



MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM ANNOUNCES PARTICIPANTS FOR ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Twenty-nine artists from seven countries to participate in eleven-week intensive training program

Program will include performances of Gioachino Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, free Schwabacher Summer Concert at Yerba Buena Gardens, the annual Merola Grand Finale, and the world premiere of Thomas Pasatieri's *The Hotel Casablanca*

SAN FRANCISCO, April 19, 2007— San Francisco Opera Center Director Sheri Greenawald announced the 23 singers, 5 apprentice coaches, and 1 apprentice stage director who will participate in the 50th Anniversary Season of the prestigious Merola Opera Program, running June 4 – August 18, 2007. The artists, selected from more than 750 applicants last fall, come from seven different countries: Argentina, Greece, Ireland, Japan, South Korea, Spain, and the United States.

The intensive eleven-week training program is highlighted by fully-staged productions of Gioachino Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, directed by Jose Maria Condemi and conducted by Martin Katz (July 13 and 15 at Fort Mason's Cowell Theater), and the world premiere of Thomas Pasatieri's *The Hotel Casablanca*, directed by Richard Kagey and conducted by Joseph Illick (August 3 and 5 at Cowell Theater). Additional public performances include the Schwabacher Summer Concert on July 29 at Yerba Buena Gardens, and the Merola Grand Finale on August 18 – the annual event showcasing the gifted young singers in performance with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House on August 18.

Throughout the summer, the artists will participate in master classes and private coachings with such luminaries as pianists Steven Blier, Martin Katz, and Warren Jones; conductor Patrick Summers; sopranos Jane Eaglen and Carol Vaness; mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade; tenor Rockwell Blake; and baritone Sir Thomas Allen. Participants will also receive training in operatic repertory, foreign languages, diction, acting, and stage movement.

A complete Merola Opera Program performance and casting calendar and artist roster follows. Visit www.Merola.org for more information.

2007 Merola Opera Program Artist Roster

Apprentice Stage Director

EUGENIA ARSENIS (Athens, Greece)

SCHOOLS: Royal Holloway University of London, Boston University, University College London, New York Film Academy, Attiko Conservatory

TEACHER: Theodore Antoniou

DIRECTING EXPERIENCE: *Waxworks*; *El Cimarrón*; *Antigone* at Royal Albert Hall—BBC Proms; theater in England and Greece; film and television in U.S. and Greece

Apprentice Coaches

ROBERTO BERROCAL (Bilbao, Spain)

SCHOOLS: New England Conservatory; College of Charleston

TEACHERS: John Moriarty, Pierre Vallet

COACHING EXPERIENCE: *Aida*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Così fan tutte*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Anna Karenina*

KEUN-A LEE (Seoul, Korea)

SCHOOLS: Manhattan School of Music; The Juilliard School; Kyunghee University

TEACHERS: Margo Garrett, Warren Jones, Brian Zeger, Jonathan Feldman

COACHING EXPERIENCE: *Il Viaggio a Reims*, *Così fan tutte*

MATTHEW OTTENLIPS (St. Louis, Missouri)

SCHOOLS: University of Missouri, Kansas City; University of Cincinnati

TEACHERS: Kelly Hale, Ken Weiss, Mark Gibson

COACHING EXPERIENCE: *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, *Madama Butterfly*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe*

YASUKO OURA (Kyoto, Japan)

SCHOOLS: The Juilliard School; Oberlin College

TEACHERS: Margo Garrett, Jonathan Feldman, Brian Zeger, Samuel Sanders

COACHING EXPERIENCE: *The Pearl Fishers*, *Così fan tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Little Women*, *Faust*, *Poliuto*, *A Month in the Country*, *Rage d'Amour*, *The Sound of Music*

MATTHEW THOMPSON (Burlington, North Carolina)

SCHOOLS: University of Michigan; University of North Carolina

TEACHERS: Martin Katz, Melody Racine, Jerry Deput, Katherine Collier

COACHING EXPERIENCE: *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *The Pajama Game*

Sopranos

JAMIE-ROSE GUARRINE (Peoria, Illinois)

SCHOOLS: University of Wisconsin, Madison; Illinois Wesleyan University

TEACHERS: Dale Johnson, James Doing, Tim Shaindlin, Robert Wood, John DeMain, Dr. Linda Farquharson

