



Jeremy Galyon and Ailyn Pérez in Merola's 2005
production of *The Rake's Progress*

Looking forward to summer

LARRY MERKLE

A lost love, a lost king, a defiant rake, a rake redeemed. The Merola 2018 Summer Festival Season features a rich array of pieces from a wide range of time periods in an equally diverse range of musical and dramatic styles. The season begins with the Schwabacher Summer Concert of extended opera scenes. As always, the pieces are chosen specifically to suit the voices of the young artists in the concert. Sheri Greenawald, San Francisco Opera Center Director who serves as Merola's Artistic Director, says, "I'm so excited to be presenting the whole first scene of *Vanessa*, which contains the famous mezzo aria, 'Must The Winter Come So Soon,' and the soprano's big aria, 'Do Not Utter a Word,' which I first heard on Leontyne Price's *Blue*."

Mark Morash — San Francisco Opera Center's Director of Musical Studies and a 1987 Merola alumnus — adds, "Barber had a real ear for the theater and he knew voices as we hear from his many songs. This opera is overdue for a serious revival!"

The second excerpt in the concert is from Puccini's *Il tabarro*. "It is probably the least known of the Puccini *Trittico*," Mark says, "overshadowed by *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*. But we will be presenting the 'meat and potatoes' excerpt of the opera where the real drama takes place. It is interesting to feature both Puccini and Barber in such close proximity as their taste for verismo is so similar."

An excerpt from *Les pêcheurs de perles* follows. "We are presenting some of the greatest highlights from this opera," Sheri says. "It's a bit like the *Reader's Digest* version of the opera, getting the best from it!" The finale of *Don Giovanni* concludes the concert. "*Don Giovanni* brings us back around to the darker quality of the first two excerpts," Mark says, "as the Don ultimately winds up being dragged off to Hell." Kathleen Kelly (Merola '91 & '92) will conduct and Aria Umezawa (Merola '16) will stage the concert.

After what is sure to be a riveting Schwabacher Summer Concert, Merola's first full opera production will be Mozart's little-performed early work *Il re pastore*. "This is a real pet piece of mine," Mark said. "I learned it many years ago when I worked on a Mark Lamos production. Mozart's precocious ingenuity is on full display in this charmer of an opera (Mozart called it a 'serenata'). As he did more famously seven years later in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Mozart utilizes two sopranos — one a lyric and the other more of a coloratura. Mozart's ear for these kinds of voices was impeccable and there are plenty of soprano treats in the opera, 'Lamerò, sarò costante' being the most famous aria that turns up often on concert stages with its lovely violin obbligato. The two sopranos have a duet at the end of Act 1 that offers a death-defying display of triplets for each, then more in thirds! The secondary characters also score well in

From the Executive Director

Merola 2018 is here! The Merola artists are hard at work honing their talents with an illustrious faculty including Steven Blier, Tracy Dahl, Alan Darling, Jane Eaglen, Warren Jones, and Martin Katz. They are delving into rehearsals for the Schwabacher Summer Concert and our two opera productions — Mozart's *Il re pastore* and Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*. In these pages you'll find Sheri and Mark's insights into the rich and varied works that make up the summer festival season.

We are very pleased to have four Merola alums conducting and directing this summer. Kathleen Kelly ('91 & '92) will conduct the Schwabacher Summer Concert and, Aria Umezawa ('16) will direct. Tara Faircloth ('06) will direct *Il re pastore*, and Mark Morash ('87) will conduct *The Rake's Progress*. In these pages you'll find highlights about their careers since Merola and their work with the Merolini this summer. You'll also find photos from a truly memorable Merola Benefit Gala last April that raised invaluable funds for Merola and featured a brilliant concert by the 2018 Adler Fellows.

Composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer are hard at work on *If I Were You*, Merola's first-ever opera commission, which will have its world premiere in our 2019 season. We're excited to share our first glimpse of the artwork for the opera, as well as a listing of the donors who have lent their support to the project so far.

