



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AVA Alumna and Metropolitan Opera soprano Angela Meade to sing the role of *Norma* in OPERATIC MASTERPIECES Concert

**Concert will feature highlights from Acts I and II of Bellini's *Norma*,
plus Act IV of Verdi's *Il trovatore***

Philadelphia: The Academy of Vocal Arts begins 2010 with a concert in the Kimmel Center's Perelman Theater, highlighting the prodigious vocal talents of its resident artists, as well as a recent alumna, soprano **Angela Meade**, who is well on her way to operatic stardom. Ms. Meade will sing Acts I and II from Bellini's bel canto masterpiece, *Norma* – a role she will also sing this summer at the Caramoor Festival, where she created a sensation last July as the title character in Rossini's fiendishly difficult *Semiramide*.

Russian tenor **Viktor Antipenko**, recently arrived from St. Petersburg, will sing the role of Pollione, the title character's Roman lover. Mr. Antipenko joined the AVA roster in December, 2009. The role of Adalgisa will be sung by mezzo-soprano **Olivia Vote**, who impressed audiences last season as Jane Seymour in *Anna Bolena*, in which she sang alongside Ms. Meade, who was featured as the doomed Anne Boleyn. The two will join their voices again in the famous *Norma/Adalgisa* duet. Bass **Scott Conner** will sing the role of Norma's father, Oroveso.

Norma will be followed by Act IV of Verdi's *Il trovatore*. Ranked seventeenth in Opera America's list of most frequently performed operas in North America, *Il trovatore* requires strong voices, stamina, and a secure technique. By performing one act of the opera, AVA's resident artists have the opportunity to sing their roles with orchestra, which provides invaluable preparation for future performances of the complete opera.

The plot of *Il trovatore* is notoriously convoluted, but the character who sets it all in motion is the gypsy, Azucena. This role will be sung by mezzo-soprano **Margaret Mezzacappa**, winner of the 2009 Giargiari Bel Canto Competition, and seen recently as Mistress Quickly in AVA's fall production of another Verdi opera, *Falstaff*. The other characters in *Il trovatore* will be shared by several of AVA's talented artists. AVA's music director, Christofer Macatsoris will conduct the AVA Opera Orchestra.

THE ARTISTS:

ANGELA MEADE, *soprano*

Less than two years after her professional debut, American soprano Angela Meade has quickly become recognized as one of the outstanding vocalists of her generation. The New Yorker hailed her as "a lavishly gifted young soprano who sings across a very wide range with uncommon beauty and strength of tone...this fast rising soprano will undoubtedly have many triumphs". Angela Meade excels in the most demanding heroines of the nineteenth century bel canto repertoire as well as in the operas of Verdi and Mozart.

Angela Meade made her professional operatic debut in 2008 at the **Metropolitan Opera** as Elvira in *Ernani*. Ronald Blum of the Associated Press wrote of the debut, "she showed a vibrant voice with nice color and an assured technique and sang like an old pro from start to finish." She had previously sung on the Met stage as one of the winners of the 2007 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, a process that is documented in the film *The Audition*. The New York Times noted Angela Meade as "an impressive soprano who powered out a 'Casta diva' from Bellini's *Norma* that left everyone breathless."

Angela Meade has won an astounding number of vocal competitions, fifty-three in all, including many of the opera world's most important prizes. In addition to being a winner at the 2007 Met National Council Auditions, she was the first singer ever to take first prize in both the opera and operetta categories of Vienna's prestigious Belvedere Competition. Angela Meade also garnered the largest cash prize in the world of opera, the \$50,000.00 first prize of the Jose Iturbi Competition.

Angela Meade's 2009/10 season includes a return to the **Metropolitan Opera** as Mozart's Countess in Jonathan Miller's production of *Le nozze di Figaro* under the baton of Fabio Luisi. She also covers the title role in Rossini's *Armida*. Ms. Meade will also cover Konstanze in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem*

Serail with the **San Francisco Opera**, and returns to **The Caramoor Festival** to perform the iconic title role in Bellini's *Norma*, conducted by Will Crutchfield.

CHRISTOFER MACATSORIS, *conductor*

Maestro Macatsoris began his conducting career in Italy at the Conservatory in Milan. He went on to study conducting privately with such famed maestri as Fausto Cleva, Max Rudolf, and Tullio Serafin, and studied composition with Vincent Persichetti. Among his many performance credits are appearances with **Philadelphia Lyric Opera Company, Pennsylvania Opera Company, San Francisco Opera Center**, and numerous regional opera companies. In 1970, Max Rudolf invited him to The Curtis Institute of Music, where he taught and conducted for seven years. Mr. Macatsoris was the music director of the weekly NBC-TV program, *Opera Theatre*, and was music director and conductor for two seasons with the **Opera at Ambler Festival**. As a pianist, he toured with **Metropolitan Opera** singers in recital programs.

