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## **Opera for the masses at free Opera in the Park concert**

**Ninth annual Madison Opera event to be held in Garner Park on Saturday, July 17**

*Madison, Wis.* – Madison Opera presents Opera in the Park 2010 on Saturday, July 17, 2010 at 8 p.m. in Garner Park on Madison's West side. This free concert of opera arias and Broadway favorites concludes Madison Opera's 2009-2010 Season. A Madison summer tradition, Opera in the Park celebrates its ninth year with a cast of exciting guest artists including sopranos Anya Matanovic and Barbara Shirvis, tenor Rodrick Dixon, and baritone Stephen Powell. Maestro John DeMain conducts the Madison Opera Chorus and Madison Symphony Orchestra; Madison Opera General Director Allan Naplan and WKOW27 News Anchor Diana Henry are emcees for the evening.

Opera in the Park is Madison Opera's flagship community event. Last year, over 13,000 people gathered in Garner Park for an evening of thrilling live performances under the stars. Repertoire for the 2010 concert will draw on Madison Opera's upcoming productions of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Kurt Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, and Verdi's *La Traviata*, in addition to other operatic and Broadway selections, including a tribute to composer Stephen Sondheim to mark his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

"Every year I look forward to the excitement of Opera in the Park," General Director Allan Naplan said. He continued, "To reach as many members of our community as possible while highlighting the accessibility of opera is at the heart of our mission. Opera in the Park affords us that opportunity on a very large scale."

The young soprano Anya Matanovic makes her Madison Opera debut at Opera in the Park 2010 and will return in November as Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Sure to thrill audiences, operatic and Broadway tenor Rodrick Dixon has received raves across genres, most recently for his performances in the title role of *Der Zwing* at Los Angeles Opera and the PBS special *Cook, Dixon, and Young: Live in Concert*. Completing the ensemble are soprano Barbara Shirvis and baritone Stephen Powell, two distinguished artists with credits at opera houses across the United States and Europe.

Garner Park is located at 333 S. Rosa Road, bordering Mineral Point Road near Whitney Way. Parking is available in the CUNA Mutual and University Research Park lots. Attendees are encouraged to bring picnics. On the day of the concert, Garner Park will open at 7 a.m. Patrons may not leave personal items in the park prior to this time. The rain date for Opera in the Park is Sunday, July 18, 2010 at 8 p.m.

For more information, visit [www.madisonopera.org](http://www.madisonopera.org). To schedule artist interviews or receive Opera in the Park images, please contact Brian Hinrichs at [hinrichs@madisonopera.org](mailto:hinrichs@madisonopera.org).

## RELATED EVENTS

### **Prelude Dinner – Saturday, July 17, 2010 at 6 p.m.**

Join Madison Opera for this special event to benefit the Opera in the Park Fund. Includes drinks and gourmet dinner by Upstairs Downstairs Catering, VIP seating to the concert, and dessert reception with artists after the performance. \$125/person.

## ARTIST BIOS

### **Anya Matanovic, soprano**



Praised for her “thrilling vocal color” and “sweetly winning” presence, American soprano Anya Matanovic made her international opera debut in Franco Zeffirelli’s production of Puccini’s *La bohème* as Musetta during the New Israeli Opera’s 2008-09 season. The 2009-10 season saw Ms. Matanovic as Gretel with Kentucky Opera and Nannetta with Seattle Opera, as well as her debut with the Richmond Symphony as the soprano soloist in Orff’s *Carmina Burana*. This past fall, Ms. Matanovic made her Opera Cleveland debut as Gretel in Humperdinck’s *Hänsel und Gretel*, and returned for their spring production of Verdi’s *Falstaff* as Nannetta. In 2009, she joined the Seattle Opera artist roster for their internationally revered production of Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Born in Madison and raised in Washington, Ms. Matanovic will return to Madison in the fall of 2010 for her performance as Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*.

### **Rodrick Dixon, tenor**



Rodrick Dixon’s dramatic stage presence and stunning vocal qualities have established him as a rising star in opera, oratorio, concert/recital, musical theater and television. In 2008, for the Los Angeles Opera, Dixon delivered a powerful performance in the title role of *Der Zwerg*. In the fall of 2008, he made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut singing excerpts of *Der Zwerg* with Maestro James Conlon. In 2009, Dixon made his Los Angeles Philharmonic debut as Oedipus in Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex* conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen and directed by Peter Sellars. He has appeared at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Michigan Opera Theater, Portland Opera, and Virginia Opera, as well as the original Broadway cast of “Ragtime.” In addition, Mr. Dixon can often be seen in television appearances and in concert performances with the opera, Broadway, jazz and gospel trio known as *The Tenors Cook, Dixon, and Young*.

### **Barbara Shirvis, soprano**



With a voice hailed as “soaring” and “exquisite” by *Opera News*, Barbara Shirvis’ 2009-10 season included returns to Toledo Opera as Alice Ford in Verdi’s *Falstaff*, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra as Fiordiligi in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, and the Rochester Philharmonic in Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9. In the summer of 2010, she sings the title role in *Tosca* with the Minnesota Orchestra. Her 2008-09 season included Cio-Cio San in *Madama Butterfly* with Utah Opera, and Liu in *Turandot* in a fully staged production for the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, as soloist in Haydn’s *The Creation* with the Rochester Philharmonic, in Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 with the Syracuse Symphony, and in recital in a new program entitled “American Celebration.”

## Stephen Powell, baritone



The dynamic American baritone Stephen Powell brings his handsome voice, elegant musicianship, and robust stage presence to a wide range of music, from Monteverdi and Handel through Verdi and Puccini to Sondheim and John Adams. *The Wall Street Journal* lauded his "rich, lyric baritone, commanding presence, and thoughtful musicianship." In 2009-10, Powell appeared as Ford in Verdi's *Falstaff* with Pittsburgh Opera and as Uncle John in Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Grapes of Wrath* in concert at Carnegie Hall. He has also recently performed with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Opera, San Francisco Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera. Recent concert engagements included the soloist in Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* with Rome's Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Christoph Eschenbach conducting, and the Brahms Requiem with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra under Marin Alsop. In the summer of 2010, in addition to his appearance with Madison Opera, Mr. Powell will sing his first Scarpia in Puccini's *Tosca* with the Minnesota Orchestra.

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Madison Opera is a non-profit, professional opera company that offers three productions annually at the Overture Center for the Arts in addition to the free summer concert Opera in the Park and a host of educational programming. Currently in its 49th year, Madison Opera's 2009-10 season has included sold-out performances of *Carmen* and *The Turn of the Screw*, as well as the company's Wagner debut, *The Flying Dutchman*. Subscriptions are currently on sale for Madison Opera's 2010-11 Season, which celebrates the company's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, and Verdi's *La Traviata*. For additional information call (608) 238-8085 or visit [www.madisonopera.org](http://www.madisonopera.org).