



Rigoletto

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 -1901)

Libretto Francesco Maria Piave after Victor Hugo

Conductor, Graeme Jenkins

Director, Christopher Alden

Christopher Alden directs new production of Verdi's masterpiece Rigoletto

Opening Thursday 13 February 2014, 7.30pm at London Coliseum (11 performances)

English National Opera presents a new production of Verdi's tragic masterpiece *Rigoletto*, directed by Olivier award winner Christopher Alden with baritone Quinn Kelsey in the title role. Verdi's tale of passion, revenge and sacrifice is a classic of the opera repertory featuring some of his most famous music, including the instantly recognisable aria 'La donna è mobile' (Women abandon us).

Based on Victor Hugo's play *Le roi s'amuse* (The King has fun), *Rigoletto* is considered to be the first of the operatic masterpieces of Verdi's middle-to-late career. Its tragic story revolves around the licentious Duke of Mantua, his hunch-backed court jester Rigoletto, and Rigoletto's beautiful daughter Gilda. The opera's original title, *La maledizione* (The Curse), refers to the curse placed on both the Duke and Rigoletto by a courtier whose daughter had been seduced by the Duke with Rigoletto's encouragement. The curse comes to fruition when Gilda likewise falls in love with the Duke with catastrophic consequences.

Critically acclaimed director Christopher Alden re-sets the opera to Verdi's time, placing it within the patriarchal setting of a 19th century gentleman's club. The production, a co-production with Canadian Opera Company, features exquisite period detailing and lavish costumes by designer Michael Levine with ambient lighting by Duane Schuler.

Hawaiian baritone Quinn Kelsey makes a return to the UK stage in the title role of the jester Rigoletto. The Toronto Globe and Mail commented that he "gave a stupendous performance" as Rigoletto. Quinn made his debut at ENO as Zurga in Penny Woolcock's production of *The Pearl Fishers* in 2010.

British bel canto tenor Barry Banks makes his debut in the role of the Duke of Mantua. During his twelve year association with ENO Barry has performed numerous roles including Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*, 2001), Edgardo (in David Alden's acclaimed production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, 2010) and, most recently, Hoffmann (in Richard Jones' new production of *The Tales of Hoffmann* in 2012).

American soprano Anna Christy performs the role of Rigoletto's daughter Gilda. A regular with the Metropolitan Opera, Anna was last seen at ENO as Cleopatra in Michael Keegan-Dolan's production of Handel's *Julius Caesar* in 2012. This is her debut as Gilda.

British bass Peter Rose and American Matthew Treviño share the role of the assassin Sparafucile with Lithuanian mezzo-soprano Justina Gringyte as Maddalena.

ENO continues to showcase the very best of British operatic talent with baritones David Stout as Monterone (recently seen at ENO in *La bohème* and *Eugene Onegin*) and George Humphreys as Marullo. ENO Harewood Artists tenor Anthony Gregory and bass Barnaby Rea appear as Borsa and Ceprano respectively. Celebrated British mezzo-soprano Diana Montague, who has sung with many opera companies worldwide including the Royal Opera House, the Metropolitan Opera, Opéra de Paris and Glyndebourne completes the cast, performing the role of Giovanna.

[For further press information please contact:](#)

Sara Parsons

Press Officer

020 7845 9433

sparsons@eno.org



Music Director Emeritus of Dallas Opera Graeme Jenkins makes a welcome return to ENO to conduct. He is renowned for the breadth of his opera repertoire, spanning the baroque, core Italian and German masterworks to contemporary works. He has conducted at many opera houses across the world including the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, at Glyndebourne, with Scottish Opera, Opera North and Deutsche Oper Berlin.

Rigoletto opens at the London Coliseum on Thursday 13 February for 11 performances – 13, 20, 22, 25 February 1, 5, 7, 10, 12, 14 March at 7.30pm, 15 February and 1 March at 6.30pm.

Running time: 2 hours 50 minutes.

Pre-performance talk, £5/£2.50 concs.

An *Opera Undressed** performance of *Rigoletto* will take place on 20 February 2014 at 7.30pm

Co-produced by English National Opera and Canadian Opera Company

Notes to Editors

English National Opera (ENO) is the UK's leading producer of world-class opera, sung in English. Working with the very best talent from across the arts and creative industries, we produce highly theatrical productions that push the boundaries of what opera can be. We champion British and British-trained talent by providing development programmes for singers, composers and conductors, placing them at the heart of our performances. Our productions are seen by audiences across Europe, North America and Australia thanks to partnerships with the world's most celebrated opera houses. Through all our activities we aim to make our work enjoyable, accessible and affordable for as many people as possible.

www.eno.org

**Opera Undressed* is an audience development scheme that aims to introduce newcomers to English National Opera by demystifying the opera-going experience in a fun and informal setting.

During our 2013/14 season, ENO is hosting eight *Opera Undressed* nights. For just £25, audience members will:

- Get one of the best seats in the house
- Attend a pre-performance chat about the production
- Get an outline of the opera in advance
- Attend post-show drinks with cast and company members
- Enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of the London Coliseum, with bars serving beer and cocktails

An *Opera Undressed* performance of *Rigoletto* will take place on 20 February 2014 at 7.30pm.

See www.eno.org/undressed for more information.

If you would like to attend an *Opera Undressed* performance, please contact:

Sara Parsons, Press Officer – sparsons@eno.org / 020 7845 9433

For further press information please contact:

Sara Parsons

Press Officer

020 7845 9433

sparsons@eno.org