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NORTH CAROLINA OPERA PRESENTS INNOVATIVE FAUST

Exciting original semi-staged production features video projections

North Carolina Opera presents FAUST by Charles Gounod April 28, 2011 at 8pm and April 30, 2011 at 8pm at the Meymandi Concert Hall at the Progress Energy Center in Raleigh. Tickets start at \$25 and are available at www.ncopera.org or by calling 919-792-3850.

The opera tells the tale of *Faust* who forfeits his soul to Méphistophélès in exchange for youth and pleasure. He seduces the virtuous Marguerite, then callously moves on, leaving her pregnant and ruined. In the end, taunted by Méphistophélès and threatened with damnation, Marguerite's only hope is to call upon the angels. *Faust* is set to a French libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré from Carré's play *Faust et Marguerite*, in turn loosely based on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust, Part 1*.

North Carolina Opera's original semi-staged production includes innovative video projections by S. Katy Tucker and stage direction by James Marvel. This traditional 19th century opera treated in a decidedly untraditional way will give the audience something a bit different. "I'd like them to feel like they've experienced something memorable, something they weren't completely expecting" said S. Katy Tucker. Stage Director James Marvel continues, "We hope to succeed in allowing our virtual scenery to support Gounod's music and the immense talent of the performers onstage. What we have done here in combining the super titles into the content of our aesthetic is an entirely new concept. It has never been done before, and it is a deliberate attempt to make the art form more accessible and more progressive at the same time."

"Our approach to the piece aims to remove barriers between the audience and the music," said General Director Eric Mitchko. "During the semi-staged production from director James Marvel you will see innovative and fascinating video projections designed by S. Katy Tucker, whose work I have loved in the celebrated new production of Wagner's *Ring* cycle in Washington and San Francisco. Most of all *Faust* needs a truly first-class cast, and I am happy to say that we have that here, all under the baton of our Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Timothy Myers."

The international cast features Dimitri Pittas in the title role, Mary Dunleavy as Marguerite, Christian Van Horn as Méphistophélès, Liam Bonner as Valentin, Irene Roberts as Siebel, John Brandon as Wagner, and Janice Meyerson as Marthe Schwerlein. James Marvel directs the production, the Video Projections Designer is S. Katy Tucker, and the Lighting Designer is Tlálóc Lopez-Watermann.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Alone in his study, the old and disillusioned Dr. Faust laments that his lifelong search for knowledge has yielded nothing but despair. He raises a goblet of poison to his lips but falters when he hears the songs of merry-

makers outside. Cursing his fellow men, the envious philosopher invokes Satan. The Devil appears, and Faust tells him of his longing for youth and pleasure; Mephistopheles replies that these desires can be fulfilled if he will forfeit his soul. Faust hesitates until the Devil conjures up a vision of a lovely maiden, Marguerite. A magic potion transforms Faust into a handsome youth, and he leaves with Mephistopheles in search of Marguerite.

Soldiers and townspeople gather for a fair. A young officer, Valentin, holding a medallion from his sister Marguerite, asks his friend Siebel to protect the girl in his absence and then bids a touching farewell. A student named Wagner starts the revelry with a lively song but is interrupted by Mephistopheles, who delivers an impudent hymn in praise of greed and gold. The Devil refuses a drink from Wagner and amazes the crowd by causing new wine to flow from an old cask. When he makes a brazen toast to Marguerite, Valentin draws his sword, but it shatters; the other soldiers, recognizing Satan, hold their swords like crosses before Mephistopheles, who backs away. They leave, and as the crowd begins a waltz, Faust speaks to Marguerite. She demurely refuses to let him escort her home; Mephistopheles returns to lead the merry-makers in their dance.

Siebel briefly visits Marguerite's garden to leave her a bouquet of flowers. The romantic youth is followed by Faust. Mephistopheles goes in search of a more impressive gift; left alone, Faust hails Marguerite's simple home. The Devil returns with a box of jewels, which he places next to Siebel's flowers. When Marguerite arrives, she sings a ballad, interrupting the verses with reflections on the stranger she met. She discovers the flowers and delightedly adorns herself with the jewels. Mephistopheles detours a nosy middle-aged neighbor, Marthe, by flirting with her so Faust can make his conquest. As night falls, Marguerite confesses her love, but persuades Faust to leave. When he is about to comply, the Devil mockingly sends him back and laughs as Marguerite, who has reappeared at her window, yields to her lover's embrace.

