



MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM

Summer 2022 Newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE

- Meet John L. Garfinkle **2**
- From the Executive Director **3** · In Memoriam **3**
- Sunday in the Park with Merola **4**
- Upcoming Member Events **6** · 2022 Merola Artists **7**
- 2022 Summer Festival Events **Back Cover**



A Diverse and Dynamic Season

Last month, Merola welcomed the largest group of artists in its history, selected from more than 1,300 international applicants. The 31 young artists traveled to San Francisco from the United States, Canada, Costa Rica, China, Taiwan, and Uzbekistan to participate in the 2022 Merola summer training.

“In our planning and dreaming for the Merola 2022 season, we were guided by the over-arching aim of providing well-rounded and balanced programming that will work toward achieving diverse goals, both for our artists and for the artistic future of the Merola Opera Program,” says San Francisco Opera Center Artistic Director Carrie-Ann Matheson, who oversees Merola’s artistic programming along with San Francisco Opera Center General Manager Markus Beam.

The return to a full 12-week program makes the 2022 summer particularly significant for Merola and its young artists. “We’ve all been changed by the events of the last two years,” Carrie-Ann says. “The performing arts industry is evolving, and we are truly excited to be a part of deeply profound changes in the landscape of our industry. As leaders of an arts organization, we have the possibility and the responsibility to provide experiences that will inform and transform our artists as they make their steps into this post-COVID opera world.”

As always, training by a world-class faculty is at the heart of what Merola does. “Our faculty and creative teams will inspire a standard of artistic excellence that will serve our Merolini as they embark on their careers,” Markus Beam says. “Training is at the core of what we do,” Carrie-Ann adds, “but the opportunity to actually get up on stage and do the job is essential.”

Merola’s 2022 Summer Festival season will begin on July 9th in the Carolyn Hume Concert Hall at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Grammy-winning pianist Craig Terry will curate A Celebration of American Song, featuring all the 2022 Merola singers. “This concert will dive into the Great American Songbook and begin our season of performances with a joy-filled evening of song from America’s Golden Age,” Carrie-Ann says.

The following week Merola will present the Schwabacher Summer Concert, which for the first time will exclusively feature the music of Latin American and Spanish composers. “This music is rich, beautiful, and makes for a very exciting evening of theater,” Markus says. Opera Hispánica General Director and Artistic Director Jorge Parodi will conduct and Merola alumnus Jose Maria Condemi (’99/’00) will direct this concert of diverse and dynamic opera and zarzuela scenes. The performances will take place on July 14th and 16th, also at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

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A Diverse and Dynamic Season (continued)

In August, *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*) returns to the Merola stage for the first time since 1998. “We’re thrilled to have a wonderful team at the helm,” Carrie-Ann says. “We look forward to welcoming conductor Kelly Kuo and stage director Gina Lapinski, both of whom will be working with Merola for the first time.” The production, sung in German with English dialogue, will take place at the Blue Shield of California Theater at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts on August 4th and 6th. This enchanting opera is ideal for audiences of all ages. Merola’s new Youth Membership (for those under 18) comes with a complimentary ticket to the matinee on August 6th and a special reception with some of the artists following the performance. The perfect opportunity to introduce the children in your life to Merola and opera.

The 2022 Merola Summer Festival culminates on August 20th with the Merola Grand Finale, back on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House for the first time since 2019. “This exciting evening of arias and scenes will be conducted by Metropolitan Opera conductor Patrick Furrer and directed by 2022 Merola stage director Matthew J. Schulz,” Markus says. Carrie-Ann adds, “The Merola Grand Finale promises to be a wonderful evening not only showcasing the talent of our 31 young artists but giving audiences the chance to celebrate the growth they have made over the course of their summer with us.”

This exciting summer season promises to be transformative not only for the young artists but for Merola’s members and audiences.



Meet John L. Garfinkle

John is an expert at listening. By training, he is a speech and language pathologist and works in acute rehabilitation with a brain injury specialty team. He will be the first to tell you that he has no artistic talent, but you will soon realize that he has a keen artistic sensibility. This may have been shaped by the countless hours over the past 40 years attending theater, dance, and opera or the years spent at his mother’s knee (as early as four years of age) regularly attending San Francisco museums.