MAJOR ROLES: Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Despina (*Così fan tutte*), Tiny (*Paul Bunyan*), Isabelle/Madeline (*The Face on the Barroom Floor*), Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*)

MEROLA ROLE: Veronique (*The Hotel Casablanca*)

ASHLEY LOGAN (Princeton, New Jersey)

SCHOOL: University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music

TEACHERS: Barbara Honn, Lindsey Christiansen, Sandra Bernhard, Terry Lusk, K. Jenny Jones

MAJOR ROLES: Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Giannetta (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), Josephine (*Comedy on the Bridge*), Dritte Zofe (*Der Zwerg*)

MEROLA ROLES: Schwabacher Summer Concert: Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) and Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*)

ANI MALDJIAN (Los Angeles, California)

SCHOOLS: California State University, Northridge; California Institute of Arts

TEACHERS: Jane Eaglen, Cyndia Sieden, Deanna Murray, Peter Kazaras, Stephen Wadsworth, Armen Guzelimian

MAJOR ROLES: Anne Frank (*The Diary of Anne Frank*), Nannetta (*Falstaff*), Serpina (*La Serva Padrona*), Princess (*Transformations*), Despina (*Così fan tutte*), Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*), Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Miss Wordsworth (*Albert Herring*), Jane (*WET*)

MEROLA ROLE: Clorinda (*La Cenerentola*)

REBECCA PAUL (Rochester, New York)

SCHOOLS: University of Notre Dame, Goucher College, Mannes College of Music—Extension Division, Eastman School of Music—Community Education Division

TEACHERS: Barbara Conrad, Patricia Sage, Deborah Karner, Georgine Resick, John Riley-Schofield, Suzanna Adams

MAJOR ROLES: Suor Angelica, Magda (*The Consul*), Guttrune (*Götterdämmerung*), Elsa (*Lohengrin*), Cio-Cio-San (*Madama Butterfly*), Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Countess (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Leonore (*Fidelio*)

MEROLA ROLES: Schwabacher Summer Concert: Aida and Mother (*Hansel and Gretel*)

TAMARA WAPINSKY (Pottsville, Pennsylvania)

SCHOOLS: Mannes College of Music, Indiana University, Temple University

TEACHERS: Ruth Falcon, Tony Manoli, Renata Scotto, Regina Resnik, David Effron

MAJOR ROLES: Giorgetta (*Il Tabarro*), Nella (*Gianni Schicchi*), Beatrice Carbone (*A View from the Bridge*), Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*), Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Cio-Cio-San (*Madama Butterfly*), Ariadne (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

MEROLA ROLE: Tallulah Carter (*The Hotel Casablanca*)

Mezzo-sopranos

CYNTHIA HANNA (Charleston, South Carolina)

SCHOOLS: University of South Carolina, Charleston Southern University

TEACHERS: Mark Oswald, Donald Gray, Peter Mark, Kamal Khan, Ellen Douglas Schlaefer

MAJOR ROLES: Mercédès (*Carmen*), Mum (*Albert Herring*), Inez (*Il Trovatore*), Charlotte (*A Little Night Music*), Isabella (*L'Italiana in Algeri*), Baba (*The Medium*), Zia Principessa (*Suor Angelica*), Komponist (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Marcellina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*)

MEROLA ROLES: Schwabacher Summer Concert: Amneris (*Aida*) and Hansel (*Hansel and Gretel*)

DAVEDA KARANAS (Mandeville, Louisiana)

SCHOOLS: Boston University—Opera Institute, Arizona State University, Southeastern Louisiana University

TEACHERS: Penelope Bitzas, Marilyn Horne, Judy May, Scharm Schrock, Dale Dreyfoos

MAJOR ROLES: Lucretia (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Judith (*Bluebeard's Castle*), Marchesa Melibea (*Il Viaggio à Reims*), Mother Marie (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*), Madame Flora (*The Medium*), Lady with a Hat Box (*Postcard from Morocco*), Amahl's Mother (*Amahl and the Night Visitors*), Zia Principessa (*Suor Angelica*)

MEROLA ROLE: Tisbe (*La Cenerentola*)

DANIELA MACK (Buenos Aires, Argentina)

