



MEROLA
OPERA PROGRAM

Contact:

Ruben Pimentel
Director of Marketing & Communications
rpimentel@merola.org
415.936.2323

Rachel Krasner
Marketing & Events Associate
rkrasner@merola.org
415.936.2320

Jean Shirk
jean@shirkmedia.com
510.332.4195

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The Merola Grand Finale August 19 at 7:30 pm at the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco concludes Merola Opera Program 2017 Summer Festival

Merola 2017 artists perform staged scenes and musical excerpts from works by Donizetti, Massenet, Verdi, Rossini, Lehár, Berg, Boito, Thomas, Bizet, Mozart, Britten, and Handel



(l to r: Victoria Crutchfield; 2017 Merolini; Antony Walker)

(San Francisco, CA – July 13, 2017) - The acclaimed [Merola Opera Program](http://merola.org), one of the most prestigious and selective opera training programs in the United States, concludes its 2017 Summer Festival and its 60th Anniversary Season with the Merola Grand Finale on Saturday, August 19 at 7:30 pm at the War Memorial Opera House. Conductor Antony Walker will lead the orchestra and 2017 Merola Apprentice Stage Director Victoria Crutchfield will stage the program, featuring works by Donizetti, Massenet, Verdi, Rossini, Lehár, Berg, Boito, Thomas, Bizet, Mozart, Britten, and Handel. The performance is a culmination of the 12-week Merola Opera training program, and all 23 of the 2017 Merola singers will perform, under the coaching and direction of their fellow artists. Tickets for the performance range from \$25 to \$50, with a limited number of \$15 student tickets available, and are on sale at San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330, merola.org or www.sfopera.com. A special post-performance reception follows the Grand Finale (tickets sold separately).

The program and casting is as follows (not in performance order and subject to change):

La fille du régiment (Donizetti)
“Quoi! Vous m’aimez?...De cet aveu si tendre”
Marie – Kendra Berentsen

Tonio – Anthony Ciaramitaro

Cendrillon (Massenet)

“Enfin, je suis ici”

Cendrillon – Ashley Dixon

I vespri siciliani (Verdi)

“Mercè, dilette amiche”

Elena – Mathilda Edge

Le comte Ory (Rossini)

“Dans ce lieu solitaire”

Raimbaud – Cody Quattlebaum

Chorus – tutti Merola men

Das Land des Lächelns (Lehár)

“Dein ist mein ganzes Herz”

Prince Sou-Chong – Xingwa Hao

Ariadne auf Naxos (R. Strauss)

“Sie hält ihn für den Todesgott”

Zerbinetta – Jana McIntyre

Composer – Samantha Hankey

Wozzeck (Berg)

“Soldaten, Soldaten sind schöne Burschen...Komm, mein Bub!”

Marie – Felicia Moore

Lucia di Lammermoor (Donizetti)

“Ebben? Di tua speranza l'ultimo raggio...Ah! cedi, o più sciagure”

Lucia – Natalie Image

Raimondo - David Weigel

Mefistofele (Boito)

“Son lo spirito che nega sempre tutto”

Mefistofele – Andrew Hiers

Mignon (Thomas)

“Je suis heureuse...Ah! que ton âme enfin”

Mignon – Edith Grossman

Wilhelm – Addison Marlor

Philine – Jana McIntyre

Les pêcheurs de perles (Bizet)

“Qu'ai-je vu?...Je frémis, je chancelle”

Leïla – Alexandra Razskazoff

Zurga – Dimitri Katotakis

La favorite (Donizetti)

“Me voici donc près d'elle...Pour tant d'amour”

Fernand – Addison Marlor

Don Gaspar – Andrès Acosta

Alphonse XI – Szymon Wach

Léonor – Ashley Dixon

Così fan tutte (Mozart)