His interest in Merola started when he attended a Merola Grand Finale with his good friend and opera companion. They were the guest of his friend’s violin teacher who was performing in the orchestra. Expecting a “student” performance, they were astounded by the quality of the voices, the program, and the setting. Years later, John became a small donor and when Merola asked for a gift to support young artists during the COVID-19 pandemic, he responded very generously. When asked about this, John stated that “COVID-19 was really hard on so many artists and arts organizations—some couldn’t survive it. I appreciate that Merola was one of the organizations that did and that it was creative in handling the crisis with caring for its artists.”

In thanks for his extraordinary support, Merola sent John links to the performances he was forced to miss in person. It was watching the performance of *What the Heart Desires* that introduced him to the talents of mezzo-soprano Gabrielle Beatag (Merola ’21). Emotionally moved by the beauty of her performance of Errolyn Wallen’s “Daedalus,” John became a fan. An introduction by Zoom was followed by visits in person and a deep friendship was born. This year, John is sponsoring one of the young artists of the 2022 Summer Season.

John is dedicated to keeping the arts alive. He feels that they “are the fabric of our culture and at this time, when the city is struggling, we need the arts all the more.” He feels fortunate that he can provide deep and lasting support through legacy gifts to 12 charitable organizations and Merola is extremely grateful to be one of them. He feels that “Merola is a special place—one that is diligent in its process of finding artists and really cares for them with well-rounded training that serves them now and in the future.” He also appreciates “the way the organization takes care of its donors by making them feel appreciated and forging a personal relationship.”

In addition to his generous Merola Legacy Society gift, John has established an endowment that will support the artists and programs that John can enjoy during his lifetime and that will serve as an investment in the future. We are honored by his support.

From the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

It is an absolute joy to write to you in the midst of a full 12-week Merola summer. Our 31 young artists are hard at work honing their talents with an illustrious faculty including Michèle Crider, Warren Jones, Martin Katz, Gerald Martin Moore, and Howard Watkins. They are delving into rehearsals for A

Celebration of American Song, the Schwabacher Summer Concert, and *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*). Carrie-Ann Matheson and Markus Beam share their insights into this dynamic Summer Festival on page 1.

In May we held Merola's first major in-person event since 2019. Sunday in the Park with Merola featured the wines of nine vintners, passed hors d'oeuvres, and a memorable concert by Merola alumni Esther Tanea ('19), Nikola Adele Printz ('21), Edward Graves ('21), and Marika Yasuda ('21). Our own Markus Beam served as the auctioneer on an idyllic afternoon that raised invaluable funds for Merola (pages 4–5). We are deeply grateful to those who attended and all who continue to support Merola and our young artists.

One of the joys of gathering together again is seeing the Merola members who have always been so integral to our program. We learn more about one of our newest members, John Garfinkle, and what brought him to Merola on page 2. And we remember longtime Merola member Milton Mosk, who sadly passed away last year, on page 3. Milton did so much for Merola and is sorely missed.

Our Summer Festival of performances is just getting underway. You'll find a listing of upcoming performances and events on pages 6 & 8. I look forward to seeing you at many of these and sharing an exciting summer with you.

See you at Merola!

With all best wishes,

Jean Kellogg



**MEROLA
OPERA PROGRAM**

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In Memoriam:

Milton J. Mosk

April 21, 1929–August 29, 2021



Milton Mosk, a San Francisco native, passed away peacefully in his sleep after a short illness. His beloved husband of 37 years, Thomas Foutch, was at his side. In many ways, Milton had an exceptional life, filled with joy, food, music, and generosity.

Milton was raised in the Avenues and answered the call to military

duty during the Korean War by enlisting in the Navy. He was stationed in Japan, a country that became very dear to him. He often talked of the kindness of the Japanese people he met.

After his tour of duty, Milton returned to San Francisco and worked at Levi Strauss, a job he loved; He always said it was the greatest place to work.

In the 1950's Milton and his brother Melvin worked in The House of Lawton, a catering company, started by their parents, that became well known for weddings and other large life events. After studying cake decorating in Chicago, Milton took charge of all the cake decorating for the House of Lawton, and skillfully created gorgeous multi-tiered cakes for all occasions.

Milton and his first partner Alfred Jacobson worked hard but found time to enjoy travel, theatre, and music. Sadly, after 22 years together, Alfred died of cancer. In 1984 Milton met Tom and their relationship lasted to the last day of his life. Together, and with their many friends and family, they traveled frequently, visiting Europe and Central America. In 2016, they enjoyed taking a cruise around the world.

