



Tuscia Operafestival™ brings Italian Style to California
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Every night before the show will 'offer the public a free taste of the best wines and oils of the tuscia and Italy

The Tuscia Operafestival™, now in its sixth season in the historic papal city of Viterbo, will see its Californian debut with the opening of the Italian Opera Festival™ in Orange County, the pearl of Southern California, at the Soka Performing Arts Center of Soka University in Aliso Viejo.

The series of events will begin on Saturday, May 26th at 5:00 PM with a press conference hosted by the Italian Cultural Institute (1023 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles) and its director, Alberto Di Mauro, and will end on June 2nd, the “Festa della Repubblica”, national Italian holiday commemorating the independence of the Republic of Italy, to be celebrated at the Pico House (430 North Main Street, Los Angeles) in the presence of the Italian Consul General. This new version of our festival strives to promote the excellence of world renowned Italian products such as opera, art, wine, olive oil, water and fashion.

The first cultural event, on Wednesday, May 30th at 7:00 PM, at the Soka Performing Arts Center (1 University Drive, Aliso Viejo) will be the recital of international opera star Bruno Praticò: “Buffo si nasce!” (We are Born Funny!), presenting operatic arias and duets by Italian composers Donizetti and Rossini. Recently featured at the LA Opera in the role of “Don Bartolo” in Rossini’s *Barbiere di Siviglia*, Praticò is considered to be one of the greatest comic bass-baritone artists of our time. Praticò will be joined by bass Marco Bussi, and by the Symphony Orchestra of the Tuscia Opera Festival, under the baton of Maestro Stefano Vignati.

A gala dinner will follow, where two hundred lucky spectators will be able to meet the artists and enjoy some of the typical Italian products of the Tuscia region. Thanks to our main sponsor, Bulgari, participants will receive a Bulgari box holding a key, and an invitation to visit the Bulgari Store in South Coast Plaza. One of these keys will open the safe, and the person holding this key will win the Bulgari ring inside the safe.

Finally, part of the proceeds of the night will be donated to the Beckstrand Cancer Foundation, a leading organization in Newport Beach that is active in the fight against cancer.

On Thursday, May 31st, at 7:00 PM, The Italian Opera Festival will debut an educational project for children and their families: “Impariamo l’Opera™” (“Let’s Learn About Opera”), already in its fourth season in Italy and enjoyed by over 11,000 young viewers. “Impariamo L’Opera” is a special project created by Maestro Stefano Vignati designed to allow children and their families to experience opera in a more accessible and fun way, with the hopes of encouraging a new generation of opera lovers. A one-hour concert version of Donizetti’s “The Elixir of Love (L’Elisir D’Amore)” will be presented, and the audience will be led through the basic storyline by narrators Paolo Manganiello, Chiara Palumbo and Emanuela Appolloni, so that audience members may enjoy the costumes and music without the distraction of reading printed translations, which will also be offered.

A cast of outstanding young professional singers will be accompanied by the Tuscia Operafestival orchestra and chorus of Socsa High School in Dana Point. Part of the evening’s proceeds will be donated to the Boys & Girls Club of Capistrano Valley. This evening’s sponsor is *Natural Child World* magazine.

For the duration of the festival, the foyer of the Soka Performing Arts Center will display the exhibition “Polymat” by Marco Zappa, and also the exhibition “All Women of Puccini,” in collaboration with the Teatro dell’ Opera di Roma. This will be the first time that “All Women of Puccini” has crossed Italian borders. All the costumes worn by the most famous singers in operatic history have been made since the 1920’s by the most famous names in Italian theatrical costume design, including Odette Nicoletti, Piero Tosi, and Academy Award winner Gabriella Pescucci. Spectators will be able to admire the thirteen Puccini heroines that for over a century have found a place in the hearts of all those passionate about opera and bel canto.

On Friday, June 1st at 7:00 PM, the evening will be dedicated to Giuseppe Verdi with a concert version of “Rigoletto,” which will include soloists Romina Casucci, Sergio Bologna, and William Davenport.

The members of The Tuscia Operafestival™ Symphony Orchestra are young musicians from the advanced courses “Prove d’Orchestra” and “Gioventù all’Opera,” arriving from Italy thanks to a project financed by the Lazio region through the European Union Social Fund and the UPI (Union of Italian Provinces), through the Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Department of Youth. American professionals from the UPI and soloists from the YPO Philharmonic String Orchestra of San Diego will also join the orchestra, conducted by Maestro Stefano Vignati.

