



**MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM SUMMER FESTIVAL PRESENTS
SCHWABACHER SUMMER CONCERT**

**Presented at Everett Auditorium on July 17 and a Free Community Performance on
July 19 at Yerba Buena Gardens**

SAN FRANCISCO, July 1, 2014 – The Merola Opera Program’s Summer Festival continues with the popular Schwabacher Summer Concert at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 17, at the Everett Auditorium and offered to the community for free at 2 p.m. on Saturday, July 19, as part of the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival. Conducted by Eric Melear and directed by Roy Rallo, the Schwabacher Summer Concert features extended scenes from six operas: Thomas’ *Mignon*; Handel’s *Semele*; Verdi’s *Luisa Miller*; Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *La Cenerentola*; Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*; and Bizet’s *Carmen*. Tickets for the concert at the Everett Auditorium are affordably priced and range from \$25 to \$40.



Associate Music Director of Houston Grand Opera, Eric Melear (Merola alumnus 2002) has carved out an operatic career as a versatile performer and administrator. As a conductor, he has led performances at the Vienna State Opera, Houston Grand Opera and Wolf Trap Opera. He has worked professionally as a pianist and coach for more than a decade and regularly plays recitals and the annual Concert of Arias for Houston Grand Opera. He has

overseen the music staff and Studio program at Wolf Trap Opera and now serves as Associate Music Director at Houston Grand Opera.

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 and 2013. Rallo’s past work includes a new production of Strauss’ *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Opéra National de Bordeaux and a new music-theater piece, the *Methusalem Projekt*, for the Nationaltheater und Staatskapelle, Weimar.

This is the 10th anniversary of the Schwabacher Summer Concert, a venture first established in 2004 to provide additional performance opportunities for Merola artists who show great promise in repertoire beyond the scope of the two operas being presented during the Merola summer season. The concert often features dramatic voices destined for Bellini, Puccini, Verdi and Wagner. 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 Concert is 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 Foundation, the Bernard Osher Foundation and Rusty Rolland and the Schick Foundation. Eric Melear is generously sponsored, in part, by Bob and Terri Ryan. Roy Rallo is generously sponsored, in part, by Mrs. Ronald Gray.

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

Casting for the July 17 and July 19 Schwabacher Summer Concert is as follows:

Mignon (Ambroise Thomas)

Wilhelm	Mingjie Lei
Mignon	Shirin Eskandani
Jarno	Matthew Stump
Lothario	Anthony Reed

Semele (George Frideric Handel)

Juno	Nian Wang
Semele	Talya Lieberman
Jupiter	Mingjie Lei

Luisa Miller (Giuseppe Verdi)

Count Walter	Matthew Stump
Wurm	Anthony Reed
Federica	Nian Wang
Luisa Miller	Maria Fasciano

Il barbiere di Siviglia (Gioachino Rossini)

Figaro	Alexander Elliott
Rosina	Shirin Eskandani

Madama Butterfly (Giacomo Puccini)

Goro	Chong Wang
Cio-Cio San	Maria Fasciano
Sharpless	Gideon Dabi
Prince Yamadori	Alexander Elliott
Suzuki	Nian Wang

La Cenerentola (Gioachino Rossini)

Dandini	Alexander Elliott
Don Magnifico	Matthew Stump

Carmen (George Bizet)

Frasquita	Talya Lieberman
Mercédès	Shirin Eskandani
Don José	Chong Wang
Carmen	Nian Wang
Chorus	Tutti

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE: 2014 Calendar of Performances

Merola Opera Program Presents

A Streetcar Named Desire

André Previn

7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 10

2 p.m. Saturday, July 12

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

Merola Opera Program Presents

Schwabacher Summer Concert

7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 17

Tickets: \$40/\$25

Merola Opera Program Presents

Schwabacher Summer Concert

2 p.m. Saturday, July 19

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

FREE

Merola Opera Program Presents

Don Giovanni

W.A. Mozart

7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 31

2 p.m. Saturday, August 2

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

Merola Opera Program Presents

Merola Grand Finale and Reception

7:30 p.m. Saturday, August 16

Tickets: \$45 Grand Tier & Orchestra Prime/\$35 Orchestra/\$25 Dress Circle

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

*Reception tickets are an additional \$50 each

For information on how to become a Merola member, please call (415) 565-6427 or visit www.merola.org.

For more information about Merola, please visit www.merola.org or phone (415) 551-6299

PHOTO CREDIT:

Schwabacher Summer Concert Cast / Kristen Loken

PRESS AND MEDIA RELATIONS CONTACT:

Karen Ames Communications:

Brenden Guy

(415) 641-7474

brenden@karenames.com

Merola Marketing, PR and Events Associate

Kelly Sepich

(415) 551-6299

ksepich@sfopera.com

###

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.