



MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM CONCLUDES SEASON WITH **MEROLA GRAND FINALE**

August 19 at the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (20 July 2023) – **Merola Opera Program's** 2023 Summer Festival comes to a triumphant conclusion with the **Merola Grand Finale**, featuring all of this year's young artists performing a dazzling array of opera's most brilliant arias, duets, and more, on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House. Conducted by Maestro Kelly Kuo and directed by 2023 Merola Stage Director Tania Arazi Coombs, this evening showcases the extraordinary talent of the 2023 cohort. Kuo made his Merola debut last season, conducting the company's critically acclaimed production of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. A post-performance reception with the artists will be held immediately following the performance in The Green Room (additional ticket required). The **Merola Grand Finale** will be presented at 7:30pm, Saturday, August 19, 2023 at the **War Memorial Opera House**, 301 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco. For more information or to purchase tickets (\$10*/\$55/\$80), the public may visit merola.org/summer or call the San Francisco Box Office at (415) 864-3330. **For audience members who have never attended a Merola production, a limited quantity of \$10 tickets will be available with the code MEROLANEW. These Community Access tickets are sponsored by TogetherSF. Tickets (\$75) to the post-performance reception, which will be held in The Green Room at the Veterans Building, must be purchased separately.*

The repertoire for the **Merola Grand Finale** will showcase selections from a wide range of operas and musical theatre pieces that include Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Britten's *Peter Grimes*, Rossini's *L'italiana in Algeri* and *La Cenerentola*, Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles*, Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*, Richard Danielpour's *Margaret Garner*, Gregory Spears' *Fellow Travelers*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *La clemenza di Tito*, Pauline Viardot's

Cendrillon, Ruperto Chapí's *Las hijas del Zebedeo*, Federico Moreno Torroba's *Luisa Fernanda*, Puccini's *La bohème*, Verdi's *Otello*, Richard Rodgers' *The Boys from Syracuse*, and Mitch Leigh's *Man of La Mancha*.

The young artists performing are:

- Georgiana Adams (Soprano)
- Lucy Joy Altus (Mezzo-soprano)
- Juliette Chauvet (Soprano)
- Nicole Marie Cloutier (Pianist/Coach)
- Caroline Corrales (Soprano)
- Eleomar Cuello (Baritone)
- Daniel Luis Espinal (Tenor)
- Joanne Evans (Mezzo-soprano)
- Simona Genga (Mezzo-soprano)
- Kevin Godínez (Baritone)
- Julian Grabarek (Pianist/Coach)
- Shan Hai (Soprano)
- Hyemin Jeong (Pianist/Coach)
- Chance Jonas-O'Toole (Tenor)
- Samuel Kidd (Baritone)
- So ry Kim (Soprano)
- Thomas William Kinch (Tenor)
- Natalie Lewis (Mezzo-soprano)
- Pei-Hsuan Tiana Lin (Pianist/Coach)
- James McCarthy (Bass-baritone)
- Cecelia Steffen McKinley (Contralto)
- Olivia Prendergast (Soprano)
- Deborah Robertson (Pianist/Coach)
- Cameron Rolling (Baritone)
- Finn Sagal (Bass-baritone)
- Sahel Salam (Tenor)
- Demetrious Sampson, Jr. (Tenor)

ABOUT KELLY KUO

Maestro **Kelly Kuo** has been praised by the *Cincinnati Enquirer* as “a leader of exceptional musical gifts, who has a clear technique on the podium and an impressive rapport with audiences.” In 2021, Maestro Kuo was named Associate Artistic Director of American Lyric Theatre and Music Director of the Reno Chamber Orchestra, while continuing his duties as Artistic Director of the Oregon Mozart Players. Recent engagements include productions with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Seattle Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Opera Orlando, Opera Columbus, Wolf Trap Opera, the Brevard Music Center, and concerts with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, Sunriver Music Festival, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, and Ballet Fantastique. Maestro Kuo has also served on the conducting staff of Los Angeles Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Pacific, Atlanta Symphony, and Cincinnati Symphony. In 2008, Maestro Kuo became the first conductor of Asian descent to lead a performance at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Since then, he has returned to lead the Chicago premiere of Charlie Parker's *Yarbird* and performances featuring artists of the Ryan Opera Center. Upcoming engagements include a return to Opera Columbus, as well as appearances with New Orleans Opera and the Olympia Symphony Orchestra. A recipient of a Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistant Award, Maestro Kuo continues to concertize as a keyboardist and is the only pianist to have studied with two pupils of the Russian virtuoso Vladimir Horowitz.

