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For more information contact: **Denise Stuart, Director of Marketing and Public Relations**

1920 Spruce Street Philadelphia, PA 19103

215 735-1685 dstuart@avaopera.org

THE ACADEMY OF VOCAL ARTS ANNOUNCES NEW ARTISTS

The world-renowned opera training program welcomes singers from Africa, Europe, and the United States

Philadelphia: The Academy of Vocal Arts has accepted seven highly accomplished young opera singers for their class of 2015. This year's group includes artists from Angola, Austria, Belgium, and the United States. With current artists from Italy, Lebanon, Russia and South Africa, AVA has become a veritable U.N. of opera!

Among this year's class is **Nelson Ebo**, a tenor from Angola, who survived poverty, disease, and a violent civil war. His story is dramatic, tragic, and triumphant. In an improbable twist of fate, he was heard singing in a Luanda music hall by a Spanish human rights officer with the United Nations. The diplomat was able to bring him to Spain to study at the Conservatory of the University of Carlos III in Madrid, and eventually, to the United States where he continued his education.

AVA also welcomes **Bettina Schweiger**, a mezzo-soprano who happens to hail from Mozart's hometown of Salzburg, Austria. **Cathy Van Roy**, a soprano from Belgium, is also an accomplished oboe and bassoon player. The American singers include two Californians - soprano **Sydney Mancasola**, a recent Oberlin College graduate, and bass-baritone **Christopher Rimmel**, who holds degrees from UCLA and Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. They are joined by tenor **William Davenport**, a Peabody Conservatory graduate from Maryland, and New Jersey native **Patrick Guetti**, a bass who is a graduate of The Catholic University.

These singers will make their AVA debuts in a **New Artists Recital**, September 26th and 27th, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. in AVA's Helen Corning Warden Theater. Tickets are available after September 12th by calling 215 735-1685, or online at www.avaopera.org. Ticket prices are \$25 for adults and seniors, \$20 for those 30 and under, and \$10 for students.



AVA Class of 2015 (left to right): William Davenport, Nelson Ebo, Patrick Guetti, Sydney Mancasola, Christopher Remmel, Bettina Schweiger, and Cathy Van Roy.

AVA's Class of 2015:

William Davenport, tenor, from Rockville, Maryland, holds a Bachelor of Music from the Peabody Conservatory of Music, where he has sung the roles of Des Grieux in *Manon*, Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Alfred in *La traviata*. He performed as a tenor soloist in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Concert Artists of Baltimore, Dvořák's Mass in D major with Columbia Pro Cantare, Handel's Messiah with the Frederick Chamber Singers, and Mozart's Coronation Mass with the Montgomery College Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. Mr. Davenport has completed young artist programs with Chautauqua Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, and Songfest.

Nelson Ebo, tenor, from Angola, attended the University of Carlos III in Madrid, Spain, Westminster Choir College, and the Hartt School of Music. Among his awards and recognitions are an encouragement award from the Giulio Gari Foundation in 2011 and 2010, second prize in the 2011 Gerda Lissner Foundation International Vocal Competition, first place in the 2010 Connecticut Concert Opera Competition, and first place in the 2008 Lakes Region Opera Competition in New Hampshire. Mr. Ebo has sung in a variety of concerts, including the Richard Tucker Foundation, Gerda Lissner Foundation, Marcello Giordani and Friends, Scenes from *Carmen*, and the UN Human Rights Day in Geneva, Switzerland. He has also performed solo recitals in New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Spain.

Patrick Guetti, bass, from Highland Park, New Jersey, earned a Bachelor of Music in Musical Theater and a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from The Catholic University of America. He has performed the role of

the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* with Martina Arroyo's *Prelude to Performance* program and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* with Bel Cantanti Summer Opera Festival. He also sang the roles of Frank in *Die Fledermaus*, Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, all with The Catholic University of America.

Sydney Mancasola, soprano, from Redding, California, earned a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where she was a recipient of the Margot Bos Strandler Scholarship. She won second prize in the Florida Grand Opera Young Patronesses Competition in 2011, and first place in both the Dayton Opera Guild Tri-State Vocal Competition and the Oberlin Conservatory Concerto Competition in 2010. Ms. Mancasola has performed the roles of Servilia in *La Clemenza di Tito* and Adele in *Die Fledermaus* with the Brevard Music Center, Cunégonde in *Candide* and Despina in *Così fan tutte* with Oberlin Opera Theater, and covered the role of Marie in *The Daughter of the Regiment* with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis. She is an alumna of Opera Theater of St. Louis' Gerdine Young Artist Program and Brevard Music Center's Janeic Opera Company.

Christopher Remmel, bass-baritone, from San Diego, California, received his Bachelor of music from the UCLA Alpert School of Music and his Master of Music from the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. In 2010, he was a member of the Wolf Trap Opera Studio and was the first place winner of the Josephine LiPuma Vocal Scholarship Competition. Mr. Remmel has performed the roles of Sam in *Trouble in Tahiti*, Le Fauteuil in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, both with the Chicago College of Performing Arts, as well as Dr. Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Berkeley's Open Opera, and Pistola in *Falstaff* with UCLA Opera. He is an alumnus of the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, AIMS in Graz, and the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. He is currently a member of the Santa Fe Opera 2011 Apprentice Program.

Bettina Schweiger, mezzo-soprano, from Salzburg, Austria, recently sang the roles of Olga in *Eugene Onegin* at Universität Mozarteum Salzburg and Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice* at Anton Bruckner Privatuniversität in Linz. Among her awards and achievements are first prize in the "Prima la Musica" Austrian Youth Competition, third prize and best Austrian singer in the Ferruccio Tagliavini International Competition for Opera Singers, and scholarships awarded by the Hübel Foundation, Solti Te Kanawa Accademia di Bel Canto, and the Rolex-Institute. Ms. Schweiger will receive a diploma from Universität Mozarteum Salzburg this November.

Cathy Van Roy, soprano, from Hingene, Belgium, studied classical music at the Royal Conservatories of Ghent and Antwerp. She has sung the roles of Mira in the world premiere of *The Marriage of Mira and Miro* at the Street Theater Festival, the Voice of Moemoe in *Woyzeck* with the National Theater Gent (Ghent), Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Ottavia in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Mrs. Grose in the *The Turn of the Screw*, and Orlofsky in Act 2 of *Die Fledermaus*, all with the Conservatory Orchestra. Ms. Van Roy received the Scholarship for Artists by the Flemish government in 2009 and 2010.

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.

Operas: \$60 adults / \$50 seniors / \$25 30 & Under / \$10 students
Add \$35 per person for PREMIUM SEATING (operas and Giargiari Competition only)

Special group rates available

For more info, 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 Gutiérrez, Angela Meade, Latonia Moore, Ailyn Pérez, Dongwon Shin, and James Valenti.

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