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Media contact:

Bronwen Bradley
bronwen.bradley@operaatelier.com
416-703-3767 x224

Press-quality photos:

media.operaatelier.com/photos
username: OAmmedia
password: OAmmedia

Opera Atelier's Creative Team Opens the Most Prestigious Opera Festival in Italy

- **New Production of *Ricciardo e Zoraide* opens Rossini Opera Festival with Rai5 Television Premiere and International DVD release to follow -**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Toronto, ON (Aug. 9, 2018) – On August 11th, the Rossini Opera Festival in Italy will unveil a new production of Rossini's *Ricciardo e Zoraide* designed, directed and choreographed by Opera Atelier's entire creative team. This sumptuous new production also kicks off the Rossini 150th anniversary celebrations in Italy.

Ricciardo e Zoraide stars the greatest Rossini singers in the world, including **Juan Diego Flórez**, **Sergey Romanovsky** and Metropolitan Opera star **Pretty Yende**. The opera's corps de ballet has been drawn from the ballet of the famed La Scala.

Canadian artists are front-and-centre at the Festival opening. *Ricciardo e Zoraide* is directed and choreographed by Co-Artistic Directors Marshall Pynkoski and Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg, with set designs by Gerard Gauci (with inspiration drawn largely from Toronto's Aga Khan Museum), lighting design by Michelle Ramsay, costume design by Michael Gianfrancesco and extensive fencing by Opera Atelier Fight Director Jennifer Parr. This production of *Ricciardo e Zoraide* propels Opera Atelier into the 19th century repertoire that the company, along with Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, has wished to explore ever since the company's 2012 production of Weber's *Der Freischütz (The Marksman)*.

Opera Atelier's creative team will return to Toronto following their six weeks in Pesaro and will immediately begin preparation for the company's fall production of **Rameau's *Pygmalion* and Charpentier's *Actéon*** (Oct. 25 – Nov. 3, 2018), which will open at Toronto's Elgin Theatre, then tour to Chicago's Harris Theater and Royal Opera House in Versailles.

The Rossini Opera Festival (ROF) takes place in August of each year on Italy's Adriatic Coast, in Rossini's birthplace Pesaro, and is the leading Rossini festival in the world. Each year, the Festival attracts thousands of audience members from Europe, North America and Asia, and features the world's finest Rossini singers and conductors. Having seen Opera Atelier's productions of *Lucio Silla* at La Scala (2015) and *Médée* at Versailles (2017), ROF General Director **Ernesto Palacio** invited Opera Atelier's creative team to create the lead production to open the 2018 Festival commemorating the 150th anniversary of Rossini's death. *Ricciardo e Zoraide* will make its European television premiere on August 30th on Rai5 as part of Rai5 Rossini cycle celebrating the composer and the Festival's Rossini 150 celebration. The production will also be released internationally on DVD.

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Opera Atelier is North America's premier period opera/ballet company, producing the opera, ballet and drama of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. While drawing upon the aesthetics and ideals of the period, Opera Atelier goes beyond "reconstruction" and infuses each production with an inventive theatricality that resonates with modern audiences. Led by founding artistic directors Marshall Pynkoski and Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg since 1985, Opera Atelier has garnered acclaim for its performances at home as well as in the United States, Europe and Asia. Opera Atelier is committed to the development of young Canadian artists and offers innovative education programs for youth.

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