

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CENTER PRESENTS SOPRANO NADINE SIERRA WITH PIANIST TAMARA SANIDKIDZE

SUNDAY, APRIL 29 AT 5:30 P.M. AT TEMPLE EMANU-EL'S MARTIN MEYER SANCTUARY

Performing works by Bernstein, Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Villa-Lobos and Braga

SAN FRANCISCO (April 16, 2012)—San Francisco Opera Center continues the 30th season of the Schwabacher Debut Recitals on Sunday, April 29 at 5:30 p.m. at Temple Emanu-El's Martin Meyer Sanctuary (Two Lake Street, at Arguello, in San Francisco). Soprano and second-year Adler Fellow Nadine Sierra will perform an eclectic program of works by Bernstein, Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Villa-Lobos and Braga, with accompaniment by pianist and former Adler Fellow Tamara Sanikidze.

The first half of soprano Nadine Sierra's diverse recital program will include song cycles by Claude Debussy (*Quatre Chansons de Jeunesse*) and Sergei Rachmaninoff (*Six Romances* Op. 38). The second half of the program features four songs from Leonard Bernstein's whimsical *La Bonne Cuisine* and a collection of songs from Heitor Villa-Lobos's cycle *Modinhas e Canções*. Concluding the program are Villa-Lobos's "Melodia Sentimental" and Ernani Braga's "Engenho novo."

A 2010 Merola alumna and second-year Adler Fellow, Nadine Sierra made her San Francisco Opera debut in 2011 creating the roles of Juliet and Maria in Christopher Theofanidis and Donna DiNovelli's *Heart of a Soldier*. A winner of the 2009 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Sierra's upcoming engagements include Anne Truelove in *The Rake's Progress* with the Cincinnati Chamber Orchesta and Papagena in *The Magic Flute* this summer with San Francisco Opera. Sierra will perform this recital program again in May for her solo debut at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall.

The Schwabacher Debut Recitals have been endowed in perpetuity by the generosity of the late James Schwabacher. A celebrated Bay Area singer, recitalist, scholar and teacher, James Schwabacher was a co-founder of the Merola Opera Program. The Schwabacher Debut Recitals have introduced the artistry of world-renowned opera singers, including Susan Graham, Anna Netrebko, Deborah Voigt, Brian Asawa and Thomas Hampson. The recitals provide an opportunity to hear a wealth of song literature ranging from Baroque masterpieces and Romantic-era classics to newly commissioned works.

2012 SCHWABACHER DEBUT RECITALS

Presented by San Francisco Opera Center

Sunday, April 29, 5:30 p.m.

Martin Meyer Sanctuary, Temple Emanu-El, 2 Lake Street, San Francisco

Nadine Sierra, soprano Tamara Sanikidze, piano

PROGRAM:

CLAUDE DEBUSSY / Quatre Chansons de Jeunesse SERGEI RACHMANINOFF / Six Romances, Op. 38 LEONARD BERNSTEIN / Songs from La Bonne Cuisine HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS / Songs from Modinhas e Canções HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS / "Melodia Sentimental" ERNANI BRAGA / "Engenho novo"

TICKETS & INFORMATION:

Single tickets for the Schwabacher Debut Recitals are \$25. Tickets may be purchased by calling the San Francisco Opera Box Office (Mon. 10 am-5 pm, Tues.-Fri. 10 am-6 pm) at (415) 864-3330. Student Rush tickets are available for \$15 at Temple Emanu-El 30 minutes prior to each recital (limit of two tickets per person; valid ID is required), subject to availability. Casting, programs, schedules and ticket prices are subject to change.

About the Artists

Second-year Adler Fellow **NADINE SIERRA** made her San Francisco Opera debut in 2011, creating the roles of Juliet and Maria in Christopher Theofanidis and Donna DiNovelli's *Heart of a Soldier*. She is an alumna of the 2010 Merola Opera Program, where she was heard as Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*. A winner of the 2009 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Sierra's other recent awards include first prize of the George London Competition (2010), the Gerda Lissner International Competition (2010), the Loren Zachary Competition (2010) and the Stella Maris Competition (2011), as well as second prize in the Mirjam Helin International Vocal Competition (2009). The soprano has also appeared as the Sandman (*Hansel and Gretel*), the First Spirit (*Die Zauberflöte*), Beth (*Little Women*), and Despina (*Così fan tutte*). She has also recently appeared as Tytania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) with Boston Lyric Opera, Euridice (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) with Palm Beach Opera and Gilda (*Rigoletto*) with Florida Grand Opera. Upcoming engagements include singing Anne Truelove (*The Rake's Progress*) with the Cincinnati Chamber Orchesta, Papagena (*The Magic Flute*) with San Francisco Opera, and her solo recital debut at Carnegie Hall.

