

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New York City Opera
Presents
Opera's Greatest Moments
at Wollman Rink in Central Park
August 2, 2022

New York City Opera will present **Opera's Greatest Moments** on Tuesday, August 2, 2022 at 7pm at Wollman Rink in Central Park. Enjoy a selection of opera favorites performed by extraordinary artists from the New York City Opera, including **Michael Capasso**, narrator; **Kathryn Olander**, piano; **Marsha Thompson**, soprano; **Elissa Pfaender**, mezzo-soprano; **WooYoung Yoon**, tenor; and **Gustavo Feuline**, baritone. Tickets are \$15. This is a non-skating event. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit wollmanrinknyc.com/event/new-york-city-opera.

The program for the evening includes:

- **Libiamo ne' lieti calici from *La traviata* by Verdi** – with WooYoung Yoon as Alfredo, Marsha Thompson as Violetta, Elissa Pfaender as Flora, and Gustavo Feulien as Barone
- **Habanera from *Carmen* by Bizet** – with Elissa Pfaender as Carmen
- **La donna è mobile from *Rigoletto* by Verdi** – with WooYoung Yoon as The Duke of Mantua
- **Toreador from *Carmen* by Bizet** – with Gustavo Feulien as Escamillo
- **Barcarolle: Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour from *Les contes d'Hoffmann* by Offenbach** – with Elissa Pfaender as Nicklausse and Marsha Thompson as Giulietta
- **È la solita storia del pastore from *L'arlesiana* by Cilea** – with WooYoung Yoon as Federico
- **Seguidilla from *Carmen* by Bizet** – with Elissa Pfaender as Carmen
- **O Mimì tu più non torni from *La bohème* by Puccini** – with WooYoung Yoon as Rodolfo and Gustavo Feulien as Marcello
- **Pace, pace mio dio! from *La forza del destino* by Verdi** – with Marsha Thompson as Leonora
- **Là ci darem la mano from *Don Giovanni* by Mozart** – with Elissa Pfaender as Zerlina and Gustavo Feulien as Don Giovanni
- **Bella figlia dell'amore from *Rigoletto* by Verdi** – with Marsha Thompson as Gilda, Gustavo Feulien as Rigoletto, WooYoung Yoon as The Duke of Mantua, and Elissa Pfaender as Maddalena

About the Artists

Michael Capasso is the director of the New York City Opera. He has produced, directed, and toured opera and musical theater productions in the U.S. and abroad for over 30 years. In June of 2014, he led the successful effort to bring the New York City Opera out of bankruptcy. The revitalized New York City Opera returned to the stage in January 2016 with a celebratory production of *Tosca*. In 1981, he, along with Diane Martindale, founded New York's Dicapo Opera Theatre. Over the 30 years of his leadership, Dicapo Opera Theater presented a diverse programming to the New York public. In addition to his work with the Dicapo Opera Theatre, Mr. Capasso has directed operas at l'Opéra de Montréal; Mallorca Opera; Toledo Opera; Connecticut Opera; New Jersey State Opera; Opera Carolina; and Orlando Opera among others. Mr. Capasso founded the National Lyric Opera in 1991, a touring company that has brought fully staged operas to communities in the American Northeast.

Kathryn Olander was recently hailed by Opera News for her "impressive playing," and she is a frequent assistant conductor/pianist with New York City Opera as well as many regional opera houses. In addition to coaching privately she has held coaching positions with the Juilliard School of Music, Manhattan School of Music, and Chautauqua Institute. An avid recitalist, highlights include performances at Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall and Zankel Hall, The Appel Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bryant Park's concert series, the Hungarian Consulate of New York and the Polish Consulate of New York, and Bechstein Hall. Ms. Olander is a regular pianist with Reaching for the Arts and Opportunity Music Project, specializing in bringing music to underserved communities and Creative Stage. Ms. Olander began teaching piano at Northeastern University while earning her BM in piano performance at New England Conservatory and has since maintained a studio of private piano students.

