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**CHELSEA OPERA 10TH SEASON OPENS WITH TWO ONE-ACTS:
THE NY PREMIERE OF *BALLYMORE, PART ONE – WINNERS* BY RICHARD
WARGO, AND *LA PIZZA CON FUNGHI* BY SEYMOUR BARAB
OCTOBER 11 & 12, 2013**

Imagine being seventeen again and having your whole life ahead of you. Mag and Joe are just such a couple. Well, she is pregnant, but after they finish their final school exams, they have plans to marry and have even rented a little apartment. They are excited and eager to take on their new responsibilities, no longer children. Woven through this poignant one-act opera *Winners* by Richard Wargo, based on Briel Friel's play *Lovers*, are The Woman and The Man, a mysterious pair who share with the audience Mag and Joe's future: later that afternoon, they will both lose their lives in a boating accident on a nearby lake. Tragic, yes, but they will die with their exuberance unscathed, and are thus "winners".

Seymour Barab's parody of 19th century opera, *La Pizza con Funghi*, will touch your funny bone! In this homage to a beloved art form, we encounter the characters found in many operas. The soprano, in love with the tenor, plots to poison her older baritone husband. Her mezzo maid, in love with the baritone, spills the beans and as in so many operas, no one is left alive at the final curtain!

Both operas will be performed with the Chelsea Opera Chamber Orchestra, led by guest conductor Steven Crawford with stage direction by Lynne Hayden-Findlay, on Friday, October 11 at 7:30pm and Saturday, October 12 at 4:00 pm at St. Peter's Church in Chelsea (346 West 20th Street, between 8th and 9th Avenues). Both operas will be sung by the same four singers, delighting in the challenge to bring two very diverse characters to the stage on the same night. Tickets are \$35 preferred, \$30 general admission and \$20 students/seniors purchased in advance (or \$45, \$40 and \$25 at the door) and may be purchased on-line (link through www.ChelseaOpera.org) or by calling 1-866-811-4111. This production is supported in part by public funds from The Amphion Foundation, the New York City

Department of Cultural Affairs, and the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, and the Friends of Chelsea Opera. For more information, call 212-260-1796 or visit www.ChelseaOpera.org.

Singing the four roles are soprano Samantha Britt, making her Chelsea Opera debut, mezzo soprano Darcy Dunn who last appeared as Alison/Mother in *This is the rill speaking*, Chad Kranak who covered Moradesh in last fall's *The Mark of Cain*, and Robert Balonek who sang the title role in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in 2010.

Composer Richard Wargo was heralded by The Philadelphia Enquirer as "A fresh new voice in American opera" and by Opera News as "a born opera composer." He is a native of Scranton, PA and a graduate of the Eastman School of Music. He has received fellowships from the NEA, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the National Institute for Music Theater, and has been granted residencies at the MacDowell Colony, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and the Tyrone Guthrie Centre in County Monaghan in Ireland, where he worked on *Ballymore*.

Composer Seymour Barab has been composing operas for many decades. Still composing and in his 90s, his operas are among the most frequently performed in America, especially his comic one-acts and those for young audiences. A fellow composer, Miriam Gideon, has called him "the Rossini of our time." His *Little Red Riding Hood* was the first American opera performed in China in its post-isolationist period. His highly praised full-length Civil War opera *Philip Marshall*, which uses Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot* as its point of departure, was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

Chelsea Opera is a professional company presenting fully staged operas with chamber orchestra. The company provides a nationally recognized venue for professional singers to advance their careers while making opera affordable and accessible to a broad spectrum of the community. The fine acoustics of the space provides excellent hearing, and the intimacy of the space allows the audience to feel involved in the opera's story. Of Chelsea Opera's sustainability, Anthony Tommasini of *The New York Times* noted in June 2009: "With American opera companies large and small struggling financially and a few going under, [Chelsea Opera is] a patch of encouraging news..."

Formed in 2004 by two singers, Lynne Hayden-Findlay and Leonarda Priore, Chelsea Opera was launched with an all-volunteer production of *Suor Angelica*. Initially, Ms. Priore and Ms. Hayden-Findlay had only intended to produce this one opera. However, artist and audience response was so compelling that they agreed to move forward, incorporating the company and obtaining their IRS non-profit designation in a record eight days. They have since produced an extensive range of operas including *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (three times), *Pagliacci*, *Don Giovanni*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, *The Scarf*, *The Bear*, the company's 5th Anniversary production of *Suor Angelica*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *This is the rill speaking/Bermudas*, *The Medium*, *Madama Butterfly*, of which Opera News said, "it was a committed and ultimately moving performance."

Modest in scale, the production gave us *Butterfly* in full.” Their November 2010 production of Tom Cipullo’s *Glory Denied* garnered rave reviews from both The New York Times and Opera News. Last fall, they presented their first world premiere, *The Mark of Cain* by Matthew Harris and Terry Quinn, followed by a Manhattan premiere this past June of *A Distant Love: Songs of John and Abigail Adams* by Gary S. Fagin and Terry Quinn.

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For further information, visit www.ChelseaOpera.org or write to ChelseaOpera@aol.com.

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