

For Immediate Release: Media Alert

The Hamilton Arts Foundation of Marin is featuring Opera in the Amphitheater: A Celebration of Our Love for Opera!

September 9th, 2023 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 9, 2023, 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:

Olga Chernisheva, a Russian **soprano**, announced as the best leading female singer in North East by Opera Online in season 2006-2007, described by critics as show-stopping (Opera Online), possessing ‘a pure, strong soprano with phrasing of sumptuous elegance’ (San Francisco Chronicle) and ‘a lyric voice focused and alluring... subtly expressive’ (Opera News), Olga Chernisheva is one of most interesting and distinctive singing actresses to emerge on the American scene during the past few years. A native of Russia, Ms. Chernisheva appeared on the main opera and concert stages of Russia, United States, Europe and other countries as Aida and Violets (Traviata); Leonora (La Forza del Destino) by Verdi, Tosca, Manon Lescaut, Cio-Cio San (Madama Butterfly), Suor Angelica, Mimi and Musetta (La Boheme), Liu and Turandot (Turandot) by Puccini, Maria (Mazeppa) by Tchaikovsky; Zemfira (Aleko) and Francesca (da Rimini) by Rachmaninoff; Ann Troulove (Rake’s Progress); Nedda (Pagliacci), Santuzza (Cavalleria Rusticana); in Messa di Requiem by Giuseppe Verdi; Bach’s Mass in B-minor; Mahler’s Symphony No. 4 and for Orff’s Carmina Burana; Bach’s Easter Oratorio; with solo recitals; and as a featured soloist for numerous festivals. Olga has performed Cio Cio San in GGO Madama Butterfly and last season at Night of Italian Opera.

Lila Khazoum, hailed as “an artist of impressive talent” with “soaring high notes” (Piedmont Post), Lila Khazoum is an emerging coloratura **soprano** based in the San Francisco Bay Area. In July, 2021 she performed Un Raggio di Speme – A Ray of Hope with pianist Alexander Katsman as part of Festival Opera’s Artist Recital Series.

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.

Shawnette Sulker has been described as a singer “...displaying a bright, superbly controlled **soprano** with perfectly placed coloratura.” On the operatic stage, Ms. Sulker has been a featured artist in three San Francisco Opera productions: Porgy and Bess, The Mother of Us All, and Louise. She was also a part of the joint production of Dido and Aeneas between San Francisco Opera and the Crucible, singing the roles of Second Woman and Second Witch. A native of Guyana, the soprano has sung leading roles with other companies of note, including Hawaii Opera Theatre, Internationale Opera Producties, Opera Naples, Union Avenue Opera, Natchez Opera Festival, Pacific Opera Project, West Edge Opera, Festival Opera, Music in the Mountains, Mendocino Music Festival, and West Bay Opera, to name a few. Roles in Ms. Sulker’s repertoire include Zerbinetta (Ariadne auf Naxos), Die Königin der Nacht (Die Zauberflöte), Cunegonde (Candide), Olympia/Giulietta/Antonia (Les Contes d’Hoffmann), Adele (Die Fledermaus), Oscar (Un ballo in maschera), Adina (L’elisir d’amore), Musetta (La Bohème), Lauretta (Gianni Schicchi), Susanna (Le nozze di Figaro), Zerlina and Donna Anna (Don Giovanni), Constanze (Abduction from the Seraglio), Frasquita and Micaëla (Carmen), Despina (Cosi

fan tutte), Clara and Serena (Porgy and Bess), Belinda (Dido and Aeneas), Amore (Orfeo ed Euridice), Treemonisha (Treemonisha), Madame Silberklang (Der Schauspieldirektor), and Rosabella (The Most Happy Fella).

Lori Willis, Mezzo **soprano**, 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.

J. Raymond Meyers, a.k.a. "Joe" is a highly sought after West Coast **tenor** with projects ranging from Verdi to Weill with many other stops along the way. Over the past five years, he's turned his attention to the leading roles of the lyric stage. The Duke in Rigoletto, Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly, Ferrando in Cosi fan Tutte, Rodolfo in La Boheme, Hoffmann in The Tales of Hoffmann, Ernesto in Don Pasquale, Camille in The Merry Widow, Rinuccio in Gianni Schicci and Alfred in Die Fledermaus are just of a few of the roles for which he is becoming known.

Claudio Santome, tenor, born in Mar del Plata, Argentina, specializes in Belcanto repertoire singing from Mozart, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi, and Puccini. Claudio Santome completed training as music teacher in Buenos Aires with a master from the Teatro Colón where he also sang Giuseppe Verdi's Aida. After immigrating 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 sung Carmina Burana, as tenor and baritone, Gustav Mahler's Ruckert and Des Knaben Wunderhorn.

Jerry Kuderna, pianist, a favorite soloist with the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra performs widely in the Bay Area. Kuderna earned his Bachelor of Music degree at the San Francisco Conservatory, his Master of Music degree at the New England Conservatory in Boston and received his Ph.D. from New York University in 1982. Kuderna became a master of the classical piano repertoire from chamber music, opera and art song accompaniment to Bach and concertos, but he says, "I developed a fondness for 20th Century music through having worked with many eminent modern composers.

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.