



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## The Academy of Vocal Arts Announces its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season

**Verdi, Puccini, R. Strauss operas featured, AVA showcases alumni stars in BrAVA Philadelphia! Gala 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert in Verizon Hall**

**Philadelphia:** The Academy of Vocal Arts will celebrate its extraordinary success in training and launching the careers of gifted young opera singers during its **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season**. The highlight of the season will be a gala dinner, spectacular concert, **BrAVA Philadelphia!** in Verizon Hall, and a "Meet the Stars" reception afterward, scheduled for March 31, 2010.

Opera lovers in the Delaware Valley and beyond will be treated to a remarkable variety of operatic and concert offerings, from the very familiar to the rarely performed. Fully staged operas and concerts, both with and without orchestral accompaniment, will showcase this year's twenty-seven singers, who train at the Academy and represent some of the world's finest young performing artists.

The season opens with the hugely popular **Giargiari Bel Canto Competition** in the Kimmel Center's Perelman Theater. A panel of experts chooses the winner and the audience cast their votes for "Audience Choice." AVA Master Vocal Coach **Danielle Orlando** is Music Director and Accompanist.

Verdi's *Falstaff* opens in November, with performances in Center City, Haverford, and Bucks County. Based on scenes from Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV*, the opera boasts a witty libretto and brilliant musical score. Conducted by AVA's acclaimed music director **Christofer Macatsoris**, the opera will be fully staged and sung in Italian with English supertitles.

Russian repertoire specialist **Ghenady Meirson** is music director and accompanist for a recital of Russian classical vocal music, *An Evening of Russian Romances* in December.

2010 begins with the AVA artists taking center stage in *Operatic Masterpieces*, a concert of an entire act each from three grand operas by one of the genre's most influential composers, Giuseppe Verdi. The concert will be performed with full orchestra under the direction of **Maestro Christofer Macatsoris**, and sung in Italian with English supertitles.

Richard Strauss' brilliant final opera, *Capriccio*, subtitled "A Conversation Piece for Music," takes place in the chateau of the Countess Madeleine, where her two suitors, the composer Flamand and the

poet Olivier, argue the relative merits of music and words to create art that speaks to the soul. Music Director **Luke Housner** accompanies on piano. **Dorothy Danner** is the stage director. The opera will open in February, and will be sung in German, with English supertitles.

In March, the always eagerly anticipated *Jubilate, A Concert of Sacred Music and Oratorio Masterpieces* returns to three locations around the Delaware Valley. **David Antony Lofton** conducts the **AVA Opera Orchestra**, the **New Jersey MasterChorale**, and the AVA resident artists. This year the concert will feature Dvorak's emotional and dramatic setting of the *Stabat Mater*.

In celebration of AVA's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, **BrAVA Philadelphia!**, a concert "extrAVAganza" of opera stars, is planned for Verizon Hall in the Kimmel Center on March 31, 2010. This event will mark the high point of the season-long celebration, as AVA brings back many of its most prominent and exciting star alumni to perform in the gala concert.

The season closes with *La bohème* by Giacomo Puccini - a touching portrayal of love and loss among a group of 19<sup>th</sup> century Parisian artists. The piece is particularly suited to the young singers at AVA, who, as struggling artists themselves, can relate to their characters. Christofer Macatsoris conducts the AVA Opera Orchestra and Dorothy Danner directs the fully staged and costumed production, which will be sung in Italian with English supertitles

Throughout the year, AVA will celebrate the contributions of three women of the Warden family - founder Helen Corning Warden, her daughter Adele Warden Paxson, and her granddaughter Sally Paxson Davis. These generous and visionary women have shaped and guided the acclaimed academy since its 1934 founding. The Academy of Vocal Arts is now well known internationally as one of the leading producers of emerging opera stars, many of whom go on to major careers. AVA's extraordinary resident artists come from all over the world and perform in venues in Center City, the Main Line, Bucks County, and South Jersey. **All operas are sung in the original language with English supertitles. Subscriptions can be purchased online at [www.avaopera.org](http://www.avaopera.org), or by calling the AVA Box Office at 215-735-1685. Single tickets will go on sale September 14, 2009.**

#### **THE ACADEMY OF VOCAL ARTS**

The mission of The Academy of Vocal Arts, founded in 1934 by Helen Corning Warden, is to provide tuition-free vocal and opera training of the highest quality, and financial support during training, to exceptionally talented and committed young singers who have the potential for international stature, and to present them in professional performances that are accessible to a wide community.

