



/OF **Opera di Firenze** **Maggio Musicale Fiorentino**

OPERA DI FIRENZE'S LAUNCHES *OPERA FOR EVERYBODY* INITIATIVE WITH NEW KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN

Program Will Engage New and Existing Audiences and Supporters Around the World

Florence, Italy—May 31, 2016—Opera di Firenze (OF) announced that the company will launch a Kickstarter fundraising campaign today, as part of its new “Opera for Everybody” initiative. The program aims to make OF’s productions more widely accessible to audiences around the world, and to spur a renaissance of interest in opera from Florence, the heart of the Renaissance and the birthplace of opera. With a target goal of €300,000 (approximately \$330,000), OF’s Kickstarter funds will: make possible the expansion of the organization’s live-streaming of its productions; create a digital venue where audiences will be able to attend performances either live or on demand; support on-site exhibitions and programs for audience engagement, both locally and internationally; and will be the first theatre in the world to offer a fantastic virtual stage, through which anyone can “enter” the Opera di Firenze and experience more about its productions. The Kickstarter campaign is backed by a range of rewards, including different music download and playlist options, a series of limited edition prints autographed by Ferragamo, parts of original costumes from OF productions, lessons with the company’s costume makers, and opportunities to audition via Skype and receive feedback from the company. The OF Kickstarter page will be live at: <http://bit.ly/OperaForEvryon>

“Opera began as a popular and populist art form, a chance for audiences of all ages to experience fantastic music and some of the world’s most gripping stories,” said Francesco Bianchi, Superintendent of Opera di Firenze. “We are continuing this tradition, using Kickstarter to help spread the word, encourage participation with incentives tied to great opera, and of course, to support the Opera di Firenze in the process. Opera per tutti, opera for everybody, that is our goal.”

Opera di Firenze is one of the world’s most successful opera houses, located in Florence, where opera originated over 400 years ago. Throughout its history, the company has been at the leading edge of opera performance, presentation, and training. OF was the first opera house to introduce live subtitling for performances more than three decades ago, now a standard practice to help local audiences engage with libretti sung in other languages. Recently, OF launched a new project called [#NeverlandOF](#), in which ten bloggers are invited to each opera

premiere to Tweet their thoughts and pictures during the show. These special “Tweet-seats” are located in the first box on the right in order to not disturb the audience.

Working with Kickstarter, OF identified a series of exciting rewards that connect directly to the message of “opera per tutti,” providing easy entry points for support--starting at \$5--to ensure that as many people as possible can participate in the campaign and receive something in return.

Each level has multiple reward options; among the rewards being offered by OF are:

- For a pledge of \$5: supporters will have their name added to the company’s curtain
- For \$10 of support: download the album Maggio Live, featuring conductor Zubin Mehta
- For a pledge of \$25: a 10 minute webinar with one of OF’s artists
- A \$50 pledge: have the chorus of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino sing Happy Birthday to a friend or loved one
- Donors of \$75: perform via Skype and receive feedback on their performance

For donors who want to make larger contributions, OF is offering rewards commensurate with their commitment to opera, including: two front-row seats to a performance plus a backstage tour for a \$200 pledge; a specially designed, limited edition perfume made by Parfumer Fabio Luisi, the Opera’s next Music Director, for a pledge of \$1,000; and for \$5,000, the opportunity to perform live at Opera di Firenze for an audience of 50 friends.

In 2014 OF opened a new opera house, an ambitious musical complex designed by architect Paolo Desideri designed to address the additional presentation needs of 21st century opera, including the wiring needed to support live-streaming, and acoustics and camera angles that create dynamic broadcasts without compromising the experience of audiences in the theater. The complex has more than 228,000 square feet of performance spaces, including an 1,800-seat main stage space, a smaller, 1,100-seat auditorium that is about to be completed, and an outdoor amphitheater. Beyond the innovative technical and scenery equipment, the house is designed to accommodate performances of classical and contemporary music as well as opera--all with the best acoustics. Long affiliated with Zubin Mehta, the company’s principal conductor since 1985 and appointed principal conductor emeritus in late 2015, OF announced that Fabio Luisi would join the company as its Music Director and conductor beginning in 2018.

OF organizes and hosts the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, established in 1933 and one of the longest-running music festivals in the world. The Maggio brings more than 179,000 visitors a year to Florence each operatic and concert season, to participate in more than 250 concerts and programs. Known for its avant-garde and innovative styles in sets, costumes, and other visual elements, the Maggio has helped grow the audience for opera while providing another avenue to ensure that this art form remains fresh and vital.

The Maggio Fiorentino Academy, a leading international center of advanced operatic theatrical training, is also run by Opera di Firenze. The Academy was founded in the early 2015 to provide the most thorough professional training for young talents wishing to embrace the arts and the crafts of opera theatre. Courses offer the opportunity to experience the daily aspects of developing, mounting, and presenting a production, effectively allowing the acquisition of the secrets of the trade through on-the-job activity.

Visit the Opera di Firenze website at: <http://www.operadifirenze.it/en/>

Visit the OF's Kickstarter page at: <http://bit.ly/OperaForEvryon>

##

For more information, please contact:
Sascha Freudenheim / Alina Sumajin
PAVE Communications & Consulting
sascha@paveconsult.com / alina@paveconsult.com
917-544-6057 / 646-369-2050