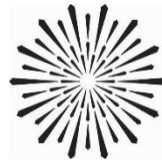


SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA CENTER



MEROLA
OPERA PROGRAM

San Francisco Opera Center and Merola Opera Program present

2019 SCHWABACHER RECITAL SERIES

April 3: Soprano Mary Evelyn Hangle, tenor Christopher Oglesby and pianist Mark Morash

April 24: Pianist Martin Katz with 2019 Adler Fellows soprano Mary Evelyn Hangle, mezzo-soprano Ashley Dixon, tenor Zhengyi Bai and bass-baritone Christian Pursell

Tickets available at (415) 864-3330 and sfopera.com

SAN FRANCISCO (March 25, 2019) — The Schwabacher Recital Series, presented by San Francisco Opera Center and the Merola Opera Program, continues in April with the final two recitals of its 36th season. Showcasing the exemplary young artists who have participated in the prestigious training programs of San Francisco Opera Center and the Merola Opera Program, the series offers music lovers an opportunity to hear opera's next generation of stars in the intimate and state-of-the-art Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater in San Francisco.

On **April 3**, the Schwabacher Recital Series presents soprano **Mary Evelyn Hangle** and tenor **Christopher Oglesby** with pianist and San Francisco Opera Center Director of Musical Studies **Mark Morash** (Merola 1987). Their program opens with two works by Franz Schubert (*Auf dem Strom*) and Benjamin Britten (Canticle III "Still Falls the Rain"), both featuring San Francisco Opera Co-Principal Horn Kevin Rivard. The artists also survey works by Richard Strauss (Sechs Lieder, Op. 19), Antonín Dvořák (*Cigánské Melodie*), Charles Ives and Gabriel Fauré (selected songs) and Italian duets by various composers. Mary Evelyn Hangle (Merola 2016; first-year Adler Fellow) recently performed the role of Anna Sørensen in Kevin Puts' *Silent Night* at Glimmerglass Festival and this spring will be featured in the Verdi Requiem at her alma mater, SUNY Fredonia, where she also held a two-day recital and masterclass residency this past fall. Tenor Christopher Oglesby (Merola 2018; first-year Adler Fellow) debuted as Tom Rakewell in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* with the Merola Opera Program. He recently performed with the Utah Symphony as a soloist in Handel's *Messiah* and was a Resident Artist at Utah Opera, where he sang Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette*.

Morash said: "Mary Evelyn and Christopher have come up with a true 'duo recital.' Each singer is featured in a beautiful number with horn and piano, with the horn courtesy of San Francisco Opera's outstanding Co-Principal Horn **Kevin Rivard**, and each has a solo set of songs. To finish, there is a light-hearted set of Italian duets. It promises to be a wonderful and varied evening of music and poetry."

Martin Katz, the “dean of collaborative pianists” (*Los Angeles Times*), leads a quartet of 2019 San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows—soprano **Mary Evelyn Hangley**, mezzo-soprano **Ashley Dixon**, tenor **Zhengyi Bai** and bass-baritone **Christian Pursell**—in the final recital of the series on **April 24**. The program features Samuel Barber’s *Hermit Songs* and selections from Hugo Wolf’s *Mörike Lieder* and Johannes Brahms’ *Deutsche Volkslieder*. One of the world’s busiest collaborators, Martin Katz has appeared and recorded regularly with celebrated vocal soloists such as Cecilia Bartoli, Lawrence Brownlee, José Carreras, Marilyn Horne, Karita Mattila, Samuel Ramey and Frederica von Stade. A pivotal figure in the training of countless singers and pianists for the past three decades, he has taught at the University of Michigan School of Music where he chairs the program in collaborative piano.

A 2018 Grand Finals winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Ashley Dixon (Merola 2015/2017; second-year Adler Fellow) first appeared with San Francisco Opera last fall as Annina in an excerpt from *La Traviata* at *Plácido Domingo in Concert*, and made her Company debut later in the season as an Angel First Class in Jake Heggie’s *It’s a Wonderful Life*. Zhengyi Bai (Merola 2018; first-year Adler Fellow), who entered college as a piano major in China before discovering his true instrument, won the Los Angeles District of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and appeared as Alessandro in Merola Opera Program’s production of Mozart’s *Il Re Pastore*. Christian Pursell (Merola 2017; second-year Adler Fellow) appeared in four Company productions last year, including Sir Walter Raleigh in *Roberto Devereux*, and this April sings Samuel/Doeg in Handel’s *Saul* with Nicholas McGegan and the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra at various venues in the Bay Area and at Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles.

Tickets & Information

All recitals take place at the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater, a state-of-the-art performance venue utilizing the Constellation® acoustic system from Berkeley-based Meyer Sound. The Taube Atrium Theater is part of San Francisco Opera’s Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera, located on the fourth floor of the Veterans Building (401 Van Ness Avenue) in San Francisco.

