



Lyric Arts France / Opéra Bastide

For immediate release

CONDUCTOR BERNARD MCDONALD APPOINTED MUSIC DIRECTOR

September 2, 2026 — Following an extensive international search, celebrated conductor and vocal coach **Bernard McDonald** has been appointed **Music Director of Lyric Arts France**, the international opera residency program of **Opéra Bastide**, the annual festival in Villefranche-de-Rouergue.



Lyric Arts France, in partnership with the French association **Les Arts en Bastide Royale**, presents the annual **Opéra Bastide** festival in the historic medieval city of Villefranche-de-Rouergue in southwest France. Through the residency, young international artists come together each summer for an intensive period of training, artistic development and public performance, supported by a faculty of around a dozen distinguished professional artists, conductors, coaches and teachers.

McDonald joins the organisation as **Opéra Bastide** enters its fourth year, following three years of sustained growth and a 2026 festival that presented **44 public events**. Under the artistic direction of **Jonathan Eaton**, Opéra Bastide brings together opera, concerts, training and community engagement throughout the city.

McDonald's responsibilities for 2027 will include conducting one of three mainstage operas at the **Théâtre des Bastides**, the only surviving 19th-century Italianate theatre in the Aveyron, and overseeing five major concerts in historic settings throughout the city.

Jonathan Eaton, **Artistic Director of Lyric Arts France and Opéra Bastide**, said "Bernard McDonald is an established international conductor and coach with a vast repertoire and a longstanding and flourishing career in North America and Europe. We are delighted to welcome him to our artistic team and look forward to building our program and enhancing the excellence of our presentations under his musical leadership."

McDonald added "Lyric Arts France and Opéra Bastide combine international-level performance and training with a community that has embraced its role as an artistic

hub and is realizing the benefits for residents and visitors alike. I'm thrilled to provide musical direction to such a visionary enterprise in the years ahead."

McDonald's international credits include the New National Theatre Tokyo, Netherlands Opera, Netherlands Radio Choir, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, New York City Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Opera Orlando, Mobile Opera, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh and Opera Kelowna.

He is currently **Director of Opera at the Florida State University College of Music** and has previously taught at the Manhattan School of Music, Indiana University Opera Theater, the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Dutch National Opera Academy.

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