

For Immediate Release: Media Alert

The Hamilton Arts Foundation of Marin is featuring Our 2nd Annual Opera in the Amphitheater: A Celebration of Our Love for Opera! September 7th, 2024 2pm - 5pm

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LEARN MORE: www.savehamiltontheater.org/opera

WHAT: Opera anyone? Fun for the Whole Family! Free admission event in a celebration of our love for opera with an emphasis on outdoor performances of famous arias and songs of the opera. There will be community activities starting at 2pm nurturing opera education, including face painting, mask making and more. This event is in collaboration with Golden Gate Opera, Fenwick Foundation and Novato Park and Recreation, and it shall showcase the amazing acoustics of the Hamilton Amphitheater.

WHEN: September 7, 2024, Saturday, 2pm - 5pm

WHERE: Hamilton Amphitheater located at 500-598 Hamilton Pkwy, Novato, CA 94949.

WHO'S INVITED: The event will have *opera Italian* concession food, entertainment, opera trivia prizes & games, and the performance will be freely open to the all that come out to learn about opera and enjoy its incredible impact on us listeners.

PARKING: Please park at the Hamilton Theater parking lot and the Hamilton Landing hangers parking lots.

THE BACK STORY: Opera was born at the end of the 16th century, as an initiative of a circle of scholars (the Florentine Camerata) who, discovering that Ancient Greek Theater was sung, had the idea of setting dramatic texts to music. Thus, Jacopo Peri created *Dafne* (1597), followed by *Euridice* (1600), by the same author.

WHY THIS MATTERS: The Hamilton Arts Foundation was founded with the vision to save the historic Hamilton Theater, restoring this classic 1930s 320 seat Spanish Revival gem to its original splendor. The restored Hamilton Theater will become home to live music, live theater, as well as cinema and is the centerpiece of a new music & arts center vision. We plan to expand our efforts by rebuilding the historic Hamilton NCO building as well to create a new place to share artistic ideas and history as building an experiential music museum. The ground floor will be a music showcase and coffee shop, gift shop, sound booths, and hall of fame dedicated to Marin's long history of musical innovation. The second story may include archival storage, recording studios, meeting rooms, and offices. In the tradition of the old NCO Club, this will be a great place for music and art appreciation, education and collaboration.

In order to help our community see the importance and invest in renovating our historic theater, we will continue to showcase the beauty of this location as a hub for music and arts in Novato, Marin County, California.

FEATURED ARTISTS AND INSTRUMENTALISTS FROM 2023:

Aléxa Anderson, née Sessler, is a **soprano** with a voice described by Joshua Kosman (San Francisco Chronicle) as a "magical gift," and "glorious," based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She has performed with companies such as the San Francisco Symphony, the San Francisco Opera Guild, West Edge Opera, Golden Gate Opera, Lamplighters Music Theatre, Pocket Opera, West Bay Opera, Lyric Theatre of San Jose, and Opera Cultura singing the roles of Mimi (La Boheme), Diana (Cruzar la Cara de la Luna), Nedda (I Pagliacci), Pamina (Die Zauberflöte), Mariana (Das Liebesverbot), Melisande (Ariane et Barbe-Bleue), Phyllis (Iolanthe), Princess Ida (Princess Ida), and Rosina (Il barbiere di Siviglia), among others. Upcoming engagements include soprano soloist in Brahms' Requiem with the Santa Clara Chorale, March 2024, and covering Rosalba in Florencia en el Amazonas with Opera San Jose, April 2024. She has four opera-loving cats.

Lila Khazoum, soprano, is known for her "soaring high notes" and for the "smooth quality" of her voice. Lila is an emerging coloratura soprano based in Tracy, California. She made her recital debut in the Bay Area as part of Festival Opera's Artist Recital Series, opening Piedmont's post-quarantine recital scene with her program Un Raggio di Speme – A Ray of Hope, an exploration of fear, hope, and emotional endurance. This summer she sang the role of Frasquita in Festival Opera's Carmen. Other performances have included French Baroque music at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice, Italy as well as various engagements in the East Bay. Her next performances will be Into the Mist, a seasonal salon recital with pianist Alexander Katsman, at San Francisco's Gregangelo Museum. [More](#) > **Richard Alexandre Rittelmann**, a Parisian **baritone** – concert, recital and opera singer, belongs to the new promising generation of opera singers, laureate of many international competitions: Marmande 96-97, Voix Nouvelles 98, Clermont-Ferrand 99, Giuseppe Giacomantonio 2000, Toulouse 2001, Armel 2014/2016... Ambassadeur lyrique de la Ville de Grasse – Administrateur du CIRM, Artistic Advisor of the Provence Classical Music Summer Festival from 2017 concerts promoter.

