



# DuPage Opera Theatre stages "Otello" for first time in troupe's 30-year history

Ginny Richardson Public Relations, January 03, 2008

URL: <http://www.pr9.net/ent/music/7034january.html>

*Artistic and music director Kirk Muspratt and DuPage Opera Theatre present Verdi's classic, "Otello," for the first time in the troupe's 30-year history.*

PR9.NET January 03, 2008 - Glen Ellyn, IL - Artistic and Music Director Kirk Muspratt and DuPage Opera Theatre (DOT) will present Verdi's "Otello," at 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 25; 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 27; 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 31; and 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 2; at the McAninch Arts Center at College of DuPage, 425 Fawell Blvd., Glen Ellyn. The opera will be sung in Italian with English supertitles; New Philharmonic Orchestra will provide accompaniment from the pit.

This is the first time in its 30-year history that DOT will stage "Otello," a production typically mounted by national opera companies.

"We are showcasing DuPage Opera's growth and new vision with this production," said Muspratt. "Otello is one of Verdi's greatest late period pieces, a true masterpiece. It is also is a very challenging production. Opera enthusiasts will be thrilled that we are bringing this to the suburbs."

Giuseppe Verdi's "Otello," adapted from Shakespeare's "Othello," first premiered in 1887 at Milan's La Scala and is often cited as the greatest Italian opera of the 19th century. Set in Cyprus after a victorious battle against the Turks, the story centers on Otello, the conquering general and Moor of Venice, and his beautiful wife, Desdemona. Otello's officer, Iago, becomes filled with resentment when Otello promotes another officer, Cassio, over him. Iago thus plots and manipulates events, twisting Otello into a jealous rage that destroys his marriage and eventually his life.

Stage director Michael Ehrman of Evanston joins Muspratt in the production of "Otello." A seasoned director on faculty at the Chicago College of Performing Arts, Ehrman has been hailed by critics for his insightful productions staged in opera houses throughout North America.

This is Ehrman's first time directing a production of "Otello." He has trimmed some of the chorus music to create a very intimate version of the opera, keeping it as close as possible to Shakespeare's original play.

"By reducing some of the chorus, we've crafted a very personal, very powerful version of Otello," said Ehrman.

Ehrman said bringing a big production like "Otello" into a distinctive theater like the McAninch Arts Center (MAC) is a bold choice, but one that will pay off for the audience.

"Typically, Otello is done in very large houses. Doing it in a more intimate setting like the MAC provides a wonderfully fresh experience for the audience," said Ehrman.

The cast is led by tenor Kevin Courtemanche of San Francisco, Calif., as Otello, who most recently starred as the Brigadier General in San Francisco Opera's world premiere of "Philip Glass." Courtemanche has performed with groups such as Long Beach Opera, Berkeley Opera, Mission City Opera, Cinnabar Theater and many others.

Joining him is soprano Christia Starnes of Bloomington, Ind., as Desdemona, making her Chicago debut. Selected for Nashville Opera's Young Artist program, Starnes most recently appeared in Nashville Opera's "Hansel and Gretel," Belmont University Opera Theater's "Die Fledermaus," and Indiana University Opera Theater's "Madama Butterfly."

Baritone Scott Skiba of Cleveland, Ohio, returns to DOT's stage as Iago, where he last performed as Marcello in "La Boheme." Skiba has starred in more than 30 operas during his six-year career.

Ludovico will be sung by bass baritone Aaron Stegemoller of Evergreen Park, Ill., whose recent engagements include "Don Giovanni" with American Opera Group, Opera Cleveland's "La Traviata" and Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Mikado" with Chicago's Light Opera Works.

Chicago native Bill Chamberlain, tenor, takes on the role of Cassio. Tenor Stephen Cannon of Woodridge, Ill., makes his DuPage Opera Theatre debut as Roderigo.

The elaborate sets for DOT's "Otello" are coming from Syracuse Opera; costumes are being designed by Chicago's Allison R. Greaves.

To purchase tickets or for more information, call 630-942-4000 or visit [www.atthemac.org](http://www.atthemac.org).

###

## About Ginny Richardson Public Relations

Ginny Richardson Public Relations specializes in media relations for business, healthcare, entertainment, and the arts.

**Phone:** 630-789-8555 ext. 24  
**E-Mail:** [jnavarro@gr-pr.com](mailto:jnavarro@gr-pr.com)

---

[PR9.NET - Your Free Press Release Service](#)