



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**OPERA SARATOGA Celebrates “National Opera Week” By Launching
Community Initiative *Saratoga Sings for Seniors***

Opera Company To Perform at Retirement Communities and Facilities Throughout the Region

(Saratoga Springs, NY) **Opera Saratoga** will celebrate National Opera Week, October 24 through November 2, 2014, by launching *Saratoga Sings for Seniors*, a week-long performance tour at retirement communities, senior centers and assisted living facilities throughout the Capital Region. The program is the beginning of a larger community engagement initiative, *Saratoga Sings!*, which will be expanded upon in early 2015. Through *Saratoga Sings!*, Opera Saratoga will present opera events at locations that leverage the unique cultural, historic, and natural assets of the region, providing an unexpected backdrop for exciting performances that allow the public to connect to opera in familiar settings. All *Saratoga Sings!* events will be free for the public, to ensure everyone can attend.

The initiative to reach out to older adults in the community was created by Artistic and General Director Lawrence Edelson. “It was brought to my attention that the company had no programs to specifically serve older adults. We realized that we had the opportunity to truly enrich the lives of so many people by bringing opera directly to senior facilities, and that this was something we could do throughout the region - not only in Saratoga Springs. Many older adults aren’t able to attend performances at concert halls or theaters due to limited income, mobility or other health issues. *Saratoga Sings for Seniors* is our way to break down all of these barriers, and bring the joy of great singing right to their door,” said Edelson.

Saratoga Sings for Seniors will include a series of over a dozen concerts, from Albany to Queensbury, by mezzo soprano **Jennifer Panara** and tenor **Javier Abreu**, accompanied by pianist **Jody Schum**. The 45 minute concerts will feature a variety of beloved arias, duets and songs, including a preview from Opera Saratoga's upcoming production of Rossini's *Cinderella (La Cenerentola)*, which will open the company's summer festival season on July 2nd, 2015.

Saratoga Sings for Seniors is being presented as part of National Opera Week, coordinated by OPERA America, the national service organization for opera. National Opera Week celebrates the vibrancy of opera in America today and brings the inventiveness and excitement of opera to a national audience. The strength and diversity of established opera companies, community opera ensembles and opera training programs across the United States are on display through free, dynamic activities designed to engage novices, opera lovers and everyone in between.

Opportunities for Media to Experience Saratoga Sings for Seniors in action during National Opera Week
(Please note only a few are open to the public. The others are open only to each specific retirement community)

October 26th

10:30 am	Fort Hudson Health System 319 Broadway Ft. Edward, NY 12828	<i>Open to Public/Media</i>
3:00 pm	Prestwick Chase at Saratoga 100 Saratoga Boulevard Saratoga Springs, NY 12866	

October 27th

10:30 am	Bright Horizons 10 New Karner Road Guilderland, NY 12084	
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October 28th

10:00 am	Bright Horizons 1673 Route 9 Clifton Park, NY 12065	
1:00 pm	Glens Falls Senior Center 380 Glen Street Glens Falls, NY 12801	<i>Open to Public/Media</i>

October 29th

10:30 am Senior Services of Albany at Westview Senior Center ***Open to Public/Media***
680 Central Avenue
Albany, NY 12206

2:00 pm Wesley Health Care Center
131 Lawrence
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

October 30th

10:00 am Saratoga County Maplewood Center
149 Ballston Avenue
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

2:30 pm Daughters of Sarah Senior Community
180 Washington Avenue Extension
Albany, NY 12203

October 31st

10:30 am Bright Horizons Carondelet
385 Watervliet-Shaker Rd.
Watervliet, NY 12189

1:30 pm Westmount Health Center
42 Gurney Lane
Queensbury, NY 12804

November 1st

3:00 pm Glen Eddy
1 Glen Eddy Drive
Niskayuna, NY 12309

7:00 pm Beverwyck
40 Autumn Drive
Slingerlands, NY 12159

ABOUT OPERA SARATOGA

Opera Saratoga, formerly known as Lake George Opera, began with a production of *Die Fledermaus* at the Diamond Point Theatre on July 5, 1962, playing to an audience of 230. The Company now calls Saratoga Springs home and performs for more than 25,000 people annually. To date, the Company has performed ninety different fully-staged works by fifty-two different composers, including thirty-three works by American composers and five world-premiere productions. Throughout its history, the

Company's continued success has been shaped by visionary leaders, talented artists, and critically acclaimed productions. For more information, visit www.operasaratoga.org.

