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Media Contact: Rex Fuller, 303-778-0214
rfuller@operacolorado.org

Opera Colorado announces the creation of the Opera Colorado Young Artists Program

**New program to build on current success—designed to encourage artistic
development for artists and better serve the needs of the
company and the community**

DENVER, CO—Opera Colorado General Director Gregory Carpenter and Leigh Holman, Director of Education and Community Programs, announced the formation of the Opera Colorado Young Artists Program. Beginning in September 2009, the current program will grow from a five-month program to a nine-month, season-long program that will greatly enhance Opera Colorado's presence in the Denver community.

“Opera Colorado Education and Community Programs served over 20,000 students throughout the state in 2007 and served an additional 20,000 adults,” Holman said. “The current five-month program could no longer meet community demand for our performances with our limited schedule.”

Holman has overseen Opera Colorado's Education and Community Programs since 2006. During that time period, the program has grown by leaps and bounds. Opera Colorado artists now perform outreach programs for thousands of residents of Colorado communities. The programs include in-school performances of operas such as Rossini's *Cinderella* and Richard Wargo's *The Music Shop*. Opera Colorado artists also present in-school residency programs, in-school workshops and master classes as well as performing opera music programs for community groups. The artists also perform a special matinee each season of one of the company's main-stage operas; in 2009 the ensemble will perform Mozart's *Così fan tutte* for a student audience.

Because of these extensive performance opportunities, Carpenter and Holman both noted that the quality of singer auditioning for the ensemble has improved greatly in recent years. “Seeing the high quality young singers that we are attracting made me believe that we could serve the needs of young singers and the needs of Opera Colorado in a new way,” Carpenter said. “Young singers just starting out are hungry for the opportunity to perform on the main stage. By expanding this program, we can offer singers much-needed performing opportunities while increasing the excellence of our programs.” Thanks in part to a grant from the Boettcher Foundation, Opera Colorado will be able to expand this program to meet community demand.

Opera Colorado will audition singers in both New York and Denver in March. Six singers will be cast to perform with the Opera Colorado Young Artists Program, singing small roles in our productions of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *The Barber of Seville* and *Tosca*, alongside their community programs activities. The program will also engage a coach/accompanist.

“It’s part of my personal goal as a teacher and an opera stage director to give these young singers valuable performance opportunities and give them real-life onstage experience,” Holman said. “So many singers come out of academic programs with vocal technique and musical expertise but little actual onstage performing experience. Our program will now offer these young singers the valuable experience they need working with seasoned professionals from the opera field so that they can advance their singing careers.”

New York auditions for the Opera Colorado Young Artists Program are scheduled for March 13 and 14. Denver auditions are scheduled for March 27. Applications and complete program details will be available at the Opera Colorado website: www.operacolorado.org/education. Biographies for the current 2009 Ensemble Artists are also available at this site.

More information about Opera Colorado Education and Community Programs is also available at the website. Schools and community groups can reserve a performance by calling Opera Colorado’s Education Department at 303-778-0371.

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