



For Immediate Release

Contact: Joyce Linehan (617) 282-2510 x , joyce@ashmontmedia.com

OPERA BOSTON ANNOUNCES 2009-10 SEASON

Highlights include world premiere commission *Madame White Snake*; Woodruff, Blythe, Maniaci, Huang, and Podleś company debuts

Tancredi, Gioacchino Rossini, Oct. 23—27, 2009 with Ewa Podleś

World Premiere: Madame White Snake, Zhou Long, Feb. 26—March 2, 2010

La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein, Jacques Offenbach, April 30—May 4, 2010

(BOSTON) – Opera Boston announces its landmark 2009-2010 season, including the company’s first commission, to be presented at the Cutler Majestic Theatre: Rossini’s *Tancredi*, Zhou Long’s *Madame White Snake*, and Offenbach’s *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*. The season marks the company debut of visionary stage director Robert Woodruff, former artistic director of the American Repertory Theatre, and the Boston stage debuts of three internationally-renowned artists in title roles: Polish contralto Ewa Podleś, Chinese soprano Ying Huang, and American mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe. All performances in the 2009-10 season will be conducted by Opera Boston’s Grammy-nominated Music Director Gil Rose. The world premiere of *Madame White Snake* is presented by State Street Corporation.

Opera Boston General Director Carole Charnow says of the upcoming season, “our programming and casting demonstrate the maturing and the confidence of the institution. We’re maintaining our focus on our artistic mission and our programming model. We’re going to keep doing what we do best, with some of the best singers in the world.” Of the three lead performers she says, “they each bring a high level of ownership to the role: Ms. Podleś is the definitive *Tancredi* of our time, Ms. Blythe is one of the most celebrated actors in opera, and Ms. Huang will create the role of *Madame White Snake*. This season, Opera Boston is setting a new standard for opera performance—and creation—in Boston.”

Opera Boston offers three performances of each opera: Friday evenings at 7:30 pm, Sunday afternoons at 3 pm, and Tuesday evenings at 7:30 pm.

Opera Boston is now taking subscription renewals; new subscription brochures will be available in early May. Patrons may request a brochure by calling (617) 451-3388, or e-mailing: info@operaboston.org. Individual tickets go on sale after Labor Day through Telecharge and the Cutler Majestic Theatre box office.

The 2009-2010 Season

(*company debut)

Tancredi

Gioacchino Rossini

Libretto by Gaetano Rossi and Luigi Lechi (revised "Ferrara" ending) after Voltaire

World Premiere: February 6, 1813, Teatro La Fenice, Venice.

Tancredi: Ewa Podleś*, contralto

Amenaide: Amanda Forsythe, soprano

Argirio: Yeghishe Manucharyan, tenor

Conducted by Gil Rose

Directed by Kristine McIntyre*

Friday, October 23 at 7:30 pm

Sunday, October 25 at 3:00 pm

Tuesday, October 27 at 7:30 pm

Sung in Italian with projected English titles

Polish contralto **Ewa Podleś** makes her Boston stage debut as the disinherited and exiled Syracusan knight Tancredi. Ms. Podleś is widely regarded as the world's foremost contralto, and is one of the few singers capable of the challenging title role of Tancredi. Her recent appearances include La Cieca in *La Gioconda* at the Metropolitan Opera, Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress* and the title role in *Tancredi* at Madrid's Teatro Real, and Maffio Orsini in *Lucrezia Borgia* at Barcelona's Liceu.

Soprano **Amanda Forsythe** returns to Opera Boston to sing the role of Amenaide, Tancredi's secret lover who is falsely accused of treason against her family when her unaddressed letter to Tancredi is intercepted and believed to be intended for the leader of the enemy Saracens. Ms. Forsythe's previous appearances with Opera Boston were as Iris in *Semele* in 2008 and as The Angel in 2006's *Angels in America*. Tenor **Yeghishe Manucharyan** appears as Argirio, the leader of a warring family who disowns his daughter Amenaide when she is suspected of betraying him. Mr. Manucharyan has made many appearances with Opera Boston since his company debut as Rodolfo in *Luisa Miller* (2004); he has sung the roles of Nadir in *The Pearl Fishers* in 2007, and Ivan the Lackey in 2009's *The Nose*.

Stage Director **Kristine McIntyre** makes her Boston debut with this production. Since making her directorial debut in 1994, Ms. McIntyre has staged revivals of *La Traviata*, *Luisa Miller*, and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for the Metropolitan Opera, and has directed new productions of diverse repertoire for companies such as Portland Opera, Dallas Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Pittsburgh Opera Center.

Madame White Snake

Zhou Long

Libretto by Cerise Lim Jacobs

World Premiere: February 26, 2010, Cutler Majestic Theatre, Boston.

