



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**OPERA SARATOGA
Announces its 2015 Summer Festival Season**

**Recently Hired Artistic and General Director Lawrence Edelson
Plans to Engage Audiences with a Vision
That Includes Providing Unique Experiences All Year and Increased Collaboration**

La Cenerentola (Cinderella)

Music by Gioachino Rossini, Libretto by Jacopo Ferretti
Based on the Fairy Tale by Charles Perrault
Directed by Lawrence Edelson, Conducted by Gary Thor Wedow
Featuring Sandra Piques Eddy, Andrew Owens, John Brancy,
David Kravitz, and Ryan Kuster
July 2 – 26, 2015

Dido and Aeneas

Music by Henry Purcell, Libretto by Nahum Tate
Directed and Choreographed by Karole Armitage, Conducted by Nicole Paiement
Featuring Jennifer Johnson Cano and ArmitageGone! Dance Company
Presented in Partnership with the National Museum of Dance
July 6 – 21, 2015

The World Premiere of

The Long Walk

Composed by Jeremy Howard Beck with libretto by Stephanie Fleischmann
Directed by David Schweizer, Conducted by Steven Osgood
Featuring Daniel Belcher, Heather Johnson, Caroline Worra, David Blalock,
Javier Abreu, Justin Hopkins, and Donita Volkwijn
July 10 – 25, 2015

Opera Saratoga announces its 2015 Summer Festival season, which will run from July 2 – July 26, 2015 at multiple venues throughout Saratoga Springs, New York.

The 2014/2015 season is the first programmatic year under the artistic and general direction of Lawrence Edelson and marks an expansion for the company in several ways: the first World Premiere presented by the company in nearly 30 years, three operas instead of two, and a longer festival season including performances at multiple venues in the region. In addition, an extensive series of concerts and community events will take place throughout the month of June and July, including recitals by Jennifer Johnson Cano and Caroline Worra, among other events.

In tandem with the expansion of the season, the Young Artist Program – the second oldest program of its kind in the country – is being expanded to provide greater professional development opportunities for emerging professionals. The program will consist of three tiers for singers, as well as opportunities for pianists, conductors and directors, under the direction of Laurie Rogers.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to lead Opera Saratoga into its next chapter, and thrilled that my first season will provide opportunities for audiences to see three operas that show the breadth and depth of what is happening in opera today, with some of the foremost artists of our generation,” said Lawrence Edelson. “The season includes three operas that couldn’t be more different. *La Cenerentola (Cinderella)* is a bubbling comedy by Rossini that features virtuoso singing to impress the most passionate opera lovers, and is also an ideal introduction to opera for family audiences. Our presentation of *Dido and Aeneas* will be our first site-specific production, presented in partnership with the National Museum of Dance. Operas that prominently feature dance will be a part of our programming every season moving forward, and this particular production not only builds upon the region’s connection to dance, but also takes advantage of the stunning natural beauty of Spa State Park, where we are located. The world-premiere of *The Long Walk* marks a reaffirmed commitment to the inclusion of contemporary American opera as a regular part of our programming. The Company has produced 33 works by American composers in its history, 5 of which have been world premieres, but *The Long Walk*, by two of the most exciting writers in American opera today - composer Jeremy Howard Beck, and librettist Stephanie Fleischmann - will actually be the first world-premiere for the company in 27 years!

This year, we are initiating new partnerships with a wide variety of cultural organizations throughout the region, enabling us to offer exciting new performance programs that compliment the season’s operas, which provide even more ways for audiences to connect with the company and our wonderful artists. By expanding the festival, and moving it into July, we are providing more opportunities not only for local audiences to enjoy our programs, but opportunities for audiences from around the country to enjoy the cultural riches that Saratoga Springs has to offer. With a train station in the heart of the city, and Albany airport less than 30 minutes away, we look forward to welcoming opera lovers from around the country to enjoy not only Opera Saratoga, but all the restaurants, shops, cultural attractions, historic sites, and natural beauty that Saratoga Springs has to offer.”

Edelson has four main goals for Opera Saratoga which include: increasing the company's value as a community partner and asset; providing access to a wide variety of high-quality opera programs for diverse audiences throughout the region during the year; serving the opera field by providing ongoing opportunities for emerging artists to reach their fullest potential through participation in our programs; and presenting a vibrant professional summer opera festival for local audiences, as well as for opera lovers who travel to the region from around the country.

