



MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM ANNOUNCES HISTORIC ALL FEMALE-DIRECTED 2024 SEASON

**SUMMER FESTIVAL INCLUDES VOCAL CHAMBER MUSIC RECITAL,
SCHWABACHER SUMMER CONCERT, FULLY STAGED *DON GIOVANNI*,
MEROLA GRAND FINALE**

June 27 – August 17, 2024

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (26 March 2024) – San Francisco’s acclaimed **Merola Opera Program** has unveiled its 2024 season. For the first time in the organization’s 67-year history, the three stage directors for the season are women. Two are distinguished alumnae of the program and the third is a 2024 participant. The summer festival performances, including a vocal chamber music recital, a concert of staged scenes, a fully staged opera, and the Merola Grand Finale concert, will showcase the talents of 29 young artists from across the United States and Canada, as well as Australia, China, France, Georgia, and South Korea, who were selected from more than 1,300 international applicants.

Said **Carrie-Ann Matheson**, San Francisco Opera Center Artistic Director and **Markus Beam** (Merola ‘02), San Francisco Opera Center General Manager, “This season we are thrilled to announce two celebrated alums will be returning to direct this summer’s performances: world-renowned soprano **Patricia Racette** (Merola ‘88) will direct our fully staged production of *Don Giovanni*, and acclaimed director **Omer Ben Seadia** (Merola ‘14) will stage our Schwabacher Summer Concert featuring an array of opera scenes. This year’s Merola Stage Director **Anna Theodosakis**, will be at the helm for the Merola Grand Finale, as well as directing one of the Schwabacher Summer Concert scenes.” Matheson, an internationally recognized conductor, pianist, and educator, will curate the opening recital, along with noted lyric tenor and educator, Nicholas Phan.

The 2024 Merola Summer Festival kicks off June 27 with ***The Song as Drama*** at the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater, an evening of vocal chamber music that highlights the dramatic narrative arc of song with selections from a diverse range of eras and musical styles. The Festival continues July 11 and 13 with the **Schwabacher Summer Concert**, a semi-staged concert of extended scenes from works by Donizetti, Gounod, Leoncavallo, Massenet, Puccini, and Richard Strauss, performed with a full orchestra at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall. Next up, Merola will present a fully staged production of Mozart’s ***Don Giovanni***, with two performances August 1 and 3 at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall. The season concludes on a triumphant

note on August 17 with the **Merola Grand Finale**, a jubilant concert featuring all the 2024 Merola participants, presented at the War Memorial Opera House. The Grand Finale is followed by a reception with the artists in the Green Room at the War Memorial building. (Separate admission \$85).

Individual performance tickets are available to Merola members starting March 26, with the remaining tickets available to the public beginning April 9 at 11:00am. This year, Merola has adjusted ticket prices to make its productions accessible to a wider range of audiences and is offering \$10 tickets for those 25 and under or those seeing their first Merola production. Tickets (\$35-\$65, plus \$10 for youth/newcomers, \$85 for reception) can be purchased at merola.org or by calling the San Francisco Opera Box Office at **415-864-3330**.

The 2024 Merola Summer Festival performance schedule:

The Song as Drama

7:30pm, June 27, 2024

Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater
401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco

Merola artists will perform a vocal chamber recital that explores the narrative arc of song. Selections from a diverse range of eras and styles offer audiences deeply compelling stories summed up in a few minutes. Merola Artistic Director **Carrie-Ann Matheson** and acclaimed music educator **Nicholas Phan** will co-curate this recital.

Schwabacher Summer Concert

7:30pm, July 11 & 2:00pm, July 13, 2024

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall
50 Oak Street, San Francisco

Bay Area audiences are invited to revel in the passion and melody of classic opera, as the Merola artists present extended scenes from works by Donizetti, Gounod, Leoncavallo, Massenet, Puccini, and Richard Strauss, among others. Performed with a full orchestra, the **Schwabacher Summer Concert** will be conducted by the internationally renowned Maestro **Louis Lohraseb**, with direction by **Omer Ben Seadia** (Merola '14) and **Anna Theodosakis** (Merola '24).

Don Giovanni

7:30pm, August 1 & 2:00pm, August 3, 2024

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall
50 Oak Street, San Francisco

World-renowned soprano **Patricia Racette** (Merola '88), who for decades has captivated audiences at major opera houses around the world, including San Francisco Opera and The Metropolitan Opera, and then launched her career as an in-demand director in 2018, will bring

to life a fully staged production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Merola artists will perform this masterpiece about an unrepentant rake who comes up against a trio of determined women and one implacable statue. Maestro **Stefano Sarzani**, who has conducted internationally for leading opera companies, will make his Merola debut at the podium.

Merola Grand Finale

7:30pm, August 17, 2024

War Memorial Opera House

301 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco

The 2024 season comes to a triumphant close with the **Merola Grand Finale**, featuring all the young artists in a dazzling array of opera's most brilliant works and lesser-known musical gems. Conducted by Maestro **Steven White** and directed by 2024 Merola Stage Director **Anna Theodosakis**, this evening showcases the extraordinary talent of this year's cohort.

The **Merola Opera Program** is widely regarded as the foremost opera training program for aspiring singers, pianists, and stage directors. Merola nurtures the opera stars of tomorrow through master classes and private coaching 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 is the only 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: San Francisco's acclaimed **Merola Opera Program** has unveiled its 2024 season. For the first time in the organization's 67-year history the three stage directors for the season are women. Two are distinguished alumnae of the program and the third is a 2024 participant. The performances, including a song recital, staged scenes, a full opera, and the Merola Grand Finale concert, will showcase the talents of 29 young artists from across the United States and Canada, as well as Australia, China, France, Georgia, and South Korea, who were selected from more than 1,300 international applicants.

The 2024 Merola Summer Festival kicks off June 27 with ***The Song as Drama***, an evening of vocal chamber music that highlights the dramatic narrative arc of song with selections from a diverse range of eras and musical styles and continues with the **Schwabacher Summer Concert**, a semi-staged concert of extended scenes performed with a full orchestra. Next up, Merola will present a

fully staged production of Mozart's **Don Giovanni**, directed by Merola alum, internationally acclaimed soprano **Patricia Racette**. The season concludes on a triumphant note with the **Merola Grand Finale**, a jubilant concert featuring all the 2024 Merola participants.

WHEN:

The Song as Drama

7:30pm, Thursday, June 27 – Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater

Tickets: \$35 (general admission)/\$10 for those 25 and under or those seeing their first Merola production

Schwabacher Summer Concert

7:30pm, Thursday, July 11 – San Francisco Conservatory of Music Caroline H.

Hume Concert Hall

2:00pm, Saturday, July 13 – San Francisco Conservatory of Music Caroline H.

Hume Concert Hall

Tickets: \$35/\$65/\$10 for those 25 and under or those seeing their first Merola production

Don Giovanni

7:30pm, Thursday, August 1 – San Francisco Conservatory of Music Caroline H.

Hume Concert Hall

2:00pm, Saturday, August 3 – San Francisco Conservatory of Music Caroline H.

Hume Concert Hall

Tickets: \$35/\$65/\$10 for those 25 and under or those seeing their first Merola production

Merola Grand Finale and Reception

7:30pm, Saturday, August 17 – War Memorial Opera House

Tickets: \$25/\$40/\$50/\$65 (includes a \$3 facility fee)/\$10 for those 25 and under or those seeing their first Merola production.

*Reception Tickets: \$85**

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

WHERE:

San Francisco Conservatory of Music, 50 Oak St., San Francisco

Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater, 401 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco

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

TICKETS:

Tickets are currently on sale for Merola members, and will be available to the public Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at 11:00am at merola.org.

For those ages 25 and under or those seeing their first Merola production, \$10 tickets are available for all performances.

Save 20 percent when tickets are purchased for all four productions* in the 2024

season. Ticket discounts are available for groups of 10 or more. Group Sales can be contacted at 415-621-4403.

**Discount is valid through June 10, 2024. All four performances must be purchased at the same time. The discount does not include the Merola Grand Finale Reception and cannot be combined with any other discounts.*

INFO: For more information or to order tickets, please visit merola.org 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). The Group Sales office is open Monday, 10:00am-5:00pm, and Tuesday through Friday, 10:00am-6:00pm.

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MEDIA: Courtney Heimbeck, Carla Befera & Co.
courtney@cb-pr.com | 650-308-4390

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<https://cbpr.co/press/merola2024/>