Gifted singers come from throughout the world to seek the exceptional guidance and training that The Academy of Vocal Arts offers. AVA's four-year program is unique, not only because it is a fully tuition-free institution that focuses solely on operatic training, but also because it has established a niche as an organization that produces opera. Admission is determined by competitive annual auditions, with an average of 8 to 10 singers admitted each year. The total roster of resident artists is purposely kept low and averages 25-30 in total. Those who are accepted receive training equivalent to more than \$70,000 per year. A faculty of individuals who are among the finest in their fields provides intensive training in voice, acting, stage combat, repertoire, languages, and other related subjects necessary for an operatic career.

Over the past seven decades, outstanding singers of international stature have attended AVA, including David Adams, Lando Bartolini, Gwendolyn Bradley, Thomas Carson, Elizabeth Carter, Richard Clark, Dominic Cossa, John Darrenkamp, Joyce DiDonato, Harry Dworchak, Ryan Edwards,

Wilhelmina Fernandez, Allan Glassman, Vernon Hartman, Nancy Herrera, Luis Ledesma, James Morris, Stuart Neill, John Packard, James Pease, David Poleri, Julien Robbins, Valerian Ruminski, Jane Shaulis, Hugh Smith, Ruth Ann Swenson, Indra Thomas, Richard Troxell, Victoria Vergara, Stephen West, and Beverly Wolff.

Currently making their mark in the opera world are recent graduates Burak Bilgili, Stephen Costello, Ellie Dehn, Michael Fabiano, Othalie Graham, Eglise Gutierrez, Tracie Luck, Angela Meade, Latonia Moore, Ailyn Pérez, Dongwon Shin, and James Valenti.

## FACT SHEET

### AVA's 2009/2010 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season

K. James McDowell, Executive/Artistic Director  
Christofer Macatsoris, Music Director

#### THE GIARGIARI BEL CANTO COMPETITION

October 6, 2009 @ 7:30 p.m.

**Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts**  
Broad and Spruce Streets, Philadelphia, PA

#### Verdi / FALSTAFF

November 13, 17, 19, 2009 @ 7:30 p.m.

**Helen Corning Warden Theater**  
The Academy of Vocal Arts  
1920 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA

November 21, 2009 @ 7:30 p.m.

**Central Bucks South High School**  
1100 Folly Road, Warrington, PA

November 23, 2009 @ 7:30 p.m.

**Centennial Hall, The Haverford School**  
450 Lancaster Avenue, Haverford, PA

#### AN EVENING OF RUSSIAN ROMANCES

December 15 and 17, 2009 @ 7:30 p.m.

**Helen Corning Warden Theater**  
The Academy of Vocal Arts  
1920 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA

#### OPERATIC MASTERPIECES IN CONCERT

Scenes from Verdi operas

January 29 and 30, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.

**Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts**  
Broad and Spruce Streets, Philadelphia, PA

February 2, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.  
**Centennial Hall, The Haverford School**  
450 Lancaster Avenue, Haverford, PA

**R. Strauss / CAPRICCIO**  
February 20, 23, 25, 27, March 2, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.  
**Helen Corning Warden Theater**  
The Academy of Vocal Arts  
1920 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA

**JUBILATE! A CONCERT OF SACRED MUSIC**  
March 7, 2010 @ 7:00 p.m.  
**Church of the Holy Trinity, Rittenhouse Square**  
19<sup>th</sup> and Walnut Streets, Philadelphia, PA

**March 13, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.**  
**Proclamation Presbyterian Church**  
278 S. Bryn Mawr Avenue, Bryn Mawr, PA

**March 14, 2010 @ 7:00 p.m.**  
**Haddonfield United Methodist Church**  
29 Warwick Road, Haddonfield, NJ 08033

**B rAVA PHILADELPHIA!**  
**GALA 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CONCERT**  
March 31, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.  
**Verizon Hall, Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts**  
Broad and Spruce Streets, Philadelphia, PA

**Puccini / LA BOHÈME**  
May 1, 4, 6, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.  
**Helen Corning Warden Theater**  
The Academy of Vocal Arts  
1920 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA

**May 8, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.**  
**Central Bucks South High School**  
1100 Folly Road, Warrington, PA

**May 11 and 13, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.**  
**Centennial Hall, The Haverford School**  
450 Lancaster Avenue, Haverford, PA

**May 15, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.**  
**Walter K. Gordon Theater**  
Rutgers University  
3<sup>rd</sup> and Pearl Streets, Camden, NJ

**Subscriptions on sale NOW! Call 215 735-1685 or buy online at [www.avaoppera.org](http://www.avaoppera.org).**  
**NEW in 2009! Special 30 and Under Subscription Series – 4 productions for \$99.**

**The Academy of Vocal Arts  
1920 Spruce St. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

**The Academy of Vocal Arts...Giving Voice to Opera's Future for 75 Years!**

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