

Thursday, July 2, 2015

Opera Saratoga Announces 2015 Summer Festival Season

Company: Opera Saratoga
Location: Saratoga Springs, NY

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Opera Saratoga announces its 2015 Summer Festival season, which will run from July 2 – July 26, 2015 at multiple venues throughout Saratoga Springs, New York.

The 2014/2015 season is the first programmatic year under the artistic and general direction of Lawrence Edelson and marks an expansion for the company in several ways: the first World Premiere presented by the company in nearly 30 years, three operas instead of two, and a longer festival season including performances at multiple venues in the region. In addition, an extensive series of concerts and community events will take place throughout the month of June and July, including recitals by Jennifer Johnson Cano and Caroline Worra, among other events.

In tandem with the expansion of the season, the Young Artist Program – the second oldest program of its kind in the country – is being expanded to provide greater professional development opportunities for emerging professionals. The program will consist of three tiers for singers, as well as opportunities for pianists, conductors and directors, under the direction of Laurie Rogers.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to lead Opera Saratoga into its next chapter, and thrilled that my first season will provide opportunities for audiences to see three operas that show the breadth and depth of what is happening in opera today, with some of the foremost artists of our generation," said Lawrence Edelson. "The season includes three operas that couldn't be more different. *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella) is a bubbling comedy by Rossini that features virtuoso singing to impress the most passionate opera lovers, and is also an ideal introduction to opera for family audiences. Our presentation of *Dido and Aeneas* will be our first site-specific production, presented in partnership with the National Museum of Dance. Operas that prominently feature dance will be a part of our programming every season moving forward, and this particular production not only builds upon the region's connection to dance, but also takes advantage of the stunning natural beauty of Spa State Park, where we are located. The world-premiere of *The Long Walk* marks a reaffirmed commitment to the inclusion of contemporary American opera as a regular part of our programming. The Company has produced 33 works by American composers in its history, 5 of which have been world premieres, but *The Long Walk*, by two of the most exciting writers in American opera today – composer Jeremy Howard Beck, and librettist Stephanie Fleischmann – will actually be the first world-premiere for the company in 27 years!

This year, we are initiating new partnerships with a wide variety of cultural organizations throughout the region, enabling us to offer exciting new performance programs that compliment the season's operas, which provide even more ways for audiences to connect with the company and our wonderful artists. By expanding the festival, and moving it into July, we are providing more opportunities not only for local audiences to enjoy our programs, but opportunities for audiences from around the country to enjoy the cultural riches that Saratoga Springs has to offer. With a train station in the heart of the city, and Albany airport less than 30 minutes away, we look forward to welcoming opera lovers from around the country to enjoy not only Opera Saratoga, but all of the restaurants, shops, cultural attractions, historic sites, and natural beauty that Saratoga Springs has to offer."

LA CENERENTOLA (Cinderella)

Music by Gioachino Rossini, Libretto by Jacopo Ferretti, Based on the Fairy Tale by Charles Perrault

Directed by Lawrence Edelson, Conducted by Gary Thor Wedow

Featuring Sandra Piques Eddy, Andrew Owens, John Brancy, David Kravitz, and Ryan Kuster

Performances: Thursday, July 2, 2015 at 7:30pm; Saturday, July 11, Tuesday, July 14, and Saturday, July 18, 2015 at 2pm; Sunday, July 26, 2015 at 7:30pm

Opera Saratoga opens the 2015 Summer Season with Rossini's beloved version of Cinderella. Based on Perrault's timeless fairytale, *La Cenerentola* features plenty of magical enchantment; the ridiculous, over-the-top situations and toe-tapping melodies that you expect from the master of comic Italian opera; and heartfelt emotion to bring together this story of forgiveness and true love. The ultimate rags to riches tale; it's a Cinderella story...but not quite as you may know it! Opera Saratoga is proud to present the company debuts of five extraordinary singers in *La Cenerentola*: Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Sandra Piques Eddy sings the virtuoso title role along side tenor Andrew Owens as Prince Ramiro, baritone John Brancy as his valet Dandini, David Kravitz as her wicked step-father Don Magnifico, and Ryan Kuster as the mysterious philosopher Alidoro. Gary Thor Wedow also makes his company debut conducting this new production by Artistic and General Director Lawrence Edelson.

DIDO AND AENEAS

Music by Henry Purcell, Libretto by Nahum Tate

Directed and Choreographed by Karole Armitage, Conducted by Nicole Paiement

Featuring Jennifer Johnson Cano and ArmitageGone! Dance Company

Presented in Partnership with the National Museum of Dance

All tickets include admission to the wonderful exhibits at The National Museum of Dance, beginning at 7pm. Seating is general admission, with seating beginning at 7:45pm for the performance beginning at 8:15pm.