Edelson believes Opera Saratoga exists to serve communities from the North Country through the entire Capital Region. “Opera Saratoga is much more than a couple of weeks of summer opera performances. Opera Saratoga is a real treasure to the region - and only by collaborating with other organizations in the area can we fully serve those who live and work in the area year round. Through partnerships, we all benefit more from the cultural riches the area has to offer,” he said.

LA CENERENTOLA (Cinderella)

Music by Gioachino Rossini, Libretto by Jacopo Ferretti, Based on the Fairy Tale by Charles Perrault

Directed by Lawrence Edelson, Conducted by Gary Thor Wedow

Featuring Sandra Piques Eddy, Andrew Owens, John Brancy, David Kravitz, and Ryan Kuster

Performances: Thursday, July 2, 2015 at 7:30pm; Saturday, July 11, Tuesday, July 14, and Saturday, July 18, 2015 at 2pm; Sunday, July 26, 2015 at 7:30pm.

Opera Saratoga opens the 2015 Summer Season with Rossini's beloved version of Cinderella. Based on Perrault's timeless fairytale, *La Cenerentola* features plenty of magical enchantment; the ridiculous, over-the-top situations and toe-tapping melodies that you expect from the master of comic Italian opera; and heartfelt emotion to bring together this story of forgiveness and true love. The ultimate rags to riches tale, it's a Cinderella story...but not quite as you may know it! Opera Saratoga is proud to present the company debuts of five extraordinary singers in *La Cenerentola*: Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano **Sandra Piques Eddy** sings the virtuoso title role along side tenor **Andrew Owens** as Prince Ramiro, baritone **John Brancy** as his valet Dandini, **David Kravitz** as her wicked step-father Don Magnifico, and **Ryan Kuster** as the mysterious philosopher Alidoro. **Gary Thor Wedow** also makes his company debut conducting this new production by Artistic and General Director **Lawrence Edelson**.

DIDO AND AENEAS

Music by Henry Purcell, Libretto by Nahum Tate

Directed and Choreographed by Karole Armitage, Conducted by Nicole Paiement

Featuring Jennifer Johnson Cano and ArmitageGone! Dance Company

Presented in Partnership with the National Museum of Dance

All tickets include admission to the wonderful exhibits at The National Museum of Dance, beginning at 7pm.

Seating is general admission, with seating beginning at 7:45pm for the performance beginning at 8:15pm.

Performances: Monday, July 6, 2015; Sunday, July 12, 2015; Sunday, July 19, 2015; Tuesday, July 21, 2015

Opera Saratoga is thrilled to present the first Baroque opera in the company's history in a truly unique production under the stars! One of the earliest English operas, *Dido and Aeneas* is one of Purcell's foremost theatrical works. This heartbreaking opera recounts the love of Dido, Queen of Carthage, for the Trojan hero, Aeneas, and her despair when he abandons her. The combination of exquisite vocal music and extensive use of dance has inspired many interpretations of the great score. Opera Saratoga has invited world-renown choreographer and director **Karole Armitage** to create a very special site-specific production for Saratoga Springs that embraces the natural beauty and history of The National Museum of Dance located in Spa State Park. The production will feature Metropolitan Opera mezzo- in her company debut **Jennifer Johnson Cano** in her company debut as Dido, along with the exquisite dancers of the **ArmitageGone! Dance Company** in what is sure to be one of the most talked about productions of the summer for dance and music lovers alike.

WORLD PREMIERE

THE LONG WALK

Composed by Jeremy Howard Beck, Libretto by Stephanie Fleischmann

Directed by David Schweizer, Conducted by Steven Osgood

Featuring Daniel Belcher, Heather Johnson, Caroline Worra, David Blalock, Javier Abreu, Justin Hopkins, and Donita Volkwijn

Commissioned by American Lyric Theater

Performances: Friday, July 10, 2015 at 7:30pm; Monday, July 13 and Friday, July 17, 2015 at 2pm; and

Saturday, July 25, 2015 at 7:30pm. Additional Community Events Related to *The Long Walk* to be presented in partnership with The New York State Military Museum and Veteran's Research Center.