SCHOOLS: Louisiana State University

TEACHERS: John Keene, Dugg McDonald, Lori Bade, Terry Patrick-Harris

MAJOR ROLES: Rosina (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Blanche (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*), Carmen (*La Tragédie de Carmen*), Jo (*Little Women*), Mrs. McLean (*Susannah*), Maurya (*Riders to the Sea*), Suzy (*La Rondine*), Alisa and Mercédès (*Plácido Domingo Gala Concert—A Night for New Orleans*)

MEROLA ROLE: Cenerentola (*La Cenerentola*)

PAULA MURRIHY (Tralee, Ireland)

SCHOOLS: New England Conservatory, Dublin Institute of Technology—Conservatory of Music and Drama

TEACHERS: Patricia Misslin, Anne Marie O'Sullivan, Kayo Iwama, Grant Llewellyn, Stephen Lord,

MAJOR ROLES: Good Witch (*Transformations*), Zweite Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*), Dido (*Dido e Aeneas*), Ariodante, Messagiera (*L'Orfeo*), Hippolyta (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Cherubino (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Diana (*La Calisto*), Nancy (*Albert Herring*), Hansel (*Hansel and Gretel*)
MEROLA ROLE: Lucy Perez (*The Hotel Casablanca*)

MEREDITH WOODEND (Kissimmee, Florida)

SCHOOLS: Boston University, University of Florida

TEACHERS: Penelope Bitzas, Dr. Elizabeth Graham, Robin Stamper, Julie Tompkins

MAJOR ROLES: Ruth (*The Pirates of Penzance*), Flora (*La Traviata*), Gertrude (*Roméo et Juliette*), Third Lady (*The Magic Flute*)

MEROLA ROLE: Miss Pooder (*The Hotel Casablanca*)

Countertenor

VINCE YI (Los Angeles, California)

SCHOOL: Boston University

TEACHERS: James Demler, Mark Goodrich, Sharon Daniels, Allison Voth, William Lumpkin

MAJOR ROLES: Cardinal 1 and Oracle 1 (*Galileo Galilei*), The Boy (*The Tsar has his Photograph Taken*), Nanki-Poo (*The Mikado*), Abe Kaplan (*Street Scene*)

MEROLA ROLE: Schwabacher Summer Concert: Cesare (*Giulio Cesare*)

Tenors

ANDREW BIDLACK (Chambersburg, Pennsylvania)

SCHOOL: Temple University

TEACHERS: Mark Oswald, Carlos Serrano, Donald Nally, Tim Gotwald

MAJOR ROLES: Rodolfo (*La Bohème*), Bastien (*Bastien and Bastienna*), Candide

MEROLA ROLE: Charles Carter (*The Hotel Casablanca*)

ALEXANDER BOYER (Port Washington, New York)

SCHOOLS: Manhattan School of Music, Boston University

TEACHERS: Marlena Malas, Penelope Bitzas, Thomas Muraco, Dona D. Vaughn, Joel Sheveloff

MAJOR ROLES: Luigi (*Il Tabarro*), Alfredo (*La Traviata*), Chevalier de la Force (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), Prince Philippe (*A Dinner Engagement*), Azor (*Zemire und Azor*), Arkady (*A Month in the Country*), Rodolfo (*La Bohème*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*)

MEROLA ROLES: Schwabacher Summer Concert: Nemorino (*The Elixir of Love*) and Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*)

ALEK SHRADER (Alva, Oklahoma)

SCHOOLS: Oberlin Conservatory, Northwestern Oklahoma State University

TEACHERS: Stephen Lord, Marilyn Horne, Salvatore Champagne, Richard Miller, Aija Jirgensons Shrader

MAJOR ROLES: Count Almaviva (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Nemorino (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), Fenton (*Die Lustigen Weiber von Windsor*), Florville (*Il Signor Bruschino*), Le Chevalier (*Dialogues des Carmélites*)

MEROLA ROLE: Ramiro (*La Cenerentola*)

Baritones

WILLIAM BROWNING (Madison, Kansas)

SCHOOLS: Emporia State University, Wichita State University

TEACHERS: Dr. Vernon Yenne, Dr. Penelope Speedie, Vinson Cole, Marie Allyn King, Sylvia Plyler

MAJOR ROLES: Mercutio (*Roméo et Juliette*), Count Ceprano (*Rigoletto*), Marquis d'Obigny (*La Traviata*), The Four Villains (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Marcello (*La Bohème*), Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Don Giovanni, Le Marquis de la Force (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), Count Danilo (*The Merry Widow*)

