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news

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For Immediate Release

THE OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK AND MUSIC DIRECTOR EVE QUELER ANNOUNCE 2010-2011 40TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Season includes a double bill of Massenet's *La Navarraise* and Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* led by Music Director Designate Alberto Veronesi on October 25, 2010 and an anniversary performance of Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* conducted by Eve Queler on March 2, 2011

Renowned casts include Roberto Alagna, Maria Guleghina, Elīna Garanča, Mignon Dunn and Marcello Giordani

New York, NY, June 23, 2010 – The Opera Orchestra of New York and its founder and Music Director Eve Queler today announced the company's 40th anniversary season to open at Carnegie Hall on Monday, October 25, 2010. The season begins with an opera-in-concert double bill of Jules Massenet's *La Navarraise* starring tenor Roberto Alagna and mezzo-soprano Elīna Garanča, and Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* starring Mr. Alagna, soprano Maria Guleghina, and mezzo-sopranos Krysty Swann and Mignon Dunn, conducted by Music Director Designate Alberto Veronesi in his Carnegie Hall and The Opera Orchestra of New York debut on Monday, October 25 at 7:30 p.m. The 2010-11 season also includes an opera-in-concert performance of Giacomo Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* with tenor Marcello Giordani and Italian soprano Chiara Taigi in her U.S. debut, conducted by Eve Queler at Avery Fisher Hall on Wednesday, March 2, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. *L'Africaine* was last presented by Eve Queler and The Opera Orchestra of New York in 1972 with Richard Tucker singing the role of Vasco da Gama, and this season's performance will be presented in tribute to that historic performance.

The season will also include the company's annual Vidda Award recital featuring 2011 Award recipient soprano Meagan Miller at Merkin Concert Hall at Kaufman Center on Wednesday, February 9, 2011 at 8:00 p.m.; and young artist recitals as part of the Opera Orchestra of New York's *Rising Star* recital series.

The 2010-11 season features the company debuts of numerous celebrated artists, including tenor Roberto Alagna; sopranos Maria Guleghina, and Chiara Taigi, also making her U.S. debut; and mezzo-sopranos Elīna Garanča and Mignon Dunn, who returns to the stage for the first time since performing in *Elektra* at the Metropolitan Opera in 1994. Returning artists include tenor Marcello Giordani, soprano Ellie Dehn, baritone Giovanni Guagliardo, and bass-baritones Daniel Mobbs and Brian Kontes. Mezzo-soprano Krysty Swann, a former Opera Orchestra Young Artist, will also make her Opera Orchestra main stage and Carnegie Hall debut.

"It is hard to believe that it has been 40 years since I founded The Opera Orchestra of New York and conducted the company's first performances at Carnegie Hall–one of which was Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*," said Music Director Eve Queler. "I look forward to revisiting *L'Africaine* this season and presenting this beautiful work for only the second time in the company's history with some of today's most important artists including tenor Marcello Giordani, with whom the company has had a long association."

"I am very excited and honored to open The Opera Orchestra of New York's 40th anniversary season and make my debut with the Opera Orchestra conducting *La Navarraise* and *Cavalleria rusticana*.

I am pleased to present these two masterpieces of Verismo opera with singers whom over the past few years, I have a developed a special rapport and artistic bond," said Alberto Veronesi, Music Director Designate. "I look forward to beginning my association with The Opera Orchestra of New York and continuing the company's long distinguished history of presenting new and lesser known operas."

Chairman of the Board Norman Raben added: "Following The Opera Orchestra of New York's 2009-10 bridge season of recitals, we are pleased to announce the orchestra's triumphant return with a season of operas-in-concert at Carnegie and Avery Fisher Halls, in addition to our young artist recitals. We look forward to welcoming our new Music Director Designate, Alberto Veronesi to the podium this season, as well as Music Director Eve Queler."

La Navarraise* and *Cavalleria Rusticana

La Navarraise, a "French Verismo" opera, is Jules Massenet's answer to Pietro Mascagni's popular opera *Cavalleria rusticana*. The operas were commonly performed on a double-bill until the early 20th century, and both recount stories of jealousy and betrayal ending in tragedy. *La Navarraise,* inspired by Jules Claretie's short story "La cigarette," is a dramatic love story set during the Carlist War in Spain. Anita (Garanča) must raise money for a dowry to marry Araquil (Alagna), and assassinates army leader Garrido for a monetary reward. When Araquil searches for Anita believing she is having an affair with Garrido, he is shot and killed while Anita looks on. *Cavalleria rusticana* recounts the story of a calm Sicilian Easter morning, disrupted by tragedy when love-struck Santuzza (Guleghina) is forsaken by Turiddu (Alagna) who has rekindled his relationship with married Lola (Swann). A jilted Santuzza goes to Lola's husband to inform him of Lola's indiscretions, igniting his revenge.