Performances: Monday, July 6, 2015; Sunday, July 12, 2015; Sunday, July 19, 2015; Tuesday, July 21, 2015

Opera Saratoga is thrilled to present the first Baroque opera in the company's history in a truly unique production under the stars! One of the earliest English operas, Dido and Aeneas is one of Purcell's foremost theatrical works. This heartbreaking opera recounts the love of Dido, Queen of Carthage, for the Trojan hero, Aeneas, and her despair when he abandons her. The combination of exquisite vocal music and extensive use of dance has inspired many interpretations of the great score. Opera Saratoga has invited world-renown choreographer and director Karole Armitage to create a very special site-specific production for Saratoga Springs that embraces the natural beauty and history of The National Museum of Dance located in Spa State Park. The production will feature Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano in her company debut Jennifer Johnson Cano as Dido, along with the exquisite dancers of the ArmitageGone! Dance Company in what is sure to be one of the most talked about productions of the summer for dance and music lovers alike.

WORLD PREMIERE

THE LONG WALK

Composed by Jeremy Howard Beck, Libretto by Stephanie Fleischmann

Based on The Long Walk, A Story of War and the Life that Follows, by Brian Castner

Directed by David Schweizer, Conducted by Steven Osgood

Featuring Daniel Belcher, Heather Johnson, Caroline Worra, David Blalock, Javier Abreu, Justin Hopkins, and Donita Volkwijn

Commissioned by American Lyric Theater

Performances: Friday, July 10, 2015 at 7:30pm; Monday, July 13 and Friday, July 17, 2015 at 2pm; and Saturday, July 25, 2015 at 7:30pm

The Long Walk is based on Brian Castner's critically acclaimed book of the same name. The opera is a deeply personal exploration of a soldier's return from Iraq where he served as an officer in an Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit and his battle with what he calls "the Crazy" as he tries to reintegrate into his family life upon returning from the war. Opera Saratoga is honored to present the world premiere of The Long Walk in partnership with American Lyric Theater. Internationally renowned theater and opera director David Schweizer makes his Opera Saratoga debut, with celebrated American conductor Steven Osgood on the podium. Grammy Award winning baritone Daniel Belcher returns to Opera Saratoga to create the role of Brian, alongside mezzo-soprano Heather Johnson, who makes her company debut as his wife Jessie. The cast also includes the company debuts of sopranos Caroline Worra and Donita Volkwijn, tenors David Blalock and Javier Abreu, and bass baritone Justin Hopkins.

Subscriptions will go on sale October 31, 2014, including special visitor subscription packages for out of town guests. Single tickets will be available beginning February 1, 2015. Subscription and single ticket information is available at www.operasaratoga.org.

Special packages are available for out-of-town visitors that will provide an opportunity to see multiple operas over a few days while enjoying the many other things that the city has to offer, including the summer residency of New York City Ballet at Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC), and the opening of the Track Season, which coincides with the final weekend of the festival.

ABOUT OPERA SARATOGA

Opera Saratoga, formerly known as Lake George Opera, began with a production of Die Fledermaus at the Diamond Point Theatre on July 5, 1962, playing to an audience of 230. The Company now calls Saratoga Springs home and performs for more than 25,000 people annually. To date, the Company has performed ninety different fully-staged works by fifty-two different composers, including thirty-three works by American composers and five world-premiere productions. Throughout its history, the Company's continued success has been shaped by visionary leaders, talented artists, and critically acclaimed productions.

For more information, visit www.operasaratoga.org.

ABOUT LAWRENCE EDELSON, ARTISTIC AND GENERAL DIRECTOR

Lawrence Edelson (Artistic and General Director, Saratoga Opera) is highly respected not only as a critically acclaimed stage director, but also as a visionary company leader who has created programs in the areas of artist mentorship and new works development that have served as models of innovation for opera companies around the country. In January 2014, Lawrence was appointed Artistic and General Director of Opera Saratoga, effective July 1, 2014. Lawrence is responsible for the oversight of both the artistic and administrative management of Opera Saratoga's programs. As a stage director, Lawrence's critically acclaimed productions include Philip Glass' Hydrogen Jukebox (Fort Worth Opera), the American Premiere of Telemann's Orpheus (Wolf Trap Opera), the World Premiere of Jeff Myers' Buried Alive (Fargo Moorhead Opera), the New York premiere of Fauré's Pénélope (Manhattan School of Music), La Traviata (Minnesota Opera), Carmen (Toledo Opera), Il Barbiere di Siviglia (Hawaii Opera Theater), H.M.S. Pinafore (Opera Saratoga), Ariadne auf Naxos, Little Women, Eugene Onegin, Werther, and A Midsummer Night's Dream (IVAI Tel Aviv) and the world premiere of The ToyMaker Off-Broadway. Lawrence is perhaps best known in the opera field as the founder of American Lyric Theater (ALT), where he continues to serve as Producing Artistic Director concurrent with his role at Opera Saratoga. He has been responsible for assembling ALT's Board of Directors, its world-renowned artistic staff, and implementing strategic operating and fundraising plans to ensure the long-term viability of the organization. As Producing Artistic Director, he coordinates the diverse artistic programs of ALT, including The Composer Librettist Development Program, commissioning of new works, co-production relationships, and recordings. A tireless advocate for emerging artists and the diversification of audiences for opera, Edelson also serves on the Strategy Committee for OPERA America, and continues to forge collaborations with opera companies across the country.

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<http://www.operasaratoga.org/tickets/>

Schedule
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