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Virginia Opera Launches Celebratory 40th Anniversary Season with Opera in the Park on Saturday, September 6th

NORFOLK, Va. (August 27, 2014) Virginia Opera, *The Official Opera Company of the Commonwealth of Virginia*, is excited to announce that the 6th Annual *Opera in the Park* will take place at Town Point Park in Norfolk, VA on Saturday, September 6, 2014. This year's *Opera in the Park* is the first event of the 40th Anniversary Season of Virginia Opera as the company celebrates Fabulous at Forty!

The event, produced in conjunction with Festevents, will be free and open to the public of all ages and feature a casual, picnic-style atmosphere. Town Point Park will open at 6:00pm and the concert will begin at 7:30pm. This year's *Opera in the Park* will include some of opera's most beloved works such as "La donna è mobile" from *Rigoletto* as well as Broadway favorites including the stirring "Tonight Quintet" from *West Side Story*, and be hosted by Virginia Opera's own "Doc Opera," Dr. Glenn Winters.

"By being free and open to the public, *Opera in the Park* exposes thousands of Hampton Roads area residents to some of opera's greatest hits, as well as Virginia Opera's upcoming 40th Anniversary season," said Russell Allen, Virginia Opera's President and Chief Executive Officer. "This event gives Virginia Opera an opportunity to be available - for free - to people of all ages in a casual, family-friendly environment."

The concert will be conducted by Virginia Opera's Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor - and audience favorite - Adam Turner, conducting the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, and feature some of opera's rising stars including many participants of the Virginia Opera's nationally recognized Emerging Artists Program. Says Turner, "I always look forward to these free concerts, getting opera out of the opera house and into the community, shining a spotlight on this extraordinary music performed by first-rate artists, under a spectacular backdrop of the beautiful outdoors. It's a perfect opportunity for anyone from the seasoned opera-goer to the intrigued newcomer to share in a rich culturally rewarding experience, hearing Opera's and Broadway's greatest hits performed by these exceptional artists, exquisitely accompanied by the Virginia Symphony Orchestra."

Virginia Opera is proud to partner once again with Wells Fargo Private Bank, sponsor of this year's *Opera in the Park*. The Company would also like to thank Festevents, as well as media sponsor's Sinclair Communications and Virginia Living Magazine.

Attendees are welcome to bring lawn chairs, picnic supplies, and coolers with non-alcoholic beverages. Food and beverage will also be available for purchase at the concert. Virginia Opera will also be hosting free drawings for a large selection of prizes, including tickets to Virginia Opera performances and other local arts venues, and restaurant gift certificates. New this year at *Opera in the Park*, Virginia Opera will also host a costume contest for participants dressed as Sweeney Todd

and Mrs. Lovett who will compete for VIP ticket and dining packages based on popular vote of the audience. Parking for *Opera in the Park* is available within walking distance to the concert.

For more information or for inquiries about media coverage of *Opera in the Park*, please call Maggi George at 757.627.9545, ext. 3316, or e-mail maggi.george@vaopera.org

About Virginia Opera

Virginia Opera Association, Inc., celebrating its 40th Anniversary season, is known and respected nationwide for the identification and presentation of the finest young artists, for the musical and dramatic integrity of its productions, and for the ingenuity and variety of its education and outreach programs. Mainstage performances in three markets across the Commonwealth reach nearly 60,000 attendees annually. In March of 1994, by unanimous vote of the Virginia General Assembly, Virginia Opera was named The Official Opera Company of the Commonwealth of Virginia in recognition of the organization's contribution to the state as well as to the world of opera. For tickets and information visit www.vaopera.org or call 866.673.7282.