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Merola Opera Program 2015 Summer Festival opens with its Schwabacher Summer Concert July 9 at San Francisco Conservatory of Music and a free outdoor performance July 11 at Yerba Buena Gardens

SAN FRANCISCO, May 27, 2015 – The acclaimed [Merola Opera Program](#), one of the most prestigious and selective opera training programs in the United States, opens its 2015 Summer Festival with the popular Schwabacher Summer Concert on Thursday, July 9 at 7:30 pm at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. The Merola artists also perform the program in a free performance for the community on Saturday, July 11 at 2 pm, at the Esplanade in Yerba Buena Gardens, as part of the [Yerba Buena Gardens Festival](#). Conducted by Valéry Ryvkin and directed by Roy Rallo, the Schwabacher Summer Concert features extended scenes from four operas: Verdi's *La Traviata* and *Don Carlo*, *Susannah* by Carlisle Floyd, and Wagner's *Die Walküre*. Tickets for the concert at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music range from \$25 to \$40, with a special student price available at \$15.

Valéry Ryvkin is the past Artistic Director for Opera Santa Barbara and a highly esteemed conductor whose experience includes *Rigoletto*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Romeo et Juliette*, *Otello*, *Turandot*, *La Bohème*, and *Hansel & Gretel*. He previously collaborated with the Merola Opera Program for its 2005 Grand Finale.

Internationally acclaimed stage director Roy Rallo has staged numerous productions for Merola, including *Il barbiere di Siviglia* in 2011 and the Schwabacher Summer Concerts in 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2014. Rallo's past work includes a new production of Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* for the Opéra National de Bordeaux and a new music-theater piece, the *Methusalem Projekt*, for the Nationaltheater und Staatskapelle Weimar.

Casting for the July 9 and July 11 Schwabacher Summer Concert is as follows:

Susannah (Carlisle Floyd)

Susannah Meredith Mecum

Olin Blitch Scott Russell

La Traviata (Giuseppe Verdi)

Alfredo	Michael Papincak
Annina	Raehann Bryce-Davis
Violetta	Toni Marie Palmertree
Giuseppe	Scott Russell
Germont	Sol Jin

Die Walküre (Richard Wagner)
Brünnhilde Meredith Mecum
Siegmond Michael Papincak

Don Carlo (Giuseppe Verdi)
Filippo Ming Zhao
Il Grande Inquisitore Scott Russell
Elizabetta Toni Mari Palmertree
Eboli Raehann Bryce-Davis
Rodrigo Sol Jin

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TICKETS:

Tickets for the July 9 Schwabacher Summer Concert are \$25 and \$40, in addition to a student price of \$15.* Tickets for all performances may be purchased by calling San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330 open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday or online at www.sfopera.com. *Student tickets must be purchased in person at the Box Office window, located inside the War Memorial Opera House at 301 Van Ness Ave. Valid student ID is required.

ABOUT THE MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM

Led artistically by San Francisco Opera Center Director and internationally acclaimed soprano Sheri Greenawald, the Merola Opera Program is an independent nonprofit organization that operates in collaboration with the San Francisco Opera. Founded in 1957 and named for San Francisco Opera's founder, Gaetano Merola, the Program is recognized as one of the most prestigious operatic training programs in the world. The Program typically receives more than 800 applications for approximately 30 positions. Merola artists, who include singers, apprentice coaches and an apprentice stage director, participate in master classes and private coaching with opera luminaries. The artists also receive training in operatic repertory, foreign languages, diction, acting and stage movement.

Twenty-three singers, five apprentice coaches, and one apprentice stage director, representing seven countries, will participate in the 58th season of the [Merola Opera Program](http://www.merola.org) from June 8 to August 22. Nearly one third of this season's artists come from countries outside the United States, including artists from Australia, China, Italy, New Zealand, Russia and South Korea, and the US artists hail from 15 states, including California, New York, Illinois, Michigan, Florida, Texas, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Idaho. For more information about Merola, please visit www.merola.org or phone (415) 551-6299.

The Schwabacher Summer Concert is named in memory of James H. Schwabacher (1920-2006). Mr. Schwabacher, a noted singer and scholar, was not only instrumental in the establishment and development of the Merola Opera Program, he became its heart and soul, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to the next generation of vocal talent. He provided vital financial and administrative stewardship to Merola, serving as President of the Board of Directors for 29 years and subsequently as Chairman of the Board for 15 years.

