

FORT LEE, NJ, September 12, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- The New Jersey Association of Verismo Opera (Verismo Opera) celebrates the Year of Italian Culture in America with its new production of Giacomo Puccini's Suor Angelica and Pietro Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana. Verismo Opera presents the grand production live with a full cast on Sunday, October 20, 3:00 p.m., at the Bergen Performing Arts Center (bergenPAC), 30 North Van Brunt Street, in Englewood, New Jersey.

Under Artistic Director Lucine Amara, one of the Metropolitan Opera's luminary performers, Verismo Opera performs the sentimental tragedy Suor Angelica. Witness a heroine's tragic plight harrow the emotions as hauntingly as Puccini's other great work, Madama Butterfly. Then, follow four people's roller-coaster lives in the one-act melodrama of rustic chivalry, Cavalleria Rusticana, as a triangle of passion, jealousy, and bitterness leads only to death.

Verismo Opera performs both operas with the cast in costume, a live orchestra, and a full chorus. Sung in Italian with English supertitles, Gioachino Forzano's libretto of Suor Angelica and Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti's and Guido Menasci's libretto of Cavalleria Rusticana will be performed with traditional staging and sets.

General Manager/Stage Director and Canadian soprano Evelyn La Quaif directs Suor Angelica and performs the lead role of Sister Angelica. She has acquired a repertoire of more than 30 roles, including La Boheme, Tosca, babeau, Madama Butterfly, I Pagliacci, La Traviata, Faust, and Lucia di Lammermoor. La Quaif has appeared at various concert halls, such as Weill Recital, Carnegie, and Alice Tully in New York, as well as Vienna and Palermo and most major Canadian houses.

StacyLyn Bennett, who performed Cio-Cio-San in the company's highly successful October 2012 production of Madama Butterfly, serves as the cover. Bennett has performed a range of roles, including Mozart's Elvira in Don Giovanni, Pamina in Die Zauberflote, and Susanna in Le Nozze di Figaro.

Verismo Opera's co-founder and Technical Director Giovanni Simone directs Cavalleria Rusticana. Simone has been involved with many companies in the tri-state area, including as Principal Stage Director and Set Designer with Regina Opera in Brooklyn. He is also a member of the Verismo Opera Chorus.

Tenor Edgar Jaramillo debuts with the company in the lead role of Turiddu. Previously,

Jaramillo performed supporting roles with Family Opera, Henry Street Settlement and the Amato Opera.

Mezzo-soprano Galina Ivannikova performs the role of Santuzza and Natasha Noviskaia appears as the cover. Ivannikova performed previously in Verismo Opera's productions of *Il Trovatore* and *Aida*. This past spring, Noviskaia debuted with the company performing the role of Zita in Puccini's comedy *Gianni Schicchi*.

Principal Conductor/Music Director Anthony Morss conducts the orchestra. Mara Waldman, Chorus Director, leads the Verismo Opera Chorus. Bergen County costumers Catherine Mirabella and Barbara Konig design the new production's costumes. Al Calzetta and Simone create the sets. Brooke Feldman of Leonia joins the production as the company's new stage manager for the 2013-2014 season.

Special Ticket Rates

Verismo Opera is providing the public with a special 40% off on \$55 and \$45 tickets only on September 12, 13, and 14 (Code CS1). Discount ticket rates for senior citizens, ages 65 and over, and children, ages 10 and under, are available now through October 20 to see *Suor Angelica* and *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Senior citizens, ages 65 and over, purchasing regular-priced tickets on non-sale dates are entitled to a 10% discount.

Verismo Opera continues its tradition of introducing and educating youngsters to the joy of fine music. The company is offering a reduced rate of \$10 on all tickets for children, ages 10 and under, when accompanied by a ticket-holding adult.

Tickets may be purchased online, at the bergenPAC box office, and by calling (201) 227-1030 or toll-free at 1-888-PACSHOW.

For special rates for group discounts available only on \$55 and \$45 tickets, call (201) 224-2809. This rate is not available online.

The 2013 season is made possible, in part, with funds provided by the New Jersey Council on the Arts/Department of State, through grant funds administered by the Bergen County Department of Parks, Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs.

About New Jersey Association of Verismo Opera

The New Jersey Association of Verismo Opera has been a part of the New Jersey music scene since 1989. Verismo Opera, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, is the only professional, grand opera company in Bergen County and northern New Jersey.

The organization provides performing opportunities for young musicians and artists and sponsors an annual vocal competition held in November with finals generally conducted in Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall, drawing artists from all over the United States, Canada, and Europe. The company also organizes opera workshops and concerts and offers affordable, highly professional operatic productions in the Bergen County, New Jersey community.

For more information about Verismo Opera, visit its web site, follow the company on Facebook and Twitter, or call (201) 886-0561.