One cannot think about Milton without remembering his incredible love for the performing arts and his philanthropy. He supported the Merola Opera Program, San Francisco Opera, the San Francisco Symphony, as well as many nonprofit organizations benefiting the City. For 20 years, he and Tom attended the New York Cabaret Convention.

Milton is survived by his husband Thomas Foutch, his brother Melvin Mosk (married to Pearl), and his sister Fay Goodman (married to the late Merv Goodman). He had three nieces: Debbie Mosk (married to Dr. Debra Shapiro); Marcie Salberg (married to Jerry) and Susie Mosk, as well as three great-grandnephews and one great-grandniece. He also left seven great-great-grandnieces and nephews.



Sunday in the Park with Merola

Sunday, May 22, 2022



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1 Carol A. Weitz and Ileana Facchini, Merola Event Committee Chairs; **2** Barbara Bruser Clark, Merola Board President; Patrick Wilken, Merola Board Chairman; Jean Kellogg, Merola Opera Program Executive Director; **3** Auctioneer Markus Beam, San Francisco Opera Center General Manager; **4** Guests enjoying Sunday in the Park with Merola; **5** Marika Yasuda ('21), pianist; Nikola Adele Printz ('21/'22), mezzo-soprano; Esther Tonea ('19), soprano; Edward Graves ('21), tenor; **6** Guests enjoying the concert by Merola alumni.



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7 Robert H. Beadle, Merola Board Member; **8** Attendees enjoying the sunshine at Marin Art and Garden Center; **9** Guests perusing the Sunday in the Park with Merola Silent Auction; **10** Many enjoyed fine California wines, while four-legged guests enjoyed the garden; **11** The Marin Art and Garden Center fountain created a beautiful backdrop for wine tasting; **12** Leah Froyd, violinist from San Francisco Conservatory of Music; **13** Ruth Uchimura, Joan Kelly, Zarana Udani; **14** Bruce Walker, Fran Walker, Barbara Bruser Clark, Merola Board President; **15** Esther Tonea ('19), soprano.

Photography by Ofer Tenenbaum. Photos 6, 9, and 14 by Garion Brodeur.

Upcoming Merola Member Events

For the most up-to-date information, visit merola.org/calendar.

Martin Katz Master Class

Wednesday, July 13, 7:00 PM PDT

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Concert Hall • 50 Oak Street

Benefactor Level and above

Martin Katz has been dubbed “the gold standard of accompanists” by *The New York Times*. Justifiably so, for his fifty-year career has taken him to five continents, collaborating with the world’s most celebrated singers. He has regularly shared the stage with Marilyn Horne, Frederica von Stade, Karita Mattila, Kiri Te Kanawa, Lawrence Brownlee, and Piotr Beczala, to name but a few. Mr. Katz is also active as a conductor and editor. He has led opera productions for the Merola Opera Program and the BBC, as well as innumerable performances at the University of Michigan, where he has been a Distinguished Professor for more than 30 years. His editions of baroque and bel canto operas have been performed in Houston, Ottawa, and at the Metropolitan Opera. At the University of Michigan, he has chaired the program in collaborative piano and coached vocal repertoire and chamber music for singers, pianists, and instrumentalists alike. Mr. Katz is an author as well. His first opus, *The Complete Collaborator*, published by Oxford University Press, is widely considered a seminal work on the subject.

Warren Jones Master Class

Wednesday, July 20, 7:00 PM PDT

Barbro Osher Recital Hall, Bowes Center • 200 Van Ness Avenue

Silver Circle and above

Always a Merola audience favorite, Mr. Jones has been a frequent guest artist at Carnegie Hall and at Lincoln Center’s “Great Performers Series,” as well as the Salzburg, Tanglewood, Ravinia, and Caramoor Festivals, in addition to touring as a recitalist throughout Europe, South America, and Asia. He has been invited multiple times to perform at the White House. Mr. Jones has conducted two Merola productions, leading Mascagni’s *L’Amico Fritz* by Mascagni and *Don Pasquale*. For 10 years he was Assistant Conductor at the Metropolitan Opera and for three seasons served in the same capacity at San Francisco Opera. He is a former faculty member at Manhattan School of Music in New York City, and has been Artist-in-Residence at Rutgers University, as well as Guest Artist in Opera at New England Conservatory and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts—and continues to enjoy a vigorous teaching schedule throughout the United States.

