



MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM ANNOUNCES ARTISTS AND PERFORMANCES FOR 2022 SEASON

SUMMER FESTIVAL INCLUDES A CELEBRATION OF AMERICAN SONG, WORKS BY LATIN AMERICAN AND SPANISH COMPOSERS, *DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE*, AND MEROLA GRAND FINALE

July 9 – August 20, 2022

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (21 March 2022) – San Francisco’s acclaimed **Merola Opera Program**, one of the most prestigious and selective opera training programs in the world, has announced its 2022 season, welcoming the largest class of artists in company history. Selected from more than 1,300 international applicants, this year’s class is made up of 30 artists coming from as far away as China, Costa Rica, South Korea, Taiwan, and Uzbekistan, as well as across the United States and Canada. The 2022 Merola Summer Festival kicks off on July 9 with **A Celebration of American Song**, an exuberant recital at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Concert Hall, highlighting beloved songs from America’s Golden Age. The season continues with the **Schwabacher Summer Concert**, presenting operatic scenes by Latin American and Spanish composers, performed in concert with full orchestra on July 14 and 16 at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Concert Hall. Mozart’s final masterpiece, *Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)*, will be performed in a fully staged production on August 4 and 6 at the Blue Shield of California Theater at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. The season comes to a dazzling close on August 20 with the **Merola Grand Finale**, a thrilling concert by all the Merola participants presented at the War Memorial Opera House, followed by a reception at the Barbro Osher Recital Hall at Bowes Center. Individual event tickets and information are available to Merola members March 21 and to the public April 4 at www.merola.org or by calling the San Francisco Box Office at **(415) 864-3330**.

Last season, under the leadership of **Carrie-Ann Matheson** and **Markus Beam (Merola '02)**, the company adapted to the digital demands of the industry, expanding training to include performing for the camera, as well as perfecting presentations for live audiences. Looking ahead to this monumental season, the new Merola artistic team is more committed than ever to preparing the young artists for extramusical aspects of a performance career. To support these efforts, Merola has assembled some of the nation’s leading musical experts to provide instruction and coaching for the 2022 season, including such luminaries as Michèle Crider, Alan Darling, Julia Faulkner, Warren Jones, Martin Katz, Mario Antonio Marra, Gerald Martin Moore, Carrie-Ann Matheson, Cesar Ulloa, and Howard Watkins.

The **Merola Opera Program** is widely regarded as the foremost opera training program for aspiring singers, pianists, and stage directors. Merola nurtures the opera stars of tomorrow through master classes and private coaching with opera’s most accomplished singers, conductors,

and directors. Participants also receive training in operatic repertoire, languages, diction, acting, stage movement, and professional development. Offered free of charge to all participants, the Merola Opera Program is unique in the industry in many ways. It is the only young artist program to provide financial support to developing artists for five years following their participation, offering aid for essential career development expenses including coaching, language classes, and audition travel.

The 2022 Merola Summer Festival performance schedule includes:

A Celebration of American Song • 3:00 PM, July 9, 2022 • San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Curated by Craig Terry, **A Celebration of American Song** is a joyous tribute to music from the Great American Songbook. Featuring familiar and time-tested songs from America's Golden Age that were created for Broadway, musical theatre, and Hollywood film, this recital celebrates the music of composers that include Frederick Loewe, Harold Arlen, Leonard Bernstein, Rodgers and Hammerstein, and many more. Grammy Award winner Craig Terry is the Jannotta Family Endowed Chair music director of Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center, and is artistic director of *Beyond the Aria* recital series. He has performed extensively as pianist with many leading names in opera, and his discography includes collaborations with Joyce DiDonato, Patricia Racette, Stephanie Blythe, and Nicole Cabell.

Schwabacher Summer Concert • 7:30 PM, July 14 & 3:00 PM, July 16, 2022 • San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Lush, lyrical, and romantic works by Latin American and Spanish composers are showcased in the **Schwabacher Summer Concert**, when the young artists of the 2022 Merola Opera Program perform vibrant operatic scenes by distinguished composers Manuel de Falla, Daniel Catán, and others. Featuring a full orchestra, the **Schwabacher Summer Concert** explores the invaluable contributions that these composers have made to the world of classical music. Jorge Parodi, General and Artistic Director of Opera Hispánica, conducts while Jose Maria Condemi (Merola '99/'00) directs.

Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute) • 7:30 PM, August 4 & 3:00 PM, August 6, 2022 • Blue Shield of California Theater, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

The season continues with a fully staged production of Mozart's **Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)**, conducted by Kelly Kuo, Associate Director of American Lyric Theatre and Music Director of the Reno Chamber Orchestra. Taking the form of a singspiel, a comic opera with spoken dialogue, **Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)** evokes intimacy, mysticism, and wit—with a dollop of humor—set to musical brilliance. Director Gina Lapinski helms this production, bringing the work's colorful characters to life—from a handsome young prince to a silly bird-catching sidekick and the mysterious Queen of the Night. Lapinski has been a stage director for the Metropolitan Opera for more than two decades.

Merola Grand Finale • 7:30 PM, August 20, 2022 • War Memorial Opera House

The Summer Festival ends on a high note with the **Merola Grand Finale**, a concert featuring all the artists of the 2022 Merola Opera Program performing opera's most thrilling arias and ensembles.

