



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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1920 Spruce Street

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**The Academy of Vocal Arts Presents
An Evening of Russian Romances**

Music Director Ghenady Meirson and the AVA artists present selections from Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol*, and more from the rich Russian opera repertoire.

Philadelphia: Warm up your December nights with the intense drama and melting lyricism of classic Russian opera. This year, AVA's annual Russian recital features sixteen of AVA's young vocalists performing arias and scenes from such works as Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol*, and Rimsky-Korsakoff's *The Tale of the Tsar Saltan*, which includes the popular "Flight of the bumblebee." **Ghenady Meirson** will accompany and serve as music director for the concert, which takes place on December 15 and 17 at 7:30 p.m. at The Academy of Vocal Arts, 1920 Spruce Street.

Also on the program is an AVA premiere of *Demon*, by Rubinstein, Tchaikovsky's teacher. It features the baritone aria "Demon's Romance" (to be sung by bass-baritone Ryan Kuster); the piece was recorded in 1925 by bass Feodor Chaliapin, acknowledged as the most famous Russian opera singer in the twentieth century.

Born in Odessa, Ukraine, Ghenady Meirson graduated from the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome and the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied piano with Seymour Lipkin and Mieczyslaw Horszowski, and accompanying with Vladimir Sokoloff. In 1982 Mr. Meirson wrote a singer's handbook entitled *Do Sing in Russian* and began to specialize in Russian vocal repertoire. He has prepared many artists for opera, oratorio, recitals, and recordings, and helped

such organizations as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Singers and Mendelssohn Club Chorus. Mr. Meirson is a faculty member of both the Academy of Vocal Arts and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

Some of AVA's most accomplished singers will appear on the program, including **Viktor Antipenko**, a newly discovered talent from Saint Petersburg, Russia. The tenor joins AVA as a resident artist in December 2009.

Alex Lawrence, from Weston, Mass., a third-year resident artist at The Academy of Vocal Arts, will sing in Rachmaninoff's *Aleko*, which contains one of the finest baritone arias in the Russian repertory. Mr. Lawrence received a B.M. in Voice from Northwestern University. He was a finalist in the Liederkrantz Vocal Competition in 2009 and the winner of an encouragement grant from the Licia Albanese Puccini Foundation in 2008. Among his roles at AVA are Giorgio Germont in *La traviata*; Dottor Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*; and Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Corinne Winters, from Frederick, Md., a third-year resident at The Academy of Vocal Arts, will sing Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Flight of the Bumblebee." Ms. Winters earned a M.M. in vocal performance from The Peabody Conservatory of Music and a B.S. in Music from Towson University. She is the winner of numerous awards and competitions, including third place in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions—New England Region and a George London Foundation Honorable Mention, both in 2009. At AVA Ms. Winters has sung Monica in *La fiamma* and Norina in *Don Pasquale*, among other roles.

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

Location: The Helen Corning Warden Theater at the Academy of Vocal Arts
1920 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Price: \$23 adults and seniors; \$15 students

Tickets or more information: 215-735-1685 or www.avaopera.org

FEATURED AVA RESIDENT ARTISTS

Maria Aleida, *soprano*
Jan Cornelius, *soprano*
Michelle B. Johnson, *soprano*
Corinne Winters, *soprano*
Cynthia Cook, *mezzo-soprano*
Margaret Mezzacappa, *mezzo-soprano*
Olivia Vote, *mezzo-soprano*
Viktor Antipenko, *tenor*

Zach Borichevsky, *tenor*
Taylor Stayton, *tenor*
Noah Van Niel, *tenor*
John Viscardi, *tenor*
Christopher Bolduc, *baritone*
Alex Lawrence, *baritone*
Ryan Kuster, *bass-baritone*
Nicholas Masters, *bass*

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 Pèrez, Dongwon Shin, and James Valenti.

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