *Esther* for the New York City Opera, jazz composer Fred Ho's *Journey Beyond the West* for the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Peter Westergaard's *The Tempest* for the Opera Festival of New Jersey, the US premieres of Franz Krasa's *Brundinbar* for the NJ State Opera and Veniamin Fleischman's *Rothschild's Violin* at the Juilliard Opera Center.

Mr. Mattaliano founded OrpheusPDX in 2022 and serves as the company's General and Artistic Director. He was the Artistic Director of the Pine Mountain Music Festival from 2001-03 and General Director of Portland Opera from 2003-2019. The highlights of his 16 years there include the expansion of programming and artistic standards, the creation of the young artists residency program, the regular engagement of women conductors, directors, and designers, and wide-ranging collaborations with most of Portland's music, theater, dance, and visual art organizations, as well as groups like Trans Affirming Spaces and Phame. Under his leadership, the company greatly increased its educational and community outreach programs, including the company's first bi-lingual opera production, and provided free access to local communities and thousands of students throughout the state. This led to the company's being awarded the 2017 Governor's Arts Award.

He has also worked extensively with young singers, teaching and directing at the Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, Yale University, Princeton University, the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, Mannes College of Music, and the New National Theater of Japan.

Mr. Mattaliano received his BA in Theater Arts from Montclair State University with additional training at the Trent Park School of Performing Arts in London, England. He is the recipient of a 1982 National Opera Institute Stage Direction Grant, and in 1998 received the L. Howard Fox Visiting Alumni Award from his alma mater.

He led the keynote panel at the 2004 OPERA America conference and was named to the National Endowment for the Arts' opera review panel. Mr. Mattaliano served on Opera America's Board of Directors from 2005-2011.