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Andrew Wilkowske (Figaro) and Monica Yunus (Rosina) at the Fabbri Mansion
Photo by Rebecca Fay Photography

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ON SITE OPERA PRESENTS NEW SITE-SPECIFIC, INDOOR-OUTDOOR PRODUCTION OF GIOVANNI PAISIELLO'S *THE BARBER OF SEVILLE*, JUNE 9 – 13 AT THE FABBRI MANSION (HOUSE OF THE REDEEMER)

Production Inaugurates *The Figaro Project*, in Which On Site Opera Will Stage Lesser-Known Adaptations of Beaumarchais' *Figaro* Plays

Three-Year Trilogy Is Celebrated Young Company's Most Ambitious Undertaking to Date

New York, NY (April 22, 2015) — This summer, **On Site Opera** (OSO) will present a new production that exemplifies the company's mission to stage operas in non-traditional locations ideally suited to the stories they tell. OSO will offer an immersive site-specific staging of **Giovanni Paisiello's *The Barber of Seville*** at the opulent **Fabbri Mansion** (House of the Redeemer) on New York City's Upper East Side. Conducted by the company's newly appointed Music Director, **Geoffrey McDonald** and directed by OSO's Co-Founder and General & Artistic Director, **Eric Einhorn**, the production will be updated to the early decades of the twentieth century (when the Fabbri Mansion was built) and staged in the mansion's outdoor courtyard and library.

Performances of *The Barber of Seville* will take place June 9, 11, 12 and 13 at 7:30 pm. (**Adam Kerry Boyles** will conduct the June 12 performance.) Tickets are \$40 and can be purchased at www.osopera.org or 866.811.4111. The Fabbri Mansion is located at 7 East 95th Street, New York, NY 10128. Sung in Italian with projected English translations, the opera will run 90 minutes with no intermission.

Einhorn, McDonald and On Site's Executive Director/Producer, Jessica Kiger, have assembled a team of accomplished artists including **Monica Yunus** (soprano) as Rosina, **David Blalock** (tenor) as Count Almaviva, **Andrew Wilkowske** (baritone) as Figaro, **Rod Nelman** (bass-baritone) as Bartolo, **Isaiah Musik-Ayala** (bass-baritone) as Basilio, **Benjamin Bloomfield** (baritone) as Svegliato and Notary and **Jessica Rose Futran** (soprano) as Giovinetto and Alcalde. The production features costume design by **Candida K. Nichols** and lighting design by **Shawn Kaufman**.

The Barber of Seville kicks off *The Figaro Project*, in which On Site Opera will offer lesser-known operatic adaptations of French playwright **Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais' (1732-1799)** famed trilogy of *Figaro* plays: *The Barber of Seville* (1775), *The Marriage of Figaro* (1784) and *The Guilty Mother* (1792). ***The Figaro Project*** will acquaint

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audiences with their favorite Beaumarchais' characters in new and unexpected ways in non-traditional venues across New York City, and consists of adaptations that, in the company's view, adhere more faithfully to the original plays.

With a libretto by **Giuseppe Petrosellini**, Paisiello's *Barber* stays true to its Beaumarchais roots, focusing more faithfully on the love story between the Count and Rosina and less on the Barber's antics. After its premiere, the opera quickly became a staple of the repertoire and inspired a young Rossini to write his own version. *The Figaro Project* continues with the North American premiere of Marcos Portugal's *The Marriage of Figaro* (Summer 2016), followed by the U.S. premiere of Darius Milhaud's *The Guilty Mother* (Summer 2017), in celebration of Milhaud's 125th Birthday.

On Site Opera has done much to prove that exciting opera can happen outside the walls of a traditional theater. Most recently (June 2014), the company staged Rameau's *Pygmalion* at Madame Tussauds New York and the Lifestyle-Trimco mannequin showroom. Previously, On Site earned critical praise for its productions of Shostakovich's *The Tale of the Silly Baby Mouse*, at the Bronx Zoo and Gershwin's *Blue Monday*, at the Cotton Club in Harlem. Reviewing *Tale*, *The New York Times* wrote that the production "enchanted audience members of all ages," and added, "connoisseurs, meanwhile, could hardly miss the seriousness and skill of the undertaking."