MEROLA ROLES: Schwabacher Summer Concert: Father (*Hansel and Gretel*) and Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*)

NATHANIEL HACKMANN (Phoenix, Arizona)

SCHOOL: Central Michigan University

TEACHER: Dr. Eric Tucker

MAJOR ROLES: Schaunard (*La Bohème*), Silvio (*Pagliacci*), Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*)

MEROLA ROLE: Raul Perez (*The Hotel Casablanca*)

MATTHEW HANSCOM (Plymouth, Minnesota)

SCHOOL: Northwestern University

TEACHERS: Bruce Hall, Alan Darling, Sherrill Milnes, Ken Smith, Fred Ockwell

MAJOR ROLES: Gianni Schicchi, Eugene Onegin, Falstaff, Gideon March/Dashwood (*Little Women*), Graf Danilo (*Die Lustige Witwe*), Second Armored Man (*Die Zauberflöte*), Ben (*The Telephone*), Clark/Reverend MacCarty (*Slip Knot*)

MEROLA ROLES: Schwabacher Summer Concert: Belcore (*The Elixir of Love*) and Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*)

PAUL LA ROSA (Union, New Jersey)

SCHOOLS: The Juilliard School, Williams College

TEACHERS: Marlena Malas, Steven Blier

MAJOR ROLES: Agamemnon (*Iphigénie en Aulide*), Junius (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Nick Shadow (*The Rake's Progress*), Marcello (*La Bohème*), Don Giovanni, Figaro (*Le Nozze di Figaro*)

MEROLA ROLE: Dandini (*La Cenerentola*)

MATTHEW MOORE (Newport News, Virginia)

SCHOOLS: Boston University, Baylor University

TEACHERS: Sharon Daniels, Dr. John Van Cura, Frederica von Stade, Stacey Frederick, Fischer Brown

MAJOR ROLES: Marcello and Schaunard (*La Bohème*), Reinaldo Arenas (*Before Night Falls*), Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Belaev (*A Month in the Country*), Don Giovanni, Der Zar (*Der Zar Lässt Sich Photographieren*), Belcore (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*), Conte Robinson (*Il Matrimonio Segreto*)

MEROLA ROLE: Alidoro (*La Cenerentola*)

JASON PLOURDE (Caribou, Maine)

SCHOOLS: University of Southern Maine, Indiana University

TEACHERS: Timothy Noble, Ellen Chickering, Jim Caraher, Andrew Altenbach, Mark Phelps

MAJOR ROLES: Pistola (*Falstaff*), Hortensio (*The Daughter of the Regiment*), Dulcamara (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), Le Dancaïre (*Carmen*), Tom/John (*The Face on the Barroom Floor*), Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Figaro (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Baron Zeta (*The Merry Widow*)

MEROLA ROLE: Burton (*The Hotel Casablanca*)

Bass

KENNETH KELLOGG (Washington, District of Columbia)

SCHOOLS: Academy of Vocal Arts, University of Michigan, Ohio University

TEACHERS: William Schuman, Marjorie Stevens, Daniel Washington

MAJOR ROLES: Zaretsky and Prince Gremin (*Eugene Onegin*), Bluebeard (*Bluebeard's Castle*), Basilio (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Seneca (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), Orgon Pernelle (*Tartuffe*), Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), Simone (*Gianni Schicchi*), Mr. Kofner (*The Consul*), Superintendent Budd (*Albert Herring*)

MEROLA ROLE: Tobias (*The Hotel Casablanca*)

Bass-baritones

TOM CORBEIL (San Diego, California)

SCHOOLS: University of California, Davis; Regent College; University of British Columbia

TEACHERS: Virginia Zeani, Martin Wright, Peter Barcza

MAJOR ROLES: Figaro (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Mustafà (*L'Italiana in Algeri*), Superintendent Budd (*Albert Herring*), Crespel (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Sprecher (*Die Zauberflöte*), Caronte (*L'Orfeo*), Captain Corcoran (*H.M.S. Pinafore*)

MEROLA ROLE: Tom Carter (*The Hotel Casablanca*)

SAM HANDLEY (Union City, Tennessee)

SCHOOLS: University of Houston, University of Wisconsin, Madison; University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point

TEACHERS: Katherine Ciesinski, Paul Rowe

MAJOR ROLES: Don Pasquale, Bottom (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Mr. Emerson (*A Room with a View*), Polyphemus (*Acis and Galatea*), Sam (*Trouble in Tahiti*), Kaspar (*Der Freischütz*), Collatinus (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Dikoj (*Kát'a Kabanová*), Dr. Miracle (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*)

MEROLA ROLE: Don Magnifico (*La Cenerentola*)

Ani Maldjian, Jamie-Rose Guarrine, and Matthew Ottenlips are returning artists from the 2006 Merola Opera Program.

