

## **Livermore Valley Opera NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Photos attached

### ***Berkeley Opera's Mark Streshinsky to Direct LVO's Don Giovanni Artistic Trio Reunites for October Production***

LIVERMORE, CALIF. – This October, with the opening of the 19th season of the Livermore Valley Opera (LVO), audiences of the growing regional opera company will have the opportunity to experience a contemporary interpretation of the classic Mozart opera, *Don Giovanni*, as realized by noted Stage Director, Mark Streshinsky. Streshinsky was recently named Artistic Director of Berkeley Opera, and has directed five productions for the company, most recently the roots of this production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* which he now will expand for LVO.

"The production for Livermore Valley Opera will be even more realized in creating an environment to set this masterwork," said Streshinsky. "LVO has resources in place that Berkeley Opera is only beginning to acquire. This opera company has established scenic and costume artists and a dedicated budget to support a full production. Those are just two of the many resources it has at its disposal. Berkeley Opera's last season was one with a drastically reduced budget and a new and unknown theater. All these points are moot at LVO."

LVO has produced several operas over the past three seasons since the Bankhead Theater opened. The theater has since earned itself a reputation as a state-of-the-art venue that offers audiences an intimate opera experience. LVO's production experience at the Bankhead, coupled with the 100 or so dedicated LVO volunteers who work to bring professional-quality operas to the theater, will aid Streshinsky in realizing his vision of *Don Giovanni*.

LVO's Executive Director Sara Nealy explains why the opera company is venturing into new territory with Streshinsky's production. "It's important for LVO to stretch creatively to expose our audiences to diverse artistic visions. We believe that Streshinsky's contemporary interpretation of *Don Giovanni* will help to engage new and younger audiences by making connections with them that are relevant."

"For anyone concerned about how true to Mozart's original this contemporary interpretation will be, just look to the reviews of Berkeley Opera's production," adds Nealy. According to *San*

*San Francisco Classical Voice*, "...the marvelous music, his [Mozart's] wit, and his basic humanity are scrupulously preserved in this performance." The *Contra Costa Times* review of Streshinsky's *Don Giovanni* said, "The production's utter faithfulness to the music, coupled with a dazzling creativity in interpreting the psychology and spirit of the opera, merit high praise."

### **Artistic Trio Reunited**

The October production of *Don Giovanni* will reunite the experienced opera trio of Streshinsky, LVO Music Director and Conductor, Alexander Katsman, and formidable rising star, baritone Eugene Brancoveanu, known to LVO audiences as Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* (March, 2009) and who the *San Francisco Chronicle* calls "extravagantly gifted." Earlier this year, this trio worked together for Berkeley Opera's *Don Giovanni*.

"Working together is like being with family," says Katsman. "You know what makes them click and how to draw out their most creative energy. This gives us the opportunity to find new colors and facets to the ideas that began in the first production."

### **Don Giovanni performance**

Performance details for *Don Giovanni* are as follows:

October 2, 3, 9, & 10

Bankhead Theater, 2400 First Street, Livermore

Tickets: [www.bankheadtheater.org](http://www.bankheadtheater.org)

More information: [www.livermorevalleyopera.org](http://www.livermorevalleyopera.org)

### **About LVO**

Livermore Valley Opera was founded in 1992, and presents fully-staged operas in the spring and fall. LVO is driven by a board of directors, and the company relies on the help of 100-plus community volunteers to bring each production to the stage. LVO is a resident company of Livermore state-of-the-art Bankhead Theater.

Livermore Valley Opera is a community-based 501(c) 3 non-profit charitable arts organization.

### **About Mark Streshinsky**

Recently named Artistic Director of Berkeley Opera, Mark Streshinsky moved the company to a new theater in El Cerrito and directed a new production of *Don Giovanni* which was a popular and critical hit. He spent 2009 directing some of the most beloved operas in the repertoire for some of the best opera companies in the country including Puccini's *La Boheme* for The Dallas Opera, Bizet's *Carmen*, and Verdi's *La Traviata* for Seattle Opera. Previously, Mark has directed four operas for the company, creating critically acclaimed productions of *Eugene Onegin*, Handel's *Acis and Galatea* and *Legend of the Ring* (a one-evening version of Wagner's Ring cycle). Mark has been a member of the staging staffs of San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera, Dallas Opera, Los Angeles Opera and Seattle Opera. Mark has also served on the faculties of West Coast Opera Works in San Francisco, Opera North in New Hampshire and Des Moines Metro Opera's young artist programs, staging opera scenes with young singers.

### **About Alex Katsman**

Alexander Katsman is the Music Director and Conductor for Livermore Valley Opera. Alumni of the San Francisco Opera's Merola Program, Mr. Katsman received his M.M. from St. Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory and his B.M. cum laude from Mussorgsky College of Music in St. Petersburg, Russia. Since his arrival in the United States, Alexander has been sought after as a conductor and collaborative pianist. He conducted for several bay area opera companies including *Opera San Jose*, *West Bay Opera*, *Berkeley Opera*, *Oakland Lyric Opera*, *San Francisco Lyric Opera*, and *Diablo Light Opera*. His conducting credits include, among others,

productions of *La Traviata*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Boheme*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Rigoletto*, , *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute*, *Die Fledermaus*, *The Student Prince*, *Carousel*, and *The Most Happy Fella*.

### **About Eugene Brancoveanu**

Eugene Brancoveanu's virile voice and superior stagecraft have earned him critical acclaim in both North America and Europe. Following recent performances of San Francisco Opera's *The Little Prince*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* lauds the superb cast as being "led by extravagantly gifted baritone Eugene Brancoveanu as the Pilot. With his unforced charisma, vocal clarity, and total heft, Brancoveanu managed the tricky feat of doing most of the show's heavy lifting..."

Eugene Brancoveanu's 2009-10 season includes the role of Marcello in *La bohème* with Virginia Opera, Gonzalvo in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* with Los Angeles Opera, the title role in *Don Giovanni* with Berkeley Opera. In 2008-09 he returned to San Francisco Opera as Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*; sang Karnak in Lalo's *Le Roi d'ys* with the American Symphony Orchestra; Count in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Livermore Valley Opera.

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