

*San Francisco Lyric Opera*  
*opera that soars, prices that don't*

**SAN FRANCISCO LYRIC OPERA PRESENTS MOZART'S DON GIOVANNI STARRING  
EUGENE BRANCOVEANU, JAN. 23–FEB. 1 AT THE COWELL THEATER,  
CONDUCTED BY BARNABY PALMER  
Tickets now on sale at (415) 345-7575 or [www.sflyricopera.org](http://www.sflyricopera.org)**

SAN FRANCISCO (January 16, 2008) – San Francisco Lyric Opera opens its 2009 Season on Friday, January 23, with Wolfgang Mozart's most intriguing and expressive opera, *Don Giovanni*, featuring critically acclaimed Romanian baritone, [Eugene Brancoveanu](#) in the title role. Each production of *Don Giovanni* will be led by exemplary artistic director and conductor, Barnaby Palmer, and guided by award-winning stage director, David Cox.

This production blends an award-winning and diverse cast, including some of the most talented emerging opera stars of today's generation. Featured with Eugene Brancoveanu, are soprano Duana Demus Leslie (*Donna Anna*), the phenomenal bass, Sergey Zadvorny (*Commendatore*), baritone Razvan Georgescu (*Leporello*), soprano Krista Wigle (*Zerlina*), baritone Igor Viera (*Masetto*), tenor Ashley Faatoalia (*Don Ottavio*) and soprano Kali Wilson (*Donna Elvira*).

*Don Giovanni* is Mozart's setting of Lorenzo Da Ponte's libretto, and of the many versions of the Don Juan story, this one is considered to be "beyond comparison." The opera synthesizes comedy, serious drama, and unearthly elements.

Set in Seville, Spain, during the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the story captures an arrogant nobleman who scoffs at all decency in his relentless pursuit of three sexual conquests; the first with Donna Elvira, who still follows him after he ends up deserting her; the second with Donna Anna, who postpones her marriage to Don Ottavio after her father, the Commendatore, is killed by Giovanni in his attempt to escape from an unsuccessful endeavor at seducing her; and the third with Zerlina, whom he vainly tries to lure from her fiancé, the peasant Masetto.

Throughout each of his trysts, Giovanni is closely and comically aided by his servant Leporello. As a result of his wrongdoings, all vow vengeance on the Don and his harassed servant. His retribution is plotted by his many enraged enemies, but justice is finally delivered by the ghostly statue of Donna Anna's murdered father, the Commendatore.

Joshua Kosman of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, complimented on a past production of *Turn of the Screw*, stating that "Intimacy and precision are the hallmarks of San Francisco Lyric Opera's splendid production of the opera...Conducted with exemplary care by Artistic Director Barnaby Palmer and sung by a uniformly fine cast, Sunday's matinee performance allowed the audience to witness the work's magic right up close, without flinching or cheating..."

In a past review of the San Francisco Lyric Opera's production of *La Bohème*, George Jelinek, Music Director Emeritus and Metropolitan Opera Panelist, acknowledged artistic director and conductor Barnaby Palmer, in his success at securing a "rousingly resonant and sensitive response from the chamber orchestra...the production was excellent, and the cast was well-chosen from professionals of high caliber. I left with deep admiration for the entire ensemble."

The San Francisco Lyric Opera unites the highest level of talent and poise throughout the orchestra, cast and production crew, bringing a superb opera experience to all.

# # #

### **Tickets and Information**

Tickets for *Don Giovanni* are \$36.50 for adults, \$22.50 for students, and children under 12 are free. All tickets may be purchased by visiting [www.fortmason.org/boxoffice](http://www.fortmason.org/boxoffice) or by phone at (415) 345-7575. Tickets may also be purchased in person at the Cowell Theater Box Office, Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11am-5pm or 60 minutes prior to each show.

The Cowell Theater at Fort Mason Center is located between Fisherman's Wharf and the Golden Gate Bridge on San Francisco Bay, and is the middle Pier, behind the Herbst Pavilion. The entrance to Fort Mason Center is at the intersection of Marina Boulevard and Buchanan Street, in the Marina district. Please note that there is no street address. Fort Mason Center offers easy access by MUNI and BART (Muni Lines 10 Townsend, 22 Fillmore, 28 - 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 30 Stockton, 47 Van Ness, 49 Van Ness/Mission). Patrons are encouraged to use public transportation to attend San Francisco Lyric Opera performances. For additional information on directions and parking, please visit [www.fortmason.org/directions](http://www.fortmason.org/directions).

### **Production Information**

Sung in Italian with English supertitles, the four performances of *Don Giovanni* are scheduled for January 23 (7:30 p.m.), January 25 (2 p.m.), January 30 (7:30 p.m.) and February 1 (2 p.m.).

All performances take place at the Cowell Theater at Fort Mason Center.