I look forward to sharing an exciting summer with you. See you at Merola!

Warmest wishes,



Jean Kellogg



Jean Kellogg, Issachah Savage (Merola '13), and Zanda Svède (Merola '13)

DREW ALTIZER PHOTOGRAPHY

Looking forward to summer

CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

this piece with their guileless music concerning duty over love. And the music and temperament of Alessandro the King (*Il re*) surely foreshadows Mozart's characterization of King Idomeneo some years later." Baroque expert Stephen Stubbs will conduct this enchanting piece and Merola alumna Tara Faircloth (Merola '06) will direct.

The second opera of the season, Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, "is one of my favorite operas on every level," Sheri says. "I love the libretto, with its stunning vocabulary and poignant emotion. For me, it is very modern...I am very aware that this is a piece that was created post-atomic bomb, with its awareness that life would never be quite the same with that destructive force on the planet. By writing in the classical form, this being his last complete work of that period of his composition, one can almost feel Stravinsky trying to bring back some sense of order. But the dark forces, though temporarily defeated, don't allow total redemption... instead we are left with madness. Not even Anne's love can restore Tom's mind. The music is thrilling and challenging at the same time. It is a love story on the one hand, and a Faustian tale on the other."

Mark adds, "Stravinsky's music for this opera has obvious stylistic nods to Bach and Mozart while the modernity of the harmony and rhythm make for an evening of singular excitement. With its archetypal characters — Tom Rakewell who wants nothing more than to be rich and happy, Anne Trulove who is unflinching in her devotion to a man who does not deserve her, and Nick Shadow who has risen up from Hell for the occasion of this story, we recognize the plot but revel in the details and characters presented. W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman wrote the libretto and it is this feast of words that inspired some of Stravinsky's most enduring music. I think the intervening years and musical developments since the opera's 1951 premiere have made the musical language of *The Rake's Progress* much more comprehensible to the modern public. I am so excited for this project — both for the Merolini and the Merola audiences." Mark will conduct this brilliant opera, and Merola favorite Robin Guarino will return to direct.

The Merola Grand Finale on August 18 (conducted by Dean Williamson and directed by 2018 Apprentice Stage Director Marcus Shields) will conclude a Merola summer sure to be as exciting and complex as the works in which the Merolini will hone and showcase their talents.



MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM

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In memoriam



CATHERINE "BETTYE" (POETZ) FERGUSON (pictured with James Schwabacher in 2001) passed peacefully on October 25, 2017 in San Francisco. She led a long and productive life in Marin County and San

Francisco. With her husband Barlow Ferguson, she traveled the world, enjoying activities ranging from hiking in the Himalayas to touring Antarctica. Her parents, Bernard and Lucille Poetz, introduced her to the arts and music early in her life which led to a lifelong passion. She studied at the University of California, Berkeley, and at the Sorbonne in Paris. During World War II, Bettye served the country on a hospital ship. Bettye loved classical music and opera and was often seen enjoying both in San Francisco, Santa Fe, and New York. Throughout her life, she generously supported numerous charitable organizations in Marin County and San Francisco and served on numerous nonprofit board of directors. As a devout Catholic, serving God and the mission of her church was an important part of her life, including frequent visits to serve at Lourdes, France. Bettye was a board member of Merola from 1960 to 1990, a major donor to Merola for many years, sponsored Merolini every summer since 1978 through her endowment the "Mr. & Mrs. A. Barlow Ferguson Endowment Fund," was feted at the 2013 gala as one of the "Girls of the Golden West," and was a Merola emeritus board member until she passed away. She was preceded in death by her husband.



