



February 23, 2016

"Everybody Does It!"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## PEORIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA BRINGS OPERA TO PEORIA WITH MOZART'S COMIC OPERA COSÌ FAN TUTTE

Peoria, IL – *"A Season of Inspiring Programs"* – George Stelluto, Music Director Peoria Symphony Orchestra.

The Peoria Symphony Orchestra's (PSO) 118<sup>th</sup> season of exceptional concerts continues on Saturday, March 12, 2016, 8:00 pm at Grace Presbyterian Church Route 91 with Mozart's comic opera COSÌ FAN TUTTE. Love, intrigue and a few white lies...everybody does it! See what happens when two best friends date two sisters and encounter a couple of troublemakers along the way. Relationships are tested in this timeless comedy brimming with flirtation, seduction and mistaken identities.

Six professional opera singers will join the Peoria Symphony Orchestra and a local chorus for the two-hour, semi-staged production which includes English translations and key plot points on screens to enhance the audience concert experience. The artists will engage with the community the week prior to the concert as part of the Peoria Symphony Orchestra Resident Artist Week initiative (RAW).

Set in 18<sup>th</sup> century Naples, the opera opens with Don Alfonso's wager that the two girls, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, are no more trustworthy in matters of love than any other woman. In their garden the girls sing of their love, interrupted by Don Alfonso, who tells them their lovers are to be called away to war. The couples part, faithfulness now pledged again. Despina, bribed by Don Alfonso, urges the girls to find other lovers, but they declare their constancy.

Guglielmo and Ferrando return, disguised as Albanians, but the girls remain firm. When the men pretend to take poison, necessitating the attentions of Despina disguised as a doctor, they seem to waver.

In the second act the girls agree to Despina's suggestion of harmless flirtation, each unwittingly choosing the other's partner. The success of the two Albanians leads to a wedding. The men now appear as themselves and pretend shock and horror at what is afoot before revealing their plot. All ends happily as Don Alfonso urges the power of reason in these circumstances.

Tickets for the PSO's concert COSÌ FAN TUTTE start at \$30 and student tickets are \$11. Tickets are available by calling the PSO Box Office at 309.671.1096, 101 State Street, Peoria, IL or online at [www.peoriasymphony.org](http://www.peoriasymphony.org).

The PSO concert COSÌ FAN TUTTE is sponsored by Meredith Foundation with additional support provided by PNC.

For more information contact:  
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### Chad Cygan, tenor as Ferrando



Illinois native Chad Cygan has a professional performance background which includes opera, oratorio, musical theater and recital work.

He holds a Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Illinois; a Master's from the Juilliard School and is a doctoral candidate at the CUNY Graduate Center. He has taught at the Juilliard School and City College of New York, among others. He lives in New York, is currently on the faculty of Turtle Bay Music School in Manhattan, and maintains a private vocal studio.

### Julianne Grace Olsen, soprano Fiordiligi



Ms. Olsen has appeared worldwide as an opera singer on stages ranging from Lyric Opera of Chicago with Lyric Unlimited, to National Theater of Szeged in Hungary, to the United Nations in NYC. Julianne has been a soloist with the Manhattan Symphony all throughout China.

Julianne holds three degrees of music from Boston Conservatory, New Jersey City University and Indiana University.

### Allyson Herman, soprano as Despina



Allyson Herman is an emerging artist known for pinpoint musicianship, winning stage presence, and uncommon versatility in a wide range of styles and repertoire. She has performed with the Bronx Opera, PORTopera, and Utopia Opera.

Ms. Herman holds a Master's degree and Professional Studies certificate for Voice Performance from Manhattan School of Music, and a Bachelor of Music from the Purchase College Conservatory of Music.

### Geoffery Penar, baritone as Guglielmo



Geoffrey Penar is a young and versatile classical voice artist with a rich and mature vocal quality. He is a 2014 Master's and Artist Diploma graduate from McGill. He has performed as "Leporello," in *Don Giovanni*, "Bottom" and "Puck" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and "Voltore" in the Canadian premiere of *Volpone*.

Geoffrey is a 2011 High Distinction graduate of the Eastman School of Music Vocal Performance program, where he studied with Dr. Robert McIver.

### Robert Mellon, baritone as Don Alfonso



Robert Mellon made his debut of Don Alfonso to great acclaim in February of 2015. Mr. Mellon received his B.M. in vocal studies from the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam. During graduate studies at Manhattan School of Music, he won first prize in both the prestigious Eisenberg and Fried Concerto Competition and the Ades Vocal Competition (2011).

### Veronica Jensen, mezzo soprano as Dorabella



Veronica Jensen is a Master's student at Indiana University's Jacob's School of Music. She earned her Bachelor of Music in vocal performance from Western Washington University while studying with Edward Cook. Veronica's most notable operatic roles at WWU were Cinderella in Jules Massenet's *Cendrillon* and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* by Wolfgang A. Mozart.

At Indiana University, Veronica performed the lead role of Lady Thi Kinh in the world premiere of *A Tale of Lady Thi Kinh* composed by P.Q. Phan.