The Long Walk is based on Brian Castner's critically acclaimed book of the same name. The opera is a deeply personal exploration of a soldier's return from Iraq where he served as an officer in an Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit and his battle with what he calls "the Crazy" as he tries to reintegrate into his family life upon returning from the war. Opera Saratoga is honored to present the world premiere of *The Long Walk* in partnership with American Lyric Theater. Internationally renowned theater and opera director **David Schweizer** makes his Opera Saratoga debut, with celebrated American conductor **Steven Osgood** on the podium. Grammy Award winning baritone **Daniel Belcher** returns to Opera Saratoga to create the role of Brian, alongside mezzo-soprano **Heather Johnson**, who makes her company debut as his wife Jessie. The cast also includes the company debuts of sopranos **Caroline Worra** and **Donita Volkwin**, tenors **David Blalock** and **Javier Abreu**, and bass baritone **Justin Hopkins**.

Subscriptions will go on sale October 31, 2014, including special visitor subscription packages for out of town guests. Single tickets will be available beginning February 1, 2015. Subscription and single ticket information is available at www.operasaratoga.org.

Special packages are available for out-of-town visitors that will provide an opportunity to see multiple operas over a few days while enjoying the many other things that the city has to offer, including the summer residency of New York City Ballet at Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC), and the opening of the Track Season, which coincides with the final weekend of the festival.

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

LA CENERENTOLA

In season 2014-15 mezzo soprano **Sandra Piques Eddy** returns to Opera North (UK) as the title role in *The Coronation of Poppea*; to Boston Lyric Opera as Varvara in Janáček's *Katya Kabanová*; to Portland Opera as *Carmen*; makes her Calgary Opera debut in that title role; and debuts with New York Philharmonic Ensembles as soloist in Respighi's *Il tramonto*. Her 2013-14 engagements included her return to the Metropolitan Opera as Fiona in the American premiere of Nico Muhly's *Two Boys* (recorded for the Nonesuch label), the title role in *Carmen* in her debut with Opera Colorado, and with Nashville Opera as Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. In summer of 2014 she traveled to Japan to sing Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* at Hyogo Performing Arts Center. Highlights include Mercédès in *Carmen* (live and international HD broadcast) and Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, both for the Metropolitan Opera; *Carmen* with Opera North (UK); Cherubino with Los Angeles Opera, also Canadian Opera Company; Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* with New York City Opera and Glimmerglass Opera; Béatrice in *Béatrice et Bénédict*, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and the title role in *La Tragédie de Carmen*, all with Chicago Opera Theater; title role in *La Cenerentola* with Spoleto Festival USA; and Idamante in *Idomeneo* with Boston Lyric Opera. Ms. Eddy was the first place New England Regional Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and a National Semifinalist.

With a beautiful Italianate timbre, effortless top and exceptional vocal agility, **Andrew Owens** is quickly building a reputation as one of the most exciting young international tenors. Last season, Andrew was a member of the Junges Ensemble at the Theater an der Wien, where he performed the roles of Don Ramiro *La Cenerentola*, Scitalce in Vinci's *Semiramide*, Tito *La clemenza di Tito* (Kammeroper), Gastone *La Traviata*, and Barbarigo *I due Foscari* opposite Plácido Domingo (Theater an der Wien), and on the concert platform he sang Giove in Rossini's rarely performed cantata *Le nozze di Teti e di Peleo* in concert at the Theater an der Wien opposite Lawrence Brownlee, and tenor solos in Bach's *B minor mass* at the Hofburgkapelle. Recipient of Central City Opera's Iris Henwood Richards Apprentice Artist Award, further credits include 1st Prize in the Mario Lanza Competition for Tenors in New York City, honors at the Mario Lanza competition in Philadelphia, and an award from the Marilyn Horne Foundation. Andrew is a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, the Maryland Opera Studio, and has participated in the Music Academy of the West Voice Program, the Salzburger Festspiele Young Singers Project, and was a member of the Bayerische Staatsoper Opernstudio. The 2014/15 season brings a return to Theater an der Wien for Chevalier Léon in Milhaud's *La mere coupable*, Tamino *Die Zauberflöte* and Camille de Rosillion *Die lustige Witwe* for Theater Magdeburg, and tenor soloist in *The Genius of Mozart* at the national Concert Hall, Dublin with the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra.

