



Opera Colorado Announces Young Artists for 2014 Season

2013-2014 Education and Community Programs Scheduled throughout Colorado

Denver, CO—June 20, 2013 – Opera Colorado today announced the five singers chosen for its 2014 Young Artist Residency, the hallmark of the company's Education & Community Programs. Soprano Colleen Jackson, mezzo-soprano Louise Rogan, tenor Brett Sprague, baritone Jared Guest, and bass Benjamin Sieverding were chosen from amongst hundreds of applicants from across the country to participate in the five-month-long residency. As part of the 2014 program, the Young Artists will perform abridged operas on tour throughout the state, take on leading roles in a production for 2,000 school students, and appear in supporting roles in Opera Colorado's professional mainstage productions.

Reflective of Opera Colorado's commitment to staging classic repertoire while also inspiring audiences and providing opportunities for emerging young talent, the 2014 mainstage season will include a traditional staging of *Rigoletto*, starring acclaimed baritone Gordon Hawkins under the direction of Bernard Uzan and the baton of Leonardo Vordoni, alongside a more contemporary staging of *Carmen* with mezzo-soprano Sandra Pique Eddy in the title role.

"Our Young Artists program is one of the most important and rewarding initiatives here at Opera Colorado," noted General Director Greg Carpenter. "The enthusiasm, talent, and dedication the Young Artists bring to our company is infectious and so important to the community members with whom they interact during their time with us. We are so thrilled to welcome Colleen, Louise, Brett, Jared, and Benjamin and are eager to get to work."

Through touring productions, field trips, and in-school programs, Opera Colorado's Education & Community Programs reach over 35,000 Coloradans of all ages each year, many of whom have never before experienced opera. The touring productions for 2014 will be Rossini's comic opera *The Barber of*

Seville and Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*. These productions are abridged to one hour in length and performed in English with piano accompaniment, making them more accessible to a broad audience. *The Barber of Seville* is returning for its second season as a touring production, while *Romeo and Juliet* is being brought back after a four-year hiatus. The Young Artists will perform these touring productions throughout the spring, with appearances scheduled in Gunnison, Buena Vista, Paonia, and Vail. In addition, the Young Artists will perform the lead roles in a matinee performance for over 2,000 students of Bizet's *Carmen* at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House and perform supporting roles in Opera Colorado's 2014 professional mainstage season. Ms. Jackson will sing the roles of Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto* and Frasquita in *Carmen*; Ms. Rogan will sing Giovanna in *Rigoletto* and Mercedes in *Carmen*; Mr. Sprague will sing Borsa in *Rigoletto* and Remendado in *Carmen*; Mr. Guest will sing Marullo in *Rigoletto* and Dancairo in *Carmen*; and Mr. Sieverding will sing Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto* and Zuniga in *Carmen*.

"We auditioned a record number of young singers for our 2014 Young Artists program and were captivated by the five young singers we've chosen to join us," said Cheryt Koepke, Director of Education and Community Programs. "I know they will be an important part of our education programming, helping us build a deep appreciation for opera and keeping the art form thriving in our Denver community."

About the 2014 Young Artists

Soprano **Colleen Jackson** is originally from Jacksonville, FL, and received a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from Florida State University. A recent graduate of the University of Northern Colorado's Master of Music program, Colleen performed the roles of Mrs. Nordstrom in *A Little Night Music*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* with the Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra. During the summer of 2011, she sang Erste Dame in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera Classica Europa in Germany. Most recently she sang her debut as Violetta in Verdi's *La Traviata* as an alumna guest artist with UNC. Colleen will sing the roles of Juliet and Berta in the Young Artists' touring productions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Barber of Seville*, respectively. In the student matinee of *Carmen*, she will sing the role of Micaela.

Mezzo-soprano **Louise Rogan** hails from Manchester, UK. She received her Diploma in Vocal and Opera Studies from the Royal Northern College of Music in 2009 and a Bachelor of Music degree from the Chicago College of Performing Arts in 2010. In 2012, she graduated from the Professional Diploma in Opera program at the Chicago College of Performing Arts. Performance highlights in Chicago included Pamela (*New York Stories*), Third Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*), and the title role in the Chicago premiere of *Amelia* by Daron Hagen. As a member of the Chicago Opera Theater Young Artist Program, Louise performed the roles of Second Lady (cover) in *Die Zauberflöte* and Masha (cover) in *Moscow Cheryomushki*. Other performance highlights include the title role in *Cendrillon* with Petite Opera Productions and First Lady/Second Witch in *Dido and Aeneas* with the Manchester Camerata. Louise was the winner of the Sixth Annual Elgin Opera Vocal Competition in 2012. Louise will perform the title role

in the student matinee production of *Carmen*, Stephano/Gertrude in the touring production of *Romeo and Juliet*, and Rosina in the touring production of *The Barber of Seville*.

