



**MEROLA**  
OPERA PROGRAM

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / May 24, 2017**

**Merola Opera Program 2017 Summer Festival continues its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season with Schwabacher Summer Concerts July 6 at 7:30 pm at San Francisco Conservatory of Music and July 9 at 2:30 pm at Bing Concert Hall at Stanford University**



*(l to r: Anne Manson, David Lefkowich)*

**(San Francisco, CA – May 24, 2017)** - The acclaimed [Merola Opera Program](http://merola.org), one of the most prestigious and selective opera training programs in the United States, celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season with the 2017 Summer Festival, presenting the popular Schwabacher Summer Concerts Thursday, July 6 at 7:30 pm at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and Sunday, July 9 at 2:30 pm at the Bing Concert Hall at Stanford University. Conducted by Anne Manson and directed by David Lefkowich, the Schwabacher Summer Concert features this year's Merola Opera artists performing extended scenes from operas including *The Ballad of Baby Doe* by Douglas Moore, *Lucrezia Borgia* by Gaetano Donizetti, *Der Freischütz* by Carl Maria von Weber, *Thaïs* by Jules Massenet, *Cavalleria rusticana* by Pietro Mascagni, and *Street Scene* by Kurt Weill. Tickets for the concert at the

San Francisco Conservatory of Music range from \$25 to \$45, with a limited number of \$15 student tickets available. Tickets for the concert at Bing Concert Hall are \$30 to \$40.

Conductor Anne Manson has served as Music Director of the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra since 2008 and recently renewed her contract through 2020. Manson's strong commitment to contemporary music has led to numerous commissions and recordings with the MCO. Among them are Philip Glass' Symphony No. 3 and Piano Concerto, and the Juno and Western Canada Music award-nominated *Troubadour & the Nightingale* with soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian. As a guest conductor, she has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Houston and Indianapolis Symphonies, the Residentie Orchestra of the Hague, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, London Philharmonic, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Bournemouth Sinfonietta, the Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Orquesta de Extremadura, BBC Proms, and she has guest conducted regularly with many orchestras in Spain.

David Lefkowich is an accomplished stage director and choreographer, and has enjoyed success with different companies including the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, New York City Opera, San Francisco Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Minnesota Opera, and Glimmerglass Opera. Directing credits are numerous and include *Don Giovanni*, *Idomeneo*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and *L'Histoire du Soldat* at the Ravinia Music Festival with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, *Salome* (Minnesota Opera), *Le Portrait de Manon* (Glimmerglass Opera), and *Il Trovatore* (New Orleans Opera, Fort Worth Opera). David is currently the Artistic Director of the Mill City Summer Opera in Minneapolis, where he directed the company's inaugural production of *Pagliacci* and followed with *Barber of Seville*, *Tosca*, *Daughter of the Regiment*, and *Sweeney Todd*.

The Merola Opera artists performing in this year's Schwabacher Summer Concerts are Kendra Berentsen, Mathilda Edge, Felicia Moore, Alexandra Razskazoff, sopranos; Alice Chung, mezzo-soprano; Andres Acosta and Xingwa Hao, tenors; and Dimitri Katotakis and Thomas Glass, baritones. The artists will be accompanied by a full orchestra, and English supertitles.

Casting for the July 6 and July 9 Schwabacher Summer Concerts is as follows:

***The Ballad of Baby Doe*** (Douglas Moore)

Baby Doe - Kendra Berentsen

Horace Tabor - Dimitri Katotakis

Augusta Tabor - Alice Chung

Townspeople – Mathilda Edge, Felicia Moore, Alexandra Razskazoff, Andres Acosta, Xingwa Hao, Thomas Glass