2007 Calendar of Performances

La Cenerentola, by Gioachino Rossini – Rossini's charming take on Cinderella will be presented at Fort Mason's Cowell Theater on July 13 (8 pm) and 15 (2 pm). Sung in Italian with English supertitles, the fully-staged performances, featuring scenic design by Erik Flatmo, will be conducted by Martin Katz and directed by Jose Maria Condemi.

Schwabacher Summer Concert – Merola will perform an afternoon of semi-staged opera scenes from works by such composers as Donizetti, Handel, Humperdinck, Mozart, and Verdi on Sunday, July 29, at 2 pm, at Yerba Buena Gardens (Mission Street, between Third and Fourth, in San Francisco). A part of the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival, this outdoor concert will be conducted by the Opera Center's Director of Musical Studies and Merola alumnus Mark Morash; Roy Rallo will direct. This concert is free; no tickets are required.

The Hotel Casablanca, by Thomas Pasatieri – The world premiere of Pasatieri's 19th opera will be performed at Fort Mason's Cowell Theater on August 3 (8 pm) and 5 (2 pm). Sung in English, the fully-staged performances will be conducted by Joseph Illick and directed and designed by Richard Kagey. Staged at the mythical Double-T Ranch and a seedy hotel riddled with assorted eccentric guests and set to an original libretto by the composer, *The Hotel Casablanca* is a comedy that takes place in 1948 regarding a wealthy Texan couple and their attempts to "toughen up" their 25-year-old nephew visiting from New York.

Merola Grand Finale – The 2007 Season of the Merola Opera Program culminates with the annual Merola Grand Finale, a concert of operatic arias and ensembles with full orchestra performed at the War Memorial Opera House on Saturday, August 18, at 7:30 pm. Merola Opera Program alumnus and Houston Grand Opera Music Director Patrick Summers will conduct the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

Tickets for *La Cenerentola* (\$35-48), *The Hotel Casablanca* (\$35-48), and the Merola Grand Finale (\$25-38) go on sale beginning May 1, and may be purchased by calling the San Francisco Opera Box Office Monday through Friday, 10 am to 6 pm, at (415) 864-3330. Members of the Merola Opera Program may purchase tickets to the Merola Grand Finale Reception (\$40), which follows the concert. For information on how to become a Merola member, please call (415) 565-6427 or visit www.Merola.org.

About the Merola Opera Program

Now in its 50th year, Merola Opera Program is the nation's oldest and foremost young artist training program in the country. Named for Gaetano Merola, San Francisco Opera's founding General Director, the Merola Opera Program has nurtured more than 1,000 up-and-coming singers, accompanists, and directors since its establishment in 1957. Each year, more than 750 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 participants.

The continued success and acclaim of this program is founded on the principal of focusing on one artist at a time, with an emphasis on personal attention and commitment to quality. Over the past five decades, Merola has built careers in opera with a proven balance of training, performance and individualized support. The Merola Opera Program is an independent nonprofit organization, which operates in collaboration with San Francisco Opera Center (Sheri Greenawald, director) and San Francisco Opera (David Gockley, general director).

The extensive list of Merola Opera alumni includes such celebrated artists today as: Brian Asawa, Charles Castronovo, Laura Claycomb, Tracy Dahl, Mark Delavan, Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, Thomas Hampson, Gary Lakes, Janis Martin, Sylvia McNair, Anna Netrebko, Cheryl Parrish, Earle Patriarco, Patricia Racette, John Reylea, Michael Schade, Kurt Streit, Patrick Summers, Ruth Ann Swenson, Jess Thomas, Mel Ulrich, Carol Vaness, Rolando Villazon, Deborah Voigt, and Dolora Zajick.

Nob Hill Gazette is the official media sponsor of the Merola 50th Anniversary Season.

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