



**MEROLA
OPERA PROGRAM**

**MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM CONCLUDES 2019 SUMMER FESTIVAL WITH THE
MEROLA GRAND FINALE
August 17 in San Francisco**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (12 July 2018) – San Francisco’s acclaimed **Merola Opera Program** wraps up its Summer Festival with the **Merola Grand Finale**, a concert at the War Memorial Opera House featuring the 29 young international artists selected from over 800 applicants in the 2019 Merola Opera Program, who will showcase a dazzling array of opera’s most exciting arias and ensembles. Conducted by Maestro George Manahan, Music Director of the American Composers Orchestra and Portland Opera, and directed by 2019 Merola Apprentice Stage Director Greg Eldridge, this evening showcases the hard work and extraordinary talent of the Merola artists. The **Merola Grand Finale** will be performed at **7:30pm, Saturday, August 17** at the **War Memorial Opera House**, 301 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco. For tickets or more information, visit www.merola.org or call **(415) 864-3330**.

The repertoire for the **Merola Grand Finale** will showcase selections from a wide variety of operas, including Strauss’s *Der Rosenkavalier*, Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* and *La finta giardiniera*, Barber’s *Vanessa*, Donizetti’s *Maria Stuarda* and *La fille du régiment*, Offenbach’s *La belle Hélène*, Bellini’s *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* and *I puritani*, Dvořák’s *Rusalka*, Poulenc’s *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Nicolai’s *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*, Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette*, Halévy’s *La juive*, Thomas’s *Hamlet*, and Verdi’s *Falstaff* and *La Traviata*.

Throughout the season, artistic staff members work closely with Merolini to choose arias and ensembles to be performed at the Merola Grand Finale. The young artists performing are:

- Salvatore Atti, tenor
- Brennan Blankenship, mezzo-soprano
- Jeff Byrnes, baritone
- Alice Chung, mezzo-soprano
- Cara Collins, mezzo-soprano
- Michael Day, tenor
- Anna Dugan, soprano
- Andrew Dwan, bass-baritone
- Stefan Egerstrom, bass
- Greg Eldridge, apprentice stage director
- Edith Grossman, mezzo-soprano
- Nicholas Huff, tenor
- Andrew King, apprentice coach
- Christopher Koelzer, apprentice coach
- Edward Laurenson, baritone
- Chelsea Lehnea, soprano
- Anne-Marie MacIntosh, soprano
- Amber R. Monroe, soprano
- Timothy Murray, baritone
- Rafael Porto, bass-baritone
- Laureano Quant, baritone
- Nicholas Roehler, apprentice coach
- Brandon Scott Russell, tenor
- Hyeree Shin, soprano
- Victor Starsky, tenor
- Elisa Sunshine, soprano
- Esther Tonea, soprano

- Patricia Westley, soprano
- William Woodard, apprentice coach

Maestro George Manahan will be conducting the young Merolini in this performance, the final concert of Merola's 2019 Summer Festival. As Music Director of both the American Composers Orchestra and the Portland Opera, Manahan's career embraces everything from opera to concert, and the traditional to the contemporary. He has appeared with the opera companies of San Francisco, Philadelphia, Seattle, Chicago, Santa Fe, Opera Theatre of St. Louis; Opera National du Paris; Teatro de Comunale de Bologna; the Bergen Festival; and the Casals Festival.

The concert will be directed by 2019 Merola Apprentice Stage Director Greg Eldridge, who has worked on more than 40 productions in seven countries, and is on the board of Stage Directors UK. With a background in text-based theatre, he works with performers on having clear actions and objectives while maintaining truthful emotional connections to situation, context, and status. Eldridge has coached at studios all over the world, including the Victorian College of the Arts (Australia), the Lyric Opera of Weimar (Germany), Music Academy International (Italy), and the Birmingham Conservatoire (UK).

Now in its 62nd season, 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 offers outreach through educational programs for students and the general public. Throughout the summer 29 Merola artists, selected from more than 800 international applicants, 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 aid for essential career development expenses 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 impressive careers in opera, including Anna Netrebko, Ailyn Pérez, Patricia Racette, Nadine Sierra, Elza van den Heever, Carol Vaness, Deborah Voigt, Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, Dolora Zajick, Brian Jagde, Stuart Skelton, Rolando Villazón, Quinn Kelsey, Thomas Hampson, Lucas Meachem, and Patrick Summers, among many others.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: San Francisco's acclaimed **Merola Opera Program** wraps up its Summer Festival with the **Merola Grand Finale**, a concert at the War Memorial Opera House featuring the 29 young international artists selected from over 800 applicants in the 2019 Merola Opera Program, who will showcase a dazzling array of opera's most exciting arias and ensembles. Conducted by Maestro George Manahan,

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WHEN: 7:30pm, Saturday, August 17

SHOWS: War Memorial Opera House, 301 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

TICKETS: Concert tickets: \$25-\$50
Post-concert reception tickets: \$75

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, 10:00am-5:00pm, and Tuesday through Friday, 10:00am-6:00pm.

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MEDIA: Contact Sydney Albin, Carla Befera & Co.
650.327.1200 | sydney@cb-pr.com

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

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