



**MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM PRESENTS BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S
THE RAPE OF LUCRETIA JULY 11 AND 13**

SAN FRANCISCO, June 18, 2013 – The Merola Opera Program presents Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* 7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 11 and 2 p.m. Saturday, July 13 at the Everett Auditorium at 450 Church Street in San Francisco. The performance coincides with the 100th anniversary of Benjamin Britten's birth, an anniversary being celebrated with Britten productions throughout the world.

The cast features Irish mezzo-soprano **Kate Allen** as Lucretia; soprano **Linda Barnett** as Female Chorus; baritone **Chris Carr** as Tarquinius; mezzo-soprano **Katie Hannigan** as Bianca; soprano **Alisa Jordheim** as Lucia; baritone **Efraín Solís** as Junius; tenor **Robert Watson** as Male Chorus; and bass-baritone **David Weigel** as Collatinus.

Merola alumnus **Mark Morash** will conduct the production and renowned stage director **Peter Kazaras** will direct.



Britten's emotionally charged, two-act chamber opera, *The Rape of Lucretia*, follows the story of Lucretia, a faithful wife who is attacked by her husband's colleague. Director Kazaras has chosen to set the production in a present-day military Court of Inquiry. "The production asks relevant questions that affect us all today: How do we as a society hold ourselves responsible for violence against women? At what point does a passive witness to violence become a guilty party?" Kazaras said. The characters are simultaneously actors and witnesses, forced to relive their roles in this heartbreaking and poignant tragedy as they attempt to come to terms with what has happened to them and with what they have done.



Merola audiences experienced the work of Mark Morash and Peter Kazaras in the company's 2012 production of *Postcard from Morocco* and in *Albert Herring* in 2008. Kazaras is well known for both his singing and directing; he is Professor of Music and Director of Opera Studies at UCLA and has served as Artistic Director of the Seattle Opera Young Artist Program. Conductor Mark Morash currently serves as the Director of Musical Studies for San Francisco Opera Center.

The Merola Opera Program is dedicated to the continuing education and training of the finest young operatic talent and the development of this talent into professional opera singers, coaches and stage directors of the highest artistic caliber. Merola operates in close artistic collaboration with San Francisco Opera but is an independent nonprofit organization. Governed by a separate board of directors, Merola is responsible for its own long-term financial stability and fundraising, and is grateful to the hundreds of loyal members, donors and foundations who support the Program.

Led artistically by San Francisco Opera Center Director and internationally acclaimed soprano Sheri Greenawald, the Merola Opera Program is an independent nonprofit organization which 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 Merola Opera Program typically receives more than 800 applications for approximately 30 positions. Throughout the summer, the Merola artists participate in master classes and private coachings with opera luminaries. Participants – who include singers, apprentice coaches and an apprentice stage director – also receive training in operatic repertory, foreign languages, diction, acting and stage movement.

About *The Rape of Lucretia*

Britten's emotionally charged chamber opera, *The Rape of Lucretia*, is both powerful and devastating. Lucretia is the only wife in Rome who has stayed true to her husband, Collatinus, while the men are away at war. However, the powerful and amoral Prince Tarquinius views this as a challenge – unbeknownst to Collatinus, he travels to Rome late at night in order to rape Lucretia. Lucretia and her serving women give Tarquinius a place to stay for the night when he arrives, despite Lucretia's reluctance. Tarquinius stalks Lucretia and attacks her in her bedroom. Lucretia, overwhelmed by shame and despair, ultimately takes her own life.

To download artist pictures, visit www.box.net/merola.

Casting for the July 11 and 13 *The Rape of Lucretia* is as follows:

Female Chorus	Linda Barnett
Male Chorus	Robert Watson
Lucretia	Kate Allen
Tarquinius	Chris Carr
Collatinus	David Weigel
Bianc	Katie Hannigan
Lucia	Alisa Jordheim
Junius	Efraín Solís

This production is graciously underwritten, in part, by the Bernard Osher Foundation and the Frances K. and Charles D. Field Foundation and the Jack H. Lund Charitable Trust. Mark Morash is generously sponsored by Barbara K. Jackson, Josephine Maxon, Miss Vivienne E. Miller and Hiroko Prather. Peter Kazaras is generously sponsored by Mike and Rusty Rolland.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE: 2013 Merola Summer Festival Calendar of Performances

Merola Opera Program Presents

The Rape of Lucretia

Benjamin Britten

Sung in English with English supertitles

7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 11

2 p.m. Saturday, July 13

Everett Middle School Auditorium, 450 Church Street, San Francisco, CA 94114

Tickets: \$60/\$40/\$25

Merola Opera Program Presents

Schwabacher Summer Concert

7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 18

Everett Middle School Auditorium, 450 Church Street, San Francisco, CA 94114

Tickets: \$40/\$25

Merola Opera Program Presents

Schwabacher Summer Concert

2 p.m. Saturday, July 20

Yerba Buena Gardens, Mission St. between 3rd and 4th Streets

FREE

Merola Opera Program Presents

Le nozze di Figaro

W.A. Mozart

Sung in Italian with English supertitles

7:30 p.m. Thursday, August 1

2 p.m. Saturday, August 3

Everett Middle School Auditorium, 450 Church Street, San Francisco, CA 94114

Tickets: \$60/\$40/\$25

Merola Opera Program Presents

Merola Grand Finale and Reception

7:30 p.m. Saturday, August 17

War Memorial Opera House, 301 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102

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

Festival ticket packages will be on sale in April to Merola members and May for the general public For information on how to become a Merola member, please call (415) 565-6427 or visit www.merola.org.

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.

PHOTO CREDIT:

Kate Allen and Chris Carr / Kristen Loken
The Rape of Lucretia Cast / Kristen Loken

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