ACT II

Marguerite, now deserted by Faust, laments that her lover will never return. Valentin and his comrades return from war, singing the glory of those slain in battle. The soldier questions Siebel about Marguerite but receives only evasive replies; puzzled, he enters his house. Faust, remorseful at having abandoned Marguerite, arrives with Mephistopheles, who sings a mocking serenade. Valentin, stepping forth to defend his sister's honor, fights a duel with Faust, who, guided by Mephistopheles, runs him through. As the Devil drags Faust away, Marguerite kneels by her fatally wounded brother, who curses her with his last breath. Marguerite seeks refuge in a church, shadowed by Mephistopheles, who torments her with curses and threats of damnation. She collapses.

Marguerite lies asleep in prison, condemned to death for the murder of her child. Faust and Mephistopheles enter, bent on spiriting her away. As the Devil keeps watch, Faust wakens Marguerite; at first the distracted girl is overjoyed to see her lover, and recalls their first days of happiness. When Mephistopheles emerges from the shadows urging haste, Marguerite calls on the angels to save her. As she dies, the Devil pronounces her condemned, but angelic choirs proclaim her salvation.

ABOUT THE CAST

Dimitri Pittas, Faust

New Yorker Dimitri Pittas is one of the most exciting young tenors on the opera and concert stage today. He has already appeared on the stages of The Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Dresden Semperoper, Frankfurt Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Santa Fe Opera. On the concert stage, Mr. Pittas has been heard with the Pittsburgh Symphony and the Atlanta Symphony in gala celebrations, and sang Verdi's Requiem with the Atlanta Symphony. This season, Mr. Pittas returns to the Bavarian State Opera as Tebaldo in a new production of *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* and makes his debut with Royal Opera House Covent Garden as Macduff in *Macbeth*. He made his debut with Houston Grand Opera as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and joined the Pittsburgh Symphony for performances of Verdi's Requiem. He finishes the season singing the title role of Faust for Santa Fe Opera.

Mary Dunleavy, Marguerite

American soprano Mary Dunleavy continues to receive critical and popular acclaim for her performances with many of the world's leading opera houses and orchestras. Ms. Dunleavy's 2010-2011 season includes the lead soprano, Christine, in New York City Opera's revival of Strauss' *Intermezzo*, the soprano soloist in Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Richmond Symphony, a gala concert with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, and her first Marguerite in *Faust* with Opera Birmingham, followed by further performances of the role in North Carolina Opera's inaugural season. Future seasons will include a new production with Opéra de Montréal, and returns to the roster of the Metropolitan Opera and to the Dallas Opera. In the 2009-2010 season, Ms. Dunleavy performed *Konstanze* in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* with San Francisco Opera, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the San Diego Symphony, *Gilda* in *Rigoletto* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and *Violetta* in *La traviata* under Lorin Maazel at the National Center for Performing Arts in Beijing. Further recent appearances of note include engagements with the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, Glimmerglass Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Hamburgische Staatsoper, and the Los Angeles Opera.

Christian Van Horn, Méphistophélès

This season, bass-baritone Christian Van Horn made his debuts at the San Francisco Opera as the King in *Aida*, the Portland Opera as Timur in *Turandot*, and the Boston Lyric Opera as Claudio in *Agrippina*. This summer he returns to the Bayerische Staatsoper as Angelotti in *Tosca* and to the Santa Fe Opera as Colline in *La Bohème*, and next season he makes his debut at the Canadian Opera Company and returns to the San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Salzburg Easter Festival. He has appeared in many distinguished opera houses in the US and Europe including the Los Angeles Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and the Staatsoper Stuttgart. In concert he has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Berlin Philharmonic, and in Carnegie Hall, the Salzburg Festival and the Bard Music Festival. Mr. Van Horn received his Master's degree in music from Yale University. His numerous awards include a winner of 2003 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, a 2003 Sarah Tucker Study Grant, and first place at the 2002 MacAllister Competition Collegiate Division.

Irene Roberts, Siebel

This season, mezzo soprano Irene Roberts joins the Metropolitan Opera roster as Stephano (cover) in *Roméo et Juliette*, returns to the Palm Beach Opera as Amore in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and makes her company debut in the role of Siebel in *Faust* with North Carolina Opera. Ms. Roberts will then perform Mahler's *Ruckert Lieder* with the Duke Symphony Orchestra. In 2012, she will return to the Townsend Opera to make her debut as the title role in *Carmen* and makes her debut with the Lyric Opera Baltimore in a new production of *Faust*. A native of Sacramento, CA, Ms. Roberts' recent engagements include two summers at the Castleton Festival under the direction of Lorin Maazel, *Rosina* in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with the Townsend Opera and *Suzuki* in *Madama Butterfly* with the Opera Western Reserve. A recent graduate of the Palm Beach Opera's Young Artist Program, she performed *Emilia* in *Otello*, *Zerlina* in *Don Giovanni* and *Mercédès* in *Carmen*. Ms. Roberts' awards include 2nd place advanced division prize in the 41st Annual Palm Beach Opera Vocal Competition.

