The Intermountain Opera Bozeman Board of Directors is pleased to announce, and hope you will join us in welcoming, conductor Michael Sakir as Interim Artistic Director. We look forward to Sakir’s expertise and guidance as we develop innovative and exciting new delivery platforms for great operatic art. The disruption of our regular programming will allow us to develop these alternative performance avenues and give us time to solidify the program in order to best-serve the community this season and into the future.

Sakir joins Intermountain Opera Bozeman following Linda Curtis’s spring retirement and transition to Emeritus Artistic Director. Curtis’s nearly 25-year, 45-production tenure brought national recognition to Montana for world-renowned singers in professionally staged productions. Sakir’s background and expertise will build on this solid foundation.

Sakir comes from Memphis, Tennessee, where he has spent the past four seasons as Music Director of Opera Memphis. In that capacity, he has presented genre-bending and community-focused performances to thousands of Mid-South audiences. Programs like 30 Days of Opera and Sing2Me have provided accessible and affordable entertainment, as well as personal human connection during the past six months of the COVID pandemic.

“I believe that positive social and civic impact should be baked into every artistic decision,” says Sakir. “There are so many opportunities for opera companies to promote public good in the world today. I feel lucky to have spent the past four years with a company that recognizes those values, and I feel equally lucky to join another company committed to those same principles.”

The belief that art strengthens communities and improves lives is foundational to Intermountain Opera Bozeman’s mission. Following the cancellation of Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro this past spring, Intermountain Opera recognized that the pandemic offered an opportunity to take opera out of the Willson Auditorium and onto the streets of Bozeman. Under Sakir’s leadership, the company looks forward to performing in unexpected places, creating new partnerships, and doubling down on its commitment to the community.

“My proposal to the board was at least one performance every month of the season. But whether we perform for 10 people, 100 people, or maybe even 1000 people, the goal which each event is to lay the foundations for a stronger presence in the community in which Montanans feel ownership of and belonging with their opera company.”

As always, your safety is a primary concern for Intermountain Opera Bozeman. Artists, staff, and audiences will observe strict health precautions and the company will pay close attention to evolving health guidelines and reopening criteria. Sakir hopes to live-stream performances online so audiences who do not feel comfortable leaving their homes can stay connected to the company.

Sakir is also committed to hiring local talent for the company’s monthly performances. “I want to hear every singer in Bozeman and the surrounding regions. Record an audition video from your home and send it to us by October 1.” Singers are encouraged to visit the
Intermountain Opera Bozeman website (intermountainopera.org) for more information about virtual auditions.

In the meantime, Sakir looks forward getting to know the Bozeman community and developing new partnerships. “Email me (artisticdirector@intermountainopera.org), say hi, and tell me about yourself and your organization. Intermountain Opera Bozeman is your opera company and we want to know how we can serve you.”

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