This double-bill opera-in-concert performance features many important debuts, including the company premiere of *La Navarraise*; Music Director Designate Alberto Veronesi's U.S., Carnegie Hall and company debuts; and Roberto Alagna, Elīna Garanča, Maria Guleghina and Mignon Dunn's first performances with the company.

L'Africaine

Giacomo Meyerbeer's final work, the now-neglected grand opera *L'Africaine*, is primarily known for the tenor aria "O Paradis." *L'Africaine* is a fictional account of Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama's (Giordani) travels beyond Africa to India, where he becomes caught in a love triangle with Selika (Taigi), queen of Madagascar, and the Portuguese noblewoman, Inez (Dehn), he left behind.

The Opera Orchestra of New York last performed an Italian-language version of the opera, *L'Africana*, during the company's premiere season with Richard Tucker starring in the role of Vasco da Gama and Antonietta Stella as Selika. This season's revival is dedicated to Mr. Tucker and that first historic performance, and features Marcello Giordanni in his sixth performance with the company and Italian soprano Chiara Taigi in her U.S. and company debut.

2011 Vidda Award Recital

The Opera Orchestra of New York's annual Vidda Award Recital will this season feature Vidda Award Winner soprano Meagan Miller at Merkin Concert Hall at Kaufmann Center on February 9, 2011 at 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Miller has performed on opera, recital and concert stages all over the world and has been hailed by *The New York Times* for her "gorgeous and lively tone" and "considerable communicative powers." Ms. Miller recently made her European operatic debut as Ariadne in the Vienna Volksoper's new production of

Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and has performed with esteemed opera companies such as New York City Opera, Minnesota Opera, L'Opéra de Montréal, Wolf Trap Opera, and with San Francisco Opera's Merola program. She made her Opera Orchestra debut in October 2008 singing the role of Saburova in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*. She is also an accomplished recitalist and noted interpreter of new music and has appeared in more than thirty professional recitals. Ms. Miller is the winner of the George London/Kirsten Flagstad Award, the Liederkranz Foundation Competition, a Richard Tucker Music Foundation Study Grant and the 1999 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

The Vidda Award Recital series was established in 1992 to provide young gifted singers the opportunity to perform a solo recital under the aegis of The Vidda Foundation and the Opera Orchestra of New York. Eve Queler, in consultation with the Vidda Foundation and Opera Orchestra staff, oversees the selection process of the recipient, and award winners receive an honorarium in addition to the an all-expenses paid recital at a major venue in New York City. Past winners of the Vidda Award include sopranos Olga Borodina, Eglise Gutiérrez, Olga Makarina, Latonia Moore and Krassimira Stoyanova; mezzo-sopranos Kate Aldrich, Barbara Conrad, Petra Lang and Vivica Genaux; and tenors Francisco Casanova, Stewart Neil and Gaston Rivero.

The Vidda Award Recital is made possible by a generous grant from The Vidda Foundation, a private, non-operating foundation interested in supporting programs that will have lasting impact in the areas of conservation, education, healthcare, human services, and the arts.

***Rising Star* Recitals**

The Opera Orchestra of New York is known for its efforts in cultivating new voices through its Young Artist Program and emerging artist recitals. Throughout the company's 40-year history Ms. Queler has identified, trained and showcased young singers, assisting their professional development and advancing their careers as performing artists. As part of these efforts, The Opera Orchestra of New York will this season continue its *Rising Star* recital series, now in its second year. The *Rising Star* recital series is made possible by the Musician's Emergency Fund. Detailed information will be provided throughout the season.

Eve Queler, Music Director

Founder and creator of The Opera Orchestra of New York, Eve Queler is internationally renowned for her ground-breaking work with the Opera Orchestra and as a guest conductor of symphonic and opera repertoire at venues that span the international musical world. She has conducted more than 100 operas in concert at Carnegie Hall, many of which are rarely performed, bringing them to the attention of the American public and introducing them to the standard repertoire. Ms. Queler has championed many Russian and Czech operas unknown in the U.S. and was the first conductor in America to perform Mussorgsky's unfinished *Khovanshchina* with orchestration by Shostakovich, as well as the first Czech-language performance of Janacek's *Katya Kabanova* in 1979, *Jenufa* in 1988 and Dvorak's *Rusalka* in 1987.

In September 2009 Ms. Queler conducted the opening of the Bellini Festival at the Teatro Massimo Bellini in Catania and will make her debut at the Puccini Festival, Torre del Lago in July 2010 conducting a new production of *Madama Butterfly*. Ms. Queler has been named a *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, one of the highest awards presented by the French government, for her commitment to French operas. She has also received the Sanford Medal, Yale University's highest musical honor.

