# 2011 SCHWABACHER DEBUT RECITALS CONTINUE ON MARCH 27 WITH *AMORES NUEVOS* PRESENTED BY NEW YORK FESTIVAL OF SONG'S STEVEN BLIER

## WITH SARA GARTLAND, DANIEL MONTENEGRO AND AUSTIN KNESS

SAN FRANCISCO (February, 28 2011)—San Francisco Opera Center continues the 29th season of the Schwabacher Debut Recitals on Sunday, March 27, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. with New York Festival of Song's Steven Blier presenting *Amores Nuevos.* In a program featuring songs from Spain and Latin America, Blier is joined by soprano Sara Gartland and tenor Daniel Montenegro, both current Adler Fellows, and baritone Austin Kness, a former Adler Fellow.

The program will feature songs from Spain and Latin America, including Sephardic melodies set by Alberto Hemsi, Brazilian art songs by Mozart Camaro Guarnieri and Oscar Fernández, Mexican songs by Maria Grever, zarzuela arias by Chapi and Chueca, Cuban songs by Gisela Hernández and Tanya León, as well as vocal music by Granados, Turina, Halffter and many others.

New York Festival of Song's artistic director and an eminent accompanist and vocal coach, Steven Blier co-founded the Festival in 1988. Since New York Festival of Song's inception, Blier has programmed, performed, translated and annotated more than 125 vocal recitals with repertoire spanning the entire range of American song, as well as art song from Schubert to Szymanowski and early vaudeville to Lennon-McCartney. Mr. Blier is on the faculty of the Juilliard School and has been active in encouraging young recitalists at summer programs, including the Wolf Trap Opera Company and the San Francisco Opera Center.

Soprano Sara Gartland, a second-year Adler Fellow, made her San Francisco Opera debut last season as Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and returned as Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. She is

a former Eastern Region finalist at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and fourth place winner of the Denver Lyric Opera Guild Competition. Daniel Montenegro, a first-year Adler Fellow, recently appeared as a Thug in Los Angeles Opera's world premiere production of Daniel Catán's *Il Postino.* The tenor performed Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* as a participant in the 2010 Merola Opera Program following his San Francisco Opera debut as Roderigo in *Otello* in 2009. Baritone Austin Kness concluded his two-year Adler Fellowship in 2010. He has appeared at San Francisco Opera in a number of roles, such as Marco from *Gianni Schicchi*, the Second Nazarene in *Salome*, and Handsome in *La Fanciulla del West*. He most recently appeared as Brühlmann in *Werther*, Prince Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly*, and a Stagehand in *The Makropulos Case*.

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, Schwabacher was a co-founder of the Merola Opera Program. The Schwabacher Debut Recitals have 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, all performed by gifted young artists in an intimate setting. The March 27 recital is made possible, in part, by Robert and Laura Cory.

**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.

**2011 Schwabacher Debut Recitals**
**Temple Emanu-El's Martin Meyer Sanctuary**
**2 Lake Street, San Francisco**

**Sunday, March 27, 5:30pm**
*Amores Nuevos* presented by New York Festival of Song's Steven Blier with Sara Gartland, Daniel Montenegro and Austin Kness.
**Steven Blier, piano**
**Sara Gartland, soprano**
**Daniel Montenegro, tenor**
**Austin Kness, baritone**
Performing works by Alberto Hemsi, Brazilian art songs by Mozart Camaro Guarnieri and Oscar Fernández, Mexican songs by Maria Grever, zarzuela arias by Chapi and Chueca, Cuban songs by Gisela Hernández and Tanya León, as well as vocal music by Granados, Turina, Halffter and many others.

## Upcoming Schwabacher Debut Recitals

**Sunday, March 6, 5:30 pm**
**Eugene Chan, baritone**
**John Churchwell, pianist**
Baritone Eugene Chan presents works by Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, and Medtner as well as a group of American songs. Chan will be accompanied by San Francisco Opera music staff member John Churchwell.

**Sunday April 10, 5:30pm**
**Daveda Karanas, mezzo-soprano**
**Allen Perriello, piano**
Former Adler Fellows Daveda Karanas and Allen Perriello present Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*.

