

Media Release
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Pacific Opera Victoria Presents Verdi's *Rigoletto*

Victoria, BC – Opening on April 23 at Victoria's Royal Theatre, Pacific Opera Victoria presents Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto*, a tragic tale of love, betrayal, and revenge. The production, set in Victorian England, will grace the stage of the Royal Theatre for four performances, April 23, 25, and 29 at 7:30 pm, and April 27 at 2:30 pm.

"Verdi's *Rigoletto* is a classic of the operatic world that will introduce singers Grant Youngblood, Sarah Dufresne, and Matthew Pearce to Pacific Opera audiences. It is grand opera which at its heart is the story of a father and his daughter, and the terrible costs paid by the ones we love when we seek revenge," says Pacific Opera Artistic Director Brenna Corner.

A blockbuster opera that has not been on a stage in Victoria in 19 years, *Rigoletto* is a gripping piece of theatre that delves into the depths of human emotion, showcasing the tragic tale of Rigoletto a servant consumed by vengeance. The opera follows Rigoletto's tumultuous journey as he navigates the intricate webs of power, deceit, and desire. With its iconic characters, including the manipulative Duke and the innocent Gilda, Verdi's masterpiece weaves a narrative of love, betrayal, and redemption. As the plot twists and turns towards its devastating climax, audiences are drawn into a world of passion, intrigue, and ultimately, catharsis.

Making both her Pacific Opera and role debut as Gilda is Canadian soprano Sarah Dufresne, who has been celebrated for her "style and elegance" (Bachtrack), and "richness of tone, some angelic high notes and admirable control" (ArtsDesk). In addition to *Rigoletto*, this season saw Dufresne make role debuts as Ophelie in Thomas' *Hamlet* (Opéra de Montréal), and Semele in Strauss' *Die Liebe der Danae* (Bayerische Staatsoper).

Baritone Grant Youngblood makes his Pacific Opera debut in the title role. His 2023-2024 season included performing *Rigoletto* at Opera Delaware and Opera Baltimore. Praised for his performance, "Veteran baritone Grant Youngblood delivered a standout performance as Rigoletto. Early on, my heart melted at the beauty of his voice and his singing of Verdi's duet with Gilda...I had the feeling Mr. Youngblood was born to play this role." (OperaGene).

Several local and British Columbia artists are part of this production, including local Pacific Opera favourite, and host of CBC Radio's Saturday Afternoon at the Opera, Marion Newman who takes on the role of Maddalena. She is one of Canada's most accomplished singers in repertoire ranging from Charpentier to Cusson and has performed with many of Canada's opera companies, orchestras and ensembles. Newman made her Pacific Opera Victoria debut in 2003 as Margret in Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, and has most recently return for *Suor Angelica*, and *Missing*.

The three act, two-hour and 30 minute production is conducted by Victoria's own Robert Tweten, making his Pacific Opera debut. He currently holds the positions of Head of Music Staff at The Santa Fe Opera and Music Director of Opera Studies for the New England Conservatory. *Rigoletto* features an outstanding artistic team lead by notable local Victoria artist, stage director Glynis Leyshon. Leyshon has directed over 30 productions for Pacific Opera Victoria, most recently Wagner's *Die Walküre* and Braunfels' *The Birds*. Award-winning set designer James Rotondo returns following his Pacific Opera début in February with *The Little Prince*, the production features lighting design by Gerald King, and costumes by Pam Johnson – know for her dynamic creative partnership with Leyshon, including Pacific Opera's 2023 much lauded production of *Die Walküre*. This new production of *Rigoletto*, built by artists of the Pacific Opera Shop, is a co-production with Vancouver Opera, and will be presented at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in October. *Rigoletto* features a 17 member, all-male chorus.

Tickets for single performances to the Royal Theatre shows start at \$35, with \$15 tickets available for youth under 18 (this opera is recommend for ages 12+). To keep Pacific Opera accessible, Community Preview tickets are available to students and community organizations for \$15. For more information about the 2024/25 season including tickets, visit: [Pacific Opera 2024 2025 season](#) .

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