Saturday, June 2nd will be the final date for the Tuscia Operafestival™ Orchestra, performing at 7:00 PM at the Pico House for the Italian Republic’s Independence Day festivities hosted by Consul General Giuseppe Perrone. The Orchestra will close its US tour with the Italian and American national anthems, and songs inspired by the Italian musical tradition, on the occasion of the Republic’s celebration.

For the enjoyment of the Italian-American community hosted by the Consul, in addition to music, there will be wine from Castiglione in Teverina and Viterbo, presented by six young Italian sommeliers from the project promoted by the UPI Union of Italian Provinces, and Province Youth Action.

Sponsors of the festival are Bulgari, Ferrari, Maserati, Terme dei Papi, Acqua di Nepi and Alitalia as technical sponsor.

IAOF

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PRINCIPAL ARTISTS RESUMEE

Bruno Praticò - As acclaimed Bass-Baritone performed in the world's most important concert halls and opera houses, including Metropolitan Opera, LA Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Teatro di San Carlo in Napoli, Wiener Staatsoper, Teatro Comunale in Firenze, Teatro Comunale in Bologna, Teatro Massimo in Palermo, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Teatro Real in Madrid, Teatro La Fenice in Venezia, Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, Teatro Regio in Parma, Amsterdam Nederlandse Opera, Opéra de Lausanne and the New National Theatre and Japan Opera Foundation in Tokyo. He collaborated with such conductors as Claudio Abbado, Bruno Campanella, Riccardo Chailly, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Daniele Gatti, Donato Renzetti, Carlo Rizzi and Alberto Zedda. Since 1993 Bruno Praticò has been a regular guest at the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro. In 1998, in the occasion of his interpretation of the role of Don Magnifico in La Cenerentola, he was awarded the "Rossini d'Oro Prize". In 1999 he returned to Pesaro for **Il viaggio a Reims**, **La Cenerentola**, **La Gazzetta**, **L'equivoco stravagante**, **Le comte Ory**, and more recently for **Torvaldo e Dorliska**. The role of Bartolo in Rossini's **Il barbiere di Siviglia** has become one of his signature parts. He performed Bartolo several times in her career in such venues as Roma, Napoli, Baltimore, Verona, Montecarlo, Paris, Catania, Munich, Madrid. Other successful performances include his performances of Don Magnifico (**La Cenerentola**) at the Opéra National de Paris. The 2009/10 season has seen him performing **La fille du régiment** (Sulpice) at the San Francisco Opera, **Il barbiere di Siviglia** (Bartolo) at the Los Angeles Opera, at the Florida Grand Opera of Miami and in Salerno under the baton of Daniel Oren, **La Cenerentola** (Don Magnifico) at the Rossini in Wildbad and at the Ciakovsky Hall in Moscow Born in Aosta, after studying with baritone Giuseppe Valdengo he attended the specialization courses of Teatro alla Scala and of Rodolfo Celletti.

