

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 24, 2016

**Washington National Opera
presents**

Mozart's sparkling comic masterpiece

The Marriage of Figaro

**New-to-Washington staging
features a compelling cast of young talents**

**September 22–October 2, 2016
in the Kennedy Center Opera House**

**Performance on Saturday, September 24 will be simulcast free
to Nationals Park as part of M&M'S® *Opera in the Outfield***

**Members of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program star
in a special performance on Saturday, October 1**

(WASHINGTON)—Washington National Opera (WNO) opens its 2016-2017 season with a new-to-Washington staging of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's masterpiece of romantic comedy—*The Marriage of Figaro*, September 22–October 2, 2016, in the Kennedy Center Opera House. One of opera's most enduring and beloved classics, *The Marriage of Figaro* tells an upstairs/downstairs story of love, lust, seduction, infidelity, and ultimately, forgiveness, all set to some of the most sublime and memorable music ever written. The production is staged by director Peter Kazaras (WNO's *La bohème*, 2014), and the WNO Orchestra is led by acclaimed conductor James Gaffigan in his WNO debut. The Saturday, September 24 performance will be simulcast free to thousands of fans at Nationals Park as part of M&M'S® *Opera in the Outfield*. A special Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performance is presented in the Opera House on

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Saturday, October 1, and features the rising stars of WNO's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program in principal roles.

It's the day of the wedding at the palace, and seduction, jealousy, and deception are the uninvited guests. Handsome Figaro, the personal valet to Count Almaviva, is finally getting married to sweet Susanna, the Countess's maid. But the Count has lustful designs on the bride-to-be, so Figaro hatches a plan to outfox his master and expose his wandering ways with a barrage of humiliating tricks. Soon everyone is involved in the farcical antics, from a vengeful doctor and his matronly housekeeper to a bumbling teenage page. Mozart's breathlessly paced comedy—one of the world's all-time favorite operas—features enchanting music marked by glorious arias, tender duets, and the immediately recognizable overture. Clever disguises and absurd mix-ups keep the laughs and surprises coming in this charming exploration of the perils of temptation, the grace of forgiveness, and the triumph of love.

The cast is led by rising star soprano Amanda Majeski in her WNO debut as the Countess, a role she has sung to great acclaim at the Metropolitan Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Another rising star soprano, Lisette Oropesa, sings the first of her two starring roles in the WNO season as the clever Susanna. She returns later this fall as Marie in *The Daughter of the Regiment*. Baritone Joshua Hopkins, who delighted audiences as Papageno in 2014's *The Magic Flute*, returns as Count Almaviva. Bass-baritone Ryan McKinny, last seen as Donner and Gunther in WNO's *Ring* cycle, is the handsome valet Figaro. Two alumni of WNO's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program also return for featured roles: mezzo-soprano Aleksandra Romano is the lovestruck page Cherubino and bass-baritone Valeriano Lanchas is the stentorian Don Bartolo. Rounding out the principal cast are WNO veteran mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Bishop as Marcellina and tenor Keith Jameson in his WNO debut as Don Basilio. The cast also features current Domingo-Cafritz Young Artists in key supporting roles: tenor Rexford Tester is Don Curzio, soprano Ariana Wehr is Barbarina, and bass Timothy J. Bruno is Antonio.

James Gaffigan, chief conductor of the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra and the principal guest conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, makes his WNO

debut leading the WNO Orchestra in interpreting Mozart's effervescent score. The vibrant production, adapted from The Glimmerglass Festival, is directed by Peter Kazaras, whose *La bohème* was a hit of WNO's 2014-2015 season. *The Marriage of Figaro* features scenery design by Benoit Dugardyn (WNO's *Anna Bolena*, 2012), costume design by Myung Hee Cho in her WNO debut, lighting design by Mark McCullough (WNO's *Ring* cycle, 2016), hair and makeup design by Anne Ford-Coates for Elsen Associates, and choreography by Kevin Williamson in his WNO debut.