ABOUT LAWRENCE EDELSON, ARTISTIC AND GENERAL DIRECTOR

Lawrence Edelson (Artistic and General Director, Saratoga Opera) is highly respected not only as a critically acclaimed stage director, but also as a visionary company leader who has created programs in the areas of artist mentorship and new works development that have served as models of innovation for opera companies around the country. In January 2014, Lawrence was appointed Artistic and General Director of Opera Saratoga, effective July 1, 2014. Lawrence is responsible for the oversight of both the artistic and administrative management of Opera Saratoga's programs. As a stage director, Lawrence's critically acclaimed productions include Philip Glass' *Hydrogen Jukebox* (Fort Worth Opera), the American Premiere of Telemann's *Orpheus* (Wolf Trap Opera), the World Premiere of Jeff Myers' *Buried Alive* (Fargo Moorhead Opera), the New York premiere of Fauré's *Pénélope* (Manhattan School of Music), *La Traviata* (Minnesota Opera), *Carmen* (Toledo Opera), *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Hawaii Opera Theater), *H.M.S. Pinafore* (Opera Saratoga), *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Little Women*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Werther*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (IVAI Tel Aviv) and the world premiere of *The ToyMaker* Off-Broadway. Lawrence is perhaps best known in the opera field as the founder of American Lyric Theater (ALT), where he continues to serve as Producing Artistic Director concurrent with his role at Opera Saratoga. He has been responsible for assembling ALT's Board of Directors, its world-renowned artistic staff, and implementing strategic operating and fundraising plans to ensure the long-term viability of the organization. As Producing Artistic Director, he coordinates the diverse artistic programs of ALT, including The Composer Librettist Development Program, commissioning of new works, co-production relationships, and recordings. A tireless advocate for emerging artists and the diversification of audiences for opera, Edelson also serves on the Strategy Committee for OPERA America, and continues to forge collaborations with opera companies across the country.

BIOGRAPHIES OF FEATURED ARTISTS

Jennifer Panara, mezzo-soprano, has drawn praise for her "voice of immense brilliance and versatility" and "rich, compelling" singing. In 2011, Jennifer was an Apprentice Artist with Opera Saratoga in its 50th Anniversary Season, during which she covered the role of Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*. In subsequent seasons she has participated in The Santa Fe Opera's Apprentice Singer Program (2012 & 2013), performing Flora Bervoix in *La Traviata* on the mainstage and Isolier in *Le Comte Ory* in the Apprentice Scenes Showcase. Most recently, Jennifer was heard as a 2014 Artist-

in-Residence with Dayton Opera, performing Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*, and as a 2014 Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, covering Mere Marie in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*.

Other recent roles performed include Stéphanie in *Roméo et Juliette*, Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Second Lady in *The Magic Flute*, and Kate Julian in Britten's *Owen Wingrave*. Jennifer's recent awards include the 2014 Sam Adams Award for Most Outstanding Operatic Performance at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM), the 2013 Donald & Luke Graham Memorial Award from The Santa Fe Opera, and Third Prize at the 2013 Violetta DuPont Vocal Competition.

In the 2014-2015 season Jennifer returns to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as a young artist covering the title role in Handel's *Riccardo Primo*, debuts with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra as Flora Bervoix in *La Traviata*, and returns to Dayton to perform in Handel's *The Messiah*. Further information regarding Jennifer's upcoming engagements may be found by visiting www.jenniferpanara.com.

Javier Abreu, tenor, who is from Puerto Rico, has been described as a commanding force on stage, incorporating a rich, sweet and agile voice, with ample dramatic skills. Engagements for 2013-2014 included his debut with Atlanta Opera as Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Tonio in *La fille du régiment* with Madison Opera, appearances with the Phoenix Symphony and Lexington Philharmonic for Handel's *Messiah* and the Philadelphia Ballet for Orff's *Carmina Burana*. In the 2014-2015 season Javier returns to Nashville Opera in *Florencia en el Amazonas*, debuts with Virginia Opera in *Sweeney Todd*, appears with Opera Sanata Barbara as Lindoro in *L'italiana in Algeri*, sings First Elder in Handel's *Susanna* with the Collegiate Chorale, and will make his Opera Saratoga main stage debut as Castleman in the world premiere of *The Long Walk*. In concert he appears with the Louisville Orchestra for *Carmina Burana* and the Jacksonville Symphony for Mozart's *Requiem*. The 2012-13 season brought debuts with Nashville Opera as Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*, Opera Santa Barbara as Ernesto in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, Phoenix Symphony in their rendition of *Carmina Burana* as well as with The Jacksonville Symphony in Handel's *The Messiah*. Summer of 2013 brought a reading of the new opera *La Reina* with American Lyric Theater and performances of Almaviva with Central City Opera. Additionally, he is featured in two recent recording releases: John Musto's *The Inspector* with the Wolf Trap Opera and the Five Borough Songbook with the Five Borough Music Festival.

Jody Schum, pianist, is an engaging, versatile collaborator known for his deep musicality at the keyboard. Recent engagements include music directing *The Mysteries* Off-Broadway alongside

Drama Desk-winning director Ed Sylvanus Iskandar, and a return to the music staff at Fort Worth Opera and being a featured pianist for their groundbreaking new works program, *Frontiers*. He has music directed for American Lyric Theater's composer librettist development program, and also music directed Brian Current's *Airline Icarus* as part of Opera America's annual New Works Forum. Schum has performed with Seagle Music Colony, The Fire Island Opera Festival, Astral Artists, Opera New Jersey, Lyric Opera of Virginia, Tri-Cities Opera, American Opera Projects, The American Songbook Project, and *Exit, Pursued by a Bear*. He has performed at Carnegie Hall and on The Wendy Williams Show.

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