



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Joyce Linehan 617-282-2510, joyce@ashmontmedia.com

OPERA BOSTON ANNOUNCES 2011-2012 SEASON

Note: This is an update to a release sent in March 2011. Sandra Piques Eddy will NOT appear in *Béatrice et Bénédict*; French-Canadian mezzo-soprano Julie Boulianne will debut the role of Béatrice.

**Program includes two rarities by beloved composers not staged locally in decades,
and a New England premiere.**

Panikkar, Boulianne, Lenormand, Harvey make company debuts.

Hector Berlioz
Béatrice et Bénédict
October 21, 23, 25, 2011

Sir Michael Tippett
The Midsummer Marriage (New England Premiere)
February 24, 26, 28, 2012

Vincenzo Bellini
I Capuleti e i Montecchi
April 27, 29, and May 1, 2012

(BOSTON – **Update August 1, 2011**) Opera Boston announces its first full season under the leadership of General Director Lesley Koenig and Artistic Director Gil Rose. The season features strong ensemble casts. Mezzo-soprano Julie Boulianne and tenor Sean Panikkar make company debuts in the title roles of *Béatrice et Bénédict*. Young American soprano Joëlle Harvey debuts as Jenifer in *The Midsummer Marriage* with Joyce Castle. Acclaimed French mezzo-soprano Marie Lenormand makes a company debut as Romeo, opposite emerging Korean soprano Hae Ji Chang, a New England Conservatory Artist Diploma candidate, as Giulietta.

All performances will be held at the Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College, 219 Tremont St., Boston. Each performance will feature a pre-performance talk, and Sunday performances feature a free post-performance talkback with artists. Opera Boston is pleased to partner with Figaro Systems to provide English translations on large flat-screen panels for all performances.

Subscriptions are now available and tickets for individual operas will go on sale on September 9 through the Emerson College Box Offices.

According to Opera Boston General Director Lesley Koenig, "This season is an excellent example of Opera Boston's unique mission to produce only original productions of new or historically vibrant repertory. We will present a rarely seen masterpiece of the 20th century, as well as two works by monumental artists that have not been staged in Boston for decades. And the casts are rich with

dynamic young artists, many in Opera Boston debuts. Comedy, mysticism, and tragedy take center stage in great love stories. I can't wait to put these operas before our audiences."

For more information, please see www.operaboston.org.

Béatrice et Bénédict

Music by Hector Berlioz

Libretto by the composer, after Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*

World premiere: Aug. 9, 1862

Performances:

Oct. 21 and 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 23 at 3 p.m.

Béatrice: Julie Boulianne, mezzo-soprano

Bénédict: Sean Panikkar, tenor

Héro: Heather Buck, soprano

Claudio: David McFerrin, baritone

Don Pedro: Robert Honeysucker, baritone

Ursule: Kelley O'Connor, mezzo-soprano

Somarone: Andrew Funk, bass

Conductor: Gil Rose

Stage Director: David Kneuss

Scenic Designer: Robert Perdziola

Sung in French, with spoken dialogue in English, all with English titles.

Opera Boston's production of Berlioz' ***Béatrice et Bénédict***—the first local staging since the early 1990s—stars Canadian mezzo-soprano **Julie Boulianne** in a local debut, and **Sean Panikkar**, a "dashing tenor with apt stage presence and a full-voiced, exceptional sound" (*Opera News*), as Shakespeare's battling couple who realize their love for each other through their friends' plotting.

Boulianne makes her company and her Boston debuts with this production. She is an acclaimed Cenerentola, having sung the role at Florida Grand Opera, Glimmerglass, and Victoria (BC). Other recent highlights include Fragoletto in Offenbach's *Les brigands* at the Opéra-Comique, Lazuli in *L'étoile* at New York City Opera, Elisa in *Tolomeo* at Glimmerglass Opera, and roles in *Roméo et Juliette* (Stéphano) and *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Diane) at the Metropolitan Opera.