As the largest class in company history, and the first group of Merolini to return to in-person performances in nearly two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the culmination of this season is not only monumental, but also sets the stage for the bright future that lies ahead. Conducted by Patrick Furrer and directed by 2022 Merola Stage Director Matthew J. Schulz, this performance showcases the dedication, passion, and extraordinary talent of opera's exciting new voices. After working as a staff member for the Metropolitan Opera since 2011, December 2021 marked Furrer's conducting debut with *Magic Flute*, which was shortly followed by the company's production of Verdi's *Don Carlos*.

This year's Merola Opera Program artists include:

Sopranos

Amanda Batista, *Manchester, New Jersey*
Adia Evans, *Baltimore, Maryland*
Maggie Kinabrew, *West Hartford, Connecticut*
Chelsea Lehnea, *Chattanooga, Tennessee*
Celeste Morales, *San Antonio, Texas*
Olivia Prendergast, *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*
Ashley Marie Robillard, *Norton, Massachusetts*
Arianna Rodriguez, *Fairfax, Virginia*
Olivia Smith, *Penticton, British Columbia, Canada*

Mezzo-sopranos

Veena Akama-Makia, *Little Rock, Arkansas*
Nikola Adele Printz, *Oakland, California*
Maggie Reneé, *Los Angeles, California*
Erin Wagner, *El Paso, Texas*

Tenors

Daniel Luis Espinal, *Sarasota, Florida*
Chance Jonas-O'Toole, *Dallas, Texas*
Jonghyun Park, *Seoul, South Korea*
Sahel Salam, *Houston, Texas*
Moisés Salazar, *Santa Ana, California*

Countertenor

Cody Bowers, *Newnan, Georgia*

Baritones

Andres Cascante, *San José, Costa Rica*
Scott Lee, *Statesville, North Carolina*

Bass-baritones

Le Bu, *Yancheng, China*
SeungYun Kim, *Cheongju, South Korea*
William Socolof, *White Plains, New York*

Bass

Edwin Jhamaal Davis, *Utica, Mississippi*

Pianists/Coaches

Shawn Chang, *Taipei, Taiwan*
Yang Lin, *Shanghai, China*
Artyom Pak, *Tashkent, Uzbekistan*
Deborah Robertson, *Springfield, Missouri*

Stage Director

Matthew J. Schulz, *Waverly, Iowa*

This year's distinguished faculty members include:

Recital Curator:

Craig Terry

Voice Teachers:

Julia Faulkner

Rhoslyn Jones

Gerald Martin Moore*

Cesar Ulloa

Musical Coaches:

Alan Darling

Warren Jones*

Martin Katz*

Mario Antonio Marra

Carrie-Ann Matheson*

Howard Watkins*

Artist in Residence:

Michèle Crider*

**Will be featured in public master classes reserved for Merola members.*

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: San Francisco's acclaimed **Merola Opera Program**, one of the most prestigious and selective opera training programs in the world, has announced its 2022 season, welcoming the largest class of artists in company history. Selected from more than 1,300 international applicants, this year's class comprises 30 artists coming from as far away as China, Costa Rica, South Korea, Taiwan, and Uzbekistan, as well as across the United States and Canada. The 2022 Merola Summer Festival includes: **A Celebration of American Song**, the **Schwabacher Summer Concert** featuring operatic scenes by Latin American and Spanish composers, a fully staged production of Mozart's **Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)**, and the stunning **Merola Grand Finale** in which all Merola artists perform arias and ensembles.

WHEN: **A Celebration of American Song**
3:00 PM, Saturday, July 9 – San Francisco Conservatory of Music Concert Hall
Tickets: \$55/\$80

Schwabacher Summer Concert
7:30 PM, Thursday, July 14 – San Francisco Conservatory of Music Concert Hall
3:00 PM, Saturday, July 16 – San Francisco Conservatory of Music Concert Hall
Tickets: \$55/\$80

Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)
7:30 PM, Thursday, August 4 – Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA
3:00 PM, Saturday, August 6 – Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA
*Tickets: \$55/\$80**

**Additional \$1 per ticket facility fee will be applied*

Merola Grand Finale and Reception

7:30 PM, Saturday, August 20 – War Memorial Opera House

Tickets: \$25/\$40/\$50

*Reception Tickets: \$75**

**The reception will take place at the Barbro Osher Recital Hall at Bowes Center*

WHERE: **San Francisco Conservatory of Music**, 50 Oak St., San Francisco
Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA, 700 Howard St., San Francisco
War Memorial Opera House, 301 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco
Barbro Osher Recital Hall at Bowes Center, 200 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

TICKETS: Tickets go on sale to Merola members Monday, March 21 and to the public Monday, April 4.

Save 20% when tickets are purchased for all four productions* in the 2022 season. Ticket discounts are available for groups of 10 or more. \$15 student tickets are also available in limited quantity in advance at San Francisco Opera Box Office.

**The 20% discount is valid until June 13, 2022. Available by phone or in-person at the San Francisco Opera Box Office only. All four performances must be purchased at the same time. The discount does not include the Merola Grand Finale Reception, and cannot be combined with any other discounts.*

INFO: For more information or to order tickets, please visit www.merola.org or call the San Francisco Box Office at **(415) 864-3330**. The box office is open Monday, 10:00 AM-5:00 PM, and Tuesday through Friday, 10:00 AM-6:00 PM.

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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://www.cbpr.co/press/MerolaOperaProgram>