WNO continues its partnership with the Washington Nationals with the M&M'S® *Opera in the Outfield* presentation of *The Marriage of Figaro* on Saturday, September 24, 2016, at Nationals Park. Gates will open at 5 p.m. for "pregame" activities for the entire family, including a meet-and-greet with M&M'S® Ms. Brown, a musical instrument "petting zoo," a costume trunk and face painting play area, chances to win prizes from M&M'S® and the Kennedy Center, and more. The opera will be broadcast live from the Kennedy Center Opera House to the high-definition NatsHD scoreboard at the ballpark at 7 p.m. Free seating will be available on the outfield grass and in the stands. The event will take place rain or shine—in case of inclement weather, some covered seating is available. More information on this popular event will be announced soon.

At the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performance on Saturday, October 1, veteran young artist Raquel González, who has memorably sung the roles of Mimì and Micaëla in past Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performances, is the Countess. Other returning young artists in the cast are Ariana Wehr as Susanna, Hunter Enoch as Count Almaviva, Daryl Freedman as Marcellina, Timothy J. Bruno as Dr. Bartolo, and Rexford Tester as Don Curzio. New Domingo-Cafritz Young Artists making their WNO debuts in this performance are Andrew Bogard as Figaro and Allegra De Vita as Cherubino; Frederick Ballentine, who was seen last season as T. Morris Chester and John Lewis in WNO's *Appomattox*, joins the young artist roster this season and sings the role of Don Basilio at this performance.

The Marriage of Figaro opens on Thursday, September 22, 2016 at 7 p.m. in the Kennedy Center Opera House and runs for seven performances, including September 24, 26, 28, 30, and October 2. The Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performance is

Saturday, October 1. The opera's running time is approximately three hours and 15 minutes, including one intermission. Visit WNO's [website](#) for complete production details and casting information.

Washington National Opera's 2016-2017 season also includes a new production of Donizetti's comedy *The Daughter of the Regiment*, the American Opera Initiative Festival featuring four world-premiere American operas, a new production of Jake Heggie and Terrence McNally's modern classic *Dead Man Walking*, the East Coast premiere of Terence Blanchard and Michael Cristofer's "opera in jazz" *Champion*, an evening of *Justice at the Opera* with Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Puccini's beloved *Madame Butterfly* in a dazzling production designed by visual artist Jun Kaneko, and other special events. [Subscription packages](#) and single tickets are available now.

***The Marriage of Figaro* Performance and Ticket Information**

Thursday, September 22 at 7:30 p.m. ▪ Saturday, September 24 at 7 p.m.
Monday, September 26 at 7 p.m. ▪ Wednesday, September 28 at 7:30 p.m.
Friday, September 30 at 7:30 p.m. ▪ Saturday, October 1 at 7 p.m.[†]
Sunday, October 2 at 2 p.m.

Tickets start at \$25 and are available [online](#), in person at the Kennedy Center Box Office, and by calling (202) 467-4600 or (800) 444-1324.

[†] The Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performance

The Marriage of Figaro Production Information

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte

Production adapted from The Glimmerglass Festival

Performed in Italian with Projected English Titles

September 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, and October 2m, 2016

Cast and Creative Team

Countess Almaviva	Amanda Majeski *	Conductor	James Gaffigan *
Susanna	Lisette Oropesa *	Director	Peter Kazaras
Count Almaviva	Joshua Hopkins	Scenery Designer	Benoit Dugardyn
Figaro	Ryan McKinny	Costume Designer	Myung Hee Cho *
Cherubino	Aleksandra Romano ±	Lighting Designer	Mark McCullough
Marcellina	Elizabeth Bishop	Hair and Makeup Designer	Anne Ford-Coates for Elsen Associates
Dr. Bartolo	Valeriano Lanchas ±	Choreographer and Fight Master	Kevin Williamson *
Don Basilio	Keith Jameson *		
Don Curzio	Rexford Tester ‡		
Barbarina	Ariana Wehr ‡		
Antonio	Timothy J. Bruno ‡		

* Washington National Opera Debut

‡ Current member of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program

± Alumnus of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program

The Marriage of Figaro: The Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performance

Saturday, October 1, 2016 at 7 p.m.

