



OPERA SUPERSTAR JOYCE DiDONATO PRESENTS *EDEN*, A MULTI-FACETED INITIATIVE EMBRACING A GLOBAL TOUR OF OVER 45 VENUES ACROSS FIVE CONTINENTS, AN ALBUM, GROUND-BREAKING EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND MULTIPLE PARTNERSHIPS

EDEN EXPLORES OUR INDIVIDUAL CONNECTION TO NATURE AND ITS IMPACT ON OUR WORLD

MUSIC PROGRAMME INCLUDES SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED EDEN ANTHEM ‘*THE FIRST MORNING OF THE WORLD*’ FROM ACADEMY AWARD-WINNING COMPOSER RACHEL PORTMAN

ERATO ALBUM RELEASED FEBRUARY 25, 2022

INTERNATIONAL TOUR BEGINS MARCH 2, 2022

**EVERY AUDIENCE MEMBER TO RECEIVE A SEED TO PLANT AS THEY’RE ASKED:
‘*IN THIS TIME OF UPHEAVAL, WHICH SEED WILL YOU PLANT TODAY?*’**

From prison reform, the plight of refugees, the need for music education for all, to the industry-defining *In War and Peace*, opera superstar **Joyce DiDonato** has long been an artist who has dedicated herself to creating and initiating projects that challenge and galvanise the public, transcending the physical confines of the concert hall.

EDEN is DiDonato’s latest multi-faceted initiative, one that she will dedicate much of her time over the next four years to, uniting music, drama, and education to confront questions of our individual connection to Nature. Comprised of a tour of over 45 venues across five continents between 2022-24, an Erato album, ground-breaking education programme, and multiple partnerships, EDEN’s long-term impact and legacy will be far reaching.

DiDonato’s passionate belief, and the driving force behind EDEN, is that a collective return to our “best selves” is needed to not only address our current climate crisis, but the crisis of heart, as well. By examining our relationship to the natural world and our unique place within it, EDEN invites the listener to explore and search for answers about belonging, purpose, and healing.



“With each passing day,” writes DiDonato, “I trust more and more in the perfect balance, astonishing mystery and guiding force of the natural world around us, how much Mother Nature has to teach us. EDEN is an invitation to return to our roots and to explore whether or not we are connecting as profoundly as we can to the pure essence of our being, to create a new EDEN from within and plant seeds of hope for the future.”

Alongside her long-standing orchestral partners, **Il Pomo d’Oro** and conductor **Maxim Emelyanychev** DiDonato will collaborate with stage director **Marie Lambert** and Academy Award-winning composer **Rachel Portman**, combining music from different genres with a stage setting designed to connect the audience with the very heart of the natural world around us.

DiDonato describes how, in challenging times, contact with the natural world in conjunction with her musical life makes her *“feel connected and sense that I’m an integral part of something bigger. A seed is awakened within me. This is precisely when I seek out the comfort and connection of music: with each passing day I trust more and more in the perfect balance, astonishing mystery, and guiding force of the musical world. Both nature and music are showing us the way – a way dictated by harmony and balance. Will we answer the call?”*

The Erato album EDEN is released on February 25th, 2022 and the international tour begins on March 2, 2022 in Brussels. The repertoire for both is richly diverse, pulling from the timeless theme of nature which has captivated composers over the centuries with each track exploring an aspect of humankind’s relationship with nature and will, in DiDonato’s words, *“have no boundaries – like a wild garden.”*

Ranging from the 17th to the 21st century, and embracing such composers as Handel, Gluck, Wagner, Mahler, Ives, Copland and Oscar-winner Rachel Portman – who DiDonato has commissioned to write a new work specially for EDEN – the programme is at the heart of this visionary project.

Crossing a number of musical genres, EDEN opens with two pieces that pose questions: dating from 1908, Charles Ives’s enigmatic *The Unanswered Question*, in which DiDonato sings lines usually assigned to a trumpet, and a new commission from the Academy Award winning British composer Rachel Portman. For EDEN, Portman has teamed up with American poet and writer Gene Scheer to compose *The First Morning of the World*. Scheer, admired for his collaborations with such prominent composers as Jake Heggie (including the song cycle *Camille Claudel: Into the fire*, written for DiDonato and released on Erato in 2018) acknowledges, through its evocative text, that this is a moment rife with questions, wondering about *“the sounds and the songs from the first morning of the world.”*

An oratorio aria by Josef Mysliveček is taken from a retelling of the story of Adam and Eve, as the Angel of Justice utters a stern and bitter warning to his people. From the earlier part of the 18th century Handel is represented by his famous *“Largo”*, a breathtaking ode to the refreshing shade of a plane tree. The early glories of Italian opera are evoked in an aria from Cavalli’s opera of gods and humans, *La Calisto*. Its story opens on a scorched, arid landscape, but it ends with Calisto, its heroine, ascending to the stars.