Critically acclaimed **soprano, Shawnette Sulker**, has recently sung the roles of Mary Jane Bowser (Intelligence by Heggie) for a workshop with Houston Grand Opera, Ariel in the world premiere of Prospero's Island by Shearer, and Poppea (L'incoronazione di Poppea) with West Edge Opera. International highlights include an orchestra concert of operatic repertoire at the Teatro di San Carlo in Napoli, touring Die Fledermaus as Adele in Holland and Belgium, and orchestra concerts in Leipzig's Gewandhaus and Prague's Smetana Hall. She has been a soloist with companies such as the San Francisco Opera, American Bach Soloists, Mark Morris Dance Group, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Opera Memphis, Opera Fairbanks, Opera Idaho, Opera Naples, Union Avenue Opera, and the Symphonies of Eugene, Oakland, and Berkeley. Upcoming engagements include singing Poppea with Intermountain Opera Bozeman, a workshop for the new opera Bulrusher (Stoocky) as Bulrusher in Cincinnati, a concert of Barber's Knoxville: Summer of 1915 with San Jose Chamber Orchestra, and Die Königin der Nacht (Die Zauberflöte) with Livermore Valley Opera.

Mezzo-soprano, Lori Willis, began her musical career as a violinist, receiving scholarships from the University of California, Berkeley Young Musician's Program and a scholarship award to attend Oberlin College Conservatory of Music. After obtaining a B.A. in Political Science from U.C. Berkeley, Ms. Willis gained recognition as a vocalist and went on to earn a Master of Arts degree in Vocal Performance from California State University, East Bay. She has been a soloist and participated in a variety of staged performances with such groups as Berkeley Opera, Golden Gate Opera, Oakland East Bay Symphony, Oakland Opera, Sacramento Philharmonic and San Francisco Opera. Ms. Willis' studied voice with Wendy Hillhouse and Allen Shearer.

Richard Alexandre Rittelmann, baritone, belongs to the new promising generation of opera singers, laureate of many international competitions, from Paris, France. He began his career at the age of 22 at the National Opera of Lyon in the new production of Doktor Faust under the Baton of Kent Nagano and directed by Pierre Strosser. He has also been a prizewinner at various international competitions such as the Voix d'Or, Toulouise, Marmande, Eurpotttega and Voix Nouvelles in Paris. This proved to be an important launch pad for his career. His most memorable interpretations of roles include Idomeneo (Ivan Fisher) at the Opera Garnier de Paris, in Ariadne auf Naxos (Ivan Fischer) at the Opera de Nice (Schnitzler/Reiber), in Werther (Alain Guingal) at the Regio Torino, in Cyrano de Bergerac from Alfano in Montpellier/Garnier Monte Carlo and la Maestranza (Guidarini/Alagna), in Manon at Hong Kong Opera (Nicola Colabianchi – Nadine Duffault), in Dialogues des Carmelites at the Opera de Nice (Michel Plasson-Carsen).

Joseph Raymond Meyers, tenor, enjoys a varied career in opera, concert work and musical theater. San Francisco, Portland, Anchorage, Tampa, Toledo, Grand Rapids, Utah Festival, San Jose, Sacramento, and Santa Barbara, are just some of the opera companies where he has worked. Over the years, Carmina Burana has become one of his specialties. He has sung it with the symphonies of Kalamazoo, Santa Rosa Silicon Valley, Ballet San Jose (on tour in China) and Spokane, among others. Favorite roles include: Piangi in The Phantom of the Opera- First National Tour, The Opera Singer in the Oscar winning film, "Milk," The Vain Man/ Snake in The Little Prince with Opera Parallèle, Soloist in West Side Story Suite with SF Ballet, Hoffmann in The Tales of Hoffman at Pocket Opera, Rodolfo in La Boheme at Rogue Valley Opera, the Rector in Cunning Little Vixen and Little Victor in Elizabeth Cree at West Edge Opera. Recent: Roderigo in Otello with Livermore Valley Opera, Carmina Burana with Marin Symphony, William Walton's Facade with Pacific Chamber Orchestra, Charlie in Mahagonny Songspiel with Expressivo Orchestra, and Mr. Bobo in Coraline with West Edge Opera this past summer. Most recent: The Crooner in The Shining at Opera Parallèle. Upcoming: Carlson in Of Mice and Men with Livermore Valley Opera in October 2023.

Claudio Santome, tenor, completed his training as a music teacher in Buenos Aires with a master's from the Teatro Colón where he also sang Giuseppe Verdi's Aida. After emigrating to the US in 1997, he performed Ariel Ramirez's Misa Criolla in California, Michigan, Switzerland, Italy, and Argentina. He specializes in Belcanto repertoire singing from Mozart, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi, and Puccini. In the symphonic repertoire, he sang Carmina Burana, as tenor and baritone, Gustav Mahler's Ruckert and Des Knaben Wunderhorn. He is the music director, stage director, and choir conductor of Andanza Spanish Arts, performing famous Zarzuela or Spanish Opera scenes in the US. Since 2009 he has performed Argentine Classical and Popular repertoire from A. Ginastera and C. Guastavino to Folk

and Tango songs. In February 2015, he presented the show “Marplatenses por el Mundo” at Theater Colon in Mar del Plata with artists from the Buenos Aires Opera House and La Scala di Milano from Italy with a selection from Rigoletto, Carmen, La Traviata.