Panikkar makes his Boston debut with the role of Bénédict. He was called a "leading man on the rise" in *The New York Times* for his Metropolitan Opera debut as Edmondo in *Manon Lescaut* in 2008. Recent highlights include Cassio in *Otello* with Dallas Opera in the inaugural production in the Winspear Opera House and Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis. The 2010-11 season included a return to the Metropolitan Opera as Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette*.

Soprano **Heather Buck** returns to Opera Boston as Héro; Buck has appeared with the company in *Powder Her Face* in 2003, *L'étoile* in 2006, and *Der Freischütz* in 2008. Recent highlights include an

engagement at Florentine Opera as Lulu Baines in *Elmer Gantry* (recorded for the Naxos label) and her reprisal of the role of Angel in Dusapin's *Faustus: The Last Night* at the Concertgebouw.

Baritone **David McFerrin** makes a company debut as Claudio. McFerrin's most recent Boston staged opera appearance was as Pallante in Boston Lyric Opera's 2011 production of *Agrippina*, and other recent highlights include the role of Paul for the world premiere of Daron Hagen's *Amelia* at Seattle Opera.

Baritone **Robert Honeysucker** returns to Opera Boston in the role of Don Pedro. Honeysucker has made many appearances with the company, most recently as Don Fernando in 2010's *Fidelio*. Past Opera Boston productions include *Luisa Miller*, 2004; *La vie parisienne*, 2004; *L'étoile*, 2006; and *The Pearl Fishers*, 2007.

Mezzo-soprano **Kelley O'Connor** returns to Opera Boston as Ursule; her most recent appearance was as Federico García Lorca in *Ainadamar* in 2007. In the 2011-12 season, upcoming engagements include the world premiere of a new oratorio by John Adams, *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*, commissioned and performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Gustavo Dudamel. She will also reprise her signature role as Federico García Lorca in a Peter Sellars staging of Golijov's *Ainadamar* at Teatro Real in Madrid.

Bass **Andrew Funk** returns to Opera Boston as Somarone. Previous appearances with the company include Kaspar in 2008's *Der Freischütz*, and as Rocco in 2010's *Fidelio*. Funk's recent season included Osmin in *Abduction from the Seraglio* for Arizona Opera, and an engagement to cover Heinrich in *Lohengrin* at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Béatrice et Bénédict reunites the production team from 2010's *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*; Metropolitan Opera Executive Stage Director David Kneuss directs and Robert Perdziola designs scenery and costumes. Kneuss is currently in his 22nd season as Executive Stage Director at the Metropolitan Opera, and has staged over 90 productions. He will direct *Tosca* to open the Washington National Opera's 2011-12 season. Robert Perdziola makes his Houston Grand Opera debut this spring with sets and costumes for *Ariadne auf Naxos*. In March 2011, his production of Richard Strauss's *Capriccio* will be staged at the Met, and his costumes for Bizet's *Carmen* will be seen at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

The Midsummer Marriage

Music and Libretto by Sir Michael Tippett

World premiere: Jan. 27, 1955

New England Premiere

Jenifer: Joëlle Harvey, soprano

Mark: Peter Tantsits, tenor

King Fisher: Andrew Schroeder, baritone

Madame Sosostri: Joyce Castle, mezzo-soprano

Jack: Matthew DiBattista, tenor

Bella: Deborah Selig, soprano

She-Ancient: Glorivy Arroyo, mezzo-soprano

He-Ancient: Bradford Gleim, baritone

Conductor: Gil Rose

Stage Director and Choreographer: Daniel Pelzig

Performances:

Feb. 24 and 28 at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 26 at 3 p.m.

Sung in English with titles.

Opera Boston presents the New England premiere of English composer Sir Michael Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*, and the first local professional staging of any Tippett opera since the Opera Company of Boston's *The Ice Break* in 1979. The opera has many sources: opera, literature, folklore, psychology. It is based on elements of *The Magic Flute*, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Eliot's *The Waste Land*, the legend of the Fisher King who guards the Holy Grail, and Jungian ideas of archetypes and the collective unconscious.