Gustavo Feulien has been hailed by the New York Times as "rich voiced" and by Opera News for his "interesting and convincing portrayal of Scarpia, most impressive in Te Deum" in *Tosca*. An Argentinean-American baritone, he continues his career with great success. Most recently, Gustavo performed as Scarpia in *Tosca* with Maryland Symphony Orchestra and this season he will return to the role with Gulfshore Symphony.

For his New York City Opera debut as Silvio in *Pagliacci*, critics hailed his performance as "...a most imposing Silvio with sharp, powerful gestures in both his acting and singing; his duet...was both ardent and tender" and "...the love scene with Silvio, rakishly sung by Gustavo Feulien, drew bravos from many in the audience." This season, Gustavo will sing Silvio with Boheme Opera in New Jersey. Gustavo made his role debuts as Marcello in *La bohème* with Wichita Grand Opera, as Scarpia in *Tosca* with Loft Opera, and as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with Gulfshore Opera. Additionally, Mr. Feulien had a successful European debut as Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore* and as Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Theater Bremen in Germany.

Elissa Pfaender has been praised as an artist who "exudes power in every detail of her body language and voice." A mezzo-soprano, she is a dynamic artist whose experience allows her to successfully perform a variety of repertoire. This upcoming summer, Ms. Pfaender will be a

Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, debuting the role of Dr. Landau in the world premiere of Tobias Picker's *Awakenings*, as well as covering Third Lady (*The Magic Flute*). Ms. Pfaender has also performed with New York City Opera, Sarasota Opera, Savannah Voice Festival, Manchester Music Festival, the National Endowment for the Arts YoungArts Foundation and more. During her time as an Apprentice Artist with Sarasota Opera for their 60th Anniversary Season, Ms. Pfaender was awarded the prestigious "Anne J. O'Donnell Outstanding Apprentice Artist Award" by the Sarasota Opera Guild for her talent, skills and musicianship. Equally at home with concert work, she has performed as a soloist for Bach's *Magnificat* and Schubert's *Mass in G* with orchestra. She has received awards and honors from the NEA YoungArts Foundation, the National Opera Association, the Houston Saengerbund, Riverside Opera Company, Tuesday Musical Association, Chicago Classical NATS, and New Jersey Classical NATS.

Marsha Thompson began her musical studies as a violinist. She has sung the roles of Tosca, Aida, Abigaille, Sieglinde, Violetta, and several other leading ladies. The *New York Times* describes her voice in the role of Violetta as "...a warm agile soprano with a secure technique." The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* said, "Abigaille is a difficult role to cast, a big sing with a wide dramatic and vocal range; soprano Marsha Thompson was up to all the challenges the score threw at her. Her high pianissimo singing was exquisite." Ms. Thompson will make her role debut as Minnie in *La fanciulla del West* in the fall of 2022. She has performed with New York City Opera, Union Avenue Opera, New York Grand Opera, and Opera Carolina as well as having won numerous prizes in national competitions with the Metropolitan Opera National Council, The Gerda Lissner Foundation, Orlando Opera Competition, Ft. Worth Opera Competition, and many others.

Korean tenor **WooYoung Yoon** recently made his role debut in Berlioz's *Le Damnation de Faust* with the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica with Maestro John Nelson. Recently he also debuted as Tonio (*The Daughter of the Regiment*) in the Merola Grand Finale on the stage of San Francisco Opera. In the spring of 2019, he returned to San Francisco Opera for a recital in the Schwabacher Recital Series. His debut at Stern Auditorium in Carnegie Hall performing Mozart's *Regina Coeli* with MidAmerica Productions will be made in the summer of 2022. This season WooYoung performs Almaviva in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* with Knoxville Opera, Beethoven's *9th Symphony* with the Lubbock Symphony, and returns to the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica for *Christus am Ölberge* with Maestro John Nelson. Mr. Yoon has distinguished himself in a variety of major competitions, most recently as the 2019 Orpheus Competition Grand Prize winner.