In the 2014-2015 season, **John Brancy**'s debuts include: The Opera San Antonio as the title role in Tobias Picker's *The Fantastic Mr. Fox* along with a gala appearance at the opening of San Antonio's new Tobin Center; Edmonton Opera as Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*; and Opera Lyra Ottawa as Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro*. His numerous concert engagements include his debut with Musica Sacra in Handel's *Messiah* at Carnegie Hall, where he also performs a recital with pianist Ken Noda later in the season for "The Song Continues". He makes his recital debut at the Kennedy Center with Vocal Arts DC, and reprises the same program with CAIC (Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago), and Société d'art vocal de Montréal. He also returns this season to the New York Festival of Song (NYFOS) performing at Merkin Hall. Future seasons include a debut with the Glyndebourne Festival Opera Tour, Opera Theater of Saint Louis, and a return to Carnegie Hall in recital as part of their "Evening of Song Series". Last season Mr. Brancy made important debuts at Oper Frankfurt as Sonora in *La fanciulla del West*, Gotham Chamber Opera in Charpentier's *La descente d'Orphée aux Enfers*, and Pacific Opera Victoria as Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Mr. Brancy's concert and recital engagements for the year included performances with the Saskatoon and Regina Symphonies, San Francisco Symphony, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Brooklyn Art Song Society, and Carnegie Hall.

David Kravitz's 2014-2015 season includes a company debut with Palm Beach Opera, as the Rabbi in the world premiere of *Enemies, A Love Story*. Additionally he returns to Boston Lyric Opera as the Baron Duphol in *La Traviata*. Last season brought a company debut with Dallas Opera to reprise the role of United Nations in *Death and the Powers*, the role of Frederik in Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* with Emmanuel Music, as well as performances with Boston Lyric Opera as both the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte* and Marullo in *Rigoletto*. His concert performances included Mohammed Fairouz's *Symphony No. 3 (Poems and Prayers)* with the UCLA Philharmonic, and *A Sea Symphony*, with the Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra. He closed the season as La Rocca in *Un giorno di Regno* with Odyssey Opera in their inaugural season, followed by debuting the role of Teveye in *Fiddler on the Roof* with Ash Lawn Opera. Mr. Kravitz has also recently appeared with: Washington National Opera, Boston Symphony Orchestra, The English Concert, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Chautauqua Opera, Florentine Opera, Atlanta Opera, Opera Memphis and New York City Opera. The baritone appears as a featured soloist on several commercial recordings that were recently released, including Mohammed Fairouz's *For Victims* (Naxos) and *Poems and Prayers* (Sono Luminus) and Peter Ash's *The Golden Ticket* (Albany Records).

Bass-Baritone **Ryan Kuster** gained vast attention after completing a two-year residency and over 80 performances with the prestigious Adler Fellowship at San Francisco Opera. His performance as Escamillo in their production of *Carmen* was called “pure bravado.” *The Classical Voice* said of his performance as Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, “Handsome Ryan Kuster sang beautifully, and acted so convincingly that it was hard to believe he’s an Adler Fellow.” This season’s appearances include: a concert of his signature repertoire with North State Symphony, the title role in *Don Giovanni* at Opera Memphis, Escamillo in *Carmen* at Opera Grand Rapids and Knoxville Opera, Angelotti in *Tosca* with Orlando Philharmonic, Alidoro in *La Cenerentola* at Opera Saratoga, and makes a triumphant return to Dallas Opera in late 2015. Recently, he made his symphonic début with the Los Angeles Philharmonic singing the role of Masetto in their production of *Don Giovanni*, returned to Wolf Trap Opera to début the title role of *Don Giovanni* and made his National Symphony début performing Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony*. Additionally, Ryan sang Alidoro in Nashville Opera’s production of *La Cenerentola*; sang Masetto in *Don Giovanni* with Cincinnati Opera; appeared in Dallas Opera’s production of *Turandot*; Colline in *La bohème* with Arizona Opera; Escamillo in *Carmen* with both Opera Colorado and Virginia Opera; and two roles at Bard SummerScape Opera: Lysiart in Weber’s *Euryanthe* and Brutamonte in Schubert’s *Fierrabras*.

