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Connecticut Lyric Opera to Perform Verdi's "La Traviata" Throughout Connecticut

New London, CT – Mar. 4, 2009 – Connecticut Lyric Opera (CLO) is pleased to announce the final production of its 2008-2009 Performance Season, a fully staged touring production of one of the best-loved operas of all time, Verdi's *La Traviata*, to be premiered on April 26 at 7 pm at the Garde Arts Center in downtown New London and also performed in New Britain, Middletown and Woodstock.

La Traviata, which translates as "the woman who strayed" or more figuratively as "the fallen one," is the story of the worldly Parisian courtesan, Violetta, who must sacrifice her happiness to spare her lover's family from scandal. Based on a true story, there are many echoes of Verdi's own life in *La Traviata*, and since its debut in 1853, it has enraptured audiences and gone on to become one of the most-performed operas of all time. According to music historian Nicholas John, "it was the character of the fallen woman which attracted Verdi in the first place. In her, vice and virtue are combined. Violetta is a courtesan who is called upon to be an example of noble self-sacrifice in a venal, materialistic society." And once he threw himself into its creation, Verdi created a musical masterpiece whose immortal score absolutely shines with virtuosic arias, inspired ensembles, and marvelously crafted duets.

Making her title role debut as the tragically heroic Violetta is radiant Lithuanian soprano Jurate Svedaite, who most recently performed a critically acclaimed Tatiana in CLO's *Eugene Onegin*, as well as Mimi in *La Boheme* and Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Making his CLO debut as the passionate young Alfredo is celebrated tenor Jeffrey Hartman, heralded as "one of the fastest-rising tenor stars on the opera horizon today." Rounding out this stellar cast is the dynamic baritone Chad Karl who previously delighted CLO audiences as Dr. Falke in last season's *Die Fledermaus*. This production will be directed by internationally acclaimed Russian stage director, Yefim Maizel (Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera), with sets designed by renowned designer Iosef Yusupov (Metropolitan Opera, La Scala) and will be conducted by CLO's General and Artistic Director, Adrian Sylveen Mackiewicz. The opera will be fully staged with orchestra, 24-voice chorus and English supertitles above the stage.

La Traviata is co-produced with CLO's resident orchestra, the Connecticut Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, and will be repeated Middletown High School at on May. 1 at 8 PM and May 3 at 6pm at Trinity-on-Main Arts Center in New Britain (these two performances are presented by the Virtuosi). The production run concludes on May 9 at 7:30pm Hyde Cultural Center in Woodstock, CT.

About Connecticut Lyric Opera

Founded in 2003, CLO is SE CT's only full season opera company and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit cultural and educational organization whose mission is: **Inspire:** to contribute to the cultural life of Southeastern Connecticut and beyond with the highest quality operas and concerts from the traditional and contemporary repertoires; **Involve:** to encourage the development of Connecticut based singers, musicians and theatrical artisans through their participation in professional opera productions; **Instill:** to present opera to people of all ages in such a way as to foster a love and appreciation of the form in particular, and classical and vocal music in general. CLO is grateful to The Frank Loomis Palmer Fund, The Bodenwein Public Benevolent Trust, The State of Connecticut's Dept. of Culture and Tourism, Pfizer, the New London Day, and the many contributors who have helped make this season possible. For tickets to the New London performance of *La Traviata* call The Garde's box office at (860) 444-7373 or visit GardeArts.org; for additional information call (860) 440-3594 or visit CtLyricOpera.org.

About the Artists

Lithuanian soprano, **Jūratė Švedaitė**, is establishing herself as a stage performer of remarkable artistry and sensitivity capable of "transfixing audiences with moments of opera magic," and has performed throughout Europe and the US with the Lithuanian National Chamber Orchestra, the European Baroque Festival Opera, Kaunas Chamber Orchestra, Connecticut Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, among others. Having earlier this season performed Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, her previous roles with CLO include Mimi in *La Bohème*, Contessa in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Marguerite in *Faust* and Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. The granddaughter of one of Lithuania's most revered composers and arrangers of traditional music, Jonas Švedas, Ms. Švedaitė attended the Lithuanian Music Academy where she earned Bachelors and Masters and Degrees in Opera and Vocal Instruction. She now resides in SE CT where she is on the faculty of Conn. College and Thames Valley Music School.