Coach and accompanist **TAMARA SANIKIDZE** is an alumna of the 2009 Merola Opera Program and the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program at Washington National Opera (WNO). A 2010 and 2011 Adler Fellow, Sanikidze has served on San Francisco Opera's music staff for productions of *La Fanciulla del West, Aida, The Makropulos Case, Die Walküre, Xerxes* and *Carmen*. She has also worked on WNO productions of *Don Giovanni, Hansel and Gretel, Rigoletto, La Traviata, Carmen*, and *Turandot*. Sanikidze has served on the music staff at Virginia Opera, Opera Cleveland, University of Maryland Opera Studio, Pittsburg Opera, Washington Concert Opera, and Wolf Trap Opera. She recently participated in the Aspen Music Festival, the Cleveland Art Song Festival, and the Music Academy of the West. She has partnered with Quinn Kelsey, Nicole Cabell, Sidney Outlaw, Leah Crocetto and Amanda Majeski for recitals at the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall, among other concert venues; she also performed for President Bush at the White House. In the summers of 2009 and 2010, Tamara Sanikidze served as the official pianist of the Operalia Voice Competition in Budapest and Milan.

About San Francisco Opera Center and Merola Opera Program

San Francisco Opera Center was created in 1982 by then—General Director Terence A. McEwen to oversee the operation and administration of the education and training programs initiated by Kurt Herbert Adler in 1954. Providing a coordinated sequence of performance and study opportunities for young artists, San Francisco Opera Center represents a new era in which young artists of major operatic potential can develop through intensive training and performance, under the aegis of a major international opera company. Now under the guidance of its fourth director, Sheri Greenawald, and San Francisco Opera General Director David Gockley, the Opera Center has trained and introduced many young stars from around the world to the international opera stage through its resident artist programs such as the Adler Fellowship.

Initially founded as the San Francisco Opera/Affiliate Artists program, the Adler Fellowship Program is one of the nation's most prestigious training programs for advanced singers. Each year, Adler Fellows are sponsored by individual donors to help cover the cost of their fellowship. Sponsorships range from \$5,000-\$100,000, and sponsors affiliated with the Adler Program have the opportunity to attend private studio classes with the Fellows and develop nurturing relationships

with them. Alumni from the Adler Fellowship Program include sopranos Laura Claycomb, Nicolle Foland, Nancy Gustafson, Mary Mills, Patricia Racette, Ruth Ann Swenson and Deborah Voigt; mezzosopranos Zheng Cao and Dolora Zajick; countertenor Brian Asawa; baritones Mark Delavan and David Okerlund; and bass-baritones Monte Pederson and John Relyea.

One of the oldest and most acclaimed training programs of its kind, the Merola Opera Program for aspiring opera professionals offers up-and-coming singers, coach-accompanists and stage directors the opportunity of intense study and performance during an eleven-week summer program. Each year, hundreds of artists from throughout the world vie for approximately 30 coveted spots in the summer program. Admission is based solely on talent rather than financial ability; there is no charge to the participants. Named for San Francisco Opera's first general director, Gaetano Merola, the program began during the 1954-55 Season and established its full training program in 1957. Alumni of the program include Sylvia McNair, Anna Netrebko, Patricia Racette, Ruth Ann Swenson, Carol Vaness, Deborah Voigt, Susan Graham, Dolora Zajick, Brian Asawa, Thomas Hampson, Rolando Villazón, and Patrick Summers. An independent non-profit organization, the Merola Opera Program operates in collaboration with San Francisco Opera Center and San Francisco Opera.

For more information on the San Francisco Opera Center and the Adler Fellowship and Merola Opera Program, visit www.sfopera.com.

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This press release and related photography are available at sfopera.com/press. For further press information, please contact: Robin Freeman [415.565.6451 / rfreeman@sfopera.com].