



Press Release

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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY OPERA THEATRE PRESENTS VERDI'S MASTERPIECE "FALSTAFF"

Fort Collins, CO –Colorado State University Opera Theatre presents Giuseppe Verdi's comedic opera *Falstaff*, based on Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, directed by Todd Queen and conducted by Wes Kenney. The opera takes place over two weekends on Friday, February 29, Saturday, March 1, Friday, March 7, 7:30 p.m., with a Sunday matinee on March 9, 2:00 p.m. in Griffin Concert Hall in the University Center for the Arts at 1400 Remington St.

Tickets are \$25 for the public and \$10 for Colorado State students and youth ages 6 to 17. Tickets are available from the Campus Box Office in the Lory Student Center, by phone at 970-491-4849, or online at www.csutix.com. CSU Opera Theatre Performances are reserved seating; performances are popular and advance purchase is highly recommended.

CSU Opera Theatre's production of *Falstaff* will delight audiences with its memorable characters, comedy, and melodies. Based on William Shakespeare's play *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Falstaff* tells the story of the incorrigible yet irresistible rogue Falstaff, a braggart, con man and habitual liar who attempts to woo two married noblewomen at the same time, in hopes of procuring their fortunes. His scheme is quickly discovered, and the women get hilarious revenge.

Sung in Italian with English supertitles, the title role of Falstaff is played by special guest Bradley Thompson. Well-known to audiences throughout Colorado, Bradley is the winner of the Gold Award Scammon International Voice Competition in 2004, regional finalist in the 2002 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and grand prizewinner in the 2001 Denver Lyric Opera Guild Voice Competition.

"Verdi's last opera perfectly captures his indomitable spirit, combining characteristic Verdi melodies with harmonic influence from Wagner, and ending with a grand Classical fugue," says Todd Queen, Associate Professor of Voice and Director of Opera at CSU. "This opera will enchant people of all ages and any musical background with terrific characters, great tunes, and a lot of laughs!"

About Bradley Thompson

Lyric baritone Bradley Thompson joined the faculty of the Metropolitan State College of Denver in 2003. As an Instructor of Voice, Dr. Thompson has taught courses in applied voice, class voice, and opera studies. He has served as the staging and musical director in programs of opera scenes as well as full opera productions. In 2007, Dr. Thompson was the musical director and conductor for the world premiere of *The Lady or the Tiger* at Metro State. He has appeared with the Metro Symphony Orchestra as a solo faculty artist in performances of Haydn's *Nelsonmesse* and the Mozart *Requiem*.

Bradley Thompson is perhaps best known to audiences for his operatic performances. Carol Rasmussen of the *Boulder Daily Camera* calls his "a strong, attractive voice with agility and range." His repertoire displays a great deal of versatility in a wide range of both comic and dramatic roles. He has made appearances with Opera Colorado where his portrayal of Fiorello was called "expertly delivered" by the

Rocky Mountain News. He has also appeared with Capitol City Opera Company of Atlanta, Utah Festival Opera, Opera Fort Collins, and Opera Theatre of the Rockies. Thompson has performed as both Marcello and Schaunard in *La bohème*, Morales in *Carmen*, Peter in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Marullo in *Rigoletto*, Ping in *Turandot*, Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and the title role in Verdi's *Falstaff*. He is especially at home performing the baritone roles of Mozart, having sung the roles of Figaro, Guglielmo, Masetto, and Papageno as well as covering Don Giovanni. He most recently appeared as Warden George Benton in the acclaimed CU Opera production of *Dead Man Walking*.

Bradley Thompson has been a Regional Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and was the grand prizewinner in the 2001 Denver Lyric Opera Guild Competition. He was awarded both the Galen and Ada Belle Spencer Voice Fellowship and the Frank and Gina Day Voice Teaching Fellowship at the University of Colorado. In 2004, he was the Gold Award winner in the Scammon International Voice Competition.

A native of Norcross, Georgia, Dr. Thompson received his undergraduate degree from Furman University (magna cum laude) where he was inducted into the national society of Phi Beta Kappa. His post-graduate education continued at the Florida State University and the University of Georgia where he was awarded the School of Music Director's Excellence Award. He received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Voice Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Colorado. He received training as an apprentice both with Opera Colorado and the Utah Festival Opera and now performs as a member of the Central City Opera Ensemble. He is a member of Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Professional Fraternity for Men in Music, and the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

CSU Student Profile

Talented vocalist and CSU graduate student Tracy Kaufman performs the role of feisty Meg Page. Ms. Kaufman graduated magna cum laude from Boston University, where she attended on a vocal performance scholarship, with a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice Performance and Music Education, and is a first year Master of Music student at Colorado State University.

"This production will certainly be delightful, musically and visually. The humor is so masterfully set in Verdi's writing that it will undoubtedly be lots of fun," says Kaufman. And about her experience at Colorado State University Kaufman adds, "The CSU Music department has a very supportive and cooperative environment which is quite unique as far as school vocal music programs are concerned."

Earlier this season, Kaufman sang the title role in *The Rape of Lucretia* with Colorado State Opera Theatre, was a guest soloist with the Edison Symphony Orchestra in New Jersey, and appeared with Opera Fort Collins as Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. She will sing Musetta in *La Bohème* with Opera Fort Collins as an Apprentice Artist in August 2008.

A native of Edison, New Jersey, Kaufman has sung with such companies as New Jersey Opera Theater, Light Opera of Oklahoma, New Jersey Repertory Opera, Liederkrantz Opera, Amato Opera, and Natchez Opera Festival. In 2007, she added the role of Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* to her repertoire, originated the role of Louise Crane in *Celebrating the Life of Ellabelle Davis*, a new production for New Rochelle Opera, and appeared with New Jersey Opera Theater in the title role of a children's production of *Carmen*. Other roles include Nicklausse (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*); Cherubino (*Le Nozze di Figaro*); Siebel (*Faust*); Nancy (*Albert Herring*), Hansel (*Hansel and Gretel*); Countess Ceprano (*Rigoletto*); Gianetta (*L'Elisir d'amore*); and Mercedes (*Carmen*). Theatrical roles include: Vi Petty (*The Buddy Holly Story*, national tour); Pitti-Sing (*The Mikado*); Hodel (*Fiddler on the Roof*); Viola (*Twelfth Night*); Kathy Selden (*Singin' in the Rain*); Petra (*A Little Night Music*); and Laurie (*Oklahoma!*).

For a full performance and event calendar, more information, and to sign up for a free event e-newsletter, visit www.CSUSchooloftheArts.com.

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knowledge needed by future generations of arts professionals to become contributors to the essential vitality of our culture and society. For more information, visit www.CSUSchooloftheArts.com.