ABOUT TANIA ARAZI COAMBS

As a director of opera, plays, and musical theatre, Tania Arazi Coombs' most recent directing project was her original award-winning play, *Stoptlight*. Other directing highlights include her award-winning production of Aaron Copland's *The Tender Land* (Indiana University of Pennsylvania); the first regional production of Claire van Kampen's *Farinelli and the King* (The Station Theatre); scenes from her original opera, *Catatumbo*, based on her own storyline and libretto and composed by Griffin Candey (University of Illinois Opera Studio); a devised theatre collaboration entitled *Scenes From Our Past*; as well as productions of Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* (Indiana University of Pennsylvania), Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* (Southern Illinois Music Festival), Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Southern Illinois Music Festival), Diana Son's *Stop Kiss* (Armory Free Theatre), Bertolt Brecht's *The Informer* (Moe Laboratory Theater), Hans Krása's *Brundibár* (Central Illinois Children's Choir), Thomas Pasatieri's *Signor Deluso* (Indiana University of Pennsylvania), Barbara Wiechmann's *Feeding the Moonfish* (Moe Laboratory Theater), and *A Canoe on the Lake* (Armory Free Theatre). As a director and an assistant director, Arazi Coombs has worked with Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, Dicapo Opera Theatre, Southern Illinois Music Festival, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Station Theatre, Armory Free Theatre, Parkland College Theatre, and Champaign Urbana Theatre Company. She previously served as the Producer/Director of Opera/Music Theater at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she directed the main stage opera productions, as well as several programs of musical theatre and operatic scenes.

ABOUT MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM

The **Merola Opera Program** is widely regarded as the foremost opera training program for aspiring singers, pianist/coaches, and stage directors. Merola nurtures the opera stars of tomorrow through master classes and private coaching sessions with opera's most accomplished singers, conductors, and directors. Participants also receive training in operatic repertoire, languages, diction, acting, stage movement, and professional development. Offered free of charge to all participants, the Merola Opera Program is unique in the industry in many ways. It was the first young artist program to provide financial support to developing artists for five years following their participation, offering aid for essential career development expenses including coaching, language classes, and audition travel. Since Carrie-Ann Matheson and Markus Beam formed the new Merola artistic team in 2021, the program has redoubled its efforts to provide exciting new curricula and added focus on preparing the burgeoning artists for extramusical aspects of a performance career. Learn more at merola.org.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **Merola Opera Program's** 2023 Summer Festival comes to a triumphant conclusion with the **Merola Grand Finale**, featuring all of this year's young artists performing a dazzling array of opera's most brilliant arias, duets, and more, on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House. Conducted by Maestro Kelly Kuo and directed by 2023 Merola Stage Director Tania Arazi Coombs, this evening

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WHEN: 7:30pm, Saturday, August 19

WHERE: War Memorial Opera House, 301 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

TICKETS: Tickets (\$10*/\$55/\$80) are available at merola.org/summer.

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Reception Tickets: \$75

The reception will take place in The Green Room at the Veterans Building.

INFO: For more information or to order tickets, please visit merola.org/summer or call the San Francisco Box Office at **(415) 864-3330**. The box office is open Monday, 10:00am-5:00pm, and Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00am-6:00pm (Saturday phones only).

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MEDIA: Courtney Heimbeck, Carla Befera & Co. PR
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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<https://cbpr.co/press/merolagrandfinale/>