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Media Contacts:

Camille Spaccavento, Director of External Affairs & Marketing | 303.778.0214 | cspaccavento@operacolorado.org

Rachel Perez, Marketing Manager | 303.698.2334 | rperez@operacolorado.org

Opera Colorado Announces Young Artists for 2014-2015 Season

Touring, Education & Community Engagement Programs Scheduled Throughout the State

Denver, CO — July 17, 2014 — Opera Colorado today announced the five singers chosen for its 2014-2015 Young Artist Residency, the hallmark of the company's Education & Community Engagement Programs. Soprano Leah Bobbey, mezzo-soprano Katherine Sanford, tenor Brett Sprague, baritone Andrew Paulson and bass-baritone Leo Rado were chosen from amongst hundreds of applicants from across the country to participate in the seven-month-long residency. As part of the 2014-2015 residency, the Young Artists will perform abridged operas on tour throughout the state, take on leading roles in a student matinee of *The Magic Flute* for 2,000 students and appear in supporting roles in Opera Colorado's mainstage productions.

Reflective of Opera Colorado's commitment to staging classic repertoire while also inspiring audiences and providing opportunities for emerging young talent, the 2014-2015 season will include a traditional staging of *Madama Butterfly* alongside a new production of *The Magic Flute*.

"As one of Opera Colorado's most rewarding and important initiatives, we are incredibly proud of our Young Artist Program. It is currently gaining national attention as one of the country's most effective and highly sought-after programs for aspiring artists," noted General Director Greg Carpenter. "The Young Artists bring an infectious amount of enthusiasm, talent and dedication to everything they do, adding real vitality to the community. We are thrilled to welcome Leah, Katherine, Brett, Andrew and Leo and look forward to seeing them in action."

Through touring productions, field trips and in-school programs, Opera Colorado's Education & Community Engagement Programs reach over 35,000 Coloradans of all ages each year, many of



whom have never before experienced opera. Touring productions for the 2014-2015 season include Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* and Gounod's *Romeo & Juliet*. Abridged to one hour in length and performed in English with piano accompaniment, these productions offer an accessible experience to a broad audience. The Young Artists will perform these touring productions throughout the fall and spring, with a Western Slope tour scheduled for spring of 2015. In addition, the Young Artists will perform the lead roles in the Student Matinee performance of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* for over 2,000 students at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House and perform supporting roles in Opera Colorado's 2015 mainstage productions. Ms. Bobbey will sing the roles of the First Lady and Pamina in the production of *The Magic Flute*; Ms. Sanford will sing Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and Second Lady and Papagena in *The Magic Flute*; Mr. Sprague will sing the Registrar in *Madama Butterfly*, 1st Man in Armour and Tamino in *The Magic Flute*; Mr. Paulson will sing The Imperial Commissioner in *Madama Butterfly*, 2nd Armored Guard and Papageno in *The Magic Flute*; and Mr. Rado will sing the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly* and 1st Priest in *The Magic Flute*.

"I was particularly selective this year in choosing who we auditioned. The caliber of singers was incredibly high. The five artists that we've chosen for our 2014-2015 Young Artists residency captivated us and we are thrilled to have them as a part of the program and the company," said Cherity Koepke, Director of Education & Community Engagement Programs. "The work that they do here will not only provide them opportunities to grow as artists, but they will be helping us to build a deep appreciation for opera and keep the art form thriving in our community."

About the 2015 Young Artists

Soprano **Leah Bobbey** is originally from Cincinnati, Ohio. She received her bachelor of music degree from the University of Michigan and completed her master's degree in Voice Performance at the University of Houston this past spring. Leah is a two-time recipient of the Encouragement Award from the Michigan district at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. She was recently seen as Lightfoot McClendon in Carlisle Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree* and the Foreign Woman in *The Consul*. Other past roles include Anaïde (*Il Cappello di Paglia di Firenze*), Adult Kim (*Showboat*), Lady in the Balcony (*Our Town*), Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), Despina (*Così fan tutte*), Bubikopf (*Der Kaiser von Atlantis*) and Barbarina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*). This summer, Leah is an apprentice artist with Central City Opera, performing the Trio in *Trouble in Tahiti*, Sister Margaretta in *The Sound of Music* and a Bridesmaid in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. In this season's Opera Colorado mainstage productions, she will sing in the Chorus in *Madama Butterfly* and sing the role of First Lady in *The Magic Flute*. She will also sing the role of Pamina in the Student Matinee production of *The Magic Flute*. In the company's touring productions, Leah will sing the roles of Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*



and Juliet in *Romeo & Juliet*. Leah is thrilled to join the Opera Colorado Young Artist Residency Program for the 2014-2015 season.

