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Catch This Rising Star in Concert at Opera Birmingham!

Birmingham, Ala. – Opera Birmingham opens the 2011-2012 Season and celebrates National Opera Week with *Catch a Rising Star*, as Opera Birmingham shines the spotlight on the winner of the 2011 Opera Birmingham Vocal Competition, outstanding soprano Melissa Shippen Burrows! *Catch a Rising Star* will take place on Sunday, November 6, 2011 at 2:30 pm at Brock Recital Hall, Samford University. Ms. Burrows will be accompanied by Kevin Chance on the piano.

Past winners of Opera Birmingham's Vocal Competition have gone on to stellar careers, singing on the world's most prestigious stages. Described by the *New York Times* as "a dramatic soprano with an attractive, powerful sound," as "angelic" by the *Washington Post*, and according to *Theater Scene*, "appealing and lyrical," Ms. Burrows has made debuts in her young career through the United States, Europe and Asia.

Ms. Burrows made her recording debut on the RCA recording *Belle Nuit* with Vesselina Kasarova, following her award as First Prize Winner in the Munich based Viotti International Vocal Competition. She was named a 2009 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions District Winner and Regional Finalist, and made her debut with the Hong Kong Philharmonic singing Gorecki's Symphony No. 3 *Sorrowful Songs*.

Recipient of the American Berlin Opera Foundation Scholarship, Ms. Burrows appeared on the stage of the Deutsche Oper Berlin as the First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, Nella in *Gianni Schicchi*, and Suor Genovieffa in *Suor Angelica*. As a member of the Juilliard Opera Center, she was heard as Marenka in the 2005 production of *The Bartered Bride* and as Lia in Debussy's *L'enfant prodigue* conducted by Yves Abel. She has sung leading roles with the Palm Beach Opera, Aspen Opera Theater, and Wolf Trap Opera, accompanied by the National Symphony Orchestra.

Ms. Burrows made her Carnegie Hall debut as the soprano soloist in Mahler's Symphony No. 2 *Resurrection* and returned in Britten's *War Requiem*, both for which she received favorable reviews in The New York Times. She was honored with the Culture Award from the American Scandinavian Society at the United Nations and was the 2nd Prize Award Junior Division Winner in the Palm Beach Opera Vocal Competition. Ms. Burrows performed at the Kennedy Center for President Clinton after being named a United States Presidential Scholar in the Arts. She holds both Master and Bachelor of Music degrees in Vocal Performance from The Juilliard School.

Order your tickets early for the best seat selection. Individual ticket prices range from \$20 for rear mezzanine seating to \$45 for seating in the prime orchestra and can be purchased as follows:

- Log on to www.operabirmingham.org (24 hours a day)
- Call 205-322-6737 (Monday-Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm)
- Visit the Hill Opera Center, located at 3601 Sixth Ave. S. (Monday-Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm)

Students tickets are available for \$12 to individuals age 25 or under with a valid full-time student ID, and must be purchased in person at the Hill Opera Center. To inquire about rates for groups of 10 or more, or for any other information regarding Opera Birmingham and performances for 2011-2012, call 205-322-6737.

Catch a Rising Star is made possible through the generous support of Patty McDonald, and by grants from the Alabama Statue Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Opera Birmingham's 2011-2012 season continues with *Home for the Holidays* on December 16 and 18, *An Evening with Angela Brown: An Italian Opera Gala* on January 27, 2012, and *Carmen* on March 16 and 18, 2012. Season tickets are still available by calling 205-322-6737 or by visiting the Hill Opera Center. Season ticket holders receive a discount off regular individual ticket prices, as well as priority seating and other exclusive benefits. Patrons can purchase season tickets for as little as \$99!

Opera Birmingham, the only professional opera company in Northern and Central Alabama, has entertained audiences for over 55 years. Opera Birmingham is pleased to be a part of National Opera Week and The Year of Alabama Music celebration. Visit our website at www.operabirmingham.org, and follow Opera Birmingham on Twitter @operabham and on Facebook at Opera Birmingham.

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Melissa Shippen Burrows