Tenor **Jeffrey Michael Hartman** is heralded as "one of the fastest-rising tenor stars on the opera horizon today." He made his Boston debut last year as Calaf in *Turandot* where he got rave reviews. His rich, full, round lyric voice has made him a popular choice for the leading roles of in the most famous operas of the standard repertoire. Jeffrey's young career already includes performances in some of the important regional American opera houses, including Indianapolis Opera, Dicapo Opera Theatre, Sarasota Opera, New Jersey Association of Verismo Opera, Coro Lirico and the New York Metro Vocal Arts Ensemble. Jeffrey won first place in the Dicapo Opera Theatre Competition in 2003, third place in the New Jersey Verismo Opera Competition in 2005, and the Most Promising Singer with the National Assn. of Teachers of Singing (NATS) in 2000. His guest appearances include solos at Carnegie Hall and other venues in the NY City area. He has studied with Metropolitan Opera soprano Lucine Amara in New York and currently studies with Metropolitan Opera tenor Francisco Casanova.

Baritone **Chad Karl** made a triumphant CLO debut last season as Dr. Falke in the hilarious *Die Fledermaus*, and his many roles include Marcello and Schaunard in *La Bohème*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, Belcore in *L'Elixir d'Amore*, Guglielmo in

Così fan Tutti, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Valentin in *Faust*, Angelotti in *Tosca*, Don Giovanni, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Marullo in *Carmen* and Cascada in *The Merry Widow*. He was performed with Tulsa Opera, Jacksonville Lyric Opera, Opera Company of the Highlands, the Belleairne Music Festival, Union Avenue Opera and the Bronx Opera. Upcoming productions include Silvio with Opera in the Highlands, Schaunard with Grandview Opera, the title role of *Macbeth* and Ford in *Falstaff*, both in Houston for Opera in the Heights.

Conductor and virtuoso violinist **Adrian Sylveen Mackiewicz** is a graduate of Paderewski Music Academy in Poznan, Poland and of the Yale University School of Music. His awards include First Prize at the International Chamber Music Competition in Lodz, Poland, the President of the Republic of Poland's Award For Outstanding Achievement "Primus Inter Pares" and the Polish Department of Education National Scholarship. Mr. Mackiewicz has performed extensively in Poland, former USSR, Germany, and the US, where he has resided since 1992. In 1997 Maestro Mackiewicz founded the Connecticut Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, a New Britain based orchestra dedicated to presenting and preserving the traditions of chamber music, both traditional and contemporary, that is also CLO's resident orchestra. In addition to his duties with CLO and the Virtuosi, Mr. Mackiewicz is Artistic Director of the New Britain Chorale and Artistic Director of the Eastern CT Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Yefim Maizel has directed and assisted throughout the former Soviet Union, Europe, Japan, and the United States. Since 1999, Mr. Maizel has been with the Metropolitan Opera, where he directed *Madama Butterfly*, as well as assisting on productions of *Mazeppa*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Il Trovatore*, *Manon*, *The Gambler*, *Idomeneo*, *Don Carlo*, *Elektra*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Mozart), *Otello*, *The Queen of Spades* and *Das Rheingold*. From 1993 to 2001, he worked assistant stage director for the San Francisco Opera productions of *The Queen of Spades*, *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Faust*, *Rusalka*, *Prince Igor*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Tsar's Bride*, and *Simon Boccanegra*. Additionally, Mr. Maizel has directed productions for Opera Santa Barbara, Bay Shore Lyric Opera, West Bay Opera, Opera San José, Berkeley Opera, San Francisco Lyric Opera, among other companies, and is the CEO and Artistic Director of Opera Academy of California, an organization he founded in 2005.

Designer and artist **Iosef Yusupov** graduated from the Saint Petersburg Institute of Theater and designed sets all over Russia, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. His first major success came with the production of *Oedipus Rex*, for which he received the prestigious State Prize of the USSR for the Arts. Since moving to the United States, he has designed numerous shows in New York, including plays, operas, and TV, and has worked on major Hollywood motion pictures. He has been involved in all George Tsypin Opera Factory productions since the early 1990s as a collaborator, and has worked for many years with famous directors such as Peter Sellars, Julie Taymor, Pierre Audi, Francesca Zambella and Jürgen Flimm in such illustrious theatres as the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Covent Garden, Bolshoi Theatre, Mariinski Theatre and Opera Bastille. He also has a special creative relationship with designers George Tsypin, Michael Shemyakin, and Georgi Alexi-Meskeshvili.