

# Media Alert

## The Hamilton Arts Foundation of Marin is featuring Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Opera in the Amphitheater September 13, 2025, 3pm-6pm

**WHAT: Opera in the Amphitheater Park.** Fun for the Whole Family. Join in the *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 3 pm nurturing opera education, including face painting, mask making and more. This event is in collaboration with “sponsors”, and Novato Park and Recreation, and it shall showcase the amazing acoustics of the Hamilton Amphitheater.

**WHEN:** September 13, 2025, Saturday, 3 pm – 6 pm

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

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

**PARKING:** Please park at the Hamilton Theater parking lot “or” 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:**

**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. Rittelmann 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).

**Olga Cherishiva Moudry**, announced by Opera Online as the best leading female singer in North East in season 2006-2007, and the most dynamic couple with Orlin Goranov for Butterfly in both 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 seasons, described by critics as possessing "a pure, strong soprano with phrasing of sumptuous elegance" (San Francisco Chronicle) , "a strong voice, with well-rounded tone and fullness in all registers" (San Francisco Classical Voice), voice all power and glinting steel" (Boston Globe) and "a lyric voice focused and alluring... subtly expressive" (Opera News), "show stopping" (Opera Online), Olga Chernisheva is one of most interesting and distinctive young singing actresses to emerge on the American scene during the past few years.

A native of Russia, Ms. Chernisheva appeared on the stages of the Bolshoi Opera (Maria in Mazeppa, Prilepa in Pique Dame, Brigittain Iolanta, Anne Trulove in The Rake's Progress, Musettain La Boheme, to name a few), Kazan Opera Theater (Mimi in La Boheme), Stanislavsky Opera Theater (Micaela in Carmen), and Mälmo Opera Theater in Sweden (Musetta) before emigrating to the U.S.A., where she has appeared with West Bay Opera and Di Capo Opera in the title role of Manon Lescaut, Illinois Opera Theater and Teatro Lirico d'Europa as Tosca, with Tampa Opera as Musetta in La Boheme, with Golden Gate Opera as Suor Angelica, with Pensacola Opera as Violetta in La Traviata, Teatro Lirico d'Europa as Mimi in La Boheme and Micaela in Carmen, with Hong Kong Opera and Boheme Opera as Liu in Turandot and with Cedar Rapids Opera Golden Gate Opera, Martinez Opera, Teatro Lirico d'Europa and Gold Coast Opera as Cio-Cio-San in Madama Butterfly.

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 (Stookey) 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.

**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.

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.

**Eric Levintow**, Tenor, is an operatic tenor, guitarist, and teacher. He has appeared as Prince Ramiro (La Cenerentola) with San Francisco Opera Guild, and with the San Francisco Opera Chorus in Un ballo in maschera, Tristan und Isolde, Beethoven's 9th Symphony, and Carmen. This season Eric also created the role of Ed McCaughan (¡Chicanísima! by Carla Lucero) with Quinteto Latino. In past seasons Eric has sung Borsa (Rigoletto), Nemorino (Elixir of Love) Don Ottavio (Don Giovanni), Spoletta (Tosca), San Francisco Opera Chorus (Lohengrin, Il trovatore, and Opera Ball Gala), Alfredo cover (La traviata), Rodolfo (La bohème), Gastone (La traviata), Antonio (Das liebesverbot), Tamino cover (Magic Flute), and First Sailor (Dido and Aeneas).

**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.

**The J-B Piano Company**, supporting Marin and the greater Bay Area with spectacular pianos for over 70 years, will provide the event with a beautiful baby grand piano.

**WHY THIS MATTERS:** Our vision is 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. We are also dedicated to renovating the **Hamilton Amphitheater**, a beautiful and acoustic treasure awaiting our attention for the Marin and Greater Bay Area to enjoy.

#### **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.

### **SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSOR & KEY VOLUNTEERS FOR THIS EVENT:**

**Ray Dwelly and The Novato Historic Guild and The Hamilton Field Museum:** The Novato Historical Guild is a membership nonprofit organization founded in 1976. Guild volunteers staff and support the Novato History Museum and the Hamilton Field History Museum in a partnership agreement with the City of Novato: the City owns the museum buildings and the historical collections, and the Guild ensures that the Museums are open to the public for educational exhibits and historical research.

**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) nonprofit, 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.

**City of Novato Park & Recreation** – thank you for your ongoing support of community sponsorships for the use of the Hamilton Amphitheater.

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**LEARN MORE:** [www.savehamiltontheater.org/opera](http://www.savehamiltontheater.org/opera)

The Hamilton Arts Foundation is a 501©3 approved non-profit by the state of California.