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**A BEHEADING, A BROKEN HEART, AND A VEXED ELF
BRING ORPHEUS|PDX'S THIRD SEASON TO A CLOSE WITH
THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF DAVID HERTZBERG'S
*THE ROSE ELF***



"This music is at least the equal of Puccini."

– Classical Voice North America

"Just about everything you want opera to be. *The Rose Elf* shocked, confounded, disturbed and in the end, exalted."

– The New York Observer

(Portland, Oregon) — OrpheusPDX completes its 2024 season with *The Rose Elf*, an opera based on a Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale with music and libretto by the acclaimed American composer David Hertzberg. Jerry Mouawad, the artistic director of Imago Theatre, will direct the action, joined by conductor Deanna Tham, the associate conductor of the Oregon Symphony.

Performances will be held on Saturday, August 17, at 7:30 pm and Sunday, August 18, at 3 pm. Performances will take place at Lincoln Performance Hall,

praised by *Opera News* as "Portland's best opera space" because of its superb acoustics. Tickets are available at OrpheusPDX.org.

"Following our production of Handel's sublime *Acis, Galatea & Polyphemus*, I'm particularly thrilled to be presenting the West Coast premiere of *The Rose Elf* by David Hertzberg, which has received ecstatic press since its world premiere in 2018," said Mattaliano.

"I'm also delighted to present two OrpheusPDX debuts with this production: Lisa Marie Rogali in the title role and Jerry Mouawad as stage director," he continued. "Lisa is one of the most exciting singers working today, and the tour-de-force role of the Elf is a perfect fit for her amazing talents. I've admired Jerry's work at Imago Theatre for years, and we've collaborated on several exciting opera productions at Portland Opera. I can't imagine an artist better suited to bring the fantastical world of this opera to vivid life on stage."

Asked to reflect on his approach to the opera, Mouawad said, "*The Rose Elf* offers a wild look at love from two vastly different vantage points: The first is the world of the elf, a surreal setting where fairy-like creatures make mini-homes inside flowers; the second is the emotionally fraught landscape of a trio of star-crossed humans. Lust, jealousy, fury, grief, longing, and confusion eventually rock both realms. I want audiences to experience both the botanical beauty and tumultuous emotions in this dark and wonderful Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale."

Hertzberg has said of the opera, "In a time when many of us are living *sub rosa*, watching unfathomable devastation unfold from a distance, in which the pain of loss and separation can be difficult to bear, 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."

OrpheusPDX's production will be the fourth presentation of this new opera. The world premiere of *The Rose Elf* was named "The Opera Event of 2018" by WQXR. A commercial recording was subsequently released and named as one of the "Best of 2021" by *Opera News*.

THE ROSE ELF

David Hertzberg

Saturday, August 17, 2024, 7:30 pm

Sunday, August 18, 2024, 3 pm

Libretto by David Hertzberg, based on the fairy tale by Hans Christian Anderson

Sung in English with English surtitles; 65 minutes with no intermission.

A tiny elf, who lives within a rose in a large garden, witnesses a violent murder. Forever changed—moved, bewildered, affected—the elf strives to give comfort and closure to the victim's beloved. The incredibly rich world of Hans Christian Andersen's fantastical tale is brought to vivid life by the music of David Hertzberg, hailed as "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" (*Parterre*).

Conductor: Deanna Tham (2023 *Dark Sisters*)
Director: Jerry Mouawad (debut)
Set Co-Designers: Alex Meyer, Sumi Wu, Jerry Mouawad (all debuts)
Costume Designer: Sumi Wu (debut)
Lighting Designer: Solomon Weisbard (2023 *Dark Sisters*)

Cast

The Elf: Lisa Marie Rogali (debut)
The Girl/Luna: Madeline Ross (2023 *The Royal Shepherd*, 2023 *Dark Sisters*)
The Beloved/Horus: Brendan Tuohy (debut)
The Brother: Zachary Lenox (2022 *L'Orfeo*)

Full cast biographies, photos, and much more can be found at OrpheusPDX.org.

PRESS REVIEWS

- "A compelling and welcome addition to the operatic canon ... Hertzberg's music is vital, colorful and dramatic." – *Opera News*
- "Voluptuous and passionate." – *The New York Times*

- "Hertzberg is a masterful dramatist...this one signals the arrival of a major compositional personality." – *WQXR*
- "To etch this fanciful yet disturbing story, Hertzberg has written some crystalline, ravishing textures, glistening with percussion...Hertzberg's shimmering score bloomed into passages of opulence that might have made Richard Strauss proud." – *Musical America*

TICKET INFORMATION

All performances are at the Lincoln Performance Hall on Portland State University's campus (1620 SW Park Ave, Portland, OR). Tickets are on sale now and start at \$50. Season Subscribers save 10%. Students can purchase up to two tickets for \$15 each. Tickets can be purchased at OrpheusPDX.org or by contacting the box office at (503) 308-4828 or boxoffice@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 professional opera company, OrpheusPDX, aspires to do the same—to touch the very soul of the community through the power of great music and theater. OrpheusPDX enhances that powerful experience by producing opera in the intimate, 472-seat Lincoln Performance Hall, described as "Portland's best opera space" by *Opera News*. OrpheusPDX is committed to both honoring tradition and exploring new directions by presenting one classic opera from a well-loved 18th century composer and one great modern work by a living composer—thus providing audiences with the best of both operatic worlds each season.

CHRISTOPHER MATTALIANO

GENERAL & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Christopher Mattaliano founded OrpheusPDX in 2022 and serves as the company's General and Artistic Director. He was the General Director of Portland Opera from 2003-2019 and the Artistic Director of the Pine Mountain Music Festival from 2001-03. 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, the company's first bilingual opera production, 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, and provided free access to local communities and thousands of students throughout the state. This led to the company being awarded the 2017 Governor's Arts Award. He 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.

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