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ORPHEUS|PDX ANNOUNCES 2024 SEASON

Portland's new professional opera company, OrpheusPDX, continues its programming model of one classic work and one modern masterpiece, featuring both international and local artists.

(Portland, OR) — OrpheusPDX General and Artistic Director Christopher Mattaliano has officially announced the details of the 2024 season, the company's third. Performances of Handel's rarely performed *Acis, Galatea, and Polyphemus* and Hertzberg's fantasy *The Rose Elf*, will take place in August 2024, at Portland's 472-seat Lincoln Performance Hall. Subscription tickets are on sale now.

"I'm delighted to be producing our third season of professional opera at the wonderfully intimate Lincoln Hall. Both operas are splendid examples of magnificent music and theater, and we've assembled a stellar company of international guest artists together with members of Portland's rich community of local artists to bring these productions to life," Mattaliano said.

"This season, our two operas share elements of fantasy — one a mythical story taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the other based on a Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale," Mattaliano continued. "Both operas, although separated by more than three centuries, are prophetic in how they speak to us during this challenging time; they are set in a sometimes dark and dangerous world, yet each offers a vision of hope and compassion. It's a truly beautiful pairing that I'm very excited to share with Portland audiences."

Each season, OrpheusPDX produces one classic, 18th century opera and one great modern work. By experiencing them concurrently, audiences gain a distinct sense of the wonderful roots of opera and the beautifully varied ways the genre has transformed throughout the ages — in stunning, fully produced stagings that audiences expect from this rich art form.

Handel's early work *Acis, Galatea, and Polyphemus* kicks off the season with performances on August 3 and August 4. "The draw of this story lies in its depiction of love in all its manifestations," said Mattaliano. "This intensely dramatic opera is full of show-stopping arias, duets, and trios. It's a supreme vocal showcase for each singer that will captivate seasoned opera lovers and newcomers alike."

Hertzberg's *The Rose Elf* runs August 17 and August 18. "I'm particularly excited to introduce our audience to the music of David Hertzberg," said Mattaliano. "It is sparkling, shimmering, glowing, wildly energetic, and colorful. Audience members who love the music of Ravel, Debussy, and Richard Strauss are sure to enjoy David's music."

ACIS, GALATEA & POLYPHEMUS

George Frideric Handel



ACIS, GALATEA, AND POLYPHEMUS

George Frideric Handel, composer

Nicola Giuvo, librettist

Based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

Saturday, August 3, 2024, 7:30 pm

Sunday, August 4, 2024, 3:00 pm

Sung in Italian with English surtitles

"Unnervingly powerful ... music of exquisite beauty!" -*The San Francisco Chronicle*

The great love between Acis and Galatea has been the subject of poems, paintings, operas, and statues throughout the centuries. When the jealous cyclops Polyphemus becomes crazed by his unrequited love for the sea-nymph Galatea, he kills her beloved, the mortal Acis. Devastated, Galatea transforms Acis into a river, in which she can live with him, forever united. Ultimately, in this timeless myth, love endures and overcomes all, even death.

Handel was so inspired by this story that he set it to music on three separate occasions. This is the first of those works, originally performed in 1708. Fans of Handel will recognize the acclaimed arias in this piece that he later used in *Agrippina*, *Rinaldo*, and several other of his masterworks. Polyphemus' dramatic entrance aria "Sibilar gli angui d'Aletto," is among his greatest and most celebrated arias. In a recent production, *The San Francisco Chronicle* praised this early piece as "a celebration of Handel's inexhaustible genius." *La Scena Musicale* raved that "the work has riches to burn — musical ideas, ingenious programmatic variety, viscerally arresting insights."