Tickets (general seating) are \$30 and can be purchased at the San Francisco Opera Box Office (301 Van Ness Avenue) in person, by phone at (415) 864-3330 and online at sfopera.com/srs. Student rush tickets, subject to availability, are available for \$15 at the Taube Atrium Theater (401 Van Ness Avenue) 30 minutes prior to each recital (limit of two tickets per person; valid ID is required). Artists, programs, schedules and ticket prices are subject to change.

The Schwabacher Recital Series is endowed in perpetuity by the generosity of the late James Schwabacher and sponsored in part by the Jack H. Lund Charitable Trust, Chris and Jennifer Brahm, Jayne and Peter Davis and Ms. Jean Schuler. A celebrated Bay Area singer, recitalist, scholar and teacher, James Schwabacher was a co-founder of the Merola Opera Program.

Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera. Pianos generously provided by Piedmont Piano Company.

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2019 SCHWABACHER RECITAL SERIES

Presented by San Francisco Opera Center and Merola Opera Program

Recitals take place at the Taube Atrium Theater

(Veterans Building (Fourth Floor), 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco)

Wednesday, April 3 at 7:30 p.m.

Mary Evelyn Hangley, soprano

Christopher Oglesby, tenor

Mark Morash, piano

Kevin Rivard, horn

PROGRAM:

Franz Schubert / *Auf dem Strom* (with San Francisco Opera Co-Principal Horn Kevin Rivard)

Benjamin Britten / Canticum III "Still Falls the Rain" (with San Francisco Opera Co-Principal Horn Kevin Rivard)

Richard Strauss / *Sechs Lieder*, Op. 19

Antonín Dvořák / *Cigánské Melodie*

Gabriel Fauré / Selected songs

Chanson de Shylock

Les roses d'Ispahan

Rencontre

Mandoline

Les présents

En sourdine

Chant d'automne

Toujours

Adieu

Italian duets (various composers)

Wednesday, April 24 at 7:30 p.m.

Martin Katz, piano

Mary Evelyn Hangley, soprano

Ashley Dixon, mezzo-soprano

Zhengyi Bai, tenor

Christian Pursell, bass-baritone

PROGRAM:

Hugo Wolf / Selections from *Mörike Lieder*

Samuel Barber / *Hermit Songs*

Johannes Brahms / Selections from *Deutsche Volkslieder*

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. Under the guidance of San Francisco Opera Center Director Sheri Greenawald and San Francisco Opera General Director Matthew Shilvock, 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 1975, the **Adler Fellowship Program** is one of the nation's most prestigious performance-oriented residencies for the most advanced young singers and pianists. Each year, Adler Fellows are sponsored by individual donors and institutional funders 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 Jane Archibald, Susannah Biller, Leah Crocetto, Heidi Melton, Melody Moore, Patricia Racette, Nadine Sierra, Ruth Ann Swenson, Elza van den Heever and Deborah Voigt; mezzo-sopranos Zheng Cao, Kendall Gladen, Daveda Karanas, Maya Lahyani, Daniela Mack, Renée Tatum and Dolora Zajick; countertenors Brian Asawa, Ryan Belongie and Gerald Thompson; tenors Andrew Bidlack, Brian Jagde, Daniel Montenegro, Matthew O'Neill, Sean Panikkar, Alek Shrader and Noah Stewart; baritones Eugene Brancoveanu, Alfredo Daza, Mark Delavan, Austin Kness, Lucas Meachem and James Westman; bass-baritones Joshua Bloom, Ryan Kuster, John Relyea, Philip Skinner, Daniel Sumegi and Dale Travis; and basses John Ames and Kenneth Kellogg.

Widely regarded as the foremost opera training program for aspiring singers, coaches, and stage directors, the **Merola Opera Program** has served as a proving ground for hundreds of artists. Many Merola alumni are now among the most recognized names in the opera world. Every summer the program offers 29 young artists the rare opportunity of studying, coaching and participating in master classes with established professionals for twelve weeks. Participants also perform in two complete opera productions with orchestra and two summer concerts. Offered free of charge for all participants, the Merola Opera Program is unique in the industry in many ways. Merola is the only young artist program to provide financial support to developing artists for five years following participation. The Merola Opera Program is a financially independent organization with a separate 501(c)(3) which operates in close collaboration with the San Francisco Opera Center and San Francisco Opera. In addition, only Merola graduates are considered for participation in the San Francisco Opera's Adler Fellowship program. Since 2015, Merola Opera Program has been the sole sponsor of three of the four annual Schwabacher Recitals through the generosity of the Jack H. Lund Charitable Trust. This season, the Merola sponsored recitals are made possible through the generosity of Jennifer and Chris Brahm, Jayne and Peter Davis, Jean Shuler and the Jack H. Lund Charitable Trust.

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

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This press release and photographs of the artists featured in the 2019 Schwabacher Recital Series are available at sfopera.com/press.

For further press inquiries, please contact San Francisco Opera Communications:

Julia Inouye (415)565-6430 / jinouye@sfopera.com

Jeffery McMillan (415) 565-6451 / jmcmillan@sfopera.com

Teresa Concepcion (415) 565-6470 / tconcepcion@sfopera.com