Conductor **Gary Thor Wedow** has established an enviable reputation for dramatically exciting and historically informed performances with orchestras, opera companies and festivals throughout North America; he debuted with the New York Philharmonic in 2012 conducting *Messiah* and returns this season again conducting Handel’s masterpiece. A frequent guest of Seattle Opera, some of his recent successes there include the double bill of Poulenc’s *La voix humaine* and Puccini’s *Suor Angelica*, Gluck’s *Orphée, Iphigénie en Tauride* and Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*; this season he leads their performances of *Don Giovanni* and Handel’s *Semele*. His 2014-2015 season also includes *Messiah* with the Santa Fe Symphony and *Le nozze di Figaro* for the Juilliard School directed by Stephen Wadsworth. Mr. Wedow was closely associated with New York City Opera for many years where he led their *Don Giovanni* in the groundbreaking Christopher Alden production and in May 2012 conducted the New York premiere of Telemann’s *Orpheus*. Last season included *The Magic Flute* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, *Messiah* for the Seattle Symphony, *Don Pasquale* for Arizona Opera, *Abduction from the Seraglio* for Utah Opera and the *St. Matthew Passion* on tour with the Juilliard 415 Historical Performance Ensemble culminating in a performance in Alice Tully Hall that ‘caught fire and magic’. Born in LaPorte, Indiana, Wedow studied with virtuoso Jorge Bolet; he has prepared several performing editions of baroque works in collaboration with countertenor Lawrence Lipnik and is currently on the faculty of The Juilliard School.

DIDO AND AENEAS

Mezzo Soprano **Jennifer Johnson Cano** is a 2012 Richard Tucker Career Grant and George London Winner who joined The Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at The Metropolitan Opera in 2008 and made her Met debut in 2009-2010. As First Prize winner of the 2009 Young Concert Artist International Auditions, she has given recital debuts with husband Christopher Cano in New York at Carnegie Hall, in Washington, DC at the Kennedy Center, in Boston at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and in Philadelphia at the Kimmel Center. Over the last two seasons, Ms. Cano has debuted as Meg Page in *Falstaff*, Bersi in *Andrea Chenier*, Marguerite in Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*, The Sharp Eared Fox in Janacek's *Cunning Little Vixen* with Franz Welser-Möst and Diana in *La Calisto*. Her 2014-2015 season includes Hansel, Nicklausse and Mercedes with The Metropolitan Opera, Donna Elvira with Boston Lyric Opera, Mahler II with the Utah Symphony, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Pittsburgh Symphony, and a return to the Baltimore Symphony with Marin Alsop for Leonard Bernstein's Jeremiah Symphony, which will also be recorded live for Naxos.