***Lucrezia Borgia*** (Donizetti)

Lucrezia - Alexandra Razskazoff

Gubetta – Thomas Glass

Duke of Ferrara - Dimitri Katotakis

Rustighello - Xingwa Hao

Gennaro - Andres Acosta

***Der Freischütz*** (Carl Maria von Weber)

Agathe - Felicia Moore

Max - Xingwa Hao

Ännchen - Kendra Berentsen

***Thaïs*** (Massenet)

Thaïs – Mathilda Edge

Athanaël- Thomas Glass

Nicias – Andres Acosta

***Cavalleria rusticana*** (Mascagni)

Turiddu - Xingwa Hao

Santuzza - Alice Chung

Lola - Alexandra Razskazoff

### ***Street Scene*** (Weill)

Lippo - Andres Acosta

Mrs. Jones – Alexandra Razskazoff

Mrs. Fiorentino - Kendra Berentsen

Mrs. Olsen - Alice Chung

Henry - Xingwa Hao

Mr. Jones - Thomas Glass

Mr. Olsen - Dimitri Katotakis

To download artist pictures, visit: <https://merolaopera.box.com/v/2017ArtistHeadshots>

### **TICKETS:**

Tickets for the July 6 Schwabacher Summer Concert at San Francisco Conservatory of Music are \$25 and \$45, in addition to a student price of \$15\*. Tickets may be purchased by calling the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330 or by visiting [merola.org](http://merola.org) or [www.sfopera.com](http://www.sfopera.com). The box office is open Monday, 10 am to 5 pm, and Tuesday through Friday, 10 am to 6 pm. \**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.*

Tickets for the Bing Concert Hall performance on the Stanford University campus go on sale June 8 and may be purchased online at [live.stanford.edu](http://live.stanford.edu); by calling (650) 724-2464; or in person at 327 Lasuen Street on the Stanford University campus.

### **ABOUT THE 2017 MEROLA 60<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SUMMER FESTIVAL SEASON**

The Merola Opera Program launches its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary season with a nod to its monumental history while forging a new path for young opera artists. Its 2017 season opens June 11 with a Benefit Gala and Concert, starting at San Francisco City Hall and continuing at Herbst Theatre, featuring some of the most illustrious participants from past Merola programs: Deborah Voigt ('85), Julie Adams ('14), Kristin Clayton ('93), Tracy Dahl ('85), Catherine Cook ('90), Zanda Svēde ('13), Dolora Zajick ('83), Pene Pati ('13), Issachah Savage ('13), Quinn Kelsey ('02), Bojan Knezevic ('92), John Churchwell ('96), Mark Morash ('89), and other special Merola alumni. The 60<sup>th</sup> season continues with two Schwabacher Summer Concerts on July 6 and 9; stagings of Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona*, Holst's *Sāvītri*, and Walton's *The Bear* in a triple bill (July 20 and 22); Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (August 3 and 5); and the annual Merola Grand Finale performance August 19 at the War Memorial Opera House.

For the 2017 Merola Opera Program, held from May 29 to August 19, 23 singers, five apprentice coaches, and one apprentice stage director will participate in the intensive opera training program, representing five countries and the United States. More than 600 young artists auditioned around the United States for this highly selective, all expenses paid, 12-week summer program. The artists chosen for the 2017 program come from around the world, including Canada, Poland, China, Colombia, and Mexico, plus 14 different states in the U.S.

Opera luminaries Alan Darling, Jane Eaglen, Warren Jones, Martin Katz, and Robert Morrison, will lead public master classes for the young artists, which may be attended by Merola members. Guest teachers include Richard Battle, Deborah Birnbaum, Steven Blier, Nicola Bowie, Alessandra Cattani, Tracy Dahl, Peter Grunberg, Robin Guarino, Peter Kazaras, Bruce Lamott, James Morris, Patricia Kristof Moy, Kevin Murphy, John Parr, and César Ulloa, who will provide training in voice, foreign languages, operatic repertory, diction, acting, career management, and stage movement. Apprentice coaches and the apprentice stage director have a 12-week program and singers have an 11-week program.