Michèle Crider Master Class

Thursday, August 11, 7:00 PM PDT

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Concert Hall • 50 Oak Street

Bronze Circle and above

Michèle Crider is one of the preeminent dramatic sopranos of her generation. She has made her mark on both operatic and concert stages in a remarkably wide repertoire. Miss Crider performs regularly in the world’s great opera houses, including the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, the Staatsoper Berlin, the State Opera Houses in Vienna, Munich, Berlin, and Hamburg, the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, the Arena di Verona, Opéra de Paris Bastille, Zurich, the Liceu in Barcelona, and Teatro Real in Madrid. Also enjoying a successful concert career, Miss Crider appears regularly at the Salzburg Festival, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Orange, Ravenna, and Edinburgh Festivals, at the Royal Albert Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Alte Oper in Frankfurt, the Savonlinna Festival, the Salle Pleyel, and Barbican Hall in London with orchestras including the London Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic, National Orchestra of Paris, Berlin Philharmonic, Oslo Philharmonic, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and the WDR Symphony Orchestra in Cologne.

Schwabacher Recital Series Auditions

Saturday, August 13, 2:00 PM PDT

San Francisco Conservatory of Music • 50 Oak Street

Bronze Circle and above

Go behind the rehearsal studio door and hear current Merola artists audition for Merola’s and San Francisco Opera Center’s renowned Schwabacher Recital Series.

Levels: Benefactor (\$300-\$599) • Bronze Circle (\$600-\$999) • Silver Circle (\$1,000-\$2,499)

2022 Merola Artists



Veena Akama-Makia
MEZZO-SOPRANO
Little Rock, AR



Amanda Batista
SOPRANO
Manchester, NJ



Cody Bowers
COUNTERTENOR
Newnan, GA



Le Bu
BASS-BARITONE
Yancheng, China



Andres Cascante
BARITONE
San José, Costa Rica



Shawn Chang
PIANIST/COACH
Taipei, Taiwan



Edwin Jhamaal Davis
BASS
Utica, MS



Daniel Luis Espinal
TENOR
Sarasota, FL



Adia Evans
SOPRANO
Baltimore, MD



Gongming Jiang
PIANIST/COACH
Shanghai, China



Chance Jonas-O'Toole
TENOR
Dallas, TX



SeungYun Kim
BASS-BARITONE
Cheongju, South Korea



Maggie Kinabrew
SOPRANO
West Hartford, CT



Scott Lee
BARITONE
Statesville, NC



Chelsea Lehnea
SOPRANO
Chattanooga, TN



Yang Lin
PIANIST/COACH
Shanghai, China



Celeste Morales
SOPRANO
San Antonio, TX



Artyom Pak
PIANIST/COACH
Tashkent, Uzbekistan



Jonghyun Park
TENOR
Seoul, South Korea



Olivia Prendergast
SOPRANO
Philadelphia, PA



Nikola Adele Printz
MEZZO-SOPRANO
Oakland, CA



Maggie René
MEZZO-SOPRANO
Los Angeles, CA



Deborah Robertson
PIANIST/COACH
Springfield, MO



Ashley Marie Robillard
SOPRANO
Norton, MA



Arianna Rodriguez
SOPRANO
Fairfax, VA



Sahel Salam
TENOR
Houston, TX



Moisés Salazar
TENOR
Santa Ana, CA



Matthew J. Schulz
STAGE DIRECTOR
Waverly, IA



Olivia Smith
SOPRANO
Penticton, British Columbia, Canada



William Socolof
BASS-BARITONE
White Plains, NY



Erin Wagner
MEZZO-SOPRANO
El Paso, TX



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2022 Merola Summer Festival

A Celebration of American Song

Saturday, July 9, 3:00 PM

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Concert Hall

Schwabacher Summer Concert

Thursday, July 14, 7:30 PM

Saturday, July 16, 3:00 PM

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Concert Hall

Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)

Thursday, August 4, 7:30 PM

Saturday, August 6, 3:00 PM

Blue Shield of California Theater
at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Merola Grand Finale

Saturday, August 20, 7:30 PM

War Memorial Opera House

Full details: merola.org