About *The Barber of Seville* Performers

Equally at home in concert, recital or on the operatic stage, **Monica Yunus (Rosina)** has established herself as one of America's most promising young sopranos. She has been called "especially winning" by *The New York Times* and commended for her "rich and sensuous voice [that] was utterly captivating." Her roles include Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Adina in *L'Elisir D'Amore*, Alice in *Le Comte Ory*, Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera* among many others. She can be seen in several Metropolitan Opera HD broadcasts ranging from *The Magic Flute* to *Le Comte Ory* to *La Rondine*. Ms. Yunus is a graduate of The Juilliard School and is the Co-Founder of the Sing for Hope charitable organization based in New York, whose mission is to make the arts available to all. For her contributions to the field of arts activism, Ms. Yunus has been honored to give special performances at The United Nations, the Fortune Most Powerful Women Summit and received a 2009 DOHA 21st Century Leader Award in the category of Outstanding Humanitarian. Born in Chittagong, Bangladesh and raised in New Jersey, Ms. Yunus is the daughter of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus. <http://monicayunus.com/>

American tenor **David Blalock (Count Almaviva)** comes to OSO's production of *The Barber of Seville* following performances this season as Jaquino in Beethoven's *Fidelio* with Madison Opera, and Don Ottavio in North Carolina Opera's production of *Don Giovanni*, and in *Silent Night* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City. Last season, as a Virginia Opera Emerging Artist, Blalock was First Priest in *The Magic Flute*, Brighella in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Le Remendado in *Carmen*. He recently completed his second summer as an apprentice artist with Santa Fe Opera, singing Bertram in Rossini's *La donna del Lago* and Infirmary Patient in the world premiere of Theodore Morrison's *Oscar*. In the spring of 2013, Blalock made his Fort Worth Opera debut as Young Thompson in Tom Cipullo's *Glory Denied*. From 2009-2011, Blalock was a member of the Maryland Opera Studio in College Park, Maryland. He has also performed as a young artist with the Seagle Music Colony and Ash Lawn Opera, singing roles in *La Cenerentola*, *La bohème*, *The Magic Flute* and *Brigadoon*. <http://www.cami.com/?webid=2397>

Baritone **Andrew Wilkowske (Figaro)** is one of the most versatile performers on the stage today. His recent performance of La Rocca in Verdi's *King For a Day* at Glimmerglass Festival was called "superb" by *The New York Times* and "brought impressive command to the text" according to *The Wall Street Journal*. Highlights this season include the world premiere of *Lucy* by John Glover and Kelley Rourke with Milwaukee Opera Theatre; Dr. Dulcamara in *L'Elisir D'Amore* with Minnesota Opera; the critically acclaimed rock recital *Guns N' Rosenkavalier* with 5 Boroughs Music Festival; Ponchel in the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Silent Night* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, a role he created in 2011 with Minnesota Opera and has reprised with Opera Philadelphia and Cincinnati Opera and concerts with Minnesota Bach Ensemble, Schubert Club and Minnesota Orchestra. <http://www.andrewwilkowske.com/>

With a repertoire of over 80 roles, bass-baritone **Rod Nelman (Bartolo)** has performed leading roles with Washington National Opera, Arena di Verona, Florida Grand Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Nante, Utah Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, Florentine Opera, Fort Worth Opera and Long Beach Opera, among others, and has been on the roster of the Metropolitan Opera since 2009. He has performed Leporello and Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Bartolo in both *Barbiere* and *Figaro*, Mustafa in *L'italiana*, Dulcamara in *Elixir*, Magnifico in *Cenerentola*, Alfonso in

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Così, Pasquale in *Pasquale*, Osmin in *Abduction*, Basilio in *Barbiere*, Mephistopheles in *Faust*, Fasolt in *Rheingold* and Wotan and the Wanderer in *The Ring*. Other roles include contemporary works such as Kissinger in *Nixon in China*, Einstein in *Einstein on Mercer Street* (Kevin Puts), Leopold Mozart in *Letters, Riddles, and Writs* (Michael Nyman), Kublai Khan in *Marco Polo* (Tan Dun), the title role in *Sweeney Todd*, George in *Of Mice and Men* and Blitch in *Susannah*. <http://www.rodnelman.com/>

American bass-baritone **Isaiah Musik-Ayala (Basilio)** is an alumnus of Irene Dalis' Resident Artist ensemble at Opera San Jose, where he performed the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*, Count Des Grieux in *Manon*, Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*, Colline in *La Bohème* and Alexei Karenin in the West Coast Premiere of *Anna Karenina*. Musik-Ayala most recently performed as an Apprentice Artist with the Caramoor Music Festival, competed as a finalist in the 2014 Irene Dalis Vocal Competition and performed Escamillo in Opera San Luis Obispo's *Carmen*. Other recent engagements include Simone (*Gianni Schicchi*) and Frank (*Die Fledermaus*) in a return to Opera San Jose; Raimondo (*Lucia di Lamermoor*) with West Bay Opera; Colline (*La Bohème*) with Hidden Valley Music in Carmel, under the baton of Stewart Robinson; and a recital with the Beverly Hills Recital Series. Other performance highlights include Ramfis (*Aida*), Baron Duphol (*La Traviata*), Pistola (*Falstaff*), Sacristan (*Tosca*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*) and Sharpless (*Madame Butterfly*). Musik-Ayala is a graduate of Oberlin Conservatory, where he studied with the late Richard Miller. <http://www.isaiahmusik-ayala.com/>

