

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***OPERA IN THE PARK* CONCERT IN SAN JOSE'S OVERFELT GARDENS, PRESENTED BY CHINESE CULTURAL GARDEN FOUNDATION AND THE INSTITUTE OF SINO-AMERICAN STUDIES, SUNDAY, APRIL 27 AT 3:00 P.M.**

**Free performance features soprano Kristin Clayton, mezzo-soprano
Raeeeka Shehabi-Yaghmai and tenor Kenji Tashiro**

San Jose, CA, April 4, 2008— The Chinese Cultural Garden Foundation and the Institute of Sino-American Studies presents the fourth *Opera in the Park* concert on Sunday April 27 at 3:00 p.m. in Overfelt Gardens Park, 368 Educational Park Drive, in San José. Crossing cultures and genres in an intimate setting, this musical journey showcases renowned Bay Area artists—soprano **Kristin Clayton**, mezzo-soprano **Raeeeka Shehabi-Yaghmai**, tenor **Kenji Tashiro** and pianist **Andrew Fleischman**—in an afternoon performance of songs and arias by Fauré, Mahler, Canteloube, Offenbach and San Francisco composer Jake Heggie alongside traditional American and Persian works, among others.

Opera in the Park in the Chinese Cultural Garden, which began in 2003 under the artistic direction of Zheng Cao, is a free gift to the community. The concert is made possible through the support of Mrs. Pauline Lowe, the Institute of Sino-American Studies, the City of San José – Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services and is funded in part by a grant from Arts Council Silicon Valley.

ABOUT THE VENUE

Overfelt Gardens Park is a garden sanctuary for plants, wildlife and the quiet contemplation and enjoyment of nature in the urban setting. The Chinese Cultural Garden is a feature of Overfelt Gardens Park and was inspired in 1971 by Frank and Pauline Lowe. Its features include an ornamental Friendship Gate, the Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall, three pavilions, a bronze statue of Confucius, a sundial, and a 15-ton black marble stone carved with Chinese characters. This was mined and shipped from the Republic of China as a gift to San Jose by her sister city, Tainan, Taiwan. Every year this park holds an event called the Chinese Moon Festival to showcase Asian and other cultural performing arts. For more information, visit <http://chineseculturalgarden.org>.

PARKING AND INFORMATION

Free parking is available in the main lot on Educational Park Drive at Schulte Drive. For limited VIP seating call (408) 258-3231 or email opera@chineseculturalgarden.org.

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PROGRAM
(subject to change)

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| Francesco Paolo Tosti (1846-1916) | “Ideale” (Ideal) “Sogno” (Dream) |
| Stefano Donaudy (1879-1925) | “O del mio amato ben” (My Dear Beloved) |
| Cesare Andrea Bixio (1896-1978) | “Parlami d’amore,” Mariù (Speak To Me of Love) |
| Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) | “Urlicht” (Primal Light) from Symphony No. 2 |
| Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) | “Après un rêve” (After a Dream) |
| Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880) | “The Barcarolle” from <i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i> |
| Pablo Sorozábal (1897-1988) | “No puede ser” from <i>La tabernera del puerto</i> |
| Manuel de Falla (1876-1946) | “Jota,” from <i>Siete canciones populares Españolas</i> |
| Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) | from <i>Bachianas Brasileiras</i> , Suite No. 5 1) Aria 2) Dança |
| Stephen C. Foster (1826-1864) | “Jennie with the Light Brown Hair” |
| Arranged by David Garner (b. 1954) | “Goleh Pamchal” (Primrose Flower) Persian folk song |
| Arranged by Jake Heggie (b. 1961) | “He’s Gone Away” (American folk song) |
| Hideo Kobayashi (b. 1931) | “Karamatsu” (popular Japanese song) |
| Rodgers and Hammerstein | “You’ll Never Walk Alone” from <i>Carousel</i> |

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Soprano **Kristin Clayton** created a sensation when she sang the world premiere of Jake Heggie and Terrence McNally’s *At the Statue of Venus* for the grand opening of Denver’s Caulkins Opera House, and she later repeated the piece in a concert in São Paulo. She was also recently heard at Houston Grand Opera in the successful premiere of Mr. Heggie’s *Last Acts* in the role of Beatrice, which was created for her. Ms. Clayton began her career at the San Francisco Opera in the San Francisco Opera Center’s prestigious Adler Fellow Program and has been heard in numerous roles at the company, including her debut as Julie in Susa’s *The Dangerous Liaisons*, Nedda in *Pagliacci*, an appearance in *Hérodiade* by Massenet as the Young Babylonian, Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold*, a Wood Nymph in *Rusalka*, and Echo in a critically acclaimed production of *Ariadne auf Naxos*. She appears frequently in orchestral concerts and made her debut with Michael Tilson-Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony in a semi-staged version of Leonard Bernstein’s *On the Town*, a tribute to the composer.

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Persian mezzo-soprano **Raeeka Shehabi-Yaghmai** has received critical acclaim for her “warm sound” and her “charismatic stage presence”. Operatic credits include *Poppea* and *Ottavia* (*L’incoronazione di Poppea*), *Rosina* (*Il Trionfo dell Onore*), *Zerlina* (*Don Giovanni*), *Hansel* (*Hansel and*

Gretel), Cherubino (Le nozze di Figaro), Dorabella (Cosi fan tutte), Suzuki (Madama Butterfly), Mrs. Page (Merry Wives of Windsor), Polina (Pique Dame), Lola (Cavalleria Rusticana), Nancy (Albert Herring), Mother (Amahl and the Night Visitors), Dinah (Trouble in Tahiti); and the title roles in Iolanthe, La Perichole, and Carmen. She has sung with San Francisco Opera Center, Monterey Opera Orchestra, West Bay Opera, Bear Valley Music Festival, Oakland Lyric Opera, Oakland Metro, Eldorado Opera, North Bay Opera, San Francisco Lyric Opera, Lamplighters and Opera Braşov in Romania. In 2008 she will be featured as Carmen with Livermore Opera, Cherubino with Mendocino Music Festival, soloist with Monterey Opera Orchestra, and Oakland East Bay Symphony in the premiere performance of David Garner's orchestrations of Persian Folk Songs. Ms. Shehabi-Yaghmai holds a Bachelor of Music, Magna Cum Laude, from California State University of Northridge, and a Master of Music and a Post Graduate Artist's Diploma from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Born and raised in Tokyo, tenor **Kenji Tashiro** studied vocal music with Kunie Imai in Tokyo, Don Everette Graham at the University of Louisville, Carmo Barbosa at the Universidade de São Paulo, and Michael Paul in New York. Mr. Tashir has also studied Italian, French and Spanish repertoire with renowned coaches Julio Alexis Muñoz at the Conservatoire de Madrid and Sabrina Trojse in Rome. He has recently performed recitals in Tokyo, Madrid, and Rome. Currently, he is focusing on Italian and Japanese art song and has upcoming performances scheduled in Rome with Archetipo Ensemble (Teatro Ghione), at the Ischia Summer Festival and at the Capri Music Festival in Italy with Sabrina Torjse.

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

What: ***OPERA IN THE PARK AT OVERFELT GARDENS***

Where: Chinese Cultural Garden, Overfelt Gardens Park
368 Educational Park Drive, San Jose 95133

When: Sunday, April 27, 2008 at 3:00 p.m.

Admission: Free – bring a lawn chair and a hat

Presented by: The Chinese Cultural Garden Friends and the Institute of Sino-American Studies

Description: An afternoon of songs and arias ranging from Mahler to Rodgers and Hammerstein, this free community event features renowned artists soprano Kristin Clayton, mezzo-soprano Raeeka Shehabi-Yaghmai and tenor Kenji Tashiro, accompanied by Andrew Fleischman.

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