



## **Opera Colorado Appoints Ari Pelto First Music Director in the Company's History**

### ***Greg Carpenter's contract renewed as General Director***

DENVER, CO—May 20, 2015—Opera Colorado today announced the appointment of Ari Pelto as the first Music Director in its history and the extension of Greg Carpenter's role as General Director through 2018. Pelto fills an important new role at the Company—partnering with Carpenter to further Opera Colorado's mission, increase and diversify its programming and repertory, build the national scope of its Young Artists program, and further extend the Company's reach through engagements in venues outside of the traditional opera house. Pelto will serve as Music Director designee beginning July 1, 2015 and take the helm as Music Director beginning July 1, 2016.

"This is an exciting moment in the history of Opera Colorado," said Greg Carpenter. "Our hard work over the past few years has provided us with the platform we need to take risks and find ways to reach a variety of audiences. As we look to the future, we need an artistic leader who can continue to push the genre forward. Working with Ari Pelto over the past two years has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my tenure at Opera Colorado. He is a talented conductor who is admired by both the singers and the Opera Colorado Orchestra, and his musical network is vast. Ari has embraced our community of supporters and they too have welcomed him as part of our family. He is the exact partner I need in creating an exhilarating future for Opera Colorado."

Carpenter and Pelto will be responsible for selecting repertoire for mainstage productions and new works for development, determining the talent for each production, and establishing a creative vision for the Company's future that both sustains the quality of work presented and broadens its presence in the community. He will continue to conduct several of the Company's productions each year, including the upcoming world premiere of the new American opera *The Scarlet Letter* in 2016. Pelto has a long relationship with Opera Colorado, where he has served as Artistic Advisor since his acclaimed debut conducting *Don Giovanni* in 2013. In addition, he has conducted at opera companies across the country including New York City Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Boston Lyric Opera, Minnesota Opera, Portland Opera, and Utah Opera.

"From the first moments rehearsing *Don Giovanni* with the singers, orchestra and chorus of Opera Colorado in the spring of 2013, I knew this was a company to love," said Ari Pelto. "I'm deeply honored to take the musical reins of Opera Colorado and I look forward to a long and productive partnership with Greg Carpenter, bringing high-level and inspired work to Denver."



"Greg Carpenter and Ari Peltó have been a vital part of Opera Colorado's success, presenting excellent programming that has been positively received by our community, actively engaging our youth in educational programming, and simultaneously building a solid financial foundation for our growth moving forward," said Michael Bock, Chairman of Opera Colorado's Board of Directors. "We are thrilled to now extend Greg's role as General Director and bring Ari Peltó on board as our first Music Director as we look towards the future and continued evolution of Opera Colorado."

Peltó takes on his official new role at Opera Colorado as the Company develops a five-year strategic plan focused on expanding artistic and educational offerings throughout Denver and Colorado. The plan marks another step forward for the Company, which has continued to see significant growth and success from the completion of a restructuring campaign in 2013, which has resulted in higher-than-anticipated ticket sales, sold-out performances, and surpluses in the 2013 and 2014 fiscal years.

#### **About Ari Peltó**

Ari Peltó was appointed Opera Colorado's Artistic Advisor in 2013, following an acclaimed debut conducting *Don Giovanni* for the company. He recently conducted the Company's 2014 production of *Madama Butterfly*, and is also set to conduct *Aida* in the fall of 2015 and the world premiere of the new American opera *The Scarlet Letter* in 2016. Peltó is in demand at elite opera houses, ballets, symphonies, and conservatories throughout the United States. After his highly praised 2004 debut at New York City Opera with Verdi's *La Traviata*, Peltó was engaged as a regular guest there, returning for *Madama Butterfly*, Jennifer Griffith's *The Dream President*, *La bohème*, and *Carmen*. Recent highlights include *La bohème* with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and the St. Louis Symphony; *The Cunning Little Vixen* at Chautauqua; *Rusalka* and *La bohème* at Boston Lyric Opera; *Romeo et Juliet* at Minnesota Opera; *The Magic Flute*, *Figaro*, and *Hansel and Gretel* at Portland Opera; as well as *Carmen* and *Hansel and Gretel* at Utah Opera. He has also been a regular guest conductor of the Atlanta Ballet. In 2012, he collaborated with Twyla Tharp on the premiere of her new ballet, *The Princess and the Goblin*. Peltó has conducted operas of Mozart and Stravinsky at the Curtis Institute of Music, Gluck and Mozart at the Juilliard School, Puccini and Massenet at San Francisco Conservatory, and Stephen Paulus and Raffaello de Banfield at the Manhattan School of Music. At the Oberlin Conservatory, he has led works of Mahler, Mozart, and Poulenc, and at New York University, works of Sibelius, Brahms, Dvořák, and Martinu. He has also conducted in Italy, Germany, and Bulgaria. Peltó studied violin performance at Oberlin and conducting at Indiana University.

#### **About Greg Carpenter**

The fourth General Director in Opera Colorado's 31-year history, Greg Carpenter guides both the artistic and administrative operations of the company. His role as General Director began in 2007, prior to which he served as Opera Colorado's Director of Development from 2004 – 2007, overseeing all fundraising and Board of Directors activities. Prior to joining Opera Colorado, he worked for four years for the National Symphony Orchestra at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. His work there included Special Projects Manager for the President of the National Symphony Orchestra from 2000 – 2001 and Manager of Development from 2001 – 2004. Carpenter's



extensive experience working in the arts also includes two years as the Artist and Event Services Manager for the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland and Special Projects Coordinator for the University of Maryland School of Music. From 1986 – 1998, Greg Carpenter performed as a professional opera singer. His work as an opera singer included both lead and supporting roles at Glimmerglass Opera, Central City Opera, Sarasota Opera, Opera Theatre of Northern Virginia, Cleveland Opera and Lyric Opera Cleveland. Carpenter currently serves on the Board of Directors for OPERA America, the national service organization for the opera industry. For the 2008 National Performing Arts Convention held in Denver, he served as Chairman of the Fundraising Committee. In 2009 Carpenter received a Livingston Fellowship Award in Leadership from the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation. He also regularly serves as a judge for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and has served as a judge for the Fritz and Lavinia Jensen Foundation Competition. Greg Carpenter received a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance from Wittenberg University, a Master of Music degree in vocal performance from Michigan State University and he completed post-graduate studies at the University of Maryland School of Music.

#### **About Opera Colorado**

A cornerstone of Denver's cultural community, Opera Colorado presents an annual season of three operas at its downtown Denver home, the Ellie Caulkins Opera House. The Company presents new works alongside standard repertoire, and reaches more than 35,000 students and community members throughout the Rocky Mountain region through a variety of education and outreach programming. Opera Colorado Young Artists, a seven-month residency for singers at the beginning stages of their careers, provides training for the next generation of American opera performers. Founded in 1983, the Company celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary season in 2013 and celebrates the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ellie Caulkins Opera House in September 2015. [www.operacolorado.org](http://www.operacolorado.org).

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