



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA CENTER

**2010 SCHWABACHER DEBUT RECITALS
CONTINUES WITH HUGO WOLF'S *SPANISCHES LIEDERBUCH*
PRESENTED BY PIANIST ALLEN PERRIELLO
WITH SOPRANO SUSANNAH BILLER AND BARITONE AUSTIN KNESS
ON MARCH 28**

SAN FRANCISCO (March 5, 2010)– San Francisco Opera Center continues the 28th season of the Schwabacher Debut Recitals on Sunday, March 28, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. with pianist Allen Perriello performing Hugo Wolf's complete *Spanisches Liederbuch* with soprano Susannah Biller and baritone Austin Kness.

Late-Romantic Austrian composer Hugo Wolf is most famous for his prolific catalogue of vocal songs in addition to several operas, chamber works and choral music. Completed in 1890, Wolf's *Spanisches Liederbuch* is drawn from a collection of Spanish poems from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which were translated into German by Emanuel Geibel and Paul Heyse. The 44 songs take their text from poems written by Lope de Vega, Luis de Camões, Miguel de Cervantes, Juan Ruiz, Nicolas Nuñez, Lopez de Ubeda, Don Manuel del Rio, José de Valdivivielso, Alvaro Fernandez de Almeida, Rodrigo de Cota, Cristobal de Castellejo, Gil Vincente, Don Luis el Chico and Maria Doceo as well as a number of anonymous poets. The complete collection, which includes ten sacred religious and 34 secular texts, will be performed in five thematic groups.

Vocal coach and accompanist Allen Perriello, a second-year Adler Fellow, serves as a member of the San Francisco Opera music staff where he has prepared productions of the Gershwins' *Porgy and Bess*, Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, and Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. In addition to his professional engagements with Opera Cleveland, Rising Star Opera Theater and Ash Lawn Opera,

Perriello served as chorus master for Cincinnati Conservatory of Music's productions of *La Bohème* and *L'Elisir d'Amore*.

First-year Adler Fellow Susannah Biller is an alumna of the 2009 Merola Opera Program, where she sang Caterina in Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz*. A graduate of University of Tennessee and Northwestern University, Biller made her professional debut singing Titania in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Opera North in New Hampshire. Baritone and second-year Adler Fellow Austin Kness made his San Francisco Opera debut as Sciarrone in the 2009 production of Puccini's *Tosca* and returned to sing Marquis d'Obigny in Verdi's *La Traviata* and Marco in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*. A 2008 Merola Opera Program alumnus, Kness performed the title role of Merola's 2008 production of *Don Giovanni*.

The Schwabacher Debut Recitals has 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 has introduced the artistry of many world-renowned opera singers, 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, 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). 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 \$10 at Temple Emanu-El 30 minutes prior to each recital (limit of two tickets per person; valid ID is required), subject to availability.

SCHWABACHER DEBUT RECITALS

Sun. March 28, 5:30 pm

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

Pianist Allen Perriello presents Hugo Wolf's *Spanisches Liederbuch*

Susannah Biller, soprano

Austin Kness, baritone

Pianist Allen Perriello presents Hugo Wolf's song cycle *Spanisches Liederbuch*, featuring Adler Fellows Susannah Biller and Austin Kness.

About the Artists

Coach and accompanist **Allen Perriello**, a second-year Adler fellow, is an alumnus of the 2008 Merola Opera Program. During the 2009 San Francisco Opera season, Perriello served as a member of the music staff on the productions of *Porgy and Bess*, *Il Trovatore*, and *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Other professional engagements include Opera Cleveland, Rising Star Opera Theater, and Ash Lawn Opera. His other coaching credits include *Hänsel und Gretel*, *Albert Herring*, *La Bohème*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *Miss Lonelyhearts*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Werther*, *L'enfant et les Sortilèges*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *The Merry Widow*, *West Side Story*, and *The Consul*. Perriello served as chorus master for Cincinnati Conservatory of Music's productions of *La Bohème* and *L'Elisir d'Amore*. Perriello holds a master's degree in collaborative piano from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and a bachelor's degree in piano performance and music education from Ithaca College.

Soprano and first-year Adler Fellow **Susannah Biller** is an alumna of the 2009 Merola Opera Program, where she sang Caterina (*L'Amico Fritz*) and performed in the Schwabacher Summer Concert as Euridice (*Orfeo ed Euridice*), Musetta (*La Bohème*), Elvira (*L'Italiana in Algeri*), and Monica (*The Medium*). While at the University of Tennessee, Biller studied voice under George Bitzas and performed roles such as Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*), First Lady (*The Magic Flute*), Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*), and Mary Warren (*The Crucible*). She received her master's degree in music from Northwestern University, winning numerous awards and performing *Mélisande* (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Nannetta (*Falstaff*), and Amy (*Little Women*). Biller made her professional debut singing Titania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) with Opera North (New Hampshire). She was a winner in the Metropolitan Opera Mid-South District 2008–09 auditions.

Baritone and second-year Adler Fellow **Austin Kness** sang Sciarrone (*Tosca*) and Marquis d'Obigny (*La Traviata*) with the Company this past summer, and recently appeared as Marco (*Gianni Schicchi*) in this fall's *Il Trittico*. An alumnus of the Merola Opera Program, he performed the title role in Merola's 2008 production of *Don Giovanni*. Kness received his bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Iowa and is pursuing a master's degree at Indiana University. He has performed with Indiana University Opera Theater as Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Don Giovanni, Escamillo (*Carmen*), and Eddie Carbone (*A View from the Bridge*). His concert credits include Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with Indiana University and the Brahms Requiem with the Bloomington Chamber Singers. Kness is a former member of the Des Moines Metropolitan Opera Apprentice Program (2006–07), where he performed the roles of Moralès (*Carmen*) and Count Ceprano (*Rigoletto*). The baritone has also sung the roles of Fiorello (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) and Moralès with Cedar Rapids Opera Theater. Kness was a finalist in the West Palm Beach Voice Competition in 2007 who participated in the Kennedy Center Conservatory Project, where he represented the Jacobs School of Music.

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; 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. 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.sfoopera.com.

– SFO –

This press release and downloadable Schwabacher Debut Recital artist photographs are available at sfoopera.com/press. For further press information, please contact: Julia Inouye [415.565.6430 / jinouye@sfoopera.com] or Robin Freeman [415.565.6451 / rffreeman@sfoopera.com].