Nicole Paiement is Artistic Director and Conductor of Opera Parallèle in San Francisco where she has conducted many new productions including the World premiere of Harrison's opera *Young Caesar*; the commissioned chamber version of Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*; John Rea's re-orchestration of Berg's *Wozzeck*; Glass's *Orphée*; Thomsons' *Four Saints in Three Acts*; Chessa's commissioned opera *A Heavenly Act*; Golijov's *Ainadamar*; the commission of De Silva's opera *Gesualdo, Prince of Madness*; Poulenc's *Les mamelles de Tirésias*; Weill's *Mahagonny Songspiel*; and the American premiere of Gorb's opera *Anya 17*. This season, Paiement will conduct Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* and the American premiere of O'Regan's *Heart of Darkness*. Paiement is an active guest conductor and was recently been appointed Principal Guest Conductor at The Dallas Opera where she will conduct the World Premiere of Joby Talbot's opera *Everest* in February 2015. Other performances with The Dallas Opera include Machover's *Death and the Powers* and Maxwell Davies's *The Lighthouse*. This December, she will be conducting at the Washington National Opera. Paiement made her Korean debut conducting opera in 2008. Her interest in interdisciplinary projects has led Paiement to collaborate with many dancers and media artists, conducting works from the 17th to the 21st century. Paiement is also well versed in Baroque Music, having completed a doctorate degree at the Eastman School of music, which focused on the music of Handel. Paiement studied Baroque performance practice with Jens Peter Larsen, Alfred Mann and John Eliot Gardner. She has frequently appeared with the Santa Cruz Baroque Festival and been a guest-conductor numerous times at the Sherbrooke University Summer Festival where she conducted large oratorios by works by Handel. Over the years, Paiement has conducted numerous recordings ranging from Early Music to Contemporary Music. Additionally, she is the Artistic Director of the BluePrint Project sponsored by the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Karole Armitage, director of the New York-based Armitage Gone! Dance Company, was rigorously trained in classical ballet. As a professional dancer she performed in Balanchine's Grand Théâtre de Genève Company and in the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Armitage is renowned for pushing the boundaries to create contemporary works that blend dance, music and art to engage in philosophical questions about the search for meaning. She joins a legacy of process-focused experimental dance that embraces the ballet and modern dance heritage as well. She directed the Ballet of Florence, Italy (1995–99) and the Biennale of Contemporary Dance in Venice (2004), served as resident choreographer for the Ballet de Lorraine in France (1999–2004). She has created works for many companies from The Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow to the Tasmanian Dance Company in Australia. She has choreographed two productions for the New York Philharmonic, directed opera at important European Opera Houses from Teatro di San Carlo in Naples to Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, two Broadway productions (*Passing Strange* and *Hair*, the latter earning her a Tony nomination), videos for Madonna and Michael Jackson, several films for Merchant Ivory productions and the Cirque du Soleil production *Amaluna* (2012). Ms. Armitage, the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, was awarded *Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, France's most prestigious award in 2009, and an honorary Doctorate of the Arts from the University of Kansas in 2013.

THE LONG WALK

Winner of a 2010 Grammy Award, baritone **Daniel Belcher** has performed in many of the world's music capitals, including Paris, London, New York, San Francisco, Berlin, Stuttgart, Amsterdam, Geneva, Toronto, Tokyo, Seoul and Houston. With a 50-role repertoire, Belcher has championed roles from the Baroque to those composed expressly for him. He came to international attention in 2004 creating the role of Prior Walter in Peter Eötvös' *Angels in America* for the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris and recently created the role of Robert Kennedy in Robin de Raaff's *Waiting for Miss Monroe* for The Netherlands Opera and Holland Festival. Other world premieres include John Brooke in Mark Adamo's *Little Women* (released on the Ondine label and recorded by PBS' Great Performances), Andy Warhol in Michael Daugherty's *Jackie O* (released by Decca on the Argo label) and Tod Machover's *Resurrection* (released on the Ondine label), all with Houston Grand Opera. World premieres in development include Robert Aldridge and Herschel Garfein's *Sister Carrie*, Thomas Morse and Ken Cazan's *Frau Schindler*, and *The Scarlet Letter* by Lori Laitman. In 2014-15, he debuts in Norway at the Trondheim Chamber Music Festival with both *Sombre* and *L'amour de Loin* by Kaija Saariaho, returns to the Portland Opera for its 50th Anniversary season as Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, Opera Colorado as Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City in his role debut as Father Palmer in *Silent Night*.

Mezzo soprano **Heather Johnson**, hailed by *Opera News* as "a dramatic singer in the truest sense", has received critical acclaim for her work on both the opera and concert stage. After making her Metropolitan Opera company debut in the 2011 Summer Recital Series, Johnson returned to the Met in the 2012-13 season making her house debut as a Flower Maiden in the new production of *Parsifal*. In the 2013-14 season Johnson returned to the Metropolitan Opera for their production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and sang the title role in Boston Lyric Opera's new production of Beeson's *Lizzie Borden* which she will repeat this summer at the Tanglewood Festival. Other notable performances include the title roles in *La Cenerentola*, *Hansel and Gretel* and Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible* with Sarasota Opera, Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with Boston Lyric Opera, the title role in *Carmen* with Folkstheater Rostock, Germany and Baltimore Concert Opera, Sainte-Marie in Berlioz's *L'enfance du Christ* with New York Choral Society at Carnegie Hall, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with New Jersey Opera, Opera Southwest and Mill City Summer Opera. The *New York Times* acclaimed her performance as the title character in Gustav Holst's *Savitri*, "Heather Johnson sang with penetrating power and natural phrasing... her eyes were haunted and her performance was both grand and intimate, in the best Wagnerian tradition." Upcoming performances include Page in *Salome* in her Dallas Opera debut as well as a return to the Metropolitan Opera.