### **ABOUT MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM**

The Merola Opera Program is widely regarded as the foremost opera training program for aspiring singers, coach accompanists, and stage directors. Merola nurtures the opera stars of tomorrow, presents operatic works that reach a diverse audience, and provides community outreach through educational programs for students and the general public.

Named for San Francisco Opera's first general director, Gaetano Merola, the Merola Opera Program began during the 1954-55 season and established its full training program in 1957. Each fall, more than 800 young artists apply to the Program. During the 12-week summer training program, they have the rare opportunity of studying, coaching, and participating in master classes with established professionals. Participants also perform in two fully-staged opera productions, the Schwabacher Summer Concert, and the Merola Grand Finale, all with full orchestra.

Merola has served as a proving ground for hundreds of artists including Leona Mitchell, Anna Netrebko, Patricia Racette, Ruth Ann Swenson, Carol Vaness, Deborah Voigt, Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, Dolora Zajick, Rolando Villazón, Thomas Hampson, and Patrick Summers, among many others.

In the past six decades, over 1,236 individual participants have experienced the transformative Merola Opera Program, many of whom have become world-renowned artists in the pages of operatic history. Between 1957 and 2016, 354 sopranos, 174 mezzo-sopranos, 5 contraltos, 5 countertenors, 211 tenors, 176 baritones, 71 bass-baritones, 82 basses, 136 apprentice coaches, and 22 apprentice stage directors have received invaluable and life-changing training and financial support from the Merola Opera Program. The impact of the equally impressive Merola faculty and artists has left a grand presence on operatic stages across the globe, and the program continues to surpass its own standard of excellence in quality and vision with each passing season.

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 fundraising, primarily from loyal members and foundations.

Merola provides a nurturing environment for young opera artists of the highest caliber to hone their skills and invites passionate supporters to be part of the journey. For information on the Merola Opera Program, please visit [merola.org](http://merola.org).

**PRESS ONLY:** For more information on the individual 2017 Merola Opera Program participants, please visit <http://merola.org/2017artists>. To download headshots of the 2017 Merola artists, please visit <https://merolaopera.box.com/v/2017ArtistHeadshots>. No password required; for media use only. To download the highest resolution, select photo and then press the "download" button on the top right.

## **CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

### **2017 Merola Opera Summer Festival *Calendar of Performances***

Tickets for all San Francisco performances may be purchased by calling the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330 or by visiting [merola.org](http://merola.org) or [sfopera.com](http://sfopera.com). The box office is open Monday, 10 am to 5 pm, and Tuesday through Friday, 10 am to 6 pm. Tickets for the Bing Concert Hall performance on the Stanford University campus go on sale June 8 and may be purchased online at [live.stanford.edu](http://live.stanford.edu); by calling (650) 724-2464; or in person at 327 Lasuen Street on the Stanford University campus.

#### **Sunday, June 11 at 8:00 pm**

#### **Merola Opera Program 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert**

War Memorial Veterans Building, Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

Deborah Voigt, Dolora Zajick, Issachah Savage, Quinn Kelsey, and many more noted Merola alums return for an evening of song and Merola memories in honor of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Merola Opera Program. Tickets: \$60.

#### **Program:**

*Les contes d'Hoffmann* (Offenbach)

"Belle nuit, o nuit d'amour"

Deborah Voigt, Dolora Zajick, 2017 Merola artists

*L'amico Fritz* (Mascagni)

“Suzel, buon dì”

Julie Adams, Pene Pati

*Samson et Dalilah* (Saint-Saëns)

“Mon coeur s'ouvre ta voix”

Zanda Švėde, Issachah Savage

*Lucia di Lammermoor* (Donizetti)

“Appressati, Lucia...Il pallor funesto orrendo”

Tracy Dahl, Quinn Kelsey

*Candide* (Bernstein)

“I am easily assimilated”

Catherine Cook, Amitai Pati, Andrew G. Manea

*Die Walküre* (Wagner)

“Siegmond heiss' ich”

Issachah Savage, Sarah Cambridge

*Showboat* (Kern)

