



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press material is available at: www.operaprojects.org

AOP WORKSHOPS BEGIN NEW YEAR WITH FIRST OPERA FROM *WICKED* COMPOSER STEPHEN SCHWARTZ, MORE

**ALSO FEATURED: FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF SONGS
BY “RUSSIAN BOB DYLAN” VLADIMIR VYSOTSKY,
OPERATIC ADAPTATION OF NOVEL *GOLDEN GATE***

NEW YORK, NY, December 13, 2007—**AMERICAN OPERA PROJECTS (AOP)** will kick off the New Year on January 18-20, 2008 with workshops of three new projects as part of its widely recognized **FIRST CHANCE** development program that allows creators to hear their works in front of a live audience for the first time.

Concert readings of **Stephen Schwartz’s** opera *Séance on a Wet Afternoon* featuring soprano **Lauren Flanigan** will be performed during a three-day marathon of new works, providing an outlet for opera lovers on a weekend in which both Lincoln Center opera companies are dark. **Conrad Cummings’s** *The Golden Gate* and *Unruly Horses*, a musical based on the songs of Russian bard **Vladimir Vysotsky** and conceived by **Moni and Mina Yakim**, will also be featured.

Séance (PROGRAM A) will take place at 8 PM on **Friday, Jan 18**; *Golden Gate* and *Unruly Horses* (PROGRAM B) will be presented at 8 PM on **Sunday, Jan. 20**. Performances will be held at South Oxford Space in **Fort Greene, Brooklyn**, the home of American Opera Projects. Running time for each program is approximately one and a half hours.

BOTH PROGRAMS A & B can be seen as a special double-bill on **Saturday, Jan. 19** at the Rose Studio of The Chamber Music Society of **Lincoln Center**: *Unruly Horses* and *The Golden Gate* start at 6 PM, followed by a long intermission, then *Séance* at 9:15 PM. Balducci box-dinners will be available during the intermission (advance purchase through AOP website required). Running time including the dinner interval on Saturday, Jan. 19 is four and a half hours.

Cost of each program is \$20 (\$15 for students with ID and seniors). Programs A and B can be purchased together for \$30 - a 25% discount. Seating is by General Admission; reservations are encouraged.

The Rose Studio is in the Rose Building, 10th Floor at 70 Lincoln Center Plaza at 65th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. South Oxford Space is located at 138 South Oxford Street, at the corner of South Oxford and Hanson Place, Fort Greene. For more information and directions, call (718) 398-4024 or visit www.operaprojects.org.

Séance on a Wet Afternoon is the first opera by noted Broadway and film composer-lyricist Stephen Schwartz ("Wicked", "Godspell", "Enchanted", etc.) Based on the novel by Mark McShane and the award-winning screen adaptation by Bryan Forbes, *Séance* is a psychological thriller about a spiritual medium who kidnaps a girl in order to gain fame by "finding" her through her séances. The opera has been commissioned by Opera Santa Barbara and will have its World Premiere at Santa Barbara's Granada Theatre in 2009.

A new musical based on the real-life Soviet Union folk hero Vladimir Vysotsky, *Unruly Horses* is conceived by Moni and Mina Yakim, freely based on leading French actress Marina Vlady's best-selling memoir of her marriage and life with Vysotsky. The stage show features English lyrics by Peter Kellogg and Albert C. Todd with musical adaptation by Larry Hochman. A poet, songwriter and actor, Vladimir Vysotsky died in 1980 at the age of 42. His fearless confrontational works were known verbatim by millions of people in the Soviet Union, even though the national radio station was forbidden to play his music and his poems went unpublished. Moni Yakim is a founding member of the Juilliard Drama Division.

Five twenty-somethings experience love, life, and loss in the magical and innocent San Francisco of the early 1980's in Conrad Cummings's *The Golden Gate*. Vikram Seth's best-selling source novel is composed entirely of 690 rhyming tetrameter sonnets and was inspired by Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. Cummings was a 2005-06 member of AOP's *Composers & the Voice* fellowship program. His works have been performed at Carnegie Hall, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), and Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco.

Lauren Flanigan has been called "the thinking man's diva" by *Time Magazine*. With a repertoire that includes more than 75 operas, Ms. Flanigan has appeared at most of the world's leading opera houses including the MET, the Chicago Lyric Opera, San Francisco Opera, Glimmerglass, La Scala, and most recently starred in the 2007 production of *Vanessa* at New York City Opera to universal acclaim. Other singers scheduled to perform include **Caroline Worra, Michael Zegarski, Jessica Miller, Amy Van Roekel, Ory Brown, Daniel Neer, Lucas Richter, Grant Clarke, Daniel Hoy, Jeffrey Tucker, Michael Wade Lee, Joshua Bouchard, Garrett McClenahan, and Katie Micha**. **AOP Artistic Director Steven Osgood** will conduct with **Charity Wicks** accompanying on piano.

AOP's seasonal program **First Chance** allows composers and librettists to hear their work in part or in full for the first time before an audience, with live singers and accompaniment.

Founded in 1988, **American Opera Projects (AOP)** has gained international recognition as an arts organization devoted to creating, developing, and presenting new American opera and experimental music theatre. In April 2008, it will present its 14th World Premiere, Lee Hoiby's *This is the Rill Speaking* at Symphony Space in New York City. AOP is led by Charles Jarden, Executive Director, and Steven Osgood, Artistic Director. www.operaprojects.org

**AMERICAN OPERA PROJECTS PRESENTS FIRST CHANCE
MUSIC DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS FEATURING *SÉANCE ON
A WET AFTERNOON, UNRULY HORSES, AND THE GOLDEN GATE***

Performance Schedule:

Friday, Jan 18, 2008

8 PM - Program A: *Séance on a Wet Afternoon*

South Oxford Space

Saturday, Jan 19, 2008

6 PM - Program B: *Unruly Horses & The Golden Gate*

(Dinner Intermission)

9:15 PM - Program A: *Séance on a Wet Afternoon*

Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Rehearsal Studio

Sunday, Jan 20, 2008

8 PM - Program B: *Unruly Horses & The Golden Gate*

South Oxford Space

Performing locations:

Jan 18 & 20, 2008 – South Oxford Space

138 South Oxford St. btwn Atlantic Ave. and Hanson Pl.

Fort Greene, Brooklyn, NY

Jan. 19, 2008 – Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Rehearsal Studio

Rose Building, 10th Floor

70 Lincoln Center Plaza at 65th Street and Amsterdam Avenue

New York, NY

Ticket Prices:

\$30 for both Programs A & B or \$20 / \$15 (Student/Senior) for individual tickets

Box Office: 718-398-4024 or www.operaprojects.org.

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More information: www.operaprojects.org