Stefano Vignati, Italian Conductor was born in Rome (Italy), where he studied Pianoforte and Composition under the guidance of noted Maestri C. Savelloni, C. Ricci and T. Procaccini. He also studied History and Musical Analysis at the University "La Sapienza" in Rome with Prof. P. Luigi Petrobelli, obtaining the highest honors. Maestro Vignati has studied Conducting and participated in International Master Classes with H. Baumann, A. Joo, N. Hansalik Samale and V. Delman. In 1990 he began his professional career in earnest, conducting Concerts in Italian theatres and enlarging his area of experience outside Italy. His operatic repertoire includes performances of: Le Nozze di Figaro (1991, 1996, 1998, 2002, 2005, 2007), Così fan Tutte and The Merry Widow (1992), Die Zauberflöte (1995, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2011), La Cambiale di Matrimonio, Gianni Schicchi, Il Campanello e Rigoletto (1993), L'Elisir d'Amore (1994, 1996), Don Giovanni (1994, 1999, 2004, 2009), Suor Angelica (1997, 2010), I Pagliacci and Cavalleria Rusticana (1997, 1998, 2005, 2008, 2010), Il Trovatore (1998, 2004, 2005), Falstaff (2000), Julius Caesar, Verdi Requiem (2001, 2007, 2008), La Traviata (2003, 2005, 2008, 2010), La Bohème (2004, 2008), Carmen (2005), Carmina Burana (2007, 2010), Il Barbiere di Siviglia (2008). Since 1994 he has been the founder and the Artistic Director of the International Lyric Academy, a educational program which provides opportunities for Young Artists to perform in Italy. In 1995 M° Vignati conducted the **Franco Ferrara Symphony Orchestra** and was invited to conduct a concert for the series "I Concerti di Rai Tre" produced by **RAI - Italian Radio/Television**. In February 1998, Maestro Vignati made his debut in United States (**New Mexico**) conducting the double bill Cavalleria Rusticana and I Pagliacci. Other prestigious engagements for 1998-99 season included: the opening concert of the International **Festival of Liubljana** (Slovenia) with the soloist **Pierre Amoyal** and the Concert Celebration for the centennial of George Gershwin at the **Festival della Valle D'Itria in Martinafranca** (Italy) with soloist **Benedetto Lupo**. M° Vignati recorded in a CD in 1997 to the operatic works of Verdi produced by De Agostini di Novara, with noted operatic Artists as **Janet Perry** and **Alice Baker**. He also recorded G. B. Pergolesi's Stabat Mater (1999) and G. F. Handel's Julius Caesar (2001). In January 2002 Maestro Vignati was invited to conduct the **Amarillo Symphony Orchestra** in Texas. Since 2006 M° Vignati has been the Artistic and Music Director of the **Tuscia Operafestival** and has conducted the first three seasons the productions of "Le Nozze di Figaro" with **Svetla Vassileva** as the Countess and **Lina Wertmüller** as Stage Director, "**Il Barbiere di Siviglia**" with **Alfonso Antoniozzi** (*both productions filmed and recorded by RAI – Italian Radio Television*), Carmina Burana, Mozart's Requiem and two Symphonic Concerts with soloist **Michele Campanella**, "**Don Giovanni**" with **Nicola Ulivieri** and **Marco Vinco**. In 2008 he conducted also in several Concert the **ORL (Orchestra di Roma e del Lazio)**. In February 2009 has been nominated Artistic Director of the **Italian American Opera Foundation**, and the following November he conducted **La Cenerentola** by Rossini at Sassari's Ente Lirico "Marialisa De Carolis" Italy. During the last season of the Tuscia Operafestival in Italy, M° Vignati conducted: Suor Angelica by Puccini, Ravel's Bolero, Rachamaninoff's Piano Concerto n°2, Orff's Carmina Burana, Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana and Verdi's La Traviata. Last engagement: **Mozart's The Magic Flute** (Italy, July 2011), **Bruno Praticò Rossini Recital** (Italy, July 2011), **Mariella Devia Recital** (Italy, Sept 2011), **Mozart's Coronation mass** (San Diego Oct 2011), (Viterbo, Italy - Teatro dell'Unione) **2012 New Year's Concert**; next engagements: **Symphonic Concert** (Italy, April 2012) (Italy, September 2012), **La Traviata** (Boston April 2012), **Bruno Praticò Rossini Recital** (Los Angeles May 30, 2012) **Rigoletto** (Los Angeles June 1, 2012) **A tribute to J. S. Bach** with **Ramin Bahrani** (Italy, August 18 2012) **Symphonic Concert** (Zurigo, October 18, 2012), Lucia Di Lammermoor (New York, Boston 2013), **Symphonic Concert** (Lima, Peru, January 2013). Maestro Vignati in January 2011 has been nominated Artistic Director of one of the most important Italian Festival, the **Festival Barocco** (40th edition).