Madame White Snake: Ying Huang*, soprano

Little Green: Michael Maniaci*, male soprano

Xu Xian: John McVeigh*, tenor

Abbot Fahai: Dong-Jian Gong*, bass

Conducted by Gil Rose
Directed by Robert Woodruff*

Friday, February 26 at 7:30 pm
Sunday, February 28 at 3:00 pm
Tuesday, March 2 at 7:30 pm

Sung in English with projected titles

Soprano **Ying Huang** makes her Opera Boston debut in the title role of Madame White Snake, a powerful snake demon who takes human form to experience love. Notable among Ms. Huang's many achievements are her creation of the role of Du Liniang in Tan Dun's *Peony Pavilion* and her film debut as Cio-Cio San in Frédéric Mitterrand's film *Madama Butterfly*. Ms. Huang made her Metropolitan Opera debut during the 2006-2007 season in the role of Pamina in the new English language version of *The Magic Flute*. She starred in the Metropolitan Opera's first simulcast into movie theaters throughout the world.

Male soprano **Michael Maniaci** creates the role of Little Green, a green snake who is Madame White Snake's servant, and who undergoes a similar transformation. Following Mr. Maniaci's overwhelming success as Tirinto in Glimmerglass Opera's production of Handel's *Imeneo*, Anthony Tommasini stated in *The New York Times*, "The amazing male soprano Michael Maniaci [is] headed for a major career." Previous Boston appearances include the title role in Handel's *Serse* and Nerone in Handel's *Agrippina* with Boston Baroque.

Tenor **John McVeigh** makes his Boston debut as Xu Xian, a scholar who falls in love with Madame White after a chance meeting, and whose suspicion of her drives him to question her true identity. Mr. McVeigh is frequently heard in Baroque and early Classical works, as well as twentieth-century works by Britten, Floyd, and Thomson.

Bass **Dong-Jian Gong** makes his Boston debut as the Abbot Fahai, an old adversary of Madame White Snake who undermines her husband's fidelity and brings about her betrayal. Mr. Gong has made a specialty of the role of Kublai Khan in Tan Dun's *Marco Polo* and appeared as Han Xizai in the world premiere of Guo Wenjing's *Night Banquet* with the Hong Kong Arts Festival. He performed the role of Laohan in the world premiere of Qu Xiao-song's *Life on a String* with the Kunsten Festival des Arts in Brussels, as well as in Paris, Lisbon, at the Edinburgh Festival, and with Zeitgenossische Opera in Berlin.

Robert Woodruff is an internationally acclaimed director of theater and opera. He has served as either director or associate artist with some of the country's most significant crucibles of innovation in the field of performance, including the Eureka Theater, the Mark Taper Forum, the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, and the American Repertory Theatre. He frequently collaborates with such artists as Rinde Eckert, Philip Glass, Charles Mee, and Sam Shepard and is among the foremost international directors of Shakespeare and Brecht. Mr. Woodruff's work has been seen in festivals in Edinburgh, Spoleto, Sydney, Jerusalem, and Brooklyn.

Composer **Zhou Long**, was recently cited by the *New York Times* as one of the leading Chinese composers charged with "injecting a new vitality into the American classical music scene." Previous compositions include "Four Seasons" for unaccompanied chorus, "Two poems from Tang" for orchestra, and "Five Elements" and "Rites of Chimes" for blended ensembles of Chinese and Western instruments. *Madame White Snake* is his first opera.

Librettist **Cerise Lim Jacobs** was born in colonial Singapore into a traditional Chinese family. She now lives in Brookline, Mass. She received her degree in creative writing from the University of Pittsburgh and her law degree from Harvard Law School. She recently retired as a trial attorney and returned to creative writing. *Madame White Snake* is her first opera libretto.

La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein

Jacques Offenbach

Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

World Premiere: April 12, 1867, Théâtre des Variétés, Paris.

La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein: Stephanie Blythe*, mezzo-soprano

Conducted by Gil Rose

Friday, April 30 at 7:30 pm

Sunday, May 2 at 3:00 pm

Tuesday, May 4 at 7:30 pm

Sung in French; spoken dialogue in English translation with titles

Acclaimed mezzo-soprano **Stephanie Blythe** makes her Boston stage debut as the capricious but charismatic petty tyrant of the fictional duchy of Gérolstein. Named *Musical America's* 2009 Vocalist of the Year, Ms. Blythe is one of the most highly-respected and versatile stars in opera today. Her recent turn as Orfeo at the Metropolitan Opera in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* prompted Anthony Tommasini of the *New York Times* to pronounce, "a once-in-a-generation opera singer has arrived."

About Opera Boston

Opera Boston is Boston's most innovative opera company. Founded in 1980, the company has presented more than 70 operas, including 34 regional and two world premieres. In addition to its critically acclaimed, award-winning mainstage productions, Opera Boston offers a range of programs, including an occasional chamber opera festival, performances in public spaces throughout the city, a popular informal cabaret series and an extensive educational program in Boston's schools.