



Colorado State University

School of the Arts

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUCCINI'S OPERATIC MASTERPIECE "TURANDOT" PRESENTED IN A COLLABORATIVE CONCERT BY CSU OPERA THEATRE, OPERA FORT COLLINS AND THE LONGMONT SYMPHONY

Fort Collins, CO –Colorado State University Opera Theatre in collaboration with Opera Fort Collins and the Longmont Symphony will present a concert version of Puccini's **Turandot** on Friday and Sunday, April 25 at 7:30 p.m. and April 27 at 2:00 p.m. at the Edna Rizley Griffin Concert Hall located at 1400 Remington Avenue in Fort Collins.

Tickets are \$40 for the public, \$30 for seniors and \$20 for Colorado State students and youth ages 6 to 17. Tickets are available at Lincoln Center (970-221-6730 or www.lctix.com) and more information is available on our website: www.operafortcollins.org. CSU Opera Theatre Performances are reserved seating; performances are popular and advance purchase is highly recommended.

This year CSU Opera Theatre and Opera Fort Collins are breaking new ground, collaborating with new partner the Longmont Symphony. Opera Fort Collins principle singers, the CSU Concert Choir and CSU Opera Theatre will join the Longmont Symphony, directed by Wes Kenney, for this production.

Maestro Kenney, CSU University Theatre and Opera Fort Collins' Music Director, has assembled a first class orchestra to bring Puccini's beautiful score to life, which includes a wealth of musical influences from the East. Mr. Kenney is well known in Fort Collins as the Conductor of the Fort Collins Symphony and for his work with the CSU Opera as well as his many guest appearances throughout the country and his work at the Varna International Conducting Competition, where he won grand prize last summer.

Artistic Director Todd Queen has assembled several outstanding new singers to fill the leading roles in Turandot. From the Kansas City Lyric Opera, Elizabeth Bennet will join us singing the title role. A recent review said "Her soprano is big and beautiful, with those honey-glazed top notes, and it's immensely pleasurable to hear..." Singing the role of Calaf, is tenor Paul Hartfield, who has worked with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the New York City Opera, the Houston Grand Opera, the Greater Miama Opera to mention a few and has also preformed internationally in France, Italy and Hong Kong. In addition, local soprano Michelle Diggs will sing the role of Liu and Egyptian bass Ashraf Sweailam will sing the role of Timur, the father. The other roles will be sung by outstanding students from Colorado State Opera Theatre.

Turandot's world-famous aria "Nessun Dorma" promises to be the highlight of the evening. Made famous by Luciano Pavarotti in the 1994 World Cup opening ceremony, this familiar tune will be the highlight of a night of memorable music and exciting drama.

Turandot is a love story. As with most operas, the characters are passionate, selfish, unreasonable, determined and somehow sympathetic. We want the lovers to find each other and live happily ever after, but their behavior leaves the outcome in doubt. In this story, Turandot, the proud and cruel princess of Peking, will wed the man who can answer her three riddles. If her suitor gives the wrong answer, he dies. When prince Calaf arrives, he accepts her challenge and answers all of her riddles; Turandot must keep her side of the bargain, but she has second thoughts. Prince charming turns the tables and asks a riddle

of his own. In trying to cheat, Turandot's actions have tragic consequences and one wonders what prince Calaf sees in her at all. Yet he persists and finally, with a kiss, melts her heart and wins her love. The concert version of this opera will give the stage to the orchestra and singers, sung in Italian with supertitles to keep us in tune with the action. This is a great opportunity to hear the real thing; drama and passion presented by excellent voices in front of an excellent orchestra. Don't miss it.

For a full performance and event calendar, more information, and to sign up for a free event e-newsletter, visit www.CSUSchooloftheArts.com.

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