Alberto Veronesi, Music Director Designate

Alberto Veronesi is Music Director of the Puccini Festival at Torre del Lago, Artistic and Music Director of the Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana in Palermo, and Artistic Director of the Filarmonica del Teatro Comunale di Bologna. He will become Music Director of The Opera Orchestra of New York beginning with the 2011/12 season.

Mr. Veronesi has done extensive research on the operatic repertoire of the late 19th and early 20th centuries by composers such as Pietro Mascagni, Ruggiero Leoncavallo and Giacomo Puccini, among others. In an effort to give this underexposed repertoire a wider audience with the hopes of establishing new masterworks, as a Deutsche Grammophon artist he has programmed and recorded Puccini's *Edgar*, Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz*, Leoncavallo's *I Medici* as well as *Puccini Rediscovered* – a collection of original editions and alternative versions of Puccini's arias and ensembles, and *La Nuit de mai* – an album of Leoncavallo's songs and arias. In July and August 2010 Mr. Veronesi will conduct Puccini's *La fanciulla del West* in honor of the opera's 100th anniversary at the Puccini Festival in Torre del Lago.

The Opera Orchestra of New York

The Opera Orchestra of New York was established by Eve Queler in 1971 to present to rarely-heard operas and provide the public with an opportunity to hear them performed in major concert venues. Among Opera Orchestra's numerous U.S. premieres are Puccini's *Edgar* with Carlo Bergonzi and Renata Scotto; Boito's *Nerone* with James Morris and Pablo Elvira; and Smetana's *Libuse* with Gabriela Benacková and Paul Plishka. The company also performed the New York premiere of Tchaikovsky's *The Maid of Orleans*, with Dolora Zajick and Jorma Hynninen, which was also the American premiere of the Russian language version. The ensemble has also presented works long neglected in New York, such as Wagner's *Rienzi*, Verdi's *I Lombardi*, Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles*, and Catalani's *La Wally*. These pioneering efforts have led national opera companies such as the Metropolitan Opera, Chicago Lyric and Houston Grand Opera to add to their permanent repertoires works that received their first major modern hearing by The Opera Orchestra of New York including *I lombardi*, Donizetti's *La Favorita*, Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini*, Dvořák's *Rusalka* and Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*.

Since 1978 Opera Orchestra's Young Artists Program has identified and fostered young operatic talent. It is the only program in the New York metropolitan area that provides young singers with an opportunity to rehearse and perform with full orchestra and chorus. The program has nurtured the talents of Renée Fleming, Aprile Millo, Vivica Genaux, Deborah Voigt, Latonia Moore, Stephen Costello, Michael Fabiano, Bryan Hymel and Eglise Gutiérrez. Other singers who have worked with Opera Orchestra very early in their careers include José Carreras, Barbara Hendricks, Dwayne Croft, Samuel Ramey and James Morris. Singers who made their U.S. or New York debuts with Opera Orchestra include Gabriela Benacková, Stephanie Blythe, Olga Borodina, Ghena Dimitrova, Jane Eaglen, Carlo Guelfi, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Vesselina Kasarova, Paul Plishka, Rosalind Plowright and Krassimira Stoyanova and Dolora Zajick.

Tickets

Tickets for the 2010-11 season will go on sale July 15, 2010. For information and tickets please contact The Opera Orchestra of New York at oony@tiac.net or (212) 906-9137.

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Monday, October 25, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.
Carnegie Hall, New York, NY

La Navarraise
Music by Jules Massenet
Libretto by Jules Claretie and Henri Cain

Cast:

Araquil	Roberto Alagna *
Anita	Elina Garanča *
Remigo	TBD
Garrido	TBD
Ramon	TBD
Bustamente	Brian Kontes

Cavalleria Rusticana
Music by Pietro Mascagni
Libretto by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci

Cast:

Turridu	Roberto Alagna *
Santuzza	Maria Guleghina *
Lola	Krysty Swann †
Mamma Lucia	Mignon Dunn *
Alfio	TBD

The Opera Orchestra of New York
Alberto Veronesi, Conductor ˚ * †
New York Choral Society

Wednesday, February 9, 2010 at 8:00 p.m.
Merkin Concert Hall at Kaufman Center, New York, NY

Vidda Award Recital with soprano Meagan Miller

Wednesday, March 2, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.
Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY

L'Africaine
Music by Giacomo Meyerbeer
Libretto by Eugène Scribe

Cast:

Vasco da Gama	Marcello Giordani
Inez	Ellie Dehn
Selika	Chiara Taigi ˚ * †
Don Diego	Giovanni Guagliardo
Nelusko	TBD
Anna	Gabriela Garcia
Don Pedro	Daniel Mobbs
Grand Inquisitor	Djore Nance
Grand Brahmin	Michael McGee

The Opera Orchestra of New York
Eve Queler, conductor

˚ U.S. debut
* Company debut
† Carnegie Hall debut