Puerto Rican tenor **Javier Abreu** 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*, and sings First Elder in Handel's *Susanna* with the Collegiate Chorale. 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.

Tenor **David Blalock** begins the season by returning to Virginia Opera, singing Toby in Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*. He was seen this past season in Virginia as Brighella in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Remendado in *Carmen*. In November, David sings Jaquino in Beethoven's *Fidelio* with Madison Opera. In the spring, he returns to his

home state to debut with NC Opera as Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*. In 2013, David made his Fort Worth Opera debut as Young Thompson in Tom Cipullo's *Glory Denied*. *Opera News* described his performance as "appealingly brash and defiant in the face of the unspeakable." Other credits include Bertram in *La donna del lago* with Santa Fe Opera, *First Prisoner* in Oscar with Santa Fe Opera, and Rodolfo in *La bohème* with Greenville Light Opera. After receiving his undergraduate degree from UNC Greensboro, David spent two years as a member of the Maryland Opera Studio in College Park. David has performed as a young artist with Santa Fe Opera, Central City Opera, Seagle Music Colony, and Ash Lawn Opera. He has won first prize from the NC District Metropolitan Opera Auditions on two occasions, the Charles A. Lynam Competition, the Heafner/Williams Competition, the St. Andrews International Aria Competition, and the Charlotte Opera Guild Competition, as well as awards in the Sally and Tony Amato Competition, the Violetta DuPont Competition, the Mario Lanza Competition, the Schuyler Foundation for Career Bridges, The Wonderlic Competition, the Long Leaf Opera Competition, the Opera Birmingham Competition, and the FAVA Grand Concours de Chant.

A standout among his peers on the operatic stage and a performer of increasingly high demand, bass-baritone **Justin Hopkins** continues to move audiences around the world with his performances. The 2014-2015 season includes his return to Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels for Strauss's *Daphne*, as well as his return to Carnegie Hall to perform the role of the Dark Angel in Kurt Weill's *The Road to Promise* with the Collegiate Chorale and American Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Hopkins will also make his debut with the Dayton Philharmonic in Britten's *War Requiem* under the baton of Maestro Keith Lockhart. The 2014-15 season also includes two world premieres: *Repast* an oratorio based on the life of Booker Wright in collaboration with composer Nolan Gasser, as well as *The Long Walk* in his debut at Opera Saratoga. He has performed in such houses as: Queen Elisabeth Hall, London; Verbier Festival, Switzerland; Carnegie Hall; Opera Philadelphia. Mr. Hopkins has performed works by composers ranging from Mozart, Verdi, Strauss and Debussy on through to Philip Glass, Conrad Cummings and Anthony Davis under the baton of such conductors as Charles Dutoit, Valery Gergiev, Keith Lockhart, and Leon Botstein. As a performer of musical theater and popular music, he has performed with the Boston Pops, BBC Concert Orchestra, as well as New York City performances including Kurt Weill On Broadway at Symphony Space. He took 2nd place in the 2012 Lotte Lenya Competition.

Soprano **Caroline Worra** has been hailed by *Opera News* as "one of the finest singing actresses around" (2014). She has sung over 75 different operatic roles including more than 20 World, American, and Regional Premieres. She was internationally acclaimed for her performances of Jenny in *The Mines of Sulphur*, Grammy nominated CD for Best Opera Recording, and as the title role for *The Greater Good; Passion of Boule de Suif*, *Opera News* and *New York Times* pick for one of the top classical CDs of the year. Her third full opera recording, *Glory Denied*, was on the Washington Posts pick for the Best of 2013. Worra has worked at over 30 opera companies across the United States including The Metropolitan Opera, The Lyric Opera of Chicago, Boston Lyric Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Fort Worth Opera, and six seasons at both NYCO and Glimmerglass. She recently reprised two of her most acclaimed roles, Eurydice in Philip Glass's *Orpheus* at Pittsburgh Opera, and Abigail in *Lizzie Borden* at Tanglewood with Boston Lyric Opera, and this fall, will perform the role of Regina in the American premiere of Faccio's *Amletto* for Baltimore Concert Opera and Opera Southwest.

