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The Academy of Vocal Arts Announces its 2011 / 2012 Season

Features two French operas, plus Donizetti and a Verdi Rarity

Philadelphia: The Academy of Vocal Arts will feature two operas from the French repertoire for its 77th season - Offenbach's fantasy *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and Debussy's dreamlike *Pelléas et Mélisande*. AVA Music Director Christofer Macatsoris conducts the AVA Opera Orchestra for *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. David Gately, fresh from The Opera Company of Philadelphia's *Carmen*, will stage direct. *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* will be presented in AVA's Warden Theater, and in venues on the Main Line and Bucks County. *Pelléas et Mélisande* will be fully staged with Luke Housner as music director and pianist. All performances will take place in AVA's Warden Theater.

In January, 2012, AVA presents Verdi's first opera, *Oberto*, in concert. **This will be the first time the opera has ever been performed in Philadelphia with orchestra.** Performances will take place in the Perelman Theater at the Kimmel Center and Centennial Hall, Haverford. AVA's music director Christofer Macatsoris will conduct the AVA Opera Orchestra.

The season will close on a lighter note with Donizetti's charming comedy, *L'elisir d'amore*, in Center City, Bucks County, the Main Line, and Rutgers/Camden. Rounding out the season are **The Giargiari Bel Canto Competition**, with music director and pianist Danielle Orlando; **An Evening of Russian Romances**, Ghenady Meirson, music director and pianist, in AVA's Warden Theater; and **Jubilate! A Concert of Sacred Music and Oratorio Masterpieces**, David Antony Lofton, music director and conductor, with performances in Haddonfield, NJ, The Church of the Holy Trinity on Rittenhouse Square, and for the first time, at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Wayne, PA.

Opera Synopses:

Les Contes d'Hoffmann, by Jacques Offenbach, is part erotic fantasy, part drunken hallucination. The poet Hoffmann, waits in a Nuremberg tavern for Stella, a prima donna. His friends egg him on to tell of his three great loves – Olympia, Giulietta, and Antonia, each of whom represents an aspect of Stella. His poetic muse, in the guise of his friend Nicklausse, attempts to steer him back to his true love – poetry, while a version of his nemesis, Lindorff, a rival for the affections of Stella, appears in each story to thwart his romance.

Oberto, by Giuseppe Verdi, takes place in 13th century Italy, where family rivalries and blood feuds made it a time of unmitigated violence. Oberto, Count of San Boniface, has been defeated in battle by Ezzelino da Romana and the Salinqueria family. Riccardo, the Count of Salinqueria, has seduced and abandoned Oberto's daughter Leonora, and is about to marry Cuniza, Ezzelino's sister. Oberto and Leonora attempt to disrupt the wedding, which ultimately results in tragedy.

Pelleas et Melisande, by Claude Debussy. The opera is set in vaguely Medieval times. While hunting, Prince Golaud finds a frightened and lost girl who calls herself Mélisande. He brings her to his grandfather's castle, and the two marry. Mélisande becomes attracted to his younger half-brother Pelléas, arousing Golaud's jealousy. Golaud, suspicious about their relationship, even asks his child, Yniold, to spy on the couple. Pelléas decides to leave the castle but arranges to meet Mélisande one last time and the two finally confess their love for one another. Golaud, overhearing, confronts Pelléas and kills him. Mélisande dies shortly after, having given birth to a daughter. Golaud is left with his grief and his doubts.

L'elisir d'amore, by Gaetano Donizetti. From the composer's middle period, ***L'elisir d'amore (The Elixir of Love)***, is one of the bel canto repertoire's most popular comic operas. The peasant Nemorino is in love with Adina, daughter of a wealthy landowner. The charming plot follows Nemorino's efforts, with the help of a traveling quack doctor, to buy a magic elixir that will make Adina fall in love with him, instead of the boastful young soldier who is his rival for Adina's affections.

Subscriptions for AVA's 2011/2012 go on sale July 1, 2011 and are available by calling 215 735-1685 or online at www.avaopera.org. Single tickets available Monday, September 12, 2011.

The Academy of Vocal Arts' 2011 / 2012 Season

New Artists Recital

AVA's Helen Corning Warden Theater

Monday, September 26, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 27, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

Giargiari Bel Canto Competition

The Church of the Holy Trinity

Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia

Tuesday, October 4, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

Les Contes d'Hoffmann / Offenbach

AVA's Helen Corning Warden Theater

Saturday, November 12, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 15, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 17, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

Central Bucks South High School

1100 Folly Road, Warrington, PA

Saturday, November 19, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

Centennial Hall, The Haverford School

450 Lancaster Ave. Haverford, PA

Monday, November 21, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 22, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

An Evening of Russian Romances

AVA's Helen Corning Warden Theater

Tuesday, December 13, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 15, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

Oberto / Verdi

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

Thursday, January 26, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Friday, January 27, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Centennial Hall, The Haverford School

Tuesday, January 31, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Pelléas et Mélisande / Debussy

AVA's Helen Corning Warden Theater

Saturday, February 25, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 28, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 1, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 3, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Jubilate! A Concert of Sacred Music

Haddonfield United Methodist Church

29 Warwick Road, Haddonfield, NJ

Sunday, March 11, 2012 @ 7:00 p.m.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

104 Louella Avenue, Wayne, PA

Saturday, March 17, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

The Church of the Holy Trinity

Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia

Sunday, March 18, 2012 @ 7:00 p.m.

L'elisir d'amore / Donizetti

AVA's Helen Corning Warden Theater

Saturday, April 28, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 1, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 3, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Central Bucks South High School

1100 Folly Road, Warrington, PA

Saturday, May 5, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Centennial Hall, The Haverford School

Tuesday, May 8, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 10, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Walter K. Gordon Theater at Rutgers/Camden

3rd and Pearl Sts. Camden, NJ

May 13, 2011 @ 2:30 p.m. matinée

Farewell Recital

The Church of the Holy Trinity

Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia

Friday, May 11, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

Subscriptions available July 8, 2011

Single Tickets available September 12, 2011

For information, contact 215-735-1685 or visit www.avaopera.org

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

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