“You are love”

Kristin Clayton, Bojan Knežević

*Cavalleria rusticana* (Mascagni)

“Voi la sapete”

Dolora Zajick

*Mignon* (Thomas)

“Oui, pour ce soir...Je suis Titania”

Tracy Dahl

*Andrea Chenier* (Giordano)

“Nemico della patria”

Quinn Kelsey

*Annie Get Your Gun* (Berlin)

“Anything you can do”

Deborah Voigt, Catherine Cook

Text revised by Clifford Cranna

*Il Trovatore* (Verdi)

“Madre, non dormi? Ai nostri monti”

Dolora Zajick, Issachah Savage

*Candide* (Bernstein)

“Make our garden grow”

Pene Pati, Amina Edris, tutti Adlers, tutti Merolini

**Thursday, July 6 at 7:30 pm**

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

**Sunday, July 9 at 2:30 pm**

Bing Concert Hall, Stanford University, Palo Alto

**Merola Opera Program presents the Schwabacher Summer Concert**

Featuring staged scenes from Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*, Moore's *Ballad of Baby Doe*, Massenet's *Thaïs*, von Weber's *Der Freischütz*, Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*, and Weill's *Street Scene*, accompanied by full orchestra, with English supertitles.

Tickets: \$45/\$25 (SF) and \$30 to \$40 (Stanford)

Anne Manson, conductor

David Lefkowich, director

Kendra Berentsen, Mathilda Edge, Felicia Moore, Alexandra Razskazoff, sopranos

Alice Chung, mezzo-soprano

Andres Acosta, Xingwa Hao, tenors

Dimitri Katotakis, Thomas Glass, baritones

**Program:**

Moore – *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Act 1, Scenes 2 and 3

Donizetti – *Lucrezia Borgia*, Act 1

Von Weber – *Der Freischütz*, from Act 2, Scenes 8 and 9

Massenet – *Thaïs*, from Act 2

Mascagni – *Cavalleria rusticana*

Weill – *Street Scene*, from Act 1, Scene 7

**Thursday, July 20 at 7:30 pm and Saturday, July 22 at 2:00 pm**

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

Merola Opera Program presents *La serva padrona* (Pergolesi), *Sāvitri* (Holst), and *The Bear* (Walton)

(English supertitles will accompany each opera)

A triple bill of one-act operas. *La serva padrona* is a quintessential operatic work that links history to the present with relatable characters in the form of a cunning young maid and her aging master. In *Sāvitri*, Holst reaches into the Mahābhārata, one of the great epics of ancient India, focusing on the tale of Death outsmarted by a young woman. The series closes with Walton's *The Bear*, where a widow faithful to the memory of her late husband finds unexpected love. Casting to be announced at a later date.

Tickets: \$70/\$50

**Thursday, August 3 at 7:30 pm and Saturday, August 5 at 2:00 pm**

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

Merola Opera Program presents *La Cenerentola* (Rossini)

(performed in Italian with English supertitles)

In Rossini's warmhearted retelling of the Cinderella story, the evil stepmother has become a wicked stepfather, the fairy godmother a philosopher, and the slipper has been swapped for a bracelet. Goodness and kindness triumph and melody reigns supreme. Casting to be announced at a later date.

Tickets: \$70/\$50

**Saturday, August 19 at 7:30 pm**

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

Merola Opera Program presents the Merola Grand Finale and reception

Celebrate with the 2017 Merola young artists one last time before they head out to dazzle audiences around the world! The Merola Grand Finale is an exciting evening at the War Memorial Opera House, featuring scenes from some of opera's most thrilling moments. Program and casting to be announced at a later date.

Concert Tickets: \$50/\$40/\$25. Post-performance Reception Tickets: \$75

Post-performance reception (10 pm) with the artists takes place at the War Memorial Veterans Building's Green Room. A separate ticket (\$75) is required for admission to the reception. For reception tickets, please call the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330.