Soprano **Donita Volkwijn** has been seen recently in major European cities performing the role of Bess for a touring production of *Porgy and Bess*. The role has led to two important company debuts: with Seattle Opera in 2011 and Tulsa Opera in 2007. She also performed the role of Micaela in *Carmen* with Tulsa Opera that year, and again the following season with Hawaii Opera Theatre. No stranger to the music of Puccini, she has also performed two of his heroines with Dicapo Opera Theatre, Mimi in *La bohème*, and Anna in *Le Villi*, as well as her first Musetta in *La bohème* with Tulsa Opera. As part of the Mezzo Television Competition, she was selected to sing the part of the Condemned Female in David Alagna's *Le Dernier Jour d'un Condamné*, which was performed in Debrecen and Dzeged, Hungary. A finalist in the 2005, 2001 and 2000 MacAllister Awards Competition, Volkwijn received the Glynn Ross Award. She was a regional finalist in the 2000 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and a national winner of the 1995 Leontyne Price Vocal Arts

Competition. A native of Cape Town, South Africa, Volkwijn earned her Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance from Oberlin College-Conservatory and her Master of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Steven Osgood is one of North America's sought after conductors. He is the former Artistic Director of American Opera Projects. Elsewhere, he has conducted Bartok's *Bluebeard's Castle*, Schoenberg's, *Erwartung* and *La Traviata* for Edmonton Opera, Tan Dun's *Marco Polo* for the Netherlands Opera, Schwartz' *Seance on a Wet Afternoon* and *La Boheme* for New York City Opera, Susa's *Transformations* at Juilliard, *Tosca*, *Peter Grimes*, and *The Ballad of Baby Doe* for Chautauqua Opera, Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream* at Wolf Trap; Foss' *Griffelkin*, Hoiby's *A Month in the Country*, and Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* at Manhattan School of Music; Xenakis' *Orestia* at Columbia University; *Aidanamar* for Long Beach Opera, and *Little Nemo* for Sarasota Opera. The current season includes three world premieres: American Opera Projects for Laura Kaminsky's *As One*, Beth Morrison Productions for *The Scarlett Ibis*. He will also debut with The Atlanta Opera to conduct Jake Heggie's *Three Decembers*, and lead concert performances of *Songs from the Uproar* in Houston. He has also conducted orchestral concerts with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, Wintergreen Festival Orchestra, and the Chautauqua Festival.

David Schweizer emerged from Yale Drama School to make his New York directing debut at the age of twenty-four at Lincoln Center for producer Joseph Papp. He returned to Lincoln Center years later with his acclaimed staging of Richard Rodney Bennett's opera *The Mines of Sulphur* for the New York City Opera. Early career highlights include world premiere productions by such playwrights as Sam Shepard, Michael Weller, Albert Innaurato, Maria Irene Fornes, Len Jenkin, Ronald Tavel, and Austin Pendleton. More recent work off-Broadway: *Wintertime* at Second Stage, *White Chocolate* at Century Playhouse, *Songs From an Unmade Bed* at the New York Theater Workshop, and his critically-acclaimed collaborations with composer/performer Rinde Eckert, *And God Created Great Whales* (OBIE Award) and *Horizon* (Lucille Lortel Award). His extensive work in opera includes Benjamin Britten's *Albert Herring* (Gotham Opera) Stephen Hartke's *The Greater Good* (Glimmerglass Festival), and several notable Verdi productions. His production of Victory Ullmann's *The Emperor of Atlantis* in Boston was a ten best of the year NY Times pick. He has directed extensively at prominent regional theaters including Arena Stage, Trinity Rep, Yale Rep, The Mark Taper Forum, Geffen Playhouse, Children's Theater Company (Minneapolis), Magic Theater, and Center Stage (Baltimore). Numerous international residences include Warsaw, Krakow, Lisbon, Hamburg, London, Stockholm, and Toga Village, Japan. Schweizer's work with performance and solo artists includes Ann Magnuson, Sandra Tsing Loh, John Fleck, Carmelita Tropicana, Mark Wolf, and most recently Marga Gomez and Mike Albo.

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