Liam Bonner, Valentin

In the 2010-11 season, Liam Bonner sings *Pelléas* in *Pelléas and Mélisande* with Opera Theater of Saint Louis and sings his first performances of *Zurga* in *Les pêcheurs de perles* (New Orleans Opera), *Ned Keene* in *Peter Grimes* (return to Houston Grand Opera), and *Figaro* in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Ash Lawn Opera). Future engagements include *Sid* in *Albert Herring* (Los Angeles Opera), *Guglielmo* in *Così fan tutte* (return to Opera Theater of Saint Louis), and *Audelbert* in the world premiere of Kevin Puts' *Silent Night* (Minnesota Opera). Previous performances include the title role in *Hamlet* (Washington National Opera), *Morales* in *Carmen*, *Horatio* in *Hamlet* (Metropolitan Opera), *Belcore* in *L'elisir d'amore*; *Demetrius* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Claudio* in *Béatrice et Bénédict*, *Count* in *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Redburn* in *Billy Budd* (Houston Grand Opera); *Malatesta* in *Don Pasquale* (Opera New Jersey); *Papageno* in *Die Zauberflöte* (Wolf Trap Opera); and *Count* in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Berkshire Opera). He has also recently sung Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall). Collegiate Division.

John Brandon, Wagner

During the 2010-11 season, baritone John Brandon makes a series of operatic debuts as Enrico (Lucia di Lammermoor) with Opera Vivente, Antonio (The Marriage of Figaro) with both Nashville Opera and Opera Columbus, and Wagner (Faust) with North Carolina Opera. He returns to Nashville Opera for the roles of Morales and Dancairo in Bizet's Carmen. Last season, John performed Mercutio in a James Marvel production of Gounod's Romeo et Juliette as a member of Opera Santa Barbara's Young Artist Program. Past appearances have included the UK Opera Theater, UTC Opera Theater, International Opera Theater, and the Schmitt Opera Outreach Program. John recently received his degree in vocal performance from Westminster Choir College, where he sang the roles of Toante (Oreste), Marco (Gianni Schicchi), and Simeon (L'Enfant Prodigue) under the direction of Daniel Beckwith and Marc Verzatt. He received further training as member of Nashville Opera's Mary Ragland Young Artist Program, where he sang Jacob in the American premiere of The Brothers Grimm. Aside from his work on the opera stage, John has performed with some of the world's leading vocal ensembles including the Kammerchor Stuttgart, English Voices, and Westminster Choir.

Janice Meyerson, Marthe Schwerlein

Janice Meyerson has triumphed in opera houses and concert halls on five continents, bringing her rich tone and dramatic characterizations to virtually the entire mezzo-soprano repertoire. She has sung with some of the world's finest orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony and Dallas Symphony especially with her performances of such works as Verdi Requiem, Mahler Das Lied von der Erde, and Brahms Alto Rhapsody. She has sung under Seiji Ozawa, John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Charles Mackerras, Rafael Kubelik, Leonard Slatkin, Christian Badaea, and others; Leonard Bernstein conducted her professional debut as Brangäne in Tristan und Isolde at Tanglewood and later with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Highlights of her operatic appearances the title role in Carmen with New York City Opera and La Monnaie in Brussels, Laura La Gioconda with Deutsche Oper Berlin Amneris in Aida at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, and the title role in Massenet's with Opera Orchestra of New York. She has also appeared with Essen Opera as Eboli in Don Carlo and Ulrica in Un ballo in maschera, Teatro Municipal, Rio de Janeiro, as Azucena in Il trovatore, Houston Grand Opera as Suzuki in Madama Butterfly, Freiburg Opera as Phaedra in Rameau's Hippolyte et Aricie and Opera Ireland as Kabanicha in Kat'a Kabanova.

Timothy Myers, Artistic Director & Principal Conductor

With a repertoire encompassing a wide variety of symphonic works and nearly 60 operas, Timothy Myers has proven himself as an important young American conductor. A protégé of renowned conductor Lorin Maazel, Myers' recent and future engagements include the Beijing National Center for the Performing Arts, New York City Opera, Opera Africa, the Atlanta, North Carolina and Milwaukee symphony orchestras, the Wolf Trap and Castleton festivals, and numerous other projects spanning four continents. As the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of North Carolina Opera, Timothy is one of the youngest artistic leaders in American opera. In addition to assistant/associate engagements with the New York Philharmonic, New York City Opera, and London BBC Symphony, Myers has made debuts with the Jerusalem, American and Palm Beach symphonies, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the opera companies of Palm Beach, Anchorage, Asheville and Central City. Myers' previous posts include associate conductor of the Palm Beach and Central City operas, principal guest conductor and artistic advisor of the Palm Beach Symphony, assistant conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra and Orlando Philharmonic, and faculty at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, CA.