*Don Giovanni* by Wolfgang Mozart  
Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte  
First performance: Prague, 1787  
Approximate running time: 3 hours

#### **Cast:**

*Don Giovanni* Eugene Brancoveanu  
*Donna Anna* Duana Demus Leslie  
*Commendatore* Sergey Zadvorny

#### **Production Team:**

*Conductor* Barnaby Palmer  
*Director* David Cox  
*Set Designer* Jean-Francois

<i>Leporello</i>	Razvan Georgescu	<i>Chorusmaster</i>	Chip Grant
<i>Zerlina</i>	Krista Wigle	<i>Costume Designer</i>	Meghan Muser
<i>Masetto</i>	Igor Vieira	<i>Lighting Designer</i>	David Ransom
<i>Don Ottavio</i>	Ashley Faatoalia *		
<i>Donna Elvira</i>	Kali Wilson *		

\* San Francisco Lyric Opera debut

### About the Artists

**EUGENE BRANCOVEANU** (*Don Giovanni*) was born in Romania. Career highlights include – 2003: Tony Award, Marcello, *La Bohème* on Broadway. 2004: Merola Programme, Tarquinius, *Rape of Lucretia*. 2005-06: Adler Fellow, SF Opera roles included 2nd Prisoner, *Fidelio*; Silvano, *Ballo*; Frank, *Fledermaus*; Fiorello, *Barbiere*; Morales, *Carmen*; Capitain, *Manon*. 2005-06: Opera Center roles included Gaspar, *Rita*; Giovanni, *Don Giovanni*. 2005-08: Boris, *Tomashefsky* Project with Michael Tilson Thomas, SF Symphony, Carnegie Hall, New World Symphony, Chicago Symphony, LA Philharmonic (and 2009 Tanglewood). 2007: Nicomedes, *Young Caesar*; Tomsy, *Pique Dame*; Festival Matsumoto, Seiji Ozawa; Pandolphe, *Cendrillon*, New York City Opera. 2008: Pilot, *The Little Prince*, SF Opera; Figaro (Mozart), Mendocino Music Festival; Figaro (Rossini), *Barbiere*, Fremont Opera; Belcore, *Elixir*, SF Opera.

**DUANA DEMUS LESLIE** (*Donna Anna*) “...stops the show... (was) excellent (and has an) incredible voice...” wrote the *Contra Costa Times* about her Serena in *Porgy and Bess* with the Oakland East Bay Symphony. She has performed leading roles in *Aida*, *Suor Angelica*, *Tosca*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Il Trovatore*, and others. She has appeared with Los Angeles Opera, San Francisco Lyric Opera, Berkeley Opera, Mendocino Music Festival, Fresno Philharmonic, Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra, Stockton Symphony, Diablo Symphony, with the Crystal Cathedral Orchestra on the international show, “Hour of Power” and others. In 2009 she will be performing leading roles with Livermore Valley Opera in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. She received her DMA and MM degrees at University of California Los Angeles. Visit [www.duanademus.com](http://www.duanademus.com).

**SERGEY ZADVORNY** (*Commendatore*) was born in the Ukraine and graduated with a Gold Medal and Honors from the Odessa State Conservatory. His repertoire includes roles such as Pimen, *Boris Godunov*; Gremin, *Eugene Onegin*; Inquisitor, *Fiery Angel*; Old Gypsy, *Aleco*; Khan Konchak, *Prince Igor*; Don Basilio, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*; Don Magnifico, *La Cenerentola*; Don Bartolo, *Le Nozze di Figaro*; Colline, *La Bohème*; and bass roles in Rossini’s *Stabat Mater*, Schumann’s *Das Glück von Edenhall*, and Handel’s *Acis and Galathea*. He is a laureate winner of twelve international competitions and has performed on the most well-known opera stages in Europe. He made his U.S. debut with the New York City Opera, and recently won an honor to sing a recital at the Carnegie Hall next season. Sergei also holds a Master’s Degree in mathematics.

**RAZVAN GEORGESCU** (*Leporello*) has performed major roles with the Romanian National Opera, San Francisco Lyric Opera, Brasov Opera, Opera Constanta and countless performances with National Philharmonics and National Radio Orchestra in Bucharest, Romania. His operatic repertoire includes Don Bartholo, Don Magnifico, Dandini (Rossini); Figaro, and the Count Almaviva Leporello (Mozart); Rigoletto, Rodrigo, and Renato (Verdi); and Don Pasquale, Dulcamara (Donizetti). Mr. Georgescu's concert repertoire includes works by Bach, Verdi, Mozart, Puccini, Rossini, Beethoven, Salieri, Britten, Handel, Schubert and Enescu. He is also a music director for the Walt Disney Company in Romania. An accomplished stage director and recording artist, Mr. Georgescu is the recipient of two major awards: 'Best Baritone' and second place overall, at the California International Opera Competition in 2004 and the best recording artist in 2002, in Romania. Mr. Georgescu has toured numerous countries throughout Europe and Asia.

