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Press contact: Matt Gray, AOP Producing Director, email: mgray@operaprojects.org, phone: 718-398-4024
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POPULAR *COMPOSERS & THE VOICE* PROGRAM OFFERS FREE TRAINING IN THE FUNDAMENTALS OF OPERA TO COMPOSERS, LIBRETTISTS

**NEW SEASON BEGINS IN FALL 2011 AT FORT GREENE, BROOKLYN
HOME OF AMERICAN OPERA PROJECTS**

BROOKLYN, NY – American Opera Projects (AOP) is proud to announce the return of its popular *Composers & the Voice* program for its 2011-2012 season. Created and led by Composers & the Voice Artistic Director **Steven Osgood**, six composers or composer/librettist teams will be selected for a year-long fellowship, working with the company's Resident Ensemble of Singers and Artistic Team. The primary focus of *Composers & the Voice* is to give composers and librettists extensive experience working collaboratively with singers on writing for the voice and contemporary opera stage. There will be a total of 15 workshop sessions between September 2011 and April 2012. Applications and additional information can be found at AOP's website www.operaprojects.org. The deadline for applications is May 27, 2011. All sessions will be in Fort Greene, Brooklyn.

In addition to the six "Working Sessions" with each singer that culminate in solo works for voice with piano accompaniment, the 2011/12 *Composers & the Voice* series will expand to incorporate "Skill Building Sessions" for composers and librettists in acting, improv games, and libretto development, in order to provide an in-depth and firsthand knowledge of how singers build characters, act in scenes and sing text.

At the end of the program, American Opera Projects will present the results of the participants' work in public performances – *First Glimpse*, a concert of songs in Spring 2012, and *Six Scenes*, an evening of short opera scenes in Fall 2012. One of these operas-in-progress will be selected to receive a staged reading at Manhattan School of Music in Spring 2013.

"I can think of no better forum for a composer with a passion for learning the traditions of so-called progressive American opera theater than AOP's program." – **Daron Hagen**, opera composer (*Amelia*) and guest C&V instructor. Previous seasons of *Composers & the Voice* have featured guest lectures from notable artists such as composer **Mark Adamo** (*Little Women*, *Lysistrata*) and librettist **Mark Campbell** (*Volpone*, *Later That Same Evening*). Past "Composer Chairs," sponsorships named in honor of mentors and their support of *Composers & the Voice*, have included Mr. Adamo and composers **Tan Dun**, **Stephen Schwartz**, **Tobias Picker**, **Richard Peaslee** and **Lee Hoiby**.

During his tenure as Artistic Director of American Opera Projects (2001 to 2008), **Steven Osgood** created *Composers & the Voice*, and conducted the world premieres of Paula Kimper and Wende Persons' *Patience & Sarah*, and Janice Hamer and Mary Azrael's *Lost Childhood*. He has also conducted the world premieres of Jonathan Sheffer's *Blood on the Dining Room Floor*, Tan Dun's *Peony Pavilion*, and Xenakis' *Oresteia*. He has been Cover Conductor for the Metropolitan Opera's productions of *Nixon in China*, *Satyagraha*, and the world premiere of Tan

Dun's *The First Emperor*. He is currently conducting Stephen Schwartz's *Séance on a Wet Afternoon* at New York City Opera (developed by AOP), and will make his debut at Fort Worth Opera conducting Philip Glass' *Hydrogen Jukebox* in May.

Composers & the Voice began during the 2002-03 season at American Opera Projects. In the 2008-2011 seasons, AOP focused on continued development of operas originally created by alumni in the first five seasons of the program including *The Golden Gate* (**Conrad Cummings**), *Paul's Case* (**Gregory Spears**), *Henry's Wife* (**Randall Eng**), *Love/Hate* (**Jack Perla**), and *Semmelweis* (**Raymond J. Lustig**). The upcoming 2011-12 season marks the first time since 2008 that new artists are being invited to participate in the program.

Past AOP *Composers & the Voice* fellows have received grants and honors from the following organizations: Aaron Copland Fund for Music, ASCAP, BMI, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the American Music Center, the American Composers Forum, OPERA America, the National Endowment for the Arts, Meet the Composer, the Argosy Foundation Contemporary Music Fund, the Fulbright Foundation, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Douglas Moore Fellowship, Tapestry New Opera Works, the Frederick Loewe Foundation, New Dramatists, and the Martha Baird Rockefeller Foundation. *Composers & the Voice* is made possible in part by a generous multi-year award from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

MORE INFO AND PRESS MATERIALS AVAILABLE AT: www.operaprojects.org

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