James Marvel, Stage Director

In February 2011, Stage Director James Marvel will direct Cavalli's Eliogabalo at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall for the Gotham Chamber Opera. In March 2011, he will make his debut with Opera Africa in Johannesburg. James made his Lincoln Center debut for the Juilliard Opera Center with Maestro James Conlon conducting. In 2009, James made his debut in Seoul, South Korea and directed a critically acclaimed new production of Monteverdi's Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria for the Wolf Trap Opera Company. In 2010, James returned to Wolf Trap to direct Mozart's Zaide and made his Canadian debut directing Rape of Lucretia. James was named Classical Singer Magazine's "2008 – Stage Director of the Year." Since his professional directing

debut in 1996, he has directed over 80 productions in the United States, England, Scotland, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. In 2008, James made his Italian debut at the Teatro Comunale in Sulmona, Italy. He will return to Sulmona in 2011. His new production of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* for the San Francisco Opera Merola Program was named "Best Production of the Year" by the San Francisco Chronicle. James served as Co-Director with Henryk Baranowski at Teatr Wielki in Lodz, Poland on Philip Glass' *Akhmaten*, which won 2 Golden Mask Awards for Best Direction and Best Production of the Year. Other career highlights include groundbreaking new productions of *Les Pecheurs De Perles* for Opera Boston; *La Voix Humaine* at Florence Gould Hall in New York City and for the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, Belgium; and *Tosca* at the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia.

S. Katy Tucker, Video Projections Designer

Katy Tucker is a video and projections designer based in New York City. Katy began her career as a painter and installation artist, exhibiting her work at a variety of galleries, such as The Corcoran Museum in Washington, DC and Artist's Space in New York City. In 2003, as her video installations became more "theatrical," Katy shifted her focus to video and projection design for the stage. Since 2003, Katy has worked all over the US and world including Broadway, Off- Broadway, The Royal Opera House, Mariinsky Theater, Carnegie Hall, Disney World, Kennedy Center, San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Ballet, Denver Center, Alley Theater, Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, Mark Taper Forum, Actors Theater of Louisville, The Julliard School and more. Upcoming productions include: *Heart of a Soldier* and *Götterdämmerung* with Francesca Zambello at the San Francisco Opera, *Sweeney Todd* at the Filene Center for Wolf Trap Opera, *21st Liederabend* with Paola Prestini at The Kitchen, *Faust* at North Carolina Opera, and *Wonderland* on Broadway. Recent productions include: *underneathmybed* at the Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* on Broadway, *Body Maps* with composer Paola Prestini and cellist Jeffrey Zeigler of the Kronos Quartet, *Beyond the Machine* at The Julliard School, and *Wagner's Ring Cycle* at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia and Covent Garden in London. In 2006, Katy co-founded with partner Alexandra Morton, *beatbox designs*, a New York and LA based interdisciplinary design firm that re-thinks and re-works the boundaries between art, architecture, entertainment and experience. Katy resides in Fort Greene, Brooklyn.

Tlálóc López-Watermann, Lighting Designer

Tlálóc López-Watermann is the founder of the lighting and video design company *Light Conversations LLC* and his talents are in demand across the country. Tlálóc is a company member of *The Plastic Arts* with whom he co-created *Utopia*, *Euphoria*, *Hysteria: Various Thinkings on Placidity* in Berlin in 2009, a follow-up to an earlier show presented at the *Ontological-Hysteric Theater (NYC)*. He was also the lighting designer for *Target Margin's "Aristophanic Lab"* for the play *The Name Means Public Spirited* at *HERE (NYC)*. His lighting designs have been seen at *Opera Louisiana*, *Toledo Opera*, *Utah Festival Opera*, *Todi Music Fest (Portsmouth, VA)*, *Opera Roanoke*, and *Shreveport Opera*. Some of these include: *Salome*, *La bohème*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *The Crucible*, *Eugene Onegin*, *La Fille du Régiment*, *Il trovatore*, *La traviata*, *Falstaff*, and *Die Zaubeflöte*. Tlálóc has a BFA in Performance Production from *Cornish College of the Arts* and an MFA in Design from *NYU/Tisch*. Tlálóc was the 2002 *Allen Lee Hughes Lighting Fellow* at *Arena Stage* in Washington, DC.

ABOUT NORTH CAROLINA OPERA

North Carolina Opera was formed in 2010 from the merger of *Capital Opera Raleigh* and *The Opera Company of North Carolina*. It is dedicated to presenting operatic performances at the highest level throughout the Triangle. We also have a robust education program that brings opera to schools across Wake County and surrounding counties. North Carolina Opera brings international level artists to Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, and also engages the best in local Triangle talent.

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