“Rivolgete a lui lo sguardo”
Guglielmo – Daniel Noyola

The Turn of the Screw (Britten)
“How beautiful it is”
Governess – Kelsea Webb

Rodelinda (Handel)
“Tirannia gli diede il regno”
Garibaldo – Christian Pursell

Il viaggio a Reims (Rossini)
“Ah! A tal colpo inaspettato”
Contessa – Kendra Berentsen
Madama Cortese – Mathilda Edge
Corinna – Samantha Hankey
Melibea – Ashley Dixon
Delia – Edith Grossman
Modestina – Alice Chung
Conte – Anthony Ciaramitaro
Zefiro – Addison Marlor
Cavaliere – Andres Acosta
Barone – Cody Quattlebaum
Don Alvaro – Christian Pursell
Lord Sidney – Daniel Noyola
Don Profondo – David Weigel
Don Prudenziio – Andrew Hiers
Chorus – tutti Merolini

Since making his professional conducting debut, Antony Walker, Music Director of Pittsburgh Opera, has conducted over 200 operas, large and smaller scale choral/orchestral works, and symphonic and chamber works with companies in Europe, the United States and Australia. On the operatic stage, he has led performances for The Metropolitan Opera, English National Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Santa Fe Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera Australia, Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Rome Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, The Minnesota Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Arizona Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Vancouver Opera, and Cincinnati Opera.

Apprentice Stage Director Victoria Crutchfield is a stage director of opera, theater, and everything in between. Recent projects have included: Massenet’s *Manon* at dell’Arte Opera Ensemble, Matthew Aucoin’s *Second Nature* at Music Academy of the West, Poulenc’s *Dialogues des Carmélites* with Bel Canto at Caramoor, and *Song Cycle*, a multimedia immersive experience at the Peabody Essex Museum. Crutchfield earned an A.B. *magna cum laude* in literature at Harvard University and received the James S. Marcus Directing Fellowship to work with acclaimed director Stephen Wadsworth at the Juilliard School. She has also studied acting and movement at the American Repertory Theater, SITI Company, the Atlantic Acting School, Movement Theater Studio, and the Einhorn School of Performing Arts.

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

TICKETS: Tickets for the Merola Grand Finale on August 19 at the War Memorial Opera House are \$25 to \$50, in addition to a student price of \$15*. Tickets for the post-performance reception are \$75 per person. Both concert and reception tickets may be purchased by calling the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330 or by visiting merola.org or 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.

ABOUT THE 2017 MEROLA 60th ANNIVERSARY SUMMER FESTIVAL SEASON

The Merola Opera Program is celebrating its 60th anniversary season with a nod to its monumental history while forging a new path for young opera artists. Its 2017 season opened June 11 with a Benefit Gala at San Francisco City Hall and Concert at Herbst Theatre, and featured some of the most illustrious participants from past Merola programs. The 60th season highlights include 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 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, 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 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. All participants are provided full scholarships, along with free travel and housing.

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.

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 or sfopera.com. The box office is open Monday, 10 am to 5 pm, and Tuesday through Friday, 10 am to 6 pm.

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

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

Merola Opera Program presents *La serva padrona* (Pergolesi), *Sāvītri* (Holst), and *The Bear* (Walton)
(English supertitles will accompany each opera)

A triple bill of fully-staged, 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 *Sāvītri*, 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 program closes with Walton’s *The Bear*, where a widow faithful to the memory of her late husband finds unexpected love.

Tickets: \$70/\$50

Christopher Ocasek, conductor

Peter Kazaras, director

Jana McIntyre, Kelsea Webb, sopranos

Ashley Dixon, mezzo-soprano

Addison Marlor, tenor

Daniel Noyola, Daniel Weigel, Cody Quattlebaum, bass-baritones

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

Tickets: \$70/\$50

Mark Morash, conductor

Chuck Hudson, director

Natalie Image, soprano

Edith Grossman, Samantha Hankey, mezzo-sopranos

Anthony Ciaramitaro, tenor

Andrew Hiers, Christian Pursell, Szymon Wach, bass-baritones

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.

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.