



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Legendary Opera Director Tito Capobianco to Direct *Falstaff* for Academy of Vocal Arts

**Best known for his ground-breaking productions with Beverly Sills at the New York City Opera, Tito Capobianco began his directing career here in Philadelphia at AVA in the 1960's – now he will help celebrate the acclaimed academy's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by returning to direct Verdi's comic masterpiece, *Falstaff*.**

**Philadelphia:** The Academy of Vocal Arts is thrilled to announce the return of legendary stage director **Tito Capobianco**. Mr. Capobianco will direct AVA's fall production of Verdi's *Falstaff*, opening November 13, 2009.

Originally from La Plata, Argentina, **Tito Capobianco** is acclaimed for his ingenious and versatile treatment of repertory classics, and has staged over 250 productions in Europe, Australia, and the American continent for major opera houses such as Berlin, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Paris, and Barcelona, along with the festivals of Spoleto, Caramoor, Las Palmas, Buenos Aires, and Mexico City. His staging of American and world premieres, plus numerous new productions, have been hailed as landmarks in opera history, and have had a strong influence in the development of opera in the United States, beginning with the inauguration of the Lincoln and Kennedy Centers.

Mr. Capobianco was invited to AVA in 1962 by founder Helen Corning Warden. While at AVA, he directed several operas, including *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La bohème*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *I pagliacci*, and the American premiere of Scarlatti's *Il trionfo dell'onore*. Following his tenure at AVA, Mr. Capobianco remained committed to the educational needs of young artists. In 1968, he founded and became general director of the **Opera Center at the Juilliard School of Music**. He created the Opera Department at the **College of Performing Arts** in Philadelphia in 1972, the **San Diego Opera Center** in 1977, and the **Pittsburgh Opera Center** in 1986.

Mr. Capobianco came to prominence in the 1970's at **New York City Opera**, where he directed mega-stars **Beverly Sills**, **Placido Domingo**, and **Norman Treigle** in some of their most celebrated performances, including *Giulio Cesare*, *Le coq d'or*, *Manon*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, and a revival of Donizetti's "Queen Trilogy" - *Roberto Devereux*, *Maria Stuarda*, and *Anna Bolena*, plus many others. He made his **Metropolitan Opera** debut in 1978, again directing Ms. Sills in *Thaïs*.

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.

**PHOTOS OF MR. CAPOBIANCO AVAILABLE:**

**1) current headshot**

**2) archival photos of Mr. Capobianco with casts of AVA operas, circa 1965**

The Academy of Vocal Arts is considered by many to be the premiere training program for emerging opera stars. 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 Pèrez, 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

## 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

**Subscriptions and Single Tickets on sale NOW!**

Call 215 735-1685 or buy online at [www.avaopera.org](http://www.avaopera.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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