



Bravo! Vail to stage debut opera production in 2019 with Puccini's *Tosca*

The Philadelphia Orchestra and conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin reunite with the genius of Director James Alexander, *Symphony V* for Bravo! Vail's premiere opera

Vail, CO—July 08, 2018—The Philadelphia Orchestra had not finished its residency before Bravo! Vail Music Festival Artistic Director Anne-Marie McDermott took to the stage to announce that the exemplary orchestra would be back in 2019 for the **summer classical music destination's debut opera production: Puccini's *Tosca***. The exquisite, outdoor Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater will be transformed as never before for **two performances of *Tosca* on July 11 and 13, 2019**. The unprecedented production for Bravo! Vail will reunite **The Philadelphia Orchestra, under the direction of Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin** with **Director James Alexander** and production company **Symphony V**, whose imaginative design will transport audiences to 1800s Rome. An all-star cast will be announced at a later date. More information about Bravo! Vail is available at www.bravovail.org.

"I never imagined when I became Artistic Director in 2010 that Bravo! Vail would be mounting this unique production of *Tosca* with the amazing Yannick Nézet-Séguin, The Philadelphia Orchestra, and director James Alexander. It is both humbling and inspiring that the Bravo! community has so generously embraced this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring opera to the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater at the highest artistic level," said Bravo! Vail Artistic Director Anne-Marie McDermott.

The project marks a transformation and deepening of the relationship between Bravo! Vail and The Philadelphia Orchestra. Nézet-Séguin is the powerful voice behind this bold new idea. His dream for the Festival is to realize two "Theater Of A Concert" performances of *Tosca*, utilizing the beautiful Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater as the set. As Music Director of both The Philadelphia Orchestra and The Metropolitan Opera, he is singularly qualified to guide this project. His inspiration comes not only from his great love of Bravo! Vail, but also his confidence in the partnership he has formed between his renowned orchestra and respected opera and stage director James Alexander, who Nézet-Séguin calls "a class act."

The dramatic staging will combine historically accurate scenic elements, costumes, furniture, and props with 21st Century projections of custom-made images shown on two giant LED screens flanking the stage. The conductor's podium will be raised and thrust outward from the stage toward the audience, freeing the space downstage of the orchestra to be used for the action of the fully costumed cast and two choruses and offer the audience a truly immersive experience.

“*Tosca* was a truly special highlight of our past season in Philadelphia, and it brings me great joy to take this grand opera on the road for our 2019 Bravo! Vail residency,” said Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Music Director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. “I look forward to delighting our Vail audiences with one of the greatest Italian operas ever composed, paired with an all-star cast and the unparalleled sound of The Philadelphia Orchestra. I know it will be a memorable experience for everyone involved.”

Tosca is one of the most popular operas in the repertoire. The Italian melodrama had its debut in the Teatro dell’Opera di Roma on January 14, 1900. Just over one year later, it had played on four continents, from Odessa to Buenos Aires. Its Metropolitan Opera premiere was on February 4, 1901, and it has since been performed at the house 937 times, making it the fifth most-produced opera in Met history.

James Alexander first brought a team from Symphony V to the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater in March 2018 to initiate a plan for an immersive, dynamic staging of *Tosca*.

“I cannot tell you how honored and thrilled I was to receive the invitation from Anne-Marie McDermott, Artistic Director of the Bravo! Vail Music Festival, to even consider mounting an opera production in this unique venue. To visit the space when two feet of snow surrounded us, to walk the space and be invited to dream how I’d like you, our audience, to see Puccini’s masterpiece in this environment on a summer’s evening was a delicious and extraordinary prospect,” said Alexander. “I fell in love with the setting and the space—a blank canvas upon which to paint the narrative of *Tosca*.”

Choruses will be led by conductor Duain Wolfe, founder and conductor of Colorado Symphony Chorus; Choral Director of Chicago Symphony; and past-president of Chorus America.

ABOUT THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world, renowned for its distinctive sound, desired for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for a legacy of imagination and innovation on and off the concert stage. The Orchestra is inspiring the future and transforming its rich tradition of achievement, sustaining the highest level of artistic quality, but also challenging—and exceeding—that level, by creating powerful musical experiences for audiences at home and around the world.

ABOUT YANNICK NÉZET-SÉGUIN

Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin will lead The Philadelphia Orchestra through the 2025-26 season, an extraordinary and significant long-term commitment. Nézet-Séguin, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is an inspired leader of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Widely recognized for his musicianship, dedication, and charisma, Nézet-Séguin has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling talents of his generation. His intensely collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm, paired with a fresh approach to orchestral programming, have been heralded by critics and audiences alike, from the Orchestra’s home in Verizon Hall to the Carnegie Hall stage.

ABOUT JAMES ALEXANDER

James Alexander is Co-Founder and the Creative Director of Symphony V. As an internationally renowned Stage Director, he has staged operas and plays on three continents with a number of prestigious companies, orchestras, and conductors. Alexander has become recognized for staging operas and plays in non-traditional environments, a challenge he relishes. During the 1990s he collaborated with Maestro Seiji Ozawa and The Boston Symphony Orchestra, helping create stagings of *Salomé*, *Pique Dame*, *Idomeneo*, and the 50th Anniversary production of *Peter Grimes* at Tanglewood. For the Atlanta Symphony, he has collaborated with Maestro Robert Spano over the last seven years on stagings of *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *The Nightingale*, *Dr. Atomic*, and *Bernstein On Broadway*, *A Flowering Tree*, and *Creation/Creator*.

ABOUT SYMPHONY V

Symphony V was formed in 2012 as a collaboration and strategic partnership between internationally renowned stage and opera director James Alexander with Brian Pirkle, CEO and founder of Velocity Productions.

Since its formation, Symphony V has been a full-service events and video animation company renowned for its ability to realize and bridge the gap between technology and creativity. The first commission was to create an immersive experience for audiences at The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra of composer John Adams' opera, *A Flowering Tree*. This was promptly followed by a commission from The Philadelphia Orchestra and Maestro Yannick Nézet-Séguin to create a series of interactive/immersive gala concerts at Philadelphia's prestigious Academy of Music, launching a season-long centennial celebration of Leopold Stokowski's arrival in Philadelphia, known as the Stokowski Festival. Most recently, Symphony V staged the world premiere of composer Christopher Theofanidis' oratorio, *Creation/Creator*, for The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in Spring 2015, which was reprised at The Kennedy Center's SHIFT Festival in 2017, prior to a staging of Gluck's *Orfeo & Eurydice* in Atlanta.

Symphony V has developed its capacity to stage galas, operas, and oratorios for symphonic organizations and performances of all sizes, scope, and scale.

ABOUT BRAVO! VAIL MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Bravo! Vail Music Festival brings world-renowned musicians to picturesque venues throughout the Vail Valley for nearly seven weeks, drawing music lovers from around the world. The only festival in North America to host four of the world's finest orchestras in a single season, Bravo! Vail celebrates its 31st season from June 21 through August 2, 2018. The 2018 season features residencies with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic – plus the London-based Academy of St Martin in the Fields, which, in 2016, became the first international orchestra to perform at the Festival. In addition, internationally acclaimed chamber artists and soloists perform a wide array of unique and carefully curated chamber music programs. Artistic Director Anne-Marie McDermott has served the Festival since 2011. For more information about Bravo! Vail, visit bravovail.org or call 970.827.5700.

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