The Midsummer Marriage features four Ritual Dances, often excerpted and performed independently. **Daniel Pelzig** has extensive experience as a choreographer, and will serve a dual role for this production, as he did for 2009's *The Bartered Bride*. Pelzig's recent highlights as choreographer include *33 Variations* starring Jane Fonda on Broadway; *La Sonnambula*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Iphigenie en Tauride* at the Metropolitan Opera; and *The Dog in the Manger*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Romeo and Juliet* at the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, DC.

Soprano **Joëlle Harvey**—an in-demand singer who was seen in the 2010 Monaco world premiere of Machover's *Death and the Powers* conducted by Gil Rose—makes her Boston debut in the role of Jenifer, a young woman who calls off her marriage to fiancé in pursuit of truth. Harvey's upcoming engagements include the Chicago premiere of *Death and the Powers* and a role and company debut with Festival d'Aix-en-Provence as Galatea in *Acis and Galatea*.

Tenor **Peter Tantsits** returns to Opera Boston as Mark; Tantsits' most recent engagement with the company was as Xu Xian in the world premiere performances of Zhou Long's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Madame White Snake*.

Baritone **Andrew Schroeder** returns to Opera Boston for the first time since his appearance as Richard Nixon in *Nixon in China* in the company's inaugural season. Recent engagements include: Ford in Verdi's *Falstaff* at Opéra de Rennes, Guglielmo in *Così fan Tutte* at Palm Beach Opera, Grand Prêtre in Gluck's *Alceste* at the festival in Aix-en-Provence, and the title roles in *Eugene Onegin* at The Royal Opera House Covent Garden and *Don Giovanni* at the Sydney Opera House.

Mezzo-soprano **Joyce Castle**, Opera Boston's Widow Begbick in 2007's *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, returns to portray Madame Sosostris, the "famous clairvoyante" borrowed directly from Eliot's "The Waste Land." Castle's most recent Boston appearance was as Mrs. Grose in 2010's *The Turn of the Screw* for Boston Lyric Opera's Opera Annex.

Tenor **Matthew DiBattista** returns to Opera Boston as Jack; his previous engagements with the company include roles in *The Nose*, *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, and the North American premiere of *Angels in America*. In the past season, he was heard in St. Louis as Molqui in *The Death of Klinghoffer*,

in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* at Florida Grand Opera, and appeared with Boston Lyric Opera in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Young soprano **Deborah Selig** makes her Opera Boston debut as Bella. Selig's recent season included performances of Ricky Ian Gordon's *Orpheus and Euridice* for the Five Boroughs Music Festival in New York, a full recital and orchestral concert schedule, and a return to Chautauqua Opera to debut the role of Pamina in *The Magic Flute*. In recent seasons, she has been engaged as a Resident Artist with Pittsburgh Opera, and as an Apprentice Artist with Santa Fe Opera.

As the He-Ancient, **Bradford Gleim** makes his Opera Boston debut in a role, having previously been engaged for the mens' chorus in *Fidelio*. **Glorivy Arroyo**, appearing as the She-Ancient, has appeared in numerous Opera Boston, Opera Boston Underground, and Education and Outreach Program performances in her many seasons with the company.

I Capuleti e i Montecchi

Music by Vincenzo Bellini

Libretto by Felice Romani, reworking his own libretto based on the 16th-century novella *Giulietta e Romeo* by Matteo Bandello.

World premiere: March 11, 1830

Romeo: Marie Lenormand, mezzo-soprano

Giulietta: Hae Ji Chang, soprano

Tebaldo: Sergey Romanovsky, tenor

Lorenzo: Grigory Soloviov, bass

Capellio: Ben Wager, bass

Conductor: Gil Rose

Stage Director: Sarah Meyers

Performances:

April 27 and May 1 at 7:30 p.m.

April 29 at 3:00 p.m.

Sung in Italian with English titles.

