

FLORIDA GRAND
Opera

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**New Production of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*
To Open February 20, 2010**

Miami, FL – January 29, 2010 -- Rossini's beloved opera, *The Barber of Seville*, continues Florida Grand Opera's season in February and March with a delightful cast of artists. Although composed 30 years after Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* is based on the first of the Beaumarchais plays and introduces us to dashing Count Almaviva, the lovely Rosina, and the resourceful Figaro. *The Barber of Seville* is considered one of the greatest comic operas ever composed and is among the best-loved and most frequently performed operas in the world.

English baritone **Roderick Williams** will make both his Florida Grand Opera and American debut as Figaro, Seville's famous barber. Williams has become widely known throughout the UK and Europe for his opera performances and recitals, and his Figaro in Rossini's opera and his Count in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* are highly regarded.

Soprano **Sarah Coburn** returns to Florida Grand Opera to sing Rosina, following her spectacular FGO concert last season with Bryn Terfel, and her performances of Kitty in FGO's 2007 world premiere of *Anna Karenina*. In May 2009, Ms. Coburn received the Washington National Opera's 2009 Artist of the Year award. The award was announced by Maestro Plácido Domingo at the annual Board of Trustees dinner on April 24. Maestro Domingo praised Sarah, who made her WNO debut in the company's 2008 production of *Tamerlano*, in which she played Asteria opposite Maestro Domingo's Bajazet.

Canadian tenor **Frédéric Antoun** returns to FGO to sing Count Almaviva. Of his Don Ramiro in last season's *La Cenerentola*, Lawrence A. Johnson wrote in the *Miami Herald*, "...Frédéric Antoun was superb across the board. The Canadian tenor's easy regal bearing was just right for the nonstuffy Ramiro, playing off Dandini's antics deftly and, most importantly, displaying the requisite high Rossini voice. Antoun blended gracefully with Boulianne in their duets and delivered the stratospheric goods in the Act 2 showpiece, "Si ritrovarla io guiro," with clarion top C's."

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Making his Florida Grand Opera debut in the role of Bartolo is bass-baritone **Bruno Praticò**, who has become one of the world's leading interpreters of the role. He made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera as Sulpice in *La fille du regiment* in 1994 and has appeared regularly at La Scala in Milan. He has an extensive discography of recordings to his credit, including the roles of Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville*, Dulcamara in *The Elixir of Love*, and Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*. His portrayal of Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville* for Los Angeles Opera in December, 2009, received extensive critical acclaim.

Three new cast members join *The Barber of Seville* production for the February 24 and 27 performances. Baritone **Kyle Pfortmiller**, who will take the role of Figaro, was recently seen as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* with New York City Opera, and as Figaro in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* with the Lake George Opera Festival. He made his FGO debut earlier this season as Silvio in *Pagliacci*. Mr. Pfortmiller will also perform the March 4 & 6 performances in Fort Lauderdale.

Tenor **Andrew Bidlack** will perform the role of Count Almaviva. A former member of FGO's Young Artist Studio, he is enjoying a highly successful career with leading opera companies. At San Francisco Opera, where he was a Merola Opera Program participant and later an Adler Fellow, he has upcoming performances of Pedrillo in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and Ruiz in *Il Trovatore*.

Bidlack and Pfortmiller will be joined by soprano **Lielle Berman** who will sing the role of Rosina. She is a former member of the Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago where she performed and covered numerous roles. She recently made her New York City Opera debut as Cunégonde in *Candide*,

Gary Thor Wedow, who made his FGO debut in the 2008 production of *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, returns to conduct *The Barber of Seville*. This American conductor has a long association with New York City Opera, and has conducted for companies including San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, Tokyo's New National Theater, Glimmerglass Opera, the Juilliard Opera Center, Manhattan School of Music, Wolf Trap Opera, and the Canadian Opera Company.

For Florida Grand Opera's 2009-2010 season, the creative team of stage director **Renaud Doucet** and designer **André Barbe** have been engaged to develop all new productions. Doucet and Barbe have gained international recognition for their productions at L'Opéra National du Rhin, Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, New York City Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Opéra de Montréal, Vienna Volksoper, Wexford Festival Opera, Arizona Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, and the Royal Swedish Opera.

For *The Barber of Seville* production, Barbe and Doucet have employed projected animation. "We wanted to incorporate an element of the unexpected, as there are so many surprises in the opera," Barbe stated. "Silhouette portraiture was extremely popular in the 18th century at the time Beaumarchais wrote *The Barber of Seville* and during the period in which Rossini set his opera. Being familiar with the pioneering animated silhouette films made in Germany in the 1920s by Lotte Reiniger, we felt we had a unique opportunity to enrich the production by introducing new technology with an 18th century look and feel."

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Single tickets start at just \$10. Call **1-800-741-1010**, or select your exact seating and order safely on line at www.fgo.org.

The Barber of Seville by Gioachino Rossini

Sung in Italian with English and Spanish projected translations

MIAMI ■ **Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County**
Sanford and Dolores Ziff Ballet Opera House

February 20 at 7 p.m. – Opening Night

February 23, 24, 26, 27 at 8 p.m.

February 28 matinee at 2 p.m.

FORT LAUDERDALE ■ **Broward Center for the Performing Arts**
Au-Rene Theater

March 4 & 6 at 8 p.m.

Count Almaviva..... Frédéric Antoun (Feb. 20, 23, 26, 28M, March 4 & 6)
Count Almaviva..... Andrew Bidlack*■ (Feb. 24 & 27)
Rosina Sarah Coburn (Feb. 20, 23, 26, 28M, March 4 & 6)
Rosina Lielle Berman* (Feb. 24 & 27)
Figaro Roderick Williams * (Feb. 20, 23, 26, 28M)
Figaro Kyle Pfortmiller (Feb. 24 & 27, March 4 & 6))
Bartolo Bruno Praticò*
Conductor..... Gary Thor Wedow
Director Renaud Doucet
Set Designer..... André Barbe
Costume Designer..... André Barbe
Lighting Designer Gordon W. Olson
Production..... Florida Grand Opera

* = FGO Debut; ■ = Former Young Artist

Production sponsored by Randy Gage

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About Florida Grand Opera

Florida Grand Opera was formed in June 1994 by the merger of Greater Miami Opera, founded in 1941, and The Opera Guild Inc., of Fort Lauderdale, founded in 1945. Celebrating its 69th season of continuous performances, Florida Grand Opera stands as one of the oldest performing arts organizations in Florida. In addition to producing standard repertoire, Florida Grand Opera also presents lesser known operas, as well as commissions and produces new operas. Annually, performances are attended by nearly 100,000 people, and education and outreach programs serve over 50,000 students. FGO offers several highly successful outreach and educational programs, including its internationally-recognized Young Artist Studio. Founded in 1984, the program attracts young singers who train and enhance their professional skills during a 35-week Miami residency.

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