Tenor **Brett Sprague** is originally from Lakewood, WA. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from Chapman University and received his Master's degree in Classical Voice from the Manhattan School of Music in 2012. He has performed extensively in the United States and Europe. Brett's past credits include *Peter Grimes* (Chautauqua Opera), *Don Pasquale*, (Amore Opera), *The Most Happy Fella* (Dicapo Opera), *Die Zauberflöte* (New York Lyric Opera Theatre), *The Ghosts of Versailles*, *Così fan tutte*, *Thaïs*, and *La Vida Breve* (Manhattan School of Music's Opera Theatre), *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Falstaff* (MSM's Opera Repertory Ensemble), *L'elisir d'amore* (Tuscia Opera festival), and *Signor Deluso*, *Gianni Schicchi* and *Die Fledermaus* (Opera Chapman). Brett has also performed as a soloist at Carnegie Hall with the Verdi Square Festival for the Arts. Brett will sing the roles of Almaviva (*The Barber of Seville*) and Romeo (*Romeo and Juliet*) in the company's touring productions and will sing the role of Don José in the student matinee production of *Carmen*.

Baritone **Jared Guest** grew up in the suburbs of Orlando and received his Bachelor of Music degree in Voice Performance from Florida State University in Tallahassee and Master of Music degree in Voice Performance and Opera from the University of Houston's Moores School of Music in 2012. He has performed in a wide range of operas such as *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Falstaff*, *Amelia*, *Il Postino*, *Der Zauberflöte*, *La Vie Parisienne*, *Don Giovanni*, *Tosca*, and *Carmen*. In the summer of 2012, he made his first professional opera recording with Lone Star Lyric Opera singing the role of Hans in the unique one-act *Hans in Luck* by Omari Tau based on a Grimm fairy-tale. 2014 marks Jared's second year as an Opera Colorado Young Artist. In his first year, he performed the role of *Grégorio* in the company's production of Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* with the main stage cast and the role of *Frère Laurent* for the student matinee. In the touring productions of *The Barber of Seville* and *Carmen*, Jared performed the roles of Bartolo and Zuniga/Narrator, respectively. In 2014, Jared will sing the role of Escamillo in the student matinee of *Carmen* and in the company's touring productions he will perform Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* and Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*.

Bass **Benjamin Sieverding** is originally from Sioux Falls, SD. He recently completed his post-graduate studies in Vocal Performance at the University of Michigan, where he also received his Master of Music degree under the tutelage of Stephen West. In 2012, he was a winner of the Nebraska District and an Upper Midwest Region finalist of the Metropolitan National Council Auditions. Since moving to Ann Arbor in 2009, Benjamin has performed in productions at both the university and regional level. His most recent operatic credits with University of Michigan Opera Theater include *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, *The Rake's Progress*, and *Falstaff*. In the summer of 2011, he was seen as Zuniga in *Carmen* with Arbor Opera Theater and Otto in the new world premiere of Jukka Linkola's *Rockland* with Pine Mountain Music Festival. Benjamin has spent summer seasons as a young artist with the Franco-American Vocal Academy and Pine Mountain Music Festival. In summer 2013, he joins The Santa Fe Opera as an apprentice artist, singing and covering small roles in the world premiere of Theodore Morrison's *Oscar*. As the bass in the 2014 Opera Colorado Young Artists, Benjamin will sing the roles of Capulet/Tybalt in the touring production of *Romeo and Juliet* and Bartolo in the touring production of *The Barber of Seville*. In the student matinee of *Carmen*, he will sing the role of Zuniga.

About Opera Colorado's Education & Community Programs

Opera Colorado offers Education & Community Programs to students and adults across the Rocky Mountain region. The programs are designed to entertain as well as educate, providing teachers with resources for training and curriculum that are aligned with Colorado Academic Standards. In addition to field trips to the Ellie Caulkins Opera House for backstage workshops, student dress rehearsals and

matinees, Opera Colorado Education Specialists travel across the state presenting abridged touring productions, recitals, and these popular in-school programs. For more information on the Education & Community Programs, please visit www.operacolorado.org/education.

Opera in a Trunk

Filled with hands-on instructional materials, Opera in a Trunk allows classrooms to discover the art form through costumes, music, props, and a corresponding study guide. The program is presented to classes by an Opera Colorado Education Specialist. Classrooms then keep the trunk for a week to continue the learning and exploration on their own. Trunks will be offered for *The Barber of Seville*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Carmen*, and *Opera for Beginners*.

In-School Workshops

One of the most flexible programs offered, In-School Workshops can be presented by an Education Specialist on any number of topics such as Shakespeare, vocal technique, stage make-up, movement, poetry and music, and stage combat.

Generation OC (Gen OC)

This in-school residency program provides students with a unique opportunity to explore the arts in a completely different way. Two Gen OC programs will be offered during the school year: a marketing tract that teaches students how to market an opera to their peers and *Page to Stage*, where students write and produce an opera from scratch. Last season, students in Greeley created and performed an original opera based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*.

About Opera Colorado

A cornerstone of Denver's cultural community, Opera Colorado presents an annual season of two operas at its downtown Denver home, the Ellie Caulkins Opera House. The Company presents new works alongside standard repertoire, and reaches more than 35,000 students and community members throughout the Rocky Mountain region through a variety of education and outreach programming. Opera Colorado Young Artists, a five-month residency for singers at the beginning stages of their careers, provides training for the next generation of American opera performers. Founded in 1983, the Company celebrated its 30th anniversary in the 2013 season. www.operacolorado.org.

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