



SEATTLE OPERA NEWS
SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

For Release Friday, October 1

Vaness and Morris Return, Litherland and Lee Debut

In Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* At Seattle Opera

Tickets Go On Sale October 4

Seattle—Single tickets for Seattle Opera's January production, Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, go on sale October 4. Soprano Carol Vaness sings the title role in the Opening Night cast opposite Jay Hunter Morris as Manon's lover, Des Grieux. The Sunday/Friday cast features Victoria Litherland as Manon and Ted Lee as Des Grieux.

"This gloriously tuneful and yet very challenging opera demands two great leads, and I think we have them in both casts," said General Director Speight Jenkins. "Carol Vaness's success here in *Tosca* suggests what she will do with this character, who is very different but has some of the same vocal requirements. Morris, who last sang Pinkerton here in *Madama Butterfly*, has since sung a lot of repertory in Europe with great success. Both Litherland and Lee are artists with distinguished resumé's: Litherland has sung at the Metropolitan Opera and in Washington, while Lee has appeared more in Europe than in America."

Set in 18th-century France and America, this production of *Manon Lescaut* features lavish period costumes and sets by designers Michel Beaulac and Bernard Uzan. Ticket prices are \$40 to \$123. Performance dates are January 15, 16, 19, 21, 22, 26, 28, and 29, 2005. Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., and the Sunday, January 16, matinee begins at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are available by calling the Seattle Opera Ticket Office at 206-389-7676 or 800-426-1619 or can be ordered online at www.seattleopera.org.

American soprano Vaness made her Seattle Opera debut singing the title role in Massenet's *Manon* at Seattle Opera in 1985. Other roles with Seattle Opera for Vaness include Desdemona in Verdi's *Otello* (1987), Violetta in Verdi's *Traviata* (1988), Leonora in Verdi's *Trovatore* (1989 and 1997), the title role in Puccini's *Tosca* (2001), and Amelia in Verdi's *Ballo in maschera* (2002). She has sung for the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Vienna State Opera, Paris Opéra-Bastille, Royal Opera Covent Garden, and many more.

Morris made his Seattle Opera debut as Anatol in the 1999 production of Barber's *Vanessa* and sang Pinkerton in the 2002 production of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. This American tenor made his San Francisco Opera debut as Mitch in the world premiere of Previn's *Streetcar Named Desire* and sang his first Walther von Stolzing in Wagner's *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* with that company. He has appeared with opera companies throughout the United States and Europe. Recent roles for Morris include Steva

(over)

Buryja in Janacek's *Jenufa* at Dallas Opera, Tichon in Janacek's *Kat'a Kabanova* at San Diego Opera, and Erik in Wagner's *Fliegende Hollander* at Opera Australia, Sydney.

Litherland's Puccini repertoire includes Musetta in *La bohème* at the Metropolitan Opera and the title role of *Tosca* at Miami Opera, Tulsa Opera, Dallas Opera, Cleveland Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, and Arizona Opera. Lee has sung Des Grieux for the National Opera of Korea, where he has also sung the title character of Verdi's *Otello*.

Also in the cast of *Manon Lescaut* are Earle Patriarco as Lescaut and Arthur Woodley as Geronte di Ravoir.

Patriarco made his Seattle Opera debut as Figaro in the 2000 production of Rossini's *Barbiere di Siviglia*. Woodley appeared here last season as Ashby in Puccini's *Fanciulla del West*. Woodley's other roles with Seattle Opera include Dr. Bartolo in Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro*, Cuno in Weber's *Freischütz*, Varlaam in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, and Count Ribbing in Verdi's *Ballo in maschera*.

Bernard Uzan, who directed *La fanciulla del West* last season, returns to Seattle Opera to direct *Manon Lescaut*. Conductor Antonello Allemandi also returns for this production. Allemandi made his Seattle Opera debut conducting Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* in 1995 and returned to conduct Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro* (1997), Verdi's *Trovatore* (1997) and *Ballo in maschera* (2002), and Puccini's *Tosca* (2001).

Manon Lescaut

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Dominico Oliva and Luigi Illica

(after the novel *L'histoire du chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut*
by Antoine-François Prévost)

In Italian with English captions

Performances

Eight Performances: January 15, 16, 19, 21, 22, 26, 28, and 29, 2005

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours, 30 minutes, including 2 intermissions

All performances in Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Ticket Information

Ticket Prices: \$40 - \$123

Ticket Office: 206-389-7676/ 800-426-1619

Credit Cards Accepted: American Express, VISA, MasterCard

Online Orders: www.seattleopera.org

Manon Lescaut Artists

Manon Lescaut: Carol Vaness/Victoria Litherland†

Chevalier des Grieux: Jay Hunter Morris/Ted Lee†

Lescaut: Earle Patriarco

Geronte di Ravoir: Arthur Woodley

Edmondo/Dancing Master/Lamplighter: Doug Jones

Singer: Priti Gandhi

Innkeeper: Archie Drake

(over)

Conductor: Antonello Allemandi
Director: Bernard Uzan
Set Designer: Michel Beaulac and Bernard Uzan
Costume Designer: Michel Beaulac
Lighting Designer: Donald Thomas
Scenery & Costumes: L'Opéra de Montréal
Chorus: 56 members
Orchestra: 63 members

† Seattle Opera debut

This production is sponsored by PONCHO. Carol Vaness's performances are made possible in part by generous support from the James and Sherry Raisbeck Singers' Endowment.

###

Founded in 1963, Seattle Opera has developed into one of the leading opera companies in the United States. The company is recognized internationally for its theatrically compelling and musically accomplished performances, especially the Opera's interpretations of the works of Richard Wagner.

Seattle Opera is grateful to the following organizations for their steadfast major institutional support: ArtsFund, Bank of America, The Boeing Company, Classical KING FM 98.1, Charles E. Stuart Charitable Foundation, The James and Sherry Raisbeck Singers' Endowment, 4Culture, Kreielsheimer Foundation, Wallace Foundation, Microsoft Corporation, National Endowment for the Arts, Nesholm Family Foundation, PONCHO, City Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, Seattle Opera Guild, Sherman Clay Pianos, and Washington State Arts Commission. Seattle Opera is a participant in the Seattle Arts Stabilization Project, a joint venture of the Seattle Arts Stabilization Committee and the National Arts Stabilization Fund.