Mezzo-soprano **Katherine Sanford** is originally from Annapolis, MD. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Maryland. While pursuing her graduate degree, she was a recipient of the University of Michigan Stevenson Friends of Opera Scholarship. She completed her Master's degree at the University of Michigan, studying under Freda Herseth. Recently, Katherine performed the role of Barbarina in the Hub Opera Ensemble's performance of *Le nozze di Figaro* in Hagerstown, MD. She also sang the role of Lola in the company's concert performance of *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Other opera credits include the roles of Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Lucretia in *The Rape of Lucretia*, and Ottavia in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* at the University of Michigan, and Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* and Mercédès in *Carmen* with Bel Cantanti Opera in Washington, D.C. Katherine also performed as an apprentice artist with Des Moines Metro Opera in the summer of 2013, where she covered the Third Lady in *Elektra*. Katherine is looking forward to joining Opera Colorado as a Young Artist during their 2014-2015 season. She will perform on the main stage as Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and Second Lady in *The Magic Flute*. For the Student Matinee of *The Magic Flute*, Katherine will sing the role of Papagena. She will also perform the roles of Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* and Stephano/Gertrude in *Romeo & Juliette* in touring productions with the company.

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*, *Thais*, 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). As a member of the 2014 Opera Colorado Young Artists, Brett sang the roles of Almaviva (*The Barber of Seville*) and Romeo (*Romeo & Juliet*) in the company's touring productions and in the student matinee of *Carmen*, he sang the role of Don José. His mainstage roles in Opera Colorado's 2014 season included in Borsa *Rigoletto* and Rememdado in *Carmen*. His roles in the 2014-2015 season include a reprisal of Romeo and The Witch in the companies touring productions of *Romeo & Juliet* and *Hansel and Gretel*, respectively. He will also sing the roles of the Registrar (*Madama Butterfly*) and 1st Man in Armour (*The Magic Flute*). For the Student Matinee of *The Magic Flute*, Brett will sing the role of Tamino. Brett is extremely excited to be back with Opera Colorado for a second year as a Young Artist.

Baritone **Andrew Paulson** is a native of Great Falls, VA. He received his undergraduate degree from Westminster Choir College and in 2014 he received his Master's Degree in Voice Performance at Florida State University. Recent opera credits include First Prison Guard cover in Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* at Central City Opera, Giorgio Germont (*La Traviata*) with Opera on the Avalon, Clayton McAllister and Luther in Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree* at Sugar Creek Symphony and Song, Clayton McAllister and Mercutio (*Romeo et Juliette*) with Florida State Opera, and Don Alfonso



(*Così fan tutte*) and Peter (*Hansel und Gretel*) with Florida State Outreach Opera. He has gained recent recognition in competitions, placing 2nd in the Mobile Opera Competition and received Encouragement Awards from both the Schuyler Foundation for Career Bridges and Florida District of the Met Competition. At Opera Colorado Andrew very much looks forward to his upcoming performance opportunities. His roles in the mainstage season include The Imperial Commissioner in *Madame Butterfly*, 2nd Armored Guard in *The Magic Flute* and Papageno in the Student Matinee of *The Magic Flute*. In the company's touring productions, Andrew will sing the roles of Mercutio and the Prince in *Romeo & Juliet*, and the Father in *Hansel and Gretel*.

Bass-Baritone **Leo Rado** is originally from Chicago, Illinois. He holds a B.M. with scholastic distinction and M.M. in voice from The Juilliard School. At Juilliard, he has been seen on stage in many operatic roles such as Bottom in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Simone in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and Tobia Mill in Rossini's *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*. In November of 2011, he performed the role of Willi Graf as both singer and pianist in the U.S. premiere of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' *Kommilitonen!* at Juilliard, which brought him critical acclaim from *The New York Times*. In addition to working with his teacher Dr. Robert C. White throughout his undergraduate and graduate studies, Leo has had the opportunity to work with many of the world's leading conductors including Riccardo Muti, Charles Dutoit and Stephen Lord. This season, Leo is thrilled to join the roster at Opera Colorado as a Young Artist, where he will be heard in the roles of Capulet/Friar Lawrence in *Romeo & Juliet* and the Sandman in *Hansel and Gretel*; the company's touring productions. In the mainstage productions, Leo will sing the roles of the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly* and 1st Priest in *The Magic Flute*. Leo will also perform in the Student Matinee of *The Magic Flute* in May 2015.

About Opera Colorado's Education & Community Engagement Programs

Opera Colorado offers Education & Community Engagement 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 align 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 Teaching Artists travel across the state presenting abridged touring productions, recitals and popular in-school programs. For more information on the Education & Community Engagement Programs 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 Teaching Artists. Classrooms then keep the trunk for a week to continue the learning and exploration on their own. This season trunks will be offered for *Hansel and Gretel*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Magic Flute* and *Opera for Beginners*.



In-School Workshops

One of the most flexible programs offered, In-School Workshops can be presented by a Teaching Artist 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: the *Marketing* tract teaches students how to market an opera to their peers and *Page to Stage*, where students write and produce an opera from scratch.

Opera Colorado's 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 seasons are sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth T. Barrow. The 2014-2015 season sponsors include the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), Magnolia Hotels, The Edge Restaurant & Bar, The Four Seasons Hotel and Rassman Design.

About Opera Colorado A cornerstone of Denver's cultural community, Opera Colorado presents operas annually 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 & Community Engagement Programs. Opera Colorado Young Artists, a seven-month residency for singers at the beginning stages of their careers, provides training for the next generation of American opera performers. The 2014-2015 Season features performances of *Madama Butterfly* (November 15-23, 2014) and *The Magic Flute* (May 2-10, 2015)

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