Cast

Countess Almaviva	Raquel González ‡
Susanna	Ariana Wehr ‡
Count Almaviva	Hunter Enoch ‡
Figaro	Andrew Bogard * ‡
Cherubino	Allegra De Vita * ‡
Marcellina	Daryl Freedman ‡
Dr. Bartolo	Timothy J. Bruno ‡
Don Basilio	Frederick Ballantine ‡
Don Curzio	Rexford Tester ‡
Barbarina	Mandy Brown
Antonio	James Shaffran

* Washington National Opera Debut

‡ Current member of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program

The Marriage of Figaro Related Programs and Events

Musical Preview: *The Marriage of Figaro*

Friday, September 16 at 6:00 p.m., Kennedy Center Millennium Stage

Enjoy a free preview of musical highlights from *The Marriage of Figaro*, featuring members of WNO's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program and other artists from the production.

Opera Insights before every performance

WNO presents a free pre-performance education event prior to every performance of *The Marriage of Figaro*. These events will begin one hour prior to curtain in the Opera House and last approximately 20-25 minutes. (The *O-Zone* lecture with musicologist Saul Lilienstein on Wednesday, September 28 begins 75 minutes prior to curtain and

lasts approximately 45 minutes.) A complete list of discussion leaders will be posted to WNO's [website](#).

Artist Q&A: *The Marriage of Figaro*

Monday, September 26 and Sunday, October 2—post-performance, Opera House

Join WNO artistic staff for a wide-ranging discussion with the artists of the production.

This event is free to patrons presenting a ticket from any performance of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

ABOUT WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA

Washington National Opera (WNO) is one of the leading opera companies in the United States. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Francesca Zambello, the company presents a diverse season of grand opera—including both classics from the repertory and more contemporary pieces—plus several newly commissioned American works and a variety of special concerts and events. The WNO Orchestra is led by Music Director Philippe Auguin. Founded in 1956 and an affiliate of the Kennedy Center since 2011, WNO has a storied legacy of world premieres, new productions, international tours, live recordings and radio broadcasts, and innovative education and community-engagement programs. Throughout its history, WNO has been led by titans in the opera field, including the legendary Plácido Domingo, who headed the company from 1996 to 2011.

WNO contributes to the future of opera through two signature artist-development programs. The Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, now in its 15th season, has become one of the nation's most competitive and comprehensive professional training programs for young singers and collaborative pianists. Alumni of the program have won major competitions and gone on to successful careers at major opera houses in the U.S. and abroad. The WNO Opera Institute nurtures the ambitions of high-school-age singers from across the nation during an intensive three-week summer program held at American University in Washington.

Among the company's most successful recent programs is the 2012 launch of the American Opera Initiative, a comprehensive commissioning program that works to expand the American operatic repertory, to give WNO's young artists the chance to collaborate with living composers and librettists on new works, and to make American opera more relevant to 21st-century audiences. The most popular of WNO's community-engagement programs is M&M'S® *Opera in the Outfield*, during which an opera is broadcast live from the Kennedy Center Opera House stage to the high-definition scoreboard at Nationals Park. The company's other education programs include the *Kids Create Opera* program at local elementary schools, Look-In performances for students in grades 4–8, and the Student Dress Rehearsal Program for middle and high school students. The company also offers free Opera Insights programs before every performance in the Opera House.

To celebrate the company's 60th anniversary last season, Washington National Opera presented three complete cycles of Wagner's *Ring* in spring 2016. These performances, featuring an acclaimed production by Artistic Director Francesca Zambello and conducted by Music Director Philippe Auguin, marked the first time the company presented *The Ring* in complete cycles in its history.

Discover [Washington National Opera](#) on social media:



#FigaroDC

FUNDING CREDITS

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M&M’S® *Opera in the Outfield* is presented in partnership with the Washington Nationals.

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WNO’s Presenting Sponsor
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TICKETS & INFORMATION

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