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Sunday, August 14, 2011 5:00 pm

Operesque Classical Concerts

Operesque Classical Concerts is the third in a series of operatic projects designed to give excellent emerging singers an opportunity to perform with seasoned professionals and expand their musical talent in specialized concerts throughout the tri-state area. Operesque is presenting an exciting new season performing repertoire in their entirety, offering singer and audience an unusual opportunity for in-depth comprehension of both drama and music. Operesque Classical Concerts has performed benefit concerts, as well as soirées entertainment, and is available for special occasions in your home or for corporate events. If you would like additional information about Operesque, or wish to audition or book a concert, please call: (917) 402-8558.

Karin Grant, Artistic Director and Founder of Operesque, is a native New Yorker who majored in Art at Mercyhurst College (PA), studied Modeling at John Robert Powers School, Acting at Herbert Berghof Studios, Fencing at Columbia University, and received her musical education at The Juilliard and Dalcroze Schools of Music and the New York School for Opera (NYC). She conceived the idea of Operesque to provide a venue for singers to perform the more dramatic operas, as well as the standard repertoire. Ms. Grant has performed over seventy leading soprano/mezzo roles in opera, operetta, oratoria, and musical comedy, has danced in various shows, and has also performed in Shakespeare. She has appeared as guest artist in concert at Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Hall and Damrosch Park (Lincoln Center), CAMI Hall and Carnegie Hall (Weill), and has performed with such companies as Brooklyn Lyric Opera, Connecticut Grand Opera, Manhattan Savoyards, Mobile Theatre, National Grand Opera, New Amsterdam Opera, New England Lyric Operetta Co., New York City Opera, New York Grand Opera, New Jersey State Opera, NJAVO, Island Lyric Opera, Light Opera of Manhattan, Long Island Opera, LOVE Opera, LUBO Opera, Opera Classics of NJ, Operesque Classical Concerts, Opera Orchestra of NY, Unicorn Opera and Village Light Opera. Ms. Grant, a Metaphysical Practitioner of Religious Science, is a member of AGMA, AEA and SAG and has served for three years on the AGMA Board of Governors.

James Kay, Music Director and Principal Conductor, Emerit, engaged in the autumn of 1996 to conduct *La Bohème*, Mr. Kay, former music director of the opera department of Brooklyn Music Conservatory, was appointed music director and principal conductor for New York's Operesque Classical Concerts. He was assistant music director with the Memphis Opera Theatre in regional opera productions starring Beverly Sills, Brigit Nilsson and Jerome Hines. Kay has conducted Baryshnikov with the New York City Ballet—Lincoln Center and ballets starring Villella and McBride with the Memphis Ballet. He is an accomplished conductor—pianist—composer and likes to be on music's leading edge exploring the relationship of music synthesizers and computers to classical music composition.

Berit Kristina Rundqvist, Musicologist, from Sweden, studied Music History and Ethnomusicology at Hunter College and Mannes College of Music (NYC). She studied Gregorian chant in Assisi, Italy with Padre Verde (Pontifical School of Music) (Rome, Italy), and in the USA with Dr. Tortolano, St. Edmunds (Mystic, Conn) and at St. Meinrad's Archabbey (Indiana) with Fr. Colombia Kelly O.S.B. Berit is a charter member of St. Gregory Institute for Music & Liturgy (Stamford, CT) and is a member of the American Musicological Society (AMS).

Sanford Rothenberg, Artistic Advisor, has appeared in *Aida* and *Don Carlo* (MET), *Moses und Aaron* at New York City Opera, and the Carnegie Hall Centennial under James Levine, Christopher Keene and Robert Shaw. He has appeared on radio and television, performed in Europe, Tahiti, Australia and New Zealand, composed fifty works and conducted two performances at Lincoln Center. He is music director of L'Ensemble Sanford Rothenberg and artistic/music director of the Rothenberg Opera Theatre. His eighty roles include Méphistophélès (Gounod, Boito and Berlioz), Boris, King Philip, Osmin and Sarastro.

SYNOPSIS

PROLOGUE.

Scene 1: The ruined city of Aquileia. Attila and his victorious horde are surprised to see a group of women spared as prisoners of war. Their leader, Odabella, asks why the Hun women remain at home (*Allor che i forti corrono* / "While your warriors rush to their sword like lions"). Attila, impressed by her courage, offers a boon and she asks for her sword to avenge the death of her father at Attila's own hand (*Da te questo or mi è concesso* / "I have the universe, but let Italy remain mine.") Attila denounces him as a traitor to his country.

Scene 2: A Swamp — the future site of Venice. A boat bearing Foresto and other survivors arrives; he thinks of the captive Odabella (*Ell'a in poter del barbaro* / "She is in barbarian's power!") but then rouses himself and the others to begin building a new city (*Carca patria già madre e reina* / "Dear homeland, at once mother and queen of powerful generous sons.")

ACT I.

Scene 1: A wood near Attila's camp. Odabella laments her father and Foresto (*Oh, N. fuggente nuvolo* / "O father, is your image not imprinted on the fleeting clouds?"), believing the latter to be dead. When he appears, she is put on the defensive, denying any infidelity and reminding him of the biblical Judith. The couple is reunited: *Oh, t'inebria nell'amplesso* / "I find vast joy without measure.")

Scene 2: Attila's tent. Attila awakens and tells Uldino of a dream in which an old man stopped him at the gates of Rome and warned him to turn back (*Mentre gonfiarsi l'anima pareo* / "As my soul seemed to swell"). In the daylight, his courage returns and he orders a march (*Oltre quel limite, t'attendo, o spetro* / "Beyond that boundary I await you, O ghost!"). However, when a procession of maidens clad in white approaches, singing a Christian hymn, he recognizes the Roman bishop, Pope Leo I., the Great, as the old man of his dream, and collapses in terror.

ACT II.

Ezio's camp. Ezio has been recalled, after a peace has been concluded. He contrasts Rome's past glory with the child emperor Valentine (*Dag'immortali vertici* / "From the splendid immortal peaks of former glory"). Recognizing the incognito Foresto among the bearers of an invitation to a banquet with Attila, he agrees to join forces (*E' gettata la mia sorte* / "My lot is cast, I am prepared for any warfare.") At the banquet, Foresto's plot to have Uldino poison Attila is foiled by Odabella, jealous of her own revenge. A grateful (and unsuspecting) Attila declares she shall be his wife, and places the unmasked Foresto in her custody.

ACT III.

The Forest. Uldino informs Foresto about the plans for the wedding of Odabella and Attila. Foresto laments Odabella's apparent betrayal (*Che non avrebbe il misero* / "What would the wretched man not have offered for Odabella.") Ezio arrives with a plan to ambush the Hun when Odabella arrives, Foresto accuses her of treachery, but she pleads for his trust. Attila finds the three and recognizes their betrayal. As Roman soldiers approach, Odabella strikes him with the sword he had given her. The three conspirators cry that the people have been avenged.