Cast

Acis: Katherine Whyte

Galatea: Hannah Penn

Polyphemus: Douglas Williams

Conductor: George Manahan

Director & Set Designer: Chas Rader-Shieber

Costume Designer: Sydney Dufka

Lighting Designer: Solomon Weisbard

THE ROSE ELF

David Hertzberg

THE ROSE ELF

David Hertzberg, composer and librettist
Based on a fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen
Inspired partly by an episode from Boccaccio's Decameron

Saturday, August 17, 2024, 7:30 pm
Sunday, August 18, 2024, 3:00 pm

Sung in English with English surtitles

"This music is at least the equal of Puccini." -*Classical Voice North America*

The Rose Elf follows a tiny elf who lives within a rose in a large, lush garden. When the elf witnesses a violent murder, it is forever changed. Moved, bewildered, and deeply affected, the elf strives to bring comfort and closure to the victim's beloved. Hertzberg said of this story, "In a time when many of us are living sub rosa, watching unfathomable devastation unfold from a distance ... it is my hope that this love-woven work of collective imagination can speak to the transformative power of nature and perhaps, in turn, offer a glimmer of hope."

The Rose Elf premiered in 2018 and was named "The Opera Event of 2018" by WQXR. The press reaction has been consistently ecstatic: *The New York Times* described the work as "voluptuous and passionate." *Parterre* called the opera "a marvel" saying: "Hertzberg is an absolute phenomenon. Such lush, decadent musical passages and ecstatic vocal lines I've rarely heard from a young composer. Hertzberg gave us splendid moments when I was sure I was hearing something straight out of the late Romantic period." *The New York Observer* describes the opera as "just about everything you want opera to be. *The Rose Elf* shocked, confounded, disturbed and in the end, exalted."

Cast

The Elf: Lisa Marie Rogali
The Girl/Luna: Madeline Ross
The Beloved/Horus: Brandon Michael
The Brother: Zachary Lenox
Conductor: Deanna Tham
Director: Jerry Mouawad
Scenic Co-Designers: Jerry Mouawad, Alex Meyer, Sumi Wu
Costume Designer: Sumi Wu
Lighting Designer: Solomon Weisbard

THE PATHWAYS PROGRAM

Building on the success of the inaugural year of The Pathways Program, OrpheusPDX will continue this mentorship program during the 2024 season, pairing an established professional artist as mentor to a student or young professional. Last year's participants included conductor Deanna Tham, violist Luke D'Silva, cellist Andy Shin, lighting designer Rachel Errico, and costume designer Paige Hanna. The 2024 participants will be announced at a later date.

TICKET INFORMATION

OrpheusPDX recognizes that many of life's expenses have increased lately and is offering all ticket buyers the opportunity to purchase this year's tickets at the same price as last year. While producing opera remains a formidable endeavor dependent on the generosity of the community, the company wants to ensure that its loyal patrons can keep the joy of opera in their lives. Season subscriptions are on sale now and subscribers save 20%. Individual tickets will be available on April 22, 2024. Single tickets range in price from \$50 to \$110. Student tickets are available for \$15 and are limited to two tickets per student. Tickets and more information can be found at www.orpheuspdx.org.

ORPHEUS|PDX

Inspired by the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, where Orpheus' singing 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 very soul of the community through the power of great music and singing. The powerful experience of live opera is enhanced by OrpheusPDX's venue, the intimate, 472-seat Lincoln Performance Hall Theater, where audiences can enjoy an enriching and personal experience with some of the best acoustics in the city. OrpheusPDX is committed to both honoring tradition and exploring new directions by presenting one opera from a well-loved Bel Canto composer and one from the body of great modern works that move and excite today's audiences — thus providing guests with the best of both operatic worlds each season.

CHRISTOPHER MATTALIANO, Founder, General & Artistic Director

Christopher 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 2001-2003 and General Director of Portland Opera from 2003-2019. The highlights of his 16 years at Portland Opera 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 offering the company's first bilingual opera production, and providing 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. Mattaliano was recently named as one of 75 key figures in opera over the last 50 years by *OPERA America* as part of its 50th Anniversary Oral History project.