Jerry Kuderna, pianist / music director, who performs widely in the Bay Area and is a favorite soloist with the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra (BSO), Kuderna began serious musical studies at the age of 9 with Antonia Brico in Denver, CO. He sang in the chorus of ‘Beethoven’s Ninth’ shortly after beginning piano lessons with her, and said, “It was the decisive experience of my young musical life.” After attending Juilliard, Kuderna earned his Bachelor of Music degree at the San Francisco Conservatory where he met pianist/composer Robert Helps, who was teaching there. Kuderna continued studying with Helps at the New England Conservatory in Boston, where he earned his Master of Music degree. He received his Ph.D. from New York University in 1982. He said, “I also studied chamber music with the violinist Rudolph Kolisch, with whom I studied the works of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, composers Kolisch knew personally and whose works he premiered.” Kuderna taught at Princeton University and the University of Louisville.

Sara Usher, violinist, has been a successful freelance performer, chamber musician and teacher since moving to the Bay Area in 1977. Her career as an orchestral player began as a founding member of the New England Chamber Orchestra in 1975, and playing with the New Haven Symphony for two seasons before arriving in the SF Bay Area. Since then she has played with or been a member of Marin Symphony, SF Ballet, San Francisco Symphony, SF Opera, Philharmonia Baroque and New Century Chamber Orchestras. She has been Concert Master for the Vallejo Symphony, the Santa Cruz Symphony, the Tassajara Symphony, as well as Principal Second for the SF Chamber Symphony and Oakland East Bay Symphonies. Currently Sara is in her sixth season as Concert Master of the Diablo Symphony and continues to free-lance, play chamber music and teach.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSOR & KEY VOLUNTEER FOR THIS EVENT:

Roberta Wain-Becker, Golden Gate Opera: Ms. Wain-Becker’s professional opera career includes 30 years of international and U.S. regional opera company engagements including The Israel National Opera, New Opera Festival di Roma, Teatro Lyrico d’Europa, Portland Opera, Mississippi Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Arizona Opera, Whitewater Opera, Marin Opera, Berkeley Opera, Sacramento Opera, San Francisco Opera and others. As featured soloist with symphonies in the west, she has had performances with Sacramento Symphony, Jackson Symphony, Boise Philharmonic, Billings Symphony, Diablo Philharmonic, Marin Symphony, Santa Barbara Choral Society, Oakland Symphony among others. Winner of Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Award, her awards also include the Wagner Society of Northern California, William Matheus Sullivan Musical Foundation of New York and more. With over 50 roles in her repertoire, she has taught singing at the San Francisco Community Music Center for 10 years, and is on the voice faculty of the California Opera Association Summer Institute in Fresno, international training program for rising opera talent, delivering world class programming for its community. A 501(c)(3) non-profit, Golden Gate Opera was founded in 1996 to share the joys of the Myriad of Fine Arts found in live opera.

The Fenwick Foundation, as a partial funding donor, supports projects that focus on the needs of children and their families in the areas of education, human services and the arts. The foundation supports organizations that work to change the social conditions that foster and perpetuate disadvantage. We would like to extend a special thanks for this amazing Foundation.

Novato Park & Recreation, as community sponsor, offers a wide range of social and recreational programs and activities for our community members of all ages to enjoy. They believe that parks have the power to impact every community through health and wellness, conservation and social equity.

ABOUT THE EFFORT TO SAVE HAMILTON THEATER:

This a *PASSION* project to preserve and grow the historic Hamilton Music & Arts Town Center, by building up its music and arts roots as well as adding to it. Tap the original intended use by the early inhabitants of the Hamilton Air Force Base occupation as well as bring expanded perspective.

The Hamilton Theater is an original structure, erected at the beginning of Hamilton Field's pre-World War II development. The Theater was in operation as late as 1994 and has a newer cinema screen. The building itself has become the symbol of the new Hamilton Field community, part of Novato, California, about 25 miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Built in 1938, the Hamilton Theater is a charming, 320-seat, Spanish-styled Theater that served the armed forces that were stationed at Hamilton Field. The Theatre building has cast-in-place Churrigueresque concrete medallion serving as attic vent - and is a very unique design effect to this structure, and other buildings in the Hamilton Field area.

Churrigueresque refers to a Spanish Baroque style of elaborate sculptural architectural ornament which emerged as a manner of stucco decoration in Spain in the late 17th century and was used up to about 1750, marked by extreme, expressive and florid decorative detailing, normally found above the entrance on the main facade of a building.

Hamilton Arts Foundation is a 501©3 approved non-profit at the federal and state levels.