Baritone **Benjamin Bloomfield (Svegliato/Notary)** is originally from Concord, New Hampshire, and earned degrees from Manhattan School of Music and The Juilliard School. Highlights this season include Marcello in *La Bohème* with DC Public Opera, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* with Opera Company of Brooklyn, Tonio in *Pagliacci* with Vocal Productions NYC, Ben Weatherstaff in the east coast premier of Nolan Gasser's opera *The Secret Garden*, soloist in Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with the Rochester Oratorio Society and a return to the Castleton Festival to sing roles in Ravel's *L'heure Espagnol* and Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*. In previous seasons, Mr. Bloomfield has appeared at the Castleton Festival, the Metropolitan Opera, Chautauqua Opera, New York Lyric Opera, NY City Opera, Music Academy of the West and Prelude to Performance. He was a Regional Finalist in New York for the Met National Council auditions in 2007, and finalist for Chicago Lyric Opera's Ryan Center auditions in 2012. www.benjaminbloomfield.com

New York City-based soprano **Jessica Rose Futran (Giovinetto/Alcalde)** recently made her Off-Broadway (and stilt-walking) debut in Mind the Art Entertainment's FringeNYC Encore production of *Fatty Fatty No Friends* (Fast). NYC credits include *Whiskey Pants: Mayor of Williamsburg* (Patience) as part of the FRIGID New York Festival at Horse Trade Theater Group, *Revival* (Eve) at The Players Theater Annual Boo Festival, *The Dream Vault Cycle* (dancer) at La Mama Experimental Theater, and internationally renowned Scottish rapper S. Cree's hit music video *Ballerina* (hip-hop dancer). Theater and opera highlights include Fatima, in the premiere stage production of the Oscar Award-winning film, *West Bank Story*, Sally (Sally), *El retablo de maese Pedro* (Trujaman), *Man of La Mancha* (Antonia), *Beauty and the Beast* (Belle), *Sweeney Todd* (Johanna), *My Favorite Year* (KC Downing), and *Little Women* (Jo). She holds a Bachelors of Music in Vocal Performance from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. <http://www.jessicarosefutkan.com/>

About The Barber of Seville Creative Team

Hailed by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* as a "promising and confident" member of the newest generation of conductors, **Geoffrey McDonald (Conductor, The Barber of Seville, on June 9, 11 & 13; Music Director, On Site Opera)** commands a broad repertoire with extensive experience in operatic, symphonic and choral works. He is the newly appointed music director of On Site Opera and the music director at the Longy Conservatory Orchestra and the Bard College Orchestra. He is also an instructor in the Bard College Conservatory's Masters Program in Conducting.

A proponent of new works and new approaches to presentation, McDonald has led operatic performances ranging from baroque to contemporary. Recent performances of Händel's *Alcina* at the Whitebox Arts Center in downtown Manhattan garnered praise from *The New York Times* ("Geoffrey McDonald led a performance alert to both the overall momentum and the shape of individual numbers"). Other recent engagements include guest performances of Xavier Montsalvatge's *El gato con botas* for Gotham Chamber Opera, workshops of *Charlie Parker's Yardbird* by Daniel Schnyder and *Breaking the Waves* by Missy Mazzoli for Opera Philadelphia. <http://www.geoffreymcdonaldmusic.com>

Eric Einhorn (Director, The Barber of Seville; Founder and Artistic Director, On Site Opera) has been praised by *The Austin Chronicle* as "a rising star in the opera world" and by *Opera News* for his "keen eye for detail and character

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insight.” He is the founder of On Site Opera, a company dedicated to immersive, site-specific productions. Mr. Einhorn has directed productions for Chicago Lyric Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Ft. Worth Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Florentine Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, Utah Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, the Pacific Symphony, and Gotham Chamber Opera. He has been a member of the stage directing staff at the Metropolitan Opera since 2005. *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* named Mr. Einhorn’s production of *Dialogues des Carmélites* for Pittsburgh Opera one of the top ten classical music performances of 2011. He originally created the production for Austin Lyric Opera in 2009 and was awarded “Best Opera” at the Austin Critics’ Table Awards in addition to garnering him a nomination for “Best Director.” During summer of 2014, he directed Rameau’s *Pygmalion* at Madame Tussauds wax museum and the Lifestyle-Trimco mannequin showroom. This production featured the world’s first implementation of supertitles for Google Glass.
www.osopera.org

Adam Kerry Boyles (Conductor, June 12) is currently Director of Orchestras at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Music Director of the Brookline Symphony Orchestra, and a conductor at Opera in the Ozarks. Recent orchestral engagements include concerts with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Muncie Symphony Orchestra, Oregon Bach Festival, Grand Harmonie, Austin Chamber Ensemble, Audio Inversions, Michigan State University, and Rhode Island College. With the Boston Opera Collaborative, he led three operas (*The Crucible*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *La bohème*) between 2009-2012. He has worked with many notable conductors, such as Gustavo Dudamel, Sir Roger Norrington, Kurt Masur, and Gunther Schuller. An accomplished vocalist, Boyles performed in numerous operas with the Indiana University Opera Theater, and in Arizona Opera’s first complete presentation of Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. He has sung with many professional choral ensembles across the country.

Candida K. Nichols (Costume Designer) is a designer and photographer based in NYC. Credits include work for Lincoln Center Theater/Institute, NAATCO, Gotham Chamber Opera, The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and Perseverance Theater, among many others. Awards include the Hay Design Fellowship at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Roy Crane Award for Outstanding Creative Achievement. Candida is a member of the Theater Mitu (USA & UAE), whose work focuses on research and training of world performance traditions.
www.candidaknichols.com

Shawn Kaufman (Lighting Designer) is the Director of Lighting Design at CS Lighting, a firm specializing in providing lighting design and lighting resources for theatre, film, television, special events and fashion. Shawn created this new division for CS Global in 2010 after working for the last 15 years in the industry. Selected clients include Celine, Givenchy, Chloe, Armani Exchange, Vogue Magazine, Estee Lauder, Kohl’s, St. John, Bombardier, Target, GQ, Hermes, Y3, The Elder Statesman, Microsoft, Tom Ford, Hugo Boss and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Recent theatrical work includes *Carmen* at Portland Opera, *Dialogues of the Carmelites* at Austin Lyric Opera and Pittsburgh Opera, *Orpheus in the Underworld* at Glimmerglass Opera, *I Pagliacci* and *Xerxes* at Pittsburgh Opera. Television: QVC Red Carpet Style, The Face Finale, CNBC studio relight, The Big Gay Sketch Show (Logo Channel), Wendy Williams (Fox Network), episodes of The Apprentice Martha Stewart and Donald Trump, Associate for Martha Live and Rachael Ray Live.

About On Site Opera

Founded in 2012, On Site Opera is dedicated to producing site-specific opera in non-traditional venues throughout New York. On Site Opera molds its productions to specific locations using physical space to create an environment in which the concept, storytelling, music, and performers unite to form an immersive, cohesive, and meaningful whole. Praised by *BBC News* as “innovative” and by *The New York Times* for their “seductive” productions, On Site Opera has presented Shostakovich at The Bronx Zoo, Gershwin at Harlem’s legendary Cotton Club, and Rameau at Madame Tussauds New York and the Lifestyle-Trimco mannequin showroom as well as a site-specific workshop of *Clarimonde*, a new work by Frederic Chaslin and P.H. Fisher. Committed to exploring new technology in opera, On Site Opera implemented the first-ever Google Glass supertitles during its 2014 run of Rameau’s *Pygmalion*, of which *The Verge* reported “Few things seem like obvious fits for Google Glass so far, but this is one of them.”

In addition to site-specific productions, On Site Opera’s mission includes forging community partnerships in order to bring opera to new and underserved audiences, as well as fostering the development of emerging talent through performance and production opportunities. On Site Opera, a registered 501(c)(3), is a member of Opera America and the New York Opera Alliance. More information: www.osopera.org

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About Fabbri Mansion (House of the Redeemer)

The House at 7 East 95th Street was built between 1914 and 1916 to serve as the town residence of Edith Shepard Fabbri, a great granddaughter of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, and her husband, Ernesto Fabbri. The House was designed by Grosvenor Atterbury, an American architect and town planner, and the interior decoration was executed by Egisto Fabbri, Ernesto Fabbri's brother, who incorporated Edith Fabbri's collection of Italian Renaissance and Baroque furnishings and architectural fragments into his designs. The House was designated a New York City Landmark in 1974, and is considered by many architectural historians to be one of the most distinguished examples of early 20th century residential architecture in New York City.

House of the Redeemer offers a unique setting for reflection, study, fellowship, and prayer. It is a place apart, providing worship and hospitality for individuals seeking spiritual renewal. The House lends itself to group and individual retreats, conferences, meetings, and wedding receptions. Often a place of music and verse, the House is also a place of silence and meditation. To many, it is where insights and ideas are originated and shared, through programs offered by The House or sponsored by outside groups. <http://www.houseoftheredeemer.org/index.html>

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