William Davenport, tenor, is rapidly garnering attention for his strong yet lyric tenor and Italianate style. Of his performance in Chesapeake Chamber Opera's production of La Bohème, Tim Smith of The Baltimore Sun said, "William Davenport, who sang the role of Rodolfo has the makings of a significant tenor. There's an immediately expressive and appealing quality in the timbre, one with quite an Italianate tint..." A native of Maryland, Mr. Davenport completed studies at the Peabody Conservatory of Music under Dr. Stanley Cornett. He performed frequently with Peabody Opera, including the roles of Des Grieux in Manon, Alfred in Die Fledermaus, Tamino in Die Zauberflöte, and Alfredo in La Traviata. Outside the walls of Peabody, Mr. Davenport has performed as Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly in a semi-staged production with the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra and has completed runs as Roméo in Gounod's Roméo et Juliette both with Chesapeake Chamber Opera, and Bel Cantanti Opera. He has performed in several opera highlights concerts throughout the area including "Opera Goes to the Movies" with Maryland Concert Opera, "Opera Greats!" and "The Life of Rossini" with Baltimore Concert Artists as well as "Mozart by Candlelight" with Annapolis Opera. In April, he joined the Maryland Symphony Orchestra for a night of opera, as part of their Masterworks series. On the concert stage Mr. Davenport has performed as tenor soloist in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Concert artists of Baltimore, Dvorák's Mass in D with Columbia Pro Cantare, Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle and Puccini's Messa di Gloria at Peabody.

Sergio Bologna was born in Carrara and he graduated at the Conservatory "G. Puccini" in la Spezia under the guide of soprano Antoinette Cannarile. In 1996 he won the competition "Città di Roma" and "Iris Adami Corradetti" Competition in Padua, making his debut as Figaro ne Il barbiere di Siviglia. In 1997 and 1998 in Bergamo, during the bicentennial of Donizetti, he sang in all the productions on the bill: Lucia di Lammermoor, Don Pasquale, Adelia e il furioso all'isola di Santo Domingo and the first performance absolute in the modern era of the first opera by Donizetti: L'ira di Achille. Also in 1997 he made his debut in both the roles of L'elisir d'amore. Then he has also approached Puccini's repertoire: Madama Butterfly, La Bohème, Turandot, and in 2006 Manon Lescaut in Tel Aviv. In 1997 he made his first debut in Verdi's role in Como as Conte di Luna in Trovatore, and then he has sung all the most important Verdi's baritone roles in: Rigoletto, La Traviata, Luisa Miller, Otello, Nabucco, Un ballo in maschera, Alzira, Simon Boccanegra, Aida, Attila, La forza del destino. Alongside these roles and titles he has added verismo roles in operas as: Cavalleria rusticana, Andrea Chenier, Adriana Lecouvreur and I Pagliacci, with this opera he made his debut at the Israeli Opera House in Tel Aviv directed by F. Zeffirelli. In 2011 he sang again the role of Renato in Un ballo in maschera in Turin. In February and March 2011 he sang Germont in La Traviata at Teatro Comunale di Bologna under M° Mariotti. and in June 2011 was Amonasro nell'Aida-Kolossal at San Siro stadium in Milan alongside D. Theodossiou under the direction of Maestro A. Veronesi.

Romina Casucci was born in Naples and she graduated in voice and piano at the San Pietro a Majella Conservatory in Naples. In 2008 she obtained with honours a voice and choral specialization diploma at the same conservatory. She improved her singing technique with Renata Scotto, Valeria Esposito and at the present time with Donata D'Annunzio Lombardi and attended masterclasses with Luciana Serra, Lella Cuberli, Rolando Panerai and Ines Salazar. She sang at the Rossini Festival in Wildbad, Germany, in "Mosè in Egitto" by Rossini and in "I due Figaro" by Carafa in Stuttgart, under the direction of M° Antonino Fogliani. In Naples, she sang Ascanio in "Lo Frate Nnammorato" by Pergolesi with the involvement of the "Teatro di S. Carlo" Foundation and the "Pergolesi-Spontini" Foundation of Jesi. She made her debut as Gilda in "Rigoletto" by Verdi in Rome. Recently she held a recital at the Munetsugu Hall in Nagoya, Japan, and a concert of arias by Tosti in Osaka. In December 2010 she held a concert in Vienne, France, patronized by the F.P. Tosti National Institute. In October 2011 she made her debut as Anna in "Nabucco" in several theatres throughout Abruzzo (Teramo, Ortona, Fermo. In December 2011 she performed The IX Symphonie by L. van Beethoven under the direction of M° D. Renzetti. In March 2012 she sang Lucietta in "I Quattro Rusteghi" by E. Wolf-Ferrari at the Philharmonic Hall with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic.