

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Modesto, California – October 19, 2009**

**Townsend Opera Players presents Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, sung in English, November 15-22 at the Gallo Center for the Arts**

Townsend Opera Players presents Gioacchino Rossini's famous comedic opera *The Barber of Seville*, opening Sunday, November 15 (2:00 pm) with additional performances Friday, November 20 (7:30 pm) and Sunday, November 22 (2:00 pm) at the Gallo Center for the Arts. The production will be sung in English with English supertitles. The production is headlined by the exciting up-and-coming mezzo soprano Irene Roberts as Rosina, originally from Sacramento, CA. Principal Conductor Ryan Murray returns to conduct these performances, and Dr. Joseph Wiggett, director of the powerful 2008 production of *Pagliacci* and newly appointed Artistic Director of Townsend Opera Players, directs this new production.

In her delayed Townsend Opera Players debut, Irene Roberts sings the role of Rosina, one of the most prominent roles of the mezzo soprano repertory, for the first time in her young but immediately successful career. Ms. Roberts was scheduled to sing the title role in the Townsend Opera Players 2009 production of *Cinderella* that was replaced by *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Ms. Roberts, born and raised in Sacramento, CA, was recently engaged by famed-Maestro Lorin Maazel, former music director of the New York Philharmonic, to perform at the inaugural Chateauville Foundation Castleton Festival in Virginia. She returns to Palm Beach Opera this year as a resident artist to sing Emilia in *Otello*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* and Mercedes in *Carmen*. She has also made appearances at Opera Cleveland. Ms. Roberts recently finished her studies in voice at the Cleveland Institute.

This production of *The Barber of Seville* features a new partnership between Townsend Opera Players and Modesto Junior College, whose Opera Workshop, led by Professor of Music Cherrie Llewellyn, will be featured as the chorus. This new partnership allows undergraduate music students the opportunity gain hands-on professional experience in their chosen field while working side by side with active professional singers. It also allows Townsend Opera Players to expand on its mission to provide opportunities for members of the community to actively participate in its programs.

One of composer's most famous works, Rossini's comic opera *The Barber of Seville* tells the story of a prince that desperately wants to win the love of Rosina, who is cared for, and secretly desired by, the old Doctor Bartolo. The Prince secures the help of the resourceful and charming Figaro, the town barber among other things, to gain entry into Rosina's home and steal her love, and what follows is a hilariously twisted plot to win the love of a woman.

Designed by Corey Strauss, with costumes by Cindy DeFilippo, this production is set in the original mid-19<sup>th</sup> century town of Seville, Spain.

**Tickets and Information**

Tickets for *The Barber of Seville* range from \$27 to \$53 each, and may be purchased online at [www.galloarts.org](http://www.galloarts.org) or by calling the Gallo Center Box Office at 209.338.2100. The Gallo Center is located at 1000 I Street, Modesto, CA 95354.

## **Production Information**

*The Barber of Seville*

*Il barbiere di Siviglia*

Libretto by Cesare Sterbini, based on the play by Pierre Beaumarchais

New dialogue by Dr. Joseph Wiggett

First performance: Teatro Argentina, Rome on February 20, 1816

First Townsend Opera Players performance: 1995

Most recent Townsend Opera Players performance: 1995

Approximately running time: 2 hours 30 minutes, with one intermission

Sung in English with English supertitles

### **Cast:**

*Rosina*

*Count Almaviva*

*Figaro*

*Doctor Bartolo*

*Fiorello*

*Basilio*

*Berta*

**Irene Roberts\***

**Gregory Zavracky\***

**Kenneth Mattice\***

**Richard Cassell\***

**Donn Bradley**

**Michael Ventura\***

**Sara Nicole Ruddy\***

### **Production Team:**

*Conductor*

*Director*

*Production Designer*

*Costume Designer*

*Lighting Designer*

*Chorus Director*

**Ryan Murray**

**Dr. Joseph Wiggett**

**Corey Strauss**

**Cindy DeFilippo**

**Erik Vose**

**Cherrie Llewellyn\***

\* Townsend Opera Players Debut

Contact:

Matthew Buckman

209.523.6426

mbuckman@townsendoperaplayers.com

605 H Street

Modesto, CA 95354

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