



MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM CONTINUES ITS 61ST SEASON WITH IL RE PASTORE

July 19 and 21 in San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (6 June 2018) – San Francisco’s acclaimed **Merola Opera Program** presents the stars of tomorrow in Mozart’s *Il re pastore*. Merola is one of the most prestigious and selective opera training programs in the world, featuring 29 artists selected from more than 800 international applicants. This exquisite early Mozart work featuring a string of thrilling arias explores the competing pulls of love and duty, as a young shepherd finds he must renounce his true love in order to reclaim his lost throne. *Il re pastore* will be performed **7:30pm, Thursday, July 19, and 2:00pm, Saturday, July 21**, at the **San Francisco Conservatory of Music**. For tickets or more information, visit www.merola.org or call (415) 864-3330.

In the spring of 1775, 19-year-old Mozart wrote *Il re pastore* in response to a commission by the Archbishop of Salzburg. With a plot that explored the demands of love against the demands of kingship, the young Mozart’s work shines with its rich orchestration and ingenious score. In addition to fulsome dramatic singing from all five soloists, highlights include Aminta’s famous arias “Aer tranquillo e di sereni” and “L’amerò, sarò costante.”

Performances will be conducted by Stephen Stubbs, a leading figure in the American early music scene and winner of a Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording in 2015 for Charpentier: *La descente d’Orphée aux enfers*. In 2007, Stubbs established his production company, Pacific MusicWorks, based in Seattle, reflecting his lifelong interest in both early music and contemporary performance. His extensive discography as conductor and solo lutenist includes well over 100 CDs, many of which have received international acclaim and awards.

The concert will be directed by Tara Faircloth (Merola 2006), who has directed two world premieres with the Houston Grand Opera’s East+West series and enjoys a thriving career in regional houses such as Wolf Trap Opera, Utah Opera, Arizona Opera, Tulsa Opera, and Atlanta Opera.

The Merola Artists performing *Il re pastore* will be Zhengyi Bai (Tenor), Cheyanne Coss (Soprano), Simone McIntosh (Mezzo-Soprano), Charles Sy (Tenor), and Patricia Westley (Soprano).

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, and presents outreach through educational programs for students and the general public. Throughout the summer, the Merola artists participate in master classes and private

coaching with opera's most accomplished singers, conductors, and directors. Participants also receive training in operatic repertory, foreign languages, diction, acting, and stage movement. Offered free of charge for all participants, the Merola Opera Program is unique in the industry in many ways. It is the only young artist program to provide financial support to developing artists for five years following participation, offering financial aid for essential career development costs including coaching, language classes, and audition travel. In addition, only Merola graduates are considered for participation in the San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program. Merola has served as a proving ground for hundreds of artists, who have gone on to extensive careers in opera, including Leona Mitchell, Anna Netrebko, Patricia Racette, Carol Vaness, Deborah Voigt, Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, Dolora Zajick, Rolando Villazón, Thomas Hampson, and Patrick Summers among many others.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: San Francisco's acclaimed **Merola Opera Program** continues its 61st season, presenting the stars of tomorrow with Mozart's *Il re pastore*. This exquisite early work featuring a string of thrilling arias explores the competing pulls of love and duty, as a young shepherd finds he must renounce his true love in order to reclaim his lost throne. Merola is one of the most prestigious and selective opera training programs in the world, featuring 29 artists selected from more than 800 international applicants.

SHOWS: **7:30pm, Thursday, July 19**
2:00pm, Saturday, July 21

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

TICKETS: \$55-\$80

Discount available for purchase of three San Francisco-based Summer Festival productions (deadline June 18, 2018). Also discount for groups of 10 or more. \$15 student tickets available in limited quantity in advance at San Francisco Opera Box Office.

INFO: For information or to order tickets visit <http://merola.org> or call the San Francisco Opera Box Office at **415-864-3330**. The box office is open Monday, 10am-5pm, and Tuesday through Friday, 10am-6pm.

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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://www.cbpr.co/press/MerolaOperaProgram>