About New York City Opera

Since its founding in 1943 by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia as "The People's Opera," New York City Opera (NYCO) has been a critical part of the city's cultural life. During its history, New York City Opera launched the careers of dozens of major artists and presented engaging productions of both mainstream and unusual operas alongside commissions and regional premieres. The result was a uniquely American opera company of international stature.

For more than seven decades, New York City Opera has maintained a distinct identity, adhering to its unique mission: affordable ticket prices, a devotion to American works, English-language performances, the promotion of up-and-coming American singers, and seasons of accessible, vibrant and compelling productions intended to introduce new audiences to the art form. Stars who launched their careers at New York City Opera include Plácido Domingo, Catherine Malfitano, Sherrill Milnes, Samuel Ramey, Beverly Sills, Tatiana Troyanos, Carol Vaness, and Shirley Verrett, among dozens of other great artists. New York City Opera has a long history of inclusion and diversity. It was the first major opera company to feature African American singers in leading roles (Todd Duncan as Tonio in *Pagliacci*, 1945; Camilla Williams in the title role in *Madama Butterfly*, 1946); the first to produce a new work by an African-American composer (William Grant Still, *Troubled Island*, 1949); and the first to have an African-American conductor lead its orchestra (Everett Lee, 1955).

A revitalized City Opera re-opened in January 2016 with *Tosca*, the opera that originally launched the company in 1944. Outstanding productions during the four years since then include: the world premieres of Iain Bell and Mark Campbell's *Stonewall*, which NYCO commissioned and developed, legendary director Harold Prince's new production of Bernstein's *Candide*; Puccini's beloved *La Fanciulla del West*; and the New York premiere of Daniel Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas* — the first in its *Ópera en Español* series. Subsequent *Ópera en Español* productions include the New York premiere of the world's first mariachi opera, José "Pepe" Martínez's *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, Literes's *Los Elementos*, and Piazzolla's *María de Buenos Aires*. In addition to the world premiere of *Stonewall*, the productions in NYCO's Pride Initiative, which produces an LGBTQ-themed work each June during Pride Month, include the New York premiere of Péter Eötvös's *Angels in America* and the American premiere of Charles Wuorinen's *Brokeback Mountain*. New York City Opera has presented such talents as Anna Caterina Antonacci and Aprile Mollo in concert, as well as its own 75th Anniversary Concert in Bryant Park, one in a series of the many concerts and staged productions that it presents each year as part of the Park's summer performance series. City Opera's acclaimed summer series in Bryant Park brings free performances to thousands of New Yorkers and visitors every year.

New York City Opera continues its legacy with main stage performances at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Theater and with revitalized outreach and education programs at venues throughout the city, designed to welcome and inspire a new generation of opera audiences. City Opera's acclaimed summer series in Bryant Park brings free performances to thousands of New Yorkers and visitors every year.

New York City Opera:

www.nycopera.com

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About Wollman Rink

For more than 70 years, Wollman Rink has served as a unique skating and welcoming venue for New York City. Located in the heart of Central Park, the rink is dedicated to advancing all communities through connection and cultural celebration. Operated by Wollman Park Partners - a coalition of New Yorkers representing decades of experience across multiple sectors made up of companies and organizations including Harris Blitzer Sports & Entertainment, Related Companies, Equinox and community partnerships include Ice Hockey in Harlem, Figure Skating in Harlem, Great Performances, Melba's Restaurant, YMCA of Greater New York, The Boys' Club of New York and Green City Force - with a deep passion for New York City, Wollman Rink offers year-round experience to both New Yorkers and visitors alike, with an emphasis on creating a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive space that promotes equitable economic opportunity and recovery in our City. For more information on Wollman Rink, community programming and upcoming ticketed events, please visit: wollmanrinknyc.com.

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