



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**1920 Spruce Street
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The Academy of Vocal Arts welcomes eleven aspiring singers into its elite opera training program

Philadelphia: The Academy of Vocal Arts welcomes its class of 2013: eleven new singers from the U.S. and abroad who have already started to make their mark in the opera world. Executive Director **K. James McDowell** has characterized this incoming class as one of the strongest in recent years. The young singers range in age from twenty to twenty-seven.

Not since tenor **Stephen Costello** (class of 2007) has AVA admitted a locally-born singer. This year, however, Doylestown native **Zach Borichevsky** will join the AVA roster. All of the members of this class have bachelors or masters degrees, but the voice faculty of The Academy of Vocal Arts selects artists based on one thing only – a great voice that has the potential for international stardom.

AVA's Class of 2013:

Maria Aleida, coloratura soprano

Ms. Aleida, from Holguin, Cuba, studied at the Vincent Emilio Sojo Conservatory in Venezuela, where she sang the roles of Adina in *L'elisir d'amore* and Queen Elizabeth in *Los Martirios de Colón*. In 2009, Ms. Aleida was the New York finalist in the International Singing Contest Francisco Viñas, and in 2008, she was the audience prize winner of the Montserrat Caballé International Singing Competition. As a soloist, she has sung with La Sinfonica de Lara, La Sinfonica de Falcon and La Sinfonica de Venezuela at the Teresa Carreño Theatre.

Sean Arnold, tenor

A native of Austin, Texas, Mr. Arnold received a B.A. from the University of Houston, where he sang the roles of Dino Corelli in *A Wedding* and Les Fils in *Les Mamelles de Tiresias*. Mr. Arnold has also been engaged for two consecutive summers as a studio artist at Wolf Trap Opera Company, where his roles have included Parpignol in *La bohème* and Arcadio in *Florenca en el Amazonas*.

Zach Borichevsky, tenor

Mr. Borichevsky, from Doylestown, Pa., received a M.M. in Opera Performance from the Yale School of Music and a B.A. in Music and Political Science from The George Washington University, where his roles included Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* and Kaspar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including second place in the 2009 Gerda Lissner Foundation Competition and an encouragement award from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions—New England Region in 2008. He has also performed with Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Boston Lyric Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, and Orchestra Giuseppe Verdi di Milano.

Scott Conner, bass

From Olathe, Kans., Mr. Conner received a B.M. in Vocal Performance from the University of Missouri—Kansas City Conservatory of Music, where he sang the roles of Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro*, the Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*. He was a first place winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Kansas City District in 2008. He has performed with the Naples Philharmonic, Wichita Grand Opera, Mobile Opera, Opera New Jersey, Springfield Regional Opera, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

Norman Garrett, baritone

Norman Garrett, from Lubbock, Texas, received his M.M. in Voice from The College-Conservatory at the University of Cincinnati and a B.M. in Vocal Performance from Texas Tech University. He has sung the roles of Dr. Grenvil in *La traviata*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, and Alcindoro in *La bohème*, among others. He has also performed with Cedar Rapids Opera and Cincinnati Opera, where he participated in the Opera Fusion and outreach programs, and performed a leading role in the World Premier of the opera *The John P. Parker Story: We Rise to Freedom* by Adolphus Hailstork.

Wes Mason, baritone

From Norfolk, Va., Mr. Mason received a B.M. in Voice Performance from the University of Michigan, where he sang the roles of Morales and Le Dancairo in *Carmen* with Michigan Opera Theatre; Sid in *Albert Herring*, Onegin in *Eugene Onegin*, and Marcello in *La bohème*. He received an encouragement award from the Kansas District of the 2009 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and was a finalist for a Sarah Tucker Study Grant. Mr. Mason has also performed with Seagle Music Colony, Motor City Lyric Opera, and Virginia Opera.

Margaret Mezzacappa, mezzo-soprano

Ms. Mezzacappa, from Euclid, Ohio, received a B.M. in Music Performance from the Baldwin-Wallace College Conservatory of Music, where she won the 2008 Baldwin-Wallace College Concerto Competition. Ms. Mezzacappa's roles include Public Opinion in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Baba in *The Medium*, Juno in *Semele*, Mum in *Albert Herring*, Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible*, and The Sorceress in *Dido and Aeneas*, all with Baldwin-Wallace College. She was twice a featured soloist in the Baldwin-Wallace Bach Festival.

Zachary Nelson, bass-baritone

Zachary Nelson, from Annapolis, Md., received a B.M. in Vocal Performance from The Catholic University of America, where he sang roles including Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Achilla and

Curio in *Giulio Cesare*, Martin in *Candide*, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*, and Marcello in *La bohème*. He is the recipient of the 2009 Benjamin T. Rome School of Music Vocal Performance Award. He also performed with Summer Opera Theater Company and Bel Cantanti Opera.

Corinne Schaefer, soprano

Ms. Schaefer, from Belford, N.J., received a B.M. in Vocal Performance from Indiana University, Jacob School of Music. She received an encouragement award from the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition in 2009; second place in the Opera at Florham Violetta DuPont Vocal Competition; third place in the FAVA Grand Concours de Chant; and second place in the National Opera Association Vocal Competition, all in 2008. Ms. Schaefer's roles include Beth in *Little Women*, with the Intermezzo Music Festival; Adele in *Die Fledermaus* and Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*, both with Amadeus Opernensemble Salzburg; and Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, with Pacific Opera.

John Viscardi, tenor

Mr. Viscardi, from Manhasset, N.Y., received both his M.A. in Music Performance—Opera Concentration and his B.M. in Vocal Performance from New York University, where he sang the roles of Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, Cat, Old Man, and Tea Pot in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, Camille in *The Merry Widow*, and Frederick in *The Pirates of Penzance* among others. He has also performed with Opera New Jersey, Rockland Opera, and the Little Orchestra Society.

Na Li Youm, soprano

Na Li Youm, from Seoul, Korea, received her M.M. in Music from Mannes College New School for Music and her Bachelor's in Vocal Performance from The Korean National University of Arts. She received the grand prize in the Giulio Gari International Competition in 2008 and first prize in The Journal of Music Competition in 1999. Ms. Youm's roles include Violetta in *La traviata*, with Mannes College, and La Contessa in *Le nozze di Figaro*, with The Korean National University of Arts.

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, Daniel Mobbs, James Morris, Stuart Neill, John Packard, James Pease, David Poleri, Julien Robbins, Valerian Ruminski, Jane Shaulis, Hugh Smith, Ruth Ann Swenson, Indra Thomas, Todd Thomas, Richard Troxell, Victoria Vergara, Stephen West, 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, Ailyn Pérez, Dongwon Shin, and James Valenti.

FACT SHEET

AVA's 2009/2010 75th 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

19th 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 75TH 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

3rd and Pearl Streets, Camden, NJ

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**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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