MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM CONTINUES 2022 SUMMER FESTIVAL WITH THE

SCHWABACHER SUMMER CONCERT

July 14 & 16 at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Concert Hall

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (15 June 2022) – 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 Daniel Catán, Manuel de Falla, Osvaldo Golijov, and Amadeo Vives. 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 frequent San Francisco Opera director Jose Maria Condemi (Merola '99/'00) directs. The **Schwabacher Summer Concert** will be presented at 7:30pm, Thursday, July 14, & 3:00pm, Saturday, July 16, at the **San Francisco Conservatory of Music**, 50 Oak St., San Francisco. For more information or to purchase tickets ($55/$80), the public may visit **www.merola.org/calendar**.

The program includes selections from Manuel de Falla's ***La vida breve***, an opera brimming with passion, depicted through the brilliant colors of de Falla's vibrant Spanish lens. Featuring a libretto by Carlos Fernández-Shaw, this powerful work follows the life of a beautiful woman who has been seduced by a fashionable upper-class youth. Despite winning First Prize in a competition for Spanish opera in 1905, *La vida breve* initially received zero public performances in Spain. Falla decided to seek better prospects in France, where the first performance of his opera was given (in a French translation by Paul Millet) in Nice on April 1, 1913. While in France, he also became friends with several leading composers of the era – from Albéniz to Debussy, Ravel, and Stravinsky. At the outbreak of WWI, Falla returned to Spain and quickly confirmed his status among critics and the public as the foremost contemporary Spanish composer. While Falla's complete opera is seldom performed today, many sections of *La vida breve* are often performed.

Also presented will be scenes from Act II of Daniel Catán's magical ***Florencia en el Amazonas***, the first Spanish-language opera commissioned by a major American opera company. Written by Marcela Fuentes-Berain, one of Catán's pupils, the libretto for *Florencia en el Amazonas* was based on the characters of the Gabriel García Márquez novel *Love in the Time of Cholera*. Since the opera's 1996 premiere at Houston Grand Opera, *Florencia en el Amazonas* has also been performed at Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Opera Colorado, Utah Opera, Washington National Opera, Nashville Opera, Arizona Opera, New York City Opera, the University of Illinois School of Music, and the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. *The Wall Street Journal* applauded Catán's score, calling it "a lush, colorful cross

between Puccini and Ravel." For this performance, audiences will be invited to join legendary diva "Florencia Grimaldi" and her fellow passengers as they embark on a boat ride down the Amazon.

With its colorful score and comic story of multiple love triangles during Carnival season in Madrid, Amadeo Vives's ***Doña Francisquita*** is considered a classic of the zarzuela genre. The masterpiece, which is based on Lope de Vega's play *La discreta enamorada*, features a libretto by Federico Romero and Guillermo Fernández-Shaw. Despite its popularity in Spain and Latin America, *Doña Francisquita* has rarely been seen onstage elsewhere. It was, however, performed in French translation at Monte Carlo, Brussels, and Vichy in 1934 and received a major production at the Washington National Opera in 1998.

Rounding out the program are selections from ***Ainadamar (Fountain of Tears)***, the first opera by Argentinian composer Osvaldo Golijov, with libretto by American playwright David Henry Hwang. Featuring elements of both an opera and a passion play, *Ainadamar* tells the story of Spanish poet Federico García Lorca and his lover and muse, Catalan actress Margarita Xirgu. Mostly scored for women's voices, this beautiful, highly Spanish-influenced score is full of flamenco and rumba rhythms. The first recording of *Ainadamar* was released by Deutsche Grammophon in May 2006 and immediately reached the top of the classical music *Billboard* charts. The recording went on to win two Grammy Awards: Best Opera Recording of 2006 and Best Classical Contemporary Composition. Like much of Golijov's work, *Ainadamar* heavily incorporates Arab and Jewish musical idioms, as well as Spanish flamenco sounds.

JORGE PARODI:

Hailed by the *New York Daily News* as "the most expressive conducting hands since Stokowski's," internationally acclaimed conductor **Jorge Parodi** has worked extensively in North America, Latin America, Europe, and Asia. He has collaborated with Isabel Leonard, Eglise Gutiérrez, Tito Capobianco, Sherrill Milnes, Aprile Millo, and Rufus Wainwright, and has assisted conductors Lorin Maazel and Julius Rudel. Parodi is the current Music Director of Opera in Williamsburg (Virginia) as well as the Music Director of the Senior Opera Theatre at the Manhattan School of Music, where he has led its productions to critical acclaim, including Schubert's *Die Verschworenen*, which was praised by *The New York Times* as being "superbly performed." Also accomplished in concert halls, Parodi has worked with a wide range of ensembles, including the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, the NHK Symphony Orchestra, the Castleton Festival, the Metamorphosis Chamber Orchestra, the Ensemble Zipoli for the American Baroque, the Juilliard Pre-College Orchestra, and the Ensemble XXI.

JOSE MARIA CONDEMI:

Praised for his creatively theatrical and innovative approach, director **Jose Maria Condemi** has worked with major opera companies in North America and abroad, where his productions have encompassed an eclectic range of styles and repertoire. His collaborations with contemporary composers include directing the world premieres of Hector Armienta's *River of Women* and *The Weeping Woman*, as well as the workshop performance of the San Francisco Opera-

commissioned piece *Earthrise* by 2000 Pulitzer Prize winner Lewis Spratlan. His theater directing credits include Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*, Dürrenmatt's *The Physicists*, Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden*, and Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*. Condemi has been a guest lecturer, master teacher, and stage director for the San Francisco Opera Center, Seattle Opera Young Artists Program, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Houston Grand Opera Studio, Indiana University, University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, University of Houston Moores School, Opera Theatre of Lucca, and the New National Theater Young Artists Programme in Tokyo. Condemi is the Carol Franc Buck Distinguished Chair and the Director of Opera and Musical Theater at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. From 2010 to 2015, he was the Artistic Director of Opera Santa Barbara, where he oversaw artistic planning and the Studio Artists Program. Upcoming engagements include Verdi's *Falstaff* at Opera San José, Piazzolla's *María de Buenos Aires* at Kentucky Opera, and *Bohème Out the Box* for San Francisco Opera, a scaled-down version of the Puccini opera.

MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM:

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.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: 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 Daniel Catán, Manuel de Falla, Osvaldo Golijov, and Amadeo Vives. 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 frequent San Francisco Opera director Jose Maria Condemi (Merola '99/'00) directs.

WHEN: 7:30pm, Thursday, July 14
3:00pm, Saturday, July 16

WHERE: **San Francisco Conservatory of Music**, 50 Oak St., San Francisco

TICKETS: $55/$80

INFO: For more information or to order tickets, please visit **www.merola.org/calendar** or call the San Francisco Opera Box Office at **(415) 864-3330**. In-person purchases can also be made at **301 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco**.

The box office is open Monday, 10:00am–5:00pm, and Tuesday through Friday, 10:00am–6:00pm.

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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos will be available here:
http://www.cbpr.co/press/schwabachersummerconcert