Not performed in Boston since 1975 by the Opera Company of Boston, Bellini's interpretation of the "Romeo and Juliet" story is drawn from Italian source material rather than from Shakespeare. In the opera, the two parties represent rival political factions, rather than feuding families.

In the trouser role of Romeo, French mezzo-soprano **Marie Lenormand** makes her Opera Boston debut. Lenormand's most recent appearance in Boston was as Arsamene in Handel's *Serse* with Boston Baroque in 2008. Recent highlights include the page Urbain in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* at the Bard SummerScape Festival in 2009 and the title role in Ambroise Thomas' *Mignon* at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, a role for which she was named the "Musical Revelation of the Season" by the Syndicate of the French National Press. She is the first solo vocalist in six years to win the prize. Lenormand appears with the New York Philharmonic in April 2011 as The Fox in Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

Korean soprano **Hae Ji Chang**, making her Boston professional debut as Giulietta, is an Artist Diploma student at New England Conservatory, and a 2011 New England Regional Finalist for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. She earned her Bachelor of Music degree and Master of Music degree from Seoul National University, and a Master's degree at Manhattan School of Music, where she performed the roles of Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*, Lydie in *Pénélope*, and the title role in scenes from *Maria Stuarda*. She recently performed Pamina in *The Magic Flute* at New England Conservatory. Chang will cover Giannetta from *L'elisir d'Amore* at New York City Opera in March 2011 and Mélisande from *Pelléas et Mélisande* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in June 2011.

Two emerging young Russian singers take central roles in the cast. Tenor **Sergey Romanovsky** makes his United States stage debut as Tebaldo. He previously performed the role to acclaim at the opening night of the 2008-09 season of the Moscow State Philharmonic Society opposite Patrizia Ciofi and Anna Bonitatibus. He also recently made his debut at La Scala in Milan in *Il viaggio a Reims*, sang Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* at the Norske Opera in Oslo, and sang Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* in Lille and Amiens,

Bass **Grigory Soloviov** makes his Boston debut in the role of Lorenzo. Soloviov is a 2007 graduate of the Moscow State Conservatory and a 2009 graduate of Washington National Opera's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program. This summer, Soloviov makes his debut at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence as Polyphemus in a production of Handel's *Acis et Galatea* that will also travel to Teatro La Fenice.

Bass **Ben Wager** is a young American artist with a presence on American and European stages. He joined the ensemble of the Deutsche Oper Berlin in 2009, and in the 2010-11 season, he sang Panthus in *Les Troyens*, Doctor Grenvil in *La traviata*, Angelotti in *Tosca*, and Escamillo in *Carmen*, among other roles, for that house. Wager's 2011-12 season includes two appearances at Minnesota Opera, as General Audebert in the world premiere of *Silent Night*, and Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Sarah Meyers has been on the directing staff at the Metropolitan Opera for four years. In 2009-2010, she stage directed the revival of the Zeffirelli production of *La Traviata*, and served as assistant director for the new productions of *Les Contes D'Hoffmann* and *The Nose*. Meyers assisted Francesca Zambello for the 2003 world premiere staging of Portman's *The Little Prince*, and directed the production for New York City Opera in 2005, the Lithuania National Opera in 2007, and San Francisco Opera in 2008. Meyers began her operatic career at Harvard, staging and choreographing seven operas, including *The Marriage of Figaro*, Antonio Cesti's *Oronota*, and *The Bartered Bride*, as an undergraduate. She also directed the New England premiere of Mark Adamo's *Little Women* with the Boston Opera Project in 2005.

About Opera Boston

Opera Boston presents rarely-staged repertory in all-new productions. Founded in 1980, the company has presented more than 70 operas, including 34 regional and two world premieres. Opera Boston's first commissioned opera, *Madame White Snake*, earned the 2011 Pulitzer Prize in Music for composer Zhou Long. In addition to its critically acclaimed, award-winning mainstage productions, Opera Boston offers a range of programs, including a chamber opera festival, a popular cabaret series and an educational program in Boston-area schools. For more information about Opera Boston, visit www.operaboston.org.

###