**KRISTA WIGLE** (*Zerlina*) is very happy to be returning to San Francisco Lyric Opera in the role of Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. She made her debut with the company as Giannetta in *L'elisir d'Amore* in 2003 and subsequently performed the role of Clorinda in *La Cenerentola* with them in 2004. Most recently, she has performed the roles of Jenny in *The Threepenny Opera* with the Santa Cruz Chamber Orchestra, Blonde in *Die Entfuhrung aus dem Serail* with Sonoma City Opera, Musetta in *La Bohème*, and Yum-Yum in *The Mikado* with Livermore Valley Opera. In 2010, she will be performing the role of Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Rogue Opera in Ashland, Oregon.

**IGOR VIEIRA** (*Masetto*) was hailed by *Opera News* as "superb," and "show-stealing." Baritone Igor Vieira made his professional debut in his native Brazil, at age 17 singing the role of Dancaire in Bizet's *Carmen*. Subsequent roles have included Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'Amore*, Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, the title role in *Don Giovanni*, Ford in *Falstaff*, and Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut*. Mr. Vieira has sung 48 operatic roles with such companies as the The Amazonian Opera Festival, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Opera Theater of Philadelphia, West Bay Opera, Berkeley Opera, San Francisco Lyric Opera, Rimrock Opera, Fremont Opera and Festival Opera. He was world finalist of the 1995 Luciano Pavarotti Voice Competition in Philadelphia. Mr. Vieira holds a Bachelor's Degree from the Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and a Master's Degree from the University of Missouri in Kansas City.

**ASHLEY FAATOALIA** (*Don Ottavio*) studied vocal performance at Chapman University with Dr. Peter Atherton. He has also studied in master classes with world-renowned opera stars, Barbara Bonney and Carol Neblett. Having performed all over the Western United States, Sydney Australia and Parts of Europe, Ashley is no stranger to the stage. Most recently, he performed the lead role of *Tamino* in Opera Festival di Roma's production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* in Rome, and performed the role of *The Crab Man* in L.A. Opera's production of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. Ashley has received numerous awards for his singing and was honored this past spring by the Pasadena Opera Guild for his continued success as a young artist.

**KALI WILSON** (*Donna Elvira*) is pleased to be making her debut with San Francisco Lyric Opera. The native of Eureka, California is currently studying with Cesar Ulloa. As a student at the

San Francisco Conservatory of Music she performed in productions of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oberon), Cavalli's *Egisto* (Hero), and in Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* (Charlotte), and *Into the Woods* (Jack's Mother). And as winner of the 2007 Voice Concerto Competition she performed Samuel Barber's *Andromache's Farewell* with the Conservatory Orchestra. On the concert stage she has appeared as a soloist with the San Jose Symphonic Choir, Eureka Symphony, Monterey Symphony, and in the Conservatory's Sing-It-Yourself-Messiah at Davies Symphony Hall.

**BARNABY PALMER (Artistic Director & Conductor)** has conducted in the United States, Canada, the Czech Republic and San Francisco Lyric Opera's productions of *Das Rheingold*, *La Traviata*, *Die Walküre*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Bohème*, *Così fan tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Pasquale*, *L'elisir d'Amore*, *Don Giovanni*, *Rigoletto*, *La Cenerentola*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Carmen*, *Abduction from the Seraglio*, *Tosca*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Il Trovatore*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Tales of Hoffman*, *La Bohème*, *The Turn of the Screw* and *Aida*. He has served locally as guest conductor for Opera San José and Livermore Opera. In April 2008 Mr. Palmer was Music Director for Opera San Jose's production of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. He has studied conducting with Alan Gilbert, Rossen Milanov, Larry Rachleff and most recently Michael Morgan.

**DAVID COX (Stage Director)** began his foray into stage directing in 1993 for Pacific Repertory Opera's *Don Pasquale*. Since then he has directed several other shows for PRO including: *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Faust*, *Rigoletto*, *Die Zauberflöte*, and *La Traviata*. For Opera San Jose, Mr. Cox began with an original language *Eugene Onegin* followed by *Faust* and *Pearl Fishers*. For OSJ he directed sold-out performances of *Carmen* and *La Bohème* in the new California Fox Theater. In 2004 Mr. Cox directed *Rigoletto* and *Un Ballo in Maschera* for Festival Opera in Walnut Creek to audience and critical acclaim and was asked to return in 2008 to direct a new production of *Turandot*. He has been the principal stage director for Opera Idaho, directing *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Bohème*, *L'elisir d'Amore* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Most recently, he made his debut with West Bay Opera with a sold out production of *Carmen*.

For further information about *Don Giovanni* and San Francisco Lyric Opera's 2009 Season, please visit [www.sflyricopera.org](http://www.sflyricopera.org).