

Union Avenue Operate Announces 30th Anniversary Season

by Emily Stolarski

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ST. LOUIS, MO. – Union Avenue Opera (UAO), known for producing vibrant and affordable original language opera in St. Louis for the last twenty-nine years, will celebrate their 30th Anniversary Season with three exciting operas in the summer of 2024. “It is wonderful to kick off our 30th season and look back on all the incredible work by many that has brought us to this point” said Founding Artistic Director Scott Schoonover. “Thirty promises to be a grand season of opera classics, monumental vocalism, and finally, finding the truth in fairytales. I can’t wait to present these epic stories on our stage.”

Opening the season will be UAO’s most requested opera in recent years, George Bizet’s *Carmen* which will feature the return of Elise Quagliata in the title role. Local audiences will remember Quagliata from her portrayal of Sister Helen in their 2011 production of *Dead Man Walking* and Sister James in 2016’s *Doubt*. *Carmen* will be presented in its original French on July 5, 6, 12, and 13 at 8PM.

UAO’s second offering is a break from the traditional by presenting a concert version of Giuseppe Verdi’s epic tragedy *Aida* on July 26 and August 3 at 8PM, and a 3PM matinee performance on Sunday, July 28. “I’ve wanted to do *Aida* for many, many years, but it’s always seemed too big for Union Avenue Opera to do it justice if it were performed with a fully realized production,” said Schoonover. For this concert version, *Aida* will be presented in Italian with a full orchestra, large chorus, and the same amazing talented artists UAO is known for. “This is not a permanent change to our way of doing things – just a one-time diversion in our thirtieth season in order to bring this masterpiece to Union Avenue audiences.”

The season will close with giants, princes and princesses, witches, Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella and other beloved fairytale characters as UAO presents Stephen Sondheim’s *Into the Wood* – a clever, fun, ultimately dark, and moving romp in the land of fairytales. *Into the Woods* will be performed in English on August 16, 17, 23, and 24 at 8 P.M.

All performances will take place on the Union Avenue Opera stage in the historic Union Avenue Christian Church at 733 N Union Blvd, just north of the intersection of Union and Delmar Boulevards. Public Season Subscriptions will be available starting February 20 and single ticket on March 26.

Auditions for the season will take place in New York City, January 24-26 and St. Louis, February 2 and 3. All positions are compensated, and opera choruses are comprised entirely of local artists. Information on auditions will be posted to UAO’s website in early November.

About Union Avenue Opera - UAO was founded in 1994 to bring affordable, professional, original-language opera to St. Louis, a mission the company continues to pursue to this day. UAO is committed to hiring the most talented artists, directors, designers, and technicians both locally and from across the United States. UAO provides promising singers the first steppingstone of their professional career while offering vibrant and affordable opera experiences in original languages to audiences who reflect the breadth and diversity of the St. Louis region. UAO is a publicly supported 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization registered in Missouri.

Into the Woods is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.
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