SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA CENTER

2013 SCHWABACHER DEBUT RECITALS CONCLUDE ON MAY 5 WITH MEZZO-SOPRANO SARAH MESKO AND TENOR THEO LEBOW

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

Performing works by Tchaikovsky, Gershwin and selections from Dvořák's *Gypsy Songs*

SAN FRANCISCO (April 12, 2013)—San Francisco Opera Center and the Merola Opera Program conclude the 31st season of the Schwabacher Debut Recitals on Sunday, May 5, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. with Merola Opera Program alumni mezzo-soprano Sarah Mesko and tenor Theo Lebow presenting a program including works by Tchaikovsky, Wolf and Gershwin as well as Dvořák's *Gypsy Songs.* They will be accompanied by pianist and current Adler Fellow Robert Mollicone.

The recital will begin with a selection from Bach's Cantata BWV 134, performed by both Sarah Mesko and Theo Lebow. Mesko will also perform a set of songs for soprano by female French composer Cécil Chaminade, Dvořák's well-known *Gypsy Songs* Opus 55, and *Songs of Wonderment and Love* by American art song composer Richard Hundley. Lebow will sing a selection of songs from Tchaikovsky's *Six Romances*, opus 38, based on poems by Aleksey Tolstoy, Liszt's *Tre Sonetti di Petrarca* and several selections from Hugo Wolf's *Mörike Lieder*. The recital will conclude with a selection of songs by George Gershwin, performed by both singers.

A 2012 Merola Opera Program alumna, Sarah Mesko recently performed the roles of Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* and Hansel in *Hänsel und Gretel* with Washington National Opera as well as Amélie in *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* with the Santa Fe Opera. The mezzo-soprano's career highlights include Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Washington National Opera and La Sagesse and Sidonie in Lully's *Armide* with Mercury Baroque and Théatre de Gennevilliers in Paris. She has appeared as a soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra,

Alexandria Symphony, the Washington National Cathedral Choral Society, and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

American tenor Theo Lebow is also a graduate of the 2012 Merola Opera Program, where he sang the role of Contino Belfiore in *La Finta Giardiniera*. Other recent credits include a Scientist in Menotti's *The Last Savage* with the Santa Fe Opera and his main-stage debut this year with Seattle Opera as the First Prisoner in *Fidelio*. He has been awarded the encouragement award from the Gerda Lissner Foundation, semi-finalist placement in the Marcello Giordani Foundation, and was regional finalist in the Metropolitan National Council Auditions.

The Schwabacher Debut Recitals are endowed in perpetuity by the generosity of the late James Schwabacher and are sponsored by the Jack H. Lund Charitable Trust.

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 internationally recognized artists, including Susan Graham, Anna Netrebko, Deborah Voigt, Brian Asawa and Thomas Hampson. The recitals offer a rare opportunity to hear a wealth of song literature ranging from Baroque masterpieces and Romantic-era classics to newly commissioned works, all performed by gifted young artists in an intimate setting.

Tickets & Information

All performances take place at Temple Emanu-El's Martin Meyer Sanctuary (Two Lake Street, at Arguello, in San Francisco). 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.-Sat. 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.

2013 Schwabacher Debut Recitals
Presented by San Francisco Opera Center and the Merola Opera Program
Temple Emanu-El's Martin Meyer Sanctuary
2 Lake Street, San Francisco

Sunday, May 5, 5:30 p.m.
Sarah Mesko, mezzo-soprano
Theo Lebow, tenor
Robert Mollicone, piano

Selections from Cantata BWV 134	J.S. Bach
Selections from Six Romances, op. 38	P.I. Tchaikovsky
Selected Songs	Cecil Chaminade
Tre Sonetti di Petrarca	Franz Liszt

INTERMISSION

Gypsy Songs, op. 55	Antonin Dvořák
Selections from *Mörike Lieder*	Hugo Wolf
Songs of Wonderment and Love	Richard Hundley
Selected Songs	George Gershwin

About the Artists

American mezzo-soprano **Sarah Mesko** is an alumna of the 2012 Merola Opera Program. Her 2012–13 season engagements include Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) and Hansel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) with Washington National Opera and Amélie (*La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*) with the Santa Fe Opera. Other career highlights include Alisa (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) and Kate Pinkerton and Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*) at Washington National Opera as well as La Sagesse and Sidonie (Lully's *Armide*) with Mercury Baroque and Théatre de Gennevilliers in Paris. On the concert stage, she has appeared as a soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra, Alexandria Symphony, the Washington National Cathedral Choral Society, and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. A two-time winner of the Richard F. Gold Career Grant, she is a graduate of Washington National Opera's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program and was a national finalist in the 2009 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

American tenor **Theo Lebow** is a graduate of the 2012 Merola Opera Program where he sang the role of Contino Belfiore in *La Finta Giardiniera*. As a 2012–13 Seattle Opera Young Artist, Lebow made his main-stage debut with that company as the First Prisoner in *Fidelio*, and he starred as Edoardo in their young artist production of *Un Giorno di Regno*. Other recent credits include a Scientist in Menotti's *The Last Savage* with the Santa Fe Opera in 2011, the encouragement award from the Gerda Lissner Foundation, semi-finalist placement in the Marcello

Giordani Foundation, and regional finalist in the Metropolitan National Council Auditions. Upcoming engagements include Népomuc in *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* with the Santa Fe Opera.

Coach and pianist **Robert Mollicone** is a second-year Adler Fellow. He was a member of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, where he served on the music staff for *Don Pasquale*, *Tosca*, and *Lucia di Lammermoor* on the main stage. A Rhode Island native, Mollicone has served as a vocal coach and pianist for Boston Lyric Opera, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Boston Opera Collaborative, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, and Opera North. He was a Spectrum Resident Artist at Virginia Opera in 2009, and a participant in the Merola Opera Program in 2010. Mollicone worked on San Francisco Opera's productions of *The Magic Flute* and *Moby-Dick* in 2012.

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.

Initially founded as the San Francisco Opera/Affiliate Artists program in 1977, the Adler Fellowship Program is one of the nation's most prestigious performance-oriented residencies for the most advanced young singers and coach/accompanists. Each year, Adler Fellows are sponsored by individual donors to help cover the cost of their fellowship, 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; mezzo-sopranos 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. 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 Joyce DiDonato, 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 sfopera.com and merola.org.

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This press release and downloadable Schwabacher Debut Recital artist photographs are available at sfopera.com/press. For further press information, please contact:

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