As music director of AVA since 1977, he has led acclaimed performances of *Il tritico, Madama Butterfly, Don Giovanni, Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and *Albert Herring*, which was broadcast on PBS. In addition, many operas received their Delaware Valley premieres at AVA under his baton, including *Idomeneo, La finta giardiniera, Deidamia, Capriccio, Un giorno di Regno*, and Wargo's *A Chekhov Trilogy*. Mr. Macatsoris has appeared at **The International Corfu Festival**, Greece, in 1981 and 1982, leading performances of *The Rape of Lucretia, La sonnambula, Ariadne auf Naxos*, and *Così fan tutte*. He has conducted in many regional American houses and has been on the conducting staff of **San Francisco Opera Company**. In great demand as a lecturer and for master classes, he has conducted them at major universities, including Johns Hopkins, Tulane, Loyola of New Orleans and SUNY-Buffalo. He frequently serves as a panel judge for the **National Council Auditions of the Metropolitan Opera**, and earns high praise for his interpretive abilities and total commitment to excellent opera theater. This past season Maestro Macatsoris celebrated thirty years as AVA's Music Director.

FACT SHEET

OPERATIC MASTERPIECES IN CONCERT

HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACTS I AND II OF NORMA, BY VINCENZO BELLINI AND ACT IV OF IL TROVATORE, BY GIUSEPPE VERDI

Norma, by Vincenzo Bellini, libretto by Felice Romani after *Norma, ossia L'infanticidio* (*Norma, or The Infanticide*) by Alexandre Soumet.

First performance: December 26, 1831 at Teatro a la Scala, Milan, Italy

Il trovatore by Giuseppe Verdi, libretto by Leone Emanuele Bardare and Salvatore Cammarano, based on the play *El Trovador* by Antonio García Gutiérrez.

First performance: January 19, 1853 at Teatro Apollo, Rome, Italy

Conductor: Christofer Macatsoris
The AVA Opera Orchestra

CAST

NORMA

Norma, *daughter of Oroveso, High-priestess of the Celts* ... Angela Meade, soprano

Adalgisa, *priestess in the grove of the Irmisul statue* ... Olivia Vote, mezzo-soprano, Cynthia Cook, mezzo-soprano

Pollione, *Roman proconsul in Gaul* ... Viktor Antipenko, tenor; Noah Van Niel, tenor

Oroveso, *chief of the Druids* ... Scott Conner, bass; Ryan Kuster, bass-baritone; Nicholas Masters, bass

Clotilde, *Norma's confidante* ... Corinne Winters, soprano

Flavio, *Pollione's companion* ... Sean Arnold, tenor

IL TROVATORE

Azucena, *a gypsy, supposedly Manrico's mother* ... Margaret Mezzacappa, mezzo-soprano

Manrico, *a troubadour and officer in the army of the Prince of Urgel* ... Zach Borichevsky, tenor

Leonora, *noble lady, in love with Manrico and courted by Di Luna* ... Jan Cornelius, soprano; Michelle Johnson, soprano; Na Li Youm, soprano

Count di Luna, *a nobleman in the service of the Prince of Aragon*... Alex Lawrence, baritone and Christopher Bolduc, baritone

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

January 29 and 30, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.

The Perelman Theater at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts

Broad and Spruce Sts, Philadelphia, PA

5

February 2, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.
Centennial Hall, The Haverford School
450 Lancaster Avenue, Haverford, PA

All theatres are wheelchair accessible

Tickets are \$48 adults / \$43 seniors / \$28 students
Add \$35 per person for PREMIUM SEATING
Special group rates available

For more info, contact 215-735-1685 or visit www.avaopera.org

THE ACADEMY OF VOCAL ARTS

The mission of The Academy of Vocal Arts, founded in 1934 by Helen Corning Warden, is to provide tuition-free vocal and opera training of the highest quality, and financial support during training, to exceptionally talented and committed young singers who have the potential for international stature, and to present them in professional performances that are accessible to a wide community.

Gifted singers come from throughout the world to seek the exceptional guidance and training that The Academy of Vocal Arts offers. AVA's four-year program is unique, not only because it is a fully tuition-free institution that focuses solely on operatic training, but also because it has established a niche as an organization that produces opera. Admission is determined by competitive annual auditions, with an average of 8 to 10 singers admitted each year. The total roster of resident artists is purposely kept low and averages 25-30 in total. Those who are accepted receive training equivalent to more than \$70,000 per year. A faculty of individuals who are among the finest in their fields provides intensive training in voice, acting, stage combat, repertoire, languages, and other related subjects necessary for an operatic career.

Over the past seven decades, outstanding singers of international stature have attended AVA, including David Adams, Lando Bartolini, Gwendolyn Bradley, Thomas Carson, Elizabeth Carter, Richard Clark, Dominic Cossa, John Darrenkamp, Joyce DiDonato, Harry Dworchak, Ryan Edwards, Wilhelmina Fernandez, Allan Glassman, Vernon Hartman, Nancy Fabiola Herrera, Luis Ledesma, James Morris, Stuart Neill, John Packard, James Pease, David Poleri, Julien Robbins, Valerian Ruminski, Jane Shaulis, Hugh Smith, Ruth Ann Swenson, Indra Thomas, Richard Troxell, Victoria Vergara, Stephen West, Beverly Wolff, and currently making their mark in the opera world, recent graduates Burak Bilgili, Stephen Costello, Ellie Dehn, Michael Fabiano, Jesus Garcia, Othalie Graham, Eglise Gutierrez, Tracie Luck, Angela Meade, Latonia Moore, Ailyn Pérez, Dongwon Shin, and James Valenti.

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