Generous Merola supporter **ALPER "AL" ABDY GARREN** died peacefully on June 25, 2017, in Oakland, California. Merola is deeply saddened by his passing, and very grateful for the Al Garren Fund's sponsorship of numerous Merola Festival seasons. Born in Oakland in 1925, Dr. Garren received his B.A. and M.A. from University of California, Berkeley and his Ph.D. in Physics from Carnegie Institute of

Technology. Dr. Garren was a career Particle Physicist at Berkeley Lab and a brilliant scientist, whose technical innovations and teaching expertise were a credit to his field. He collaborated with scientists around the world, sharing his ideas with colleagues and mentoring his young students. He loved to sail and travel, and maintained an enormous circle of friends throughout his lifetime. He was also a dedicated philanthropist who supported some 200 environmental, human rights, and performing arts organizations in his later years, including San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Symphony, and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. Physicist, teacher, mentor, world traveler, sailor, philanthropist, and above all dear friend, Al enriched many lives during his 92 years, including those of Merola's young artists.



Longtime Merola member and donor **NORMAN TYLER LARSON**, 79, of San Francisco passed away peacefully in the presence of comforting family on Tuesday, February 20, 2018. Norm was born on September 8, 1938, a fourth-generation San Franciscan. He graduated valedictorian from Willow Glen High School in San Jose and received a full academic Alfred P. Sloan scholarship to attend

Stanford University, graduating with a degree in Economics. Despite earning a law degree from Harvard University, he chose to forgo becoming a lawyer in favor of living and teaching in the Middle East throughout the 1960s and 70s. He returned to San Francisco in 1978, where he established his full-time career as property owner and landlord of the Doolan-Larson Residence and Storefronts. Dubbed "the Duke of the Haight" by a friend, Norm's knowledge and affection for the rich history of the area was a driving force behind achieving his goal of having his property named to the National Register of Historic Places. The greatest love of his life, however, was music, particularly baroque. He was a devoted supporter of many local arts organizations, and his love of music served as a gateway for many to experience its transformative power. Preceded in death by his parents and survived by his brother Steve, Norm will be greatly missed by the many who knew and loved him for his hospitality, creativity, philanthropy, and humor.



ELOISE BOUYE was a great opera aficionada who took great pleasure in personally helping and encouraging young opera singers. She exhorted them to work hard and excel at their chosen opera careers, in spite of occasional rejections, and she helped to make it possible for them to do so. She generously supported opera programs, including Merola, with gifts which will go on giving in the future.

She labeled herself "Opera Nut," and indeed she was. She was a familiar sight — the joy of opera incarnate — at all our events, and she will be sorely missed.

Merola Opera Program 2018 Spring Benefit

SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 2018 · THE RITZ-CARLTON, SAN FRANCISCO PHOTOS BY DREW ALTIZER PHOTOGRAPHY

Attendees



1 Matthew Shilcock, Barbara Ward, Haggai Niv, and David Hugle; 2 Jean Kellogg, Carlyn Clause, Ruth Uchimura, Susan Walker, James Cross, Maurice Bizzarri, Christopher Wiseman, Patrick Wilken, Carol Weitz, Pamela George, and Jayne Davis; 3 Spring Benefit Gala Co-Chairs James Cross and Christopher Wiseman; 4 L. Bing Liem; 5 Mary Henderson and Jake Heggie; 6 Dennis Zhang and Lokesh Bidhan; 7 Ashley Hanson, Karen Ames, and Elaine Radcliffe; 8 Vivienne Miller and Paul Gomory; 9 Robert Shwartz, Jodi Binder, Renata Anderson, and Raj Singh; 10 Robert Mison, Julia Mathis, Adam Bier, Rachel Bier Lem, and Susan Walker; 11 Myron Marx and Cora Yang; 12 Bob Ryan, Kristen Loken, Mark Morash (Merola '87), and Terri Ryan; 13 Thomas Larsen and Bernice Lindstrom; 14 Cathi Ahearn and Olivia Ware; 15 James Noe and Nafiseh Lindberg; 16 Amy Roth and Sheri Greenawald; 17 Anita Weissberg, Steven Franceschi, Jeannie Sack, and Pamela Lawder