Integral to EDEN is a new and industry-defining model that will set a new standard for the local impact artists can have in amplifying the power of their performances. By engaging with multiple international partners, EDEN ensures that its education and community work is central to the project, and that its legacy is real and long-lasting.

As **International Teaching Artists Collaborative** (ITAC)'s Climate Ambassador, DiDonato has been working with them on the design and delivery of EDEN Engagement—an interdisciplinary music-



nature education and community programme for children's choirs and school groups across the globe, under the guidance of Eric Booth, Co-Founder of ITAC. The vision is to employ local Teaching Artists in every city on the tour, and work with them to amplify young peoples' and others' experiences of EDEN, using their voices and creative projects to gain a deeper understanding of nature and their direct impact within the world. Local children's choirs will also get the opportunity to perform on stage with DiDonato in the EDEN concerts.

Botanic Gardens Conservation International and DiDonato have created *The EDEN Sustainability Challenge* that poses simple goals which demonstrably bring a more sustainable lifestyle. BGCI are providing native seeds for audience members to plant, bringing a rare and singular opportunity for the classical music community to literally and collectively plant a new "EDEN" across the globe, actively participating in regeneration, awareness and creation.

NOTES TO EDITORS

TOUR DATES

March

2 Brussels, Bozar
4 Luxembourg, Philharmonie
6 Arnhem, Stadstheater
8 Amsterdam, Concertgebouw
11 Aalborg, Musikkens Hus
14 Hamburg, Elbphilharmonie
17 Athens
20 Vienna, Konzerthaus
22 Budapest, MUPA
25 Moscow, Zaryadye Hall
27 St Petersburg, Philharmonie

April

5/6 London, Barbican
9 Dublin, National Concert Hall
12 Kansas City, Folly Theater
14 Ann Arbor, Hill Auditorium
16 Chicago, Harris Theatre
19 Toronto, Koerner Hall
23 New York, Carnegie Hall
24 Washington, The Music Center at Strathmore

TRACKLIST – EDEN

Charles Ives 1874-1954

1. **The Unanswered Question**

Rachel Portman b.1960

2. **The First Morning of the World***

Gustav Mahler 1860-1911

Rückert-Lieder

3. II. "Ich atmet' einen linden Duft!"

Biagio Marini 1594-1663

Scherzi e canzone Op.5

4. III. "Con le stelle in ciel che mai"

Josef Mysliveček 1737–1781

Oratorio **Adamo ed Eva** (Part II)

5. Aria: "Toglierò le sponde al mare" (Angelo di giustizia)

Aaron Copland 1900-1990

8 Poems of Emily Dickinson for voice and chamber orchestra

6. I. Nature, the gentlest mother

Giovanni Valentini c.1582–1649

7. **Sonata enharmonica**

Francesco Cavalli 1602–1676

Opera **La Calisto** (Act I, Scene 14)

8. Aria: "Piante ombrose" (*Calisto*)

Christoph Willibald Gluck 1714–1787

Opera **Orfeo ed Euridice Wq. 30**

9. Danza degli spettri e delle furie. Allegro non troppo

Christoph Willibald Gluck 1714–1787

Scena ed aria **Misera, dove son! From Ezio Wq. 15** (*Fulvia*)

10. Scena: "Misera, dove son!..."

11. Aria: "Ah! non son io che parlo..."

George Frideric Handel 1685–1759

Dramatic oratorio **Theodora HWV 68** (Part I)

12. Aria: "As with Rosy steps the morn" (*Irene*)

Gustav Mahler

Rückert-Lieder

13. IV. "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen"

Richard Wagner 1813–1883

5 Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme WWV 91 (Wesendonck Lieder)

14. IV. "Schmerzen"

BONUS TRACK

George Frideric Handel

Opera **Serse HWV 40** (Act I, Scene 1)

15. Recitativo: "Frondi tenere e belle"



16. Aria: "Ombra mai fù" (*Serse*)

**World-premiere recording*

Artists:

Joyce DiDonato, *soprano (1-6,8,10-16)*

Il Pomo d'Oro

Maxim Emelyanychev, *conductor*

PARTNERS

Beautiful Chorus

www.beautifulchorus.com

International Teaching Artists Collaborative

www.itac-collaborative.com/projects/itac-impact-climate

Eric Booth

<http://ericbooth.net/about/>

Botanic Gardens Conservation International

<https://www.bgci.org/>

Erato Album

1CD digipack

Release date: **Friday, 25 February 2022**

Digipack: 0190296465154 - SHRM: 0190296465130 - Dolby Atmos: 0190296340215

Recording place and dates: September 2021, Teatro Comunale di Lonigo, Italy