### About the Artists

Accompanist and vocal coach **STEVEN BLIER** is the artistic director of New York Festival of Song (NYFOS). He has performed in recital with such artists as Samuel Ramey, Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, Susan Graham, Frederica von Stade, Jessye Norman, and Sylvia McNair. In concert with Renée Fleming, he performed throughout North America and Europe, including recitals at Carnegie Hall; La Scala, Milan: and a *Live From Lincoln Center* telecast. Blier co-founded New York Festival of Song in 1988 with Michael Barrett and since the Festival's inception he has programmed, performed, translated and annotated more than 125 vocal recitals with repertoire spanning the entire range of American song. A champion of American music, he has premiered works of John Corigliano, Ned Rorem, William Bolcom, John Musto, Richard Danielpour, Tobias Picker, Robert Beaser, and Lee Hoiby. His discography includes a Grammy Award winning recording of Leonard Bernstein's *Arias and Barcarolles* (Koch International); the NYFOS discs of Blitzstein, Gershwin, and German Lieder (*Unquiet Peace*); Gershwin's *Lady Be Good!* (Nonesuch Records); four albums of songs by Charles Ives in partnership with baritone William Sharp (Albany Records); and *The Land Where the Good Songs Go* with Sylvia McNair and Hal Cazalet.

Soprano **SARA GARTLAND,** a second-year Adler Fellow, made her San Francisco Opera debut last season as Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and returned as Kate Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*). She

appeared as Suzel (*L'Amico Fritz*) with the 2009 Merola Opera Program, where she also performed in scenes as Gilda (*Rigoletto*) and Nannetta (*Falstaff*). Other recent engagements include performances with Utah Opera and Des Moines Metro Opera as Alexandra in Blitzstein's *Regina*, Opera Iowa as Norina (*Don Pasquale*) and the Ohio Light Opera as Elisabeth Bennet in the world premiere of Mechem's *Pride and Prejudice*, Valencienne (*The Merry Widow*), and as Marianne (Romberg's *The New Moon*). Gartland earned a master's degree in vocal performance from the University of Colorado Boulder and a bachelor's degree in vocal performance from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is a former Eastern Region finalist at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and fourth place winner of the Denver Lyric Opera Guild Competition.

A first-year Adler Fellow, **DANIEL MONTENEGRO** recently appeared as a Thug in Los Angeles Opera's world premiere production of Daniel Catán's *Il Postino.* The tenor performed Nemorino (*L'Elisir d'Amore*) as a participant in the 2010 Merola Opera Program following his San Francisco Opera debut as Roderigo (*Otello*) in 2009. His many appearances with Los Angeles Opera include Gastone (*La Traviata*, released on Decca DVD); El Dancaïro (*Carmen*), which he also performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and Maximino Mendez in the world premiere of Lee Holdridge's *Concierto para Mendez*, as well as productions of *L'Incoronazione di Poppea, Luisa Fernanda, Il Tabarro* and *Die Gezeichneten.* Montenegro's other credits include the Shepherd (Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*) at the Sydney Festival and the Steersman (*Der fliegende Holländer*) with both Portland Opera and Arizona Opera. The Southern California native is a former resident artist at Minnesota Opera, where he performed Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Nick (*The Handmaid's Tale*), Flavio (*Norma*), and Liverotto (*Lucrezia Borgia*). Montenegro is a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Baritone **AUSTIN KNESS**, a native of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, concluded his two-year Adler Fellowship in 2010. He appeared at San Francisco Opera as Sciarrone (*Tosca*) and Marquis d'Obigny (*La Traviata*) in 2008 and returned in the 2009–10 season as Marco (*Gianni Schicchi*), the Second Nazarene (*Salome*), a Herald (*Otello*) and Handsome (*La Fanciulla del West*); he most recently appeared as Brühlmann (*Werther*), Prince Yamadori (*Madama Butterfly*), A Stagehand (*The Makropulos Case*) and several roles in *Cyrano de Bergerac* this season. An alumnus of the Merola Opera Program, he performed the title role in the Merola 2008 production of *Don Giovanni*. 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)*. 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.

## 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 11-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 downloadable Schwabacher Debut Recital artist photographs are available at sfopera.com/press. For further press information, please contact: Gelane Pearson [415.565.6470 / gpearson@sfopera.com] or Robin Freeman [415.565.6451 / rfreeman@sfopera.com].