Fit Gala — Evening of Mystery

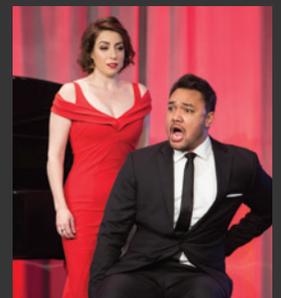
SF Opera Adler Fellows Concert



1 Ashley Dixon (Merola '15/'17) and Natalie Image (Merola '17); 2 Sarah Cambidge (Merola '16); 3 Christian Pursell (Merola '17); 4 San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows (l-r): John Elam (Merola '16), César Cañón (Merola '17), Ashley Dixon (Merola '15/'17), Aria Umezawa (Merola '16), Kyle van Schoonhoven (Merola '16), Natalie Image (Merola '17), Sarah Cambidge (Merola '16), Christian Pursell (Merola '17), and Amitai Pati (Merola '16)

Special Preview of Merola's 2019 Commission *If I Were You*

FEATURING JAKE HEGGIE, RENÉE RAPIER (MEROLA '10/'11), AND AMITAI PATI (MEROLA '16)



Why we're excited about this summer at Merola

SOME OF 2018'S DIRECTORS AND CONDUCTORS — ALL MEROLINI THEMSELVES AND RETURNING TO MEROLA — SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS YEAR'S SUMMER FESTIVAL



Aria Umezawa (Merola '16)

DIRECTOR, SCHWABACHER SUMMER CONCERT

"It's such an honor to be returning to Merola to direct the Schwabacher Summer Concert. The evening is about musical excellence, effective and simple story telling, and above all it's about showcasing the extraordinary talent of the performers. I'm looking forward to helping the future stars of opera shine their brightest, and to presenting a unique evening of music."

Kathleen Kelly (Merola '91/'92)

CONDUCTOR, SCHWABACHER SUMMER CONCERT

"I will never forget my first, proud, terrified summer as a Merolini! I had everything to learn, from how to say real Italian vowels to how a rehearsal process works. I encountered new levels of expectation and rigor...and, most important of all, support. To be accorded the privilege of returning to offer those same things to exciting new artists is a deep honor. I am grateful and thrilled!"



Tara Faircloth (Merola '06)

