



For Immediate Release – October 14, 2011

Eleanor L. Parker, Director of Marketing & Communications
Opera Birmingham
3601 Sixth Avenue, South
Birmingham, AL 35222
P: 205-322-6737
F: 205-322-6206
eleanor@operabirmingham.org
www.operabirmingham.org

**Opera Birmingham Celebrates National Opera Week
Friday, October 28 – Sunday, November 6**

Birmingham, AL — Opera Birmingham is proud to join dozens of other opera organizations nationwide to celebrate **National Opera Week (October 28 – November 6)**, coordinated by OPERA America, the national service organization for opera, with support of the National Endowment for the Arts.

National Opera Week celebrates the vibrancy of opera in America today, and brings the inventiveness and excitement of opera to a national audience. The strength and diversity of established opera companies, community opera ensembles and opera training programs across the United States will be shared through free, dynamic activities designed to engage novices, opera lovers and everyone in between.

“From behind-the-scenes tours to enlightening performance talks to Twitter contests and more, there is something for everyone during National Opera Week,” states Marc A. Scorca, president & CEO of OPERA America. “National Opera Week draws attention to the creativity and dynamism that propels our field today. We are proud to highlight this depth of opera activity across the United States.”

Opera Birmingham has several exciting events planned, locally, as part of National Opera Week. To kick off the festivities, Amici—Young Friends of Opera Birmingham—will host “Voices & Vino” with cabaret entertainment by the Opera Birmingham Chorus and the University of Alabama jazz combo. Proceeds from this event will benefit the Opera Birmingham Chorus. The culmination of the National Opera Week celebrations will be *Catch a Rising Star*, a recital by young American soprano Melissa Shippen Burrows, winner of the 2011 Opera Birmingham Vocal Competition.

Launching National Opera Week will be the **NEA Opera Honors** award ceremony on Thursday, October 27 at 7:30 p.m. ET in Washington, D.C. For the first time, this event will be available worldwide through a [live webcast](#) that also will be archived after the event and accessible at neaoperahonors.org. The NEA Opera Honors is the nation’s highest award in opera and recognizes outstanding artists for their lifetime achievements and contributions to the excellence and perpetuation of opera in America. This year’s honorees are stage designer **John Conklin**, general director **Speight Jenkins**, mezzo-soprano **Risë Stevens** and composer **Robert Ward**. The October 27 award ceremony and live webcast will feature video tributes, guest performances from artists such as tenor Lawrence Brownlee and mezzo-soprano Heather Johnson, and an onstage conversation with the honorees. For additional information, visit neaoperahonors.org.

For more information about National Opera Week events around the country, please visit www.operaamerica.org/operaweek. Join the National Opera Week conversation on Twitter with #OperaWeek.

Opera Birmingham’s National Opera Week events:

Voices and Vino: A Chorus Cabaret

Friday, November 4, 5:30pm (cocktails), 6:00pm (performance)

The Wine Loft, 2200 1st Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203

Join Amici—Young Friends of Opera Birmingham—for a cocktail party benefiting the Opera Birmingham Chorus. Cabaret entertainment will be provided by members of the Opera Birmingham Chorus and the University of Alabama jazz combo. Enter to win an iPad and more! Complimentary hors d'oeuvres and valet parking. Cash bar. Tickets are only \$20 at the door.

The Great Opera Attic Sale

Saturday, November 5, 8:00am – 12:00pm

Hill Opera Center, 3601 Sixth Ave. S., Birmingham, AL 35222

Gently used treasures, including props from Opera Birmingham productions, will be the stars of this sale! A wide variety of household and electronic goods will give new meaning to the words "Rummage Sale!" Items have been coming in by the truckload, so you don't want to miss this event! We have everything from furniture to jewelry, books, art, computers, unique clothing, CDs, DVDs, musical items and much more! Sale items accepted through Friday, November 4. *Admission is free.*

All proceeds from items sold will benefit Opera Birmingham.

Catch a Rising Star

Sunday, November 6, 2:30 pm

Brock Recital Hall at Samford University, 800 Lakeshore Dr., Birmingham, AL 35226

Opera Birmingham celebrates National Opera Week and the opening of the 2011-12 Season by shining the spotlight on the winner of the 2011 Opera Birmingham Vocal Competition, outstanding soprano Melissa Shippen Burrows! Past winners of Opera Birmingham's Vocal Competition have gone on to stellar careers, singing on the world's most prestigious stages! So catch this rising star while you can!!

Individual ticket prices range from \$20 for rear mezzanine seating to \$45 for seating in the prime orchestra and can be purchased online at www.operabirmingham.org, by calling 205-322-6737, or in person at the Hill Opera Center located at 3601 Sixth Ave. S. Birmingham, AL 35222.

Join Opera Birmingham for other local events during National Opera Week:

The Metropolitan Opera: Live in HD

The Metropolitan Opera's Peabody and Emmy Award-winning series *The Met: Live in HD* continues for its sixth season, featuring 11 live transmissions. Don't miss the chance to experience the Met live at your local movie theater!

Mozart's Don Giovanni – New Production

Saturday, October 29, 11:55am CT/12:55 pm ET

Mariusz Kwiecien brings his youthful and sensual interpretation of Mozart's timeless anti-hero to the Met for the first time, under the direction of Tony Award®-winning director Michael Grandage and with Fabio Luisi conducting. Also starring Marina Rebeka, Barbara Frittoli, Ramón Vargas, and Luca Pisaroni.

Wagner's Siegfried – New Production

November 5, 2011, 11am CT/12 pm ET

In part three of the Ring, Wagner's cosmic vision focuses on his hero's early conquests, while Robert Lepage's revolutionary stage machine transforms itself from bewitched forest to mountaintop love nest. Gary Lehman sings the title role and Deborah Voigt's Brünnhilde is his prize. Bryn Terfel is the Wanderer. Fabio Luisi conducts.

Ticket prices vary by theater, and senior and student discounts are generally available. For more information or to purchase tickets, follow the directions at www.metoperafamily.org, or contact the individual theaters:

Rave Vestavia Hills 10, ravemotionpictures.com, 205-978-3655

Rave Patton Creek 15, ravemotionpictures.com, 205-982-4778

Regal Trussville 16, www.regmovies.com, 205-655-2875

Cobb Theater's Hollywood 16, Tuscaloosa, www.cobbtheatres.com, 205-248-8212

###

Additional press contact:

For OPERA America/National Opera Week: Patricia Kiernan Johnson, 212-796-8620, ext. 217,

PKJohnson@operaamerica.org