The Schwabacher Summer Concerts are graciously underwritten, in part, by the Frances K. and Charles D. Field Foundation, the Jack H. Lund Charitable Trust, the Grace A. Diem and Alice E. Siemons Fund, and Rusty Rolland and the Schick Foundation. Valéry Ryvkin is generously sponsored by Darla & Richard Bastoni. Roy Rallo is generously sponsored by the Mr. and Mrs. A. Barlow Ferguson Fund.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE: 2015 Calendar of Performances

Thursday, July 9 at 7:30 pm

Merola Opera Program: Schwabacher Summer Concert

San Francisco Conservatory of Music, 50 Oak St., San Francisco

Valéry Ryvkin, conductor

Roy Rallo, director

Meredith Mecum and Toni Marie Palmertree, sopranos

Raehann Bryce-Davis, mezzo-soprano

Michael Papincak, tenor

Sol Jin, baritone

Scott Russell and Ming Zhao, basses

PROGRAM:

Floyd - *Susannah*, Act 2, scene 3

Susannah - Meredith Mecum

Olin Blich - Scott Russell

Verdi - *La Traviata*, Act 2

Alfredo - Michael Papincak

Annina - Raehann Bryce-Davis

Violetta - Toni Marie Palmertree

Giuseppe - Scott Russell

Germont - Sol Jin

Wagner - *Die Walküre*, Act 2, scene 4

Brünnhilde - Meredith Mecum

Siegmund - Michael Papincak

Verdi - *Don Carlo*, Act 4, parte prima

Filippo - Ming Zhao

Il Grande Inquisitore - Scott Russell
Elisabetta - Toni Marie Palmertree
Eboli - Raehann Bryce-Davis
Rodrigo - Sol Jin

TICKETS: \$40/\$25/\$15 (students). Tickets may be purchased by calling San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday or online at www.sfopera.com. *Student tickets must be purchased in person at the Box Office window, located inside the War Memorial Opera House at 301 Van Ness Ave. Valid student ID is required.*

Saturday, July 11 at 2 pm

Merola Opera Program: Schwabacher Summer Concert

Esplanade at Yerba Buena Gardens, 773 Mission St. between 3rd and 4th Streets, San Francisco
FREE outdoor concert

Valéry Ryvkin, conductor
Roy Rallo, director
Meredith Mecum and Toni Marie Palmertree, sopranos
Raehann Bryce-Davis, mezzo-soprano
Michael Papincak, tenor
Sol Jin, baritone
Scott Russell and Ming Zhao, basses

PROGRAM:

Floyd - *Susannah*, Act 2, scene 3
Susannah - Meredith Mecum
Olin Blich - Scott Russell

Verdi - *La Traviata*, Act 2
Alfredo - Michael Papincak
Annina - Raehann Bryce-Davis
Violetta - Toni Marie Palmertree
Giuseppe - Scott Russell
Germont - Sol Jin

Wagner - *Die Walküre*, Act 2, scene 4
Brünnhilde - Meredith Mecum
Siegmond - Michael Papincak

Verdi - *Don Carlo*, Act 4, parte prima
Filippo - Ming Zhao
Il Grande Inquisitore - Scott Russell
Elisabetta - Toni Marie Palmertree
Eboli - Raehann Bryce-Davis

Rodrigo - Sol Jin

TICKETS: This is a free concert; no tickets required.

Merola Opera Program Presents

The Medium and Gianni Schicchi

Thursday, July 23, 7:30 pm and Saturday, July 25 at 2 pm

Cowell Theater at Fort Mason

Tickets: \$65 | \$45 | \$15 Students with ID

Merola Opera Program Presents

Don Pasquale

Thursday, August 6, 7:30 pm and Saturday, August 8 at 2 pm

Cowell Theater at Fort Mason

Tickets: \$65 | \$45 | \$15 Students with ID

Merola Opera Program Presents

Merola Grand Finale and Reception

Saturday, August 22, 7:30 pm

War Memorial Opera House

Tickets: \$45 Orchestra Premium & Grand Tier Premium | \$35 Orchestra and Grand Tier | \$25

Dress Circle

Reception begins at 10 p.m. in the Opera House Café

*Reception tickets are an additional \$50 each