DIRECTOR, *IL RE PASTORE*

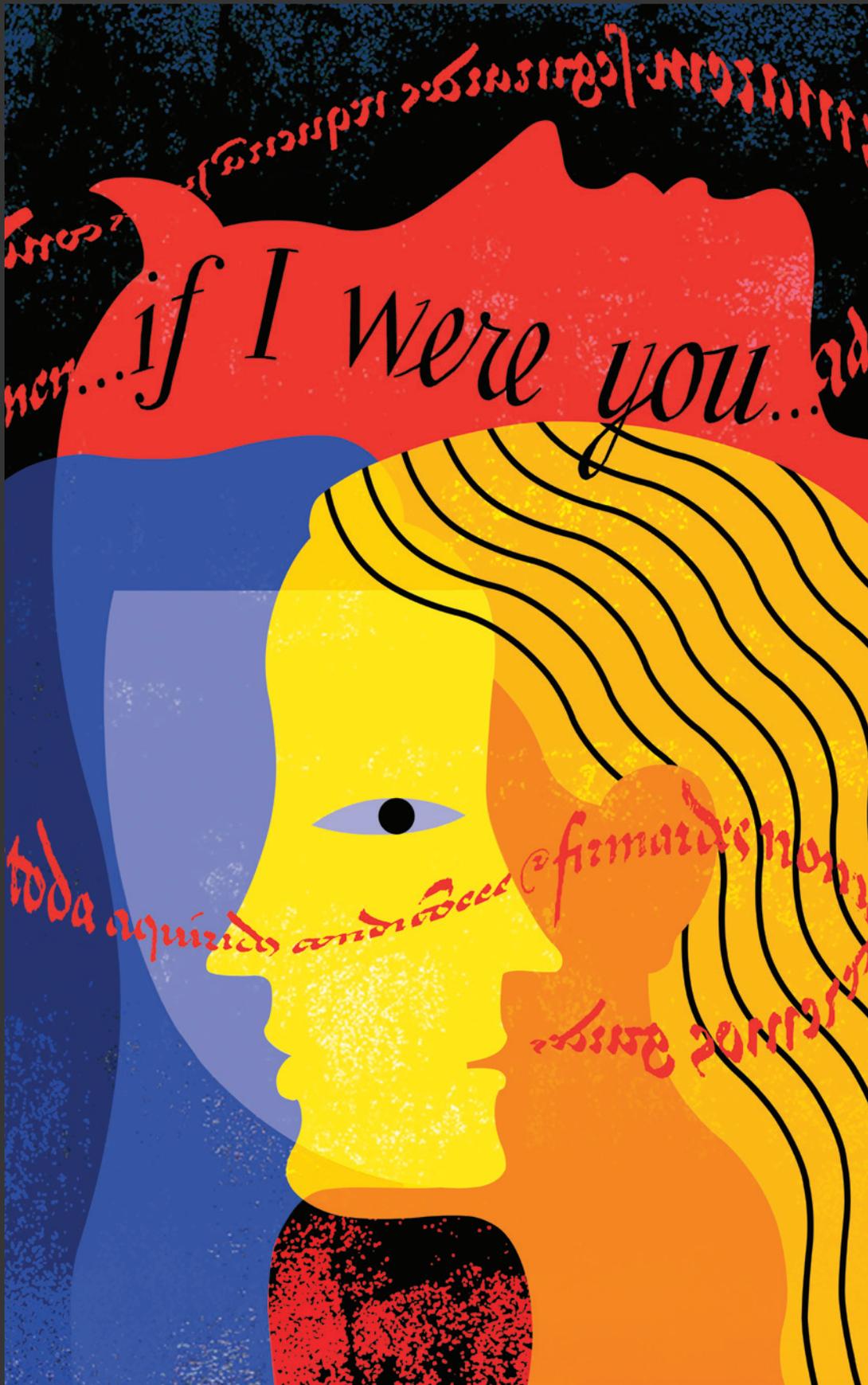
"Merola launched my professional opera career, and it has been my great pleasure to work with fellow Merolini on stages large and small ever since! It is an honor to have been part of such a distinguished program. I am delighted to return to meet this new generation of singing actors and present *Il re pastore*, the perfect Merola vehicle: charming, quirky, and full of ravishing vocal music."

Mark Morash (Merola '87)

CONDUCTOR, *THE RAKE'S PROGRESS*

"*The Rake's Progress* is a long-standing 'must-do' project for me. I think I truly learned the first notes of this when I was in Merola many years ago. I remember hearing another pianist playing Anne Trulove's aria in a class that summer. The pianist had the presence of mind to bring out the bassoon line in the cavatina. Suddenly, I understood that that was what made all the other dissonances possible! Thus began my fascination with *Rake's Progress*. I have never done a complete production until this one upcoming. I think our cast should be fantastic and I can barely wait for rehearsals to begin!"





Coming in 2019: a big first for Merola

**IN THE SUMMER OF 2019
MEROLA WILL PRESENT
THE WORLD PREMIERE** of our first-ever opera commission, *If I Were You*, by composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer. Merola extends our heartfelt thanks to the following individuals and foundations who have made gifts of \$10,000 or more to the commission as of May 1, 2018. If you are interested in making a gift in support of this special project, call Jean Kellogg at (415) 936-2321 or email her at jkellogg@merola.org.

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James A. Noe, III

JAKE HEGGIE  GENE SCHEER

MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM
WORLD PREMIERE 2019



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TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

Merola Opera Program 2018 Summer Festival

Schwabacher Summer Concert · July 5 & 7
Mozart's *Il re pastore* · July 19 & 21
Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* · August 2 & 4
Merola Grand Finale and Reception · August 18

For tickets, visit the SF Opera Box Office at
301 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco or call (415) 864-3330.
For more information, visit merola.org.



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