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AMERICAN OPERA PROJECTS PRESENTS
Free outdoor concerts of scenes from the opera-in-development:
THE SUMMER KING,
BASED ON THE LIFE OF LEGENDARY NEGRO LEAGUE
SLUGGER JOSH GIBSON

Brooklyn, NY, July 20th, 2007—AMERICAN OPERA PROJECTS (AOP) will present scenes from the baseball opera **THE SUMMER KING** at three free outdoor borough festivals in August and September.

August 25th – 2:30pm: Prospect Heights, Brooklyn as part of *St. John's Place on Stage*, a neighborhood festival in front of Five Myles Gallery, 558 St Johns Place (btwn Classon and Franklin Avenues).

August 30th – 7:30pm: in Fort Greene Park as part of Fort Greene Park Conservancy's *Outdoor Summer Film Series 2007* night "Baseball Through the Eye of the Artist" preceding a screening of the acclaimed 1973 baseball film *Bang the Drum Slowly*.

September 8th – (time TBA in afternoon): in Fort Greene Park as part of *FortGreeneFest* – a celebration of the cultures, cuisine & artistic diversity of Brooklyn.

Raffles will be held at each of the performances for a chance to win official **Major League Baseball** merchandise.

THE SUMMER KING, music by **Daniel Sonenberg**, libretto by **Daniel Nester & Daniel Sonenberg**, is based on the life of **Josh Gibson**, the power-hitter of the Negro Baseball Leagues who died tragically at the age of 35 only three months before **Jackie Robinson** broke through the color barrier with the **Brooklyn Dodgers**. *The Summer King* is currently in development with American Opera Projects.

"This is an exciting and important stage in the development of this opera," states AOP Executive Director Charles Jarden. "This is our first chance to get this music out to neighborhoods and communities that we believe will connect strongly with the material, but might be seeing live opera for the first time."

The Summer King features an African-American cast including **Lynn Randolph, Kenneth Overton**, and **Lori-Kaye Miller**. Music Direction is by **Elizabeth Scott** (8/25) and **Steven Osgood**, AOP's Artistic Director (8/30, 9/8) with stage direction by **Seret Scott**. Lead funders for this project include NYSCA, The New York State Music Fund, established by the NY State Attorney General at Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors, and NYC's Department of Cultural Affairs.

Composer Daniel Sonenberg was awarded a residency in AOP's *Composers & the Voice* program in 2003, where he worked on developing *The Summer King*. Since 2005, workshops of the opera have been presented by AOP with such partners as The Manhattan School of Music, Opera Index, the University of Southern Maine, and New York City Opera's VOX new music series. Besides his collaboration with AOP, Sonenberg writes for chamber and orchestral ensembles, and recently gained notice for art songs and theater compositions. His *Baseball Songs*, described as "touching" by James R. Oestreich in *The New York Times*, won the Robert Starer prize of the City University of New York.

For Press material and to learn more about this and all other AOP projects, please visit AOP's website at www.operaprojects.org.

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. AOP is led by Charles Jarden, Executive Director, and Steven Osgood, Artistic Director.