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For Immediate Release

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Wolf Trap Opera Company Features Fashion Center Stage

Award-winning creative artist Mattie Ullrich unveils a new futuristic collection for Wolf Trap Opera Company's New Production of Zaide

Vienna, VA—The GRAMMY-nominated **Wolf Trap Opera Company**, one of the nation's most highly regarded opera residency programs, proudly announces the return of internationally recognized costume designer Mattie Ullrich. Ullrich, who has designed hundreds of costumes for film, television, theatre and opera, has been tapped to style costumes for the Wolf Trap Opera Company's upcoming production of *Zaide*. The collection will combine classical and futuristic styles, to portray a visual world fusing the austerity of George Orwell and Michel Foucault with the line of Abrahamic religions.

Zaide is the story of man and woman captured and held against their will in a foreign land. Ullrich sheds light on the characters' physical, mental and emotional struggles through her use of design, material selection and color choices.

"What makes the costumes unique to this production of *Zaide* is the theme of psychological manipulation," said Ullrich. "The slaves are terrified of the hidden. Technology, bondage and physiological punishment all manifest themselves in the clothing. For example, you may see an apparatus that locks away a face behind a metal grill or a full body chastity belt on a man. The costumes have that unnerving feel of apocalyptic futurism."

While her work has been consistently lauded by audiences and critics alike (*New York Times*, *Opera News*, *Washington Post*), her biggest fans are the artists who credit her fashion with helping them reach new depth of character portrayal. Ullrich has designed costumes for three other Wolf Trap Opera productions, including *Alcina* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* in 2008 and *Così fan tutte* in 2009.

"As Dryade in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, I wore an airy green gown that had a tree growing up the bodice and across my shoulders," says Jamie Van Eyck, who has worked with Ullrich on three productions at Wolf Trap and is currently singing the role of Cherubino at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. "Mattie incorporates elements that are unexpected and a little bit edgy, encouraging me to look at my character in a fresh way. Her designs make me feel like I've stepped off of a fashion runway and onto the stage."

Ava Pine, a soprano who opens *L'elisir d'amore* with Fort Worth Opera this weekend, worked with Ullrich in 2008 on a production of Handel's *Alcina*.

"Mattie designed the costume for a character with whom I shared very few traits. The dress she designed for me was the perfect complement to the character the director and I had created, and helped make the

transformation complete. I became a different woman each time I stepped into Morgana's yellow gown and red shoes!"

A graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem, Ullrich relishes her role in bridging fashion and costuming noting that her work "...provides artists and audiences with a frame of reference that allows them to more easily drift into imagination for the sake of the story."

"I'm fortunate to use fashion to help actors transform themselves on stage – to become someone else entirely," said Ullrich. "Opera presents an exciting artistic challenge as a medium that is not always an accessible art form for modern audiences. Modern fashion affords us the opportunity to leverage societal stereotypes to theatrical advantage in a way that makes the performance more relatable."

"There are many nuances that inform the Wolf Trap Opera Company's summer performances," said Kim Witman, Directress of the company. "One of the ways our production directors infuse their performances with spirit and life is through the fashion they select to complement their vision. Three different directors have independently selected Mattie to sculpt their characters' looks on stage. She's in demand and at the top of her game. We're very lucky to have her."

The Production

[Zaide](#), June 11, 13, 15, and 19

In [Mozart's unfinished opera](#), a man and woman are held hostage in a foreign land, finding love in one another's arms. How the story ends will be determined by audiences at each performance of this two-act opera in German with supertitles.

For more of Mattie Ullrich's resume or portfolio, visit www.mattieullrich.com.

Artwork Attached: includes before and after sketches of Mattie's designs for Wolf Trap, and a "before" sketch for the upcoming production of *Zaide*, opening in June.

About the Wolf Trap Opera Company

Established in 1971, the Wolf Trap Opera Company continues to earn national and international recognition for its mission to discover and encourage outstanding emerging talent in the opera field, serving singers of exceptional achievement and potential who are ready to make the transition to full-time professional careers. In addition to the young professional singers, the company also features the work of emerging designers, directors, and conductors; and provides opportunities for aspiring stage managers, administrators, coaches, and technical theatre professionals.

Tickets for Wolf Trap Opera Company performances can be purchased at the **Wolf Trap Box Office** located at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts at 1551 Trap Road, Vienna, Virginia; by calling **1(877) WOLFTRAP**; or online at www.wolftrap.org. For more information, call Wolf Trap at (703) 255-1868.

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Dryade, a woodland nymph, from *Ariadne auf Naxos*



Dryade, as portrayed by Jamie Van Eyck, 2008



Morgana, a sorceress, from *Alcina*



Morgana, as portrayed by Ava Pine, 2008



Costume rendering for the title character, *Zaide* 2010



Costume rendering for Allazim, the sultan's trusted slave, *Zaide* 2010