**Peter Mark, conductor**

is an International Opera Coach, Masterclass Teacher, and Conductor. He was the Founding General and Artistic Director of Virginia Opera (1975-2010), and of International Opera Alliance, and is now the Founding Artistic Director of the Buck Hill-Skytop Music Festival in the Poconos, as well as the new LYRIC OPERA VIRGINIA created in January 2010 with its unique format of presenting opera for the 21st Century.

Since his Virginia Opera debut in 1975 – conducting the pilot production of La Traviata with rising star Diana Soviero as Violetta – Maestro Peter Mark has presided over the company's growth into one of the finest and largest regional opera companies in the nation. Under his guidance for the past 36 seasons, he has identified and presented some of the nation's most promising young singers – from Jeannine Altmeyer, Frederick Burchinal, John Aler, Rockwell Blake, Randy Locke, and Jake Gardner to Renée Fleming, Barbara Dever, Frank Porretta, Grant Youngblood, Fabiana Bravo, Lawrence Brownlee, Nmon Ford, Thomas Truhitte, Cristina Nassif, Jeniece Golbourne, Manon Strauss Evrard and Mary Elizabeth Williams. He has brought directors from the theatre and opera world to Virginia including Gian Carlo Menotti, Gordon Davidson, Arvin Brown, Dorothy Danner and Lillian Groag in new productions designed by some of the nation's top opera and theater designers.

Maestro Mark has conducted well over 100 opera productions – comprising over 700 highly-successful performances --- on Virginia stages already during his career. He has also conducted productions and presented singers in South America, London, New York, and China, where he conducted Shanghai's first Italian-language Tosca to open the brand new Opera House of the Oriental Arts Center, China's first, and was featured on the cover of China's national Opera News.

Among his most recognized productions are four operas by Maestro Mark's wife, distinguished Scottish-American composer Thea Musgrave, and the Virginia Premieres of Strauss' Elektra and Salome, Wagner's Die Walküre and Tristan & Isolde, Giordano's Andrea Chénier, and Handel's Rodelinda and Agrippina. Maestro Mark conducted the British premiere of Musgrave's A Christmas Carol for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (telecast throughout the United Kingdom by Granada Television); Porgy and Bess at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, La Traviata and Masked Ball for Krakow Opera, and La Bohème for its centennial production at the Torre del Lago Puccini Festival in Italy. He has also conducted for New York City Opera, Pacific Opera Victoria in Canada, and the National Opera of Mexico at the Bellas Artes.

His recent work through the International Opera Alliance has focused on the identification and training as well as career-building opportunities for extraordinarily gifted young international opera singers, through which he has traveled to China, Africa, Europe and the Americas to hear, train, encourage and present the best young operatic talent.

As Founding Artistic Director of the Buck Hill-Skytop Music Festival in Northeastern Pennsylvania, he presided over its initial successful Festival in August 2010 offering a jewel-box production of PORGY & BESS, a series of opera masterclasses, chamber music, Broadway, jazz and cabaret performances, and a closing night OPERA GALA which he co-hosted with Metropolitan Opera Mezzo Victoria Livengood. A Jewel Box production of CARMEN was presented at Festival 2011 and a Jewel Box production of Verdi's LA TRAVIATA will be presented at Festival 2012 (www.buckhillskytopfest.org) along with expanded opera masterclasses, dance, chamber music and cabaret/Broadway/jazz offerings, and an enhanced Young Scholars Program throughout the expanded Festival July 21-August 4, 2011.

LYRIC OPERA VIRGINIA – LOV – THE LYRIC – was conceived and created to provide Virginians a major artistic institution whose mission is to present professional opera and musical theater gems of the classical and contemporary opera and musical theater repertoires in new, fresh and accessible formats appealing to 21st century audiences. The Lyric is presenting its productions at venues including the new SANDLER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS nestled in Virginia Beach's prestigious Town Center, CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY'S FERGUSON CENTER FOR THE ARTS CONCERT HALL in Newport News, THE PARAMOUNT in Charlottesville, and the STEWARD SCHOOL and LANDMARK THEATRES in Richmond.

The 2011-2012 season has been designed with the intent of drawing first-time as well as experienced opera audiences to the new venues. Its two successful productions to date were enthusiastically received by audience and press alike. The never-before-seen, grand production of Verdi's LA TRAVIATA this fall was followed by the Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein musical THE KING AND I with 250+ talented school children performing along LOV's seasoned professionals during its three-city performance run. LOV presents its first JEWEL BOX PRODUCTION -- of Bizet's CARMEN this spring. Added to this programming will be two additional evenings in the theaters which will bring audiences into the exciting process of finding and training the next generation of the world's opera stars – via a DISCOVERY CONCERT comprised of Maestro Mark's latest and greatest singer discoveries – and also a PUBLIC MASTERCLASS – where you will be able to witness the transformation of the voices of aspiring singers into gleaming instruments of operatic passion in front of your own eyes and ears.

Announced repertoire for LOV's 2012-2013 season includes Puccini's THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST, Lerner and Loewe's CAMELOT and a Jewel Box production of Gounod's ROMEO ET JULIETTE. For more information, visit the LOV website at lyricoperavirginia.org or contact LOV directly at lyricoperavirginia@gmail.com or (757) 446-6666 .

Prior to his career as conductor and impresario, Maestro Mark, who began his musical career as a boy soprano soloist at the Metropolitan Opera and the New York City Opera, enjoyed a successful career as a solo violinist and violist. He held leadership positions with the Juilliard Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestra, and toured extensively throughout Europe, South America, and Great Britain as a soloist.

He has been training singers and conducting opera professionally for the past four decades.