

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 5, 2009

INTERNATIONAL OPERA STAR SHERRILL MILNES LENDS SUPPORT TO MADISON'S OPERA FOR THE YOUNG

MADISON, WI, JANUARY 5, 2009: Baritone Sherrill Milnes, who has thrilled audiences in the world's leading opera houses, has now lent his golden voice to Madison's Opera for the Young in a letter of support for their fund raising efforts.

Opera for the Young performs abridged versions of classic operas in elementary and secondary schools all over Wisconsin and in parts of Michigan, Minnesota, northern Illinois, Iowa and Indiana. The singers who tour with OFY are young professionals, often just out of college or conservatory; some have studied in the VoicExperience! artist development program founded by Milnes and his wife, soprano Maria Zouves.

While Opera for the Young's primary focus is bringing vocal performance to the schools, the organization also fulfills the important function of providing both employment and valuable experience for young singers as they begin their careers. An OFY

credit, often one of the first on a singer's resume, helps open doors with other companies.

Opera for the Young alum tenor Gregory Schmidt is just one example. Schmidt, who lives in Madison when he is not on the road performing, sings leading Bel Canto roles nationally and is on the roster at New York's Metropolitan Opera. Fifteen years ago and just out of school, Schmidt toured with the OFY production of Orpheus in the Underworld. He remains a staunch supporter of OFY, calling it "valuable to this art form in so many ways...[through] the outreach to the schools, the performing and music education experience for the singers. And you should see how the kids respond! Opera for the Young is creating the next generation of audiences, performers, and philanthropists."

Sherrill Milnes has been called the world's greatest Verdi baritone. His career spanned decades, and he was a regular at the Metropolitan opera in New York in the 1970s and 1980s. He was a prolific recording artist who partnered with other international stars, Placido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti and Beverly Sills among them. He is Professor Emeritus, Northwestern University School of Music. In addition to his role as Artistic Director with the VoiceExperience! Foundation, he serves as Artistic Advisor for Opera Tampa.

For more information about Opera for the Young, call 608.277.9560 or visit their web site at www.operafortheyoung.org.

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A Message from Sherrill Milnes

December, 2008

Dear Friends,

In my many years on the stages of the great opera houses of the world, I have seen wonderful performances enjoyed by audiences of all ages. That is why I am such a big supporter of audience development and growing opera lovers for the future. One of the many ways that we build new opera audiences is through outreach. It is essential to the support and growth of the operatic art form and the performing arts.

Opera for the Young has been igniting enthusiasm for opera for nearly 40 years.

This innovative not-for-profit touring company performs abridged works by the great composers, traveling to every corner of Wisconsin (as well as parts of Minnesota, Michigan and northern Illinois) to introduce live vocal performances to thousands of primary and middle school children every year. OFY works with school music teachers who prepare the student choruses and soloists to be full participants in the productions. Principal cast members are young professional singers, some of whom have come directly out of my training programs. They gain valuable experience both as performers and as music educators. Costs to schools are underwritten by grants and donations to keep them very affordable.

The part YOU can play in this valuable program is to make Opera For the Young part of your charitable giving this year. Please be generous in your support and help ensure the future of our favorite art form by returning the enclosed envelope with your check today.

Sincerely,

A large, fluid handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sherrill Milnes". The signature is written in a cursive style with long, sweeping strokes.

Sherrill Milnes

Professor Emeritus, Northwestern University School of Music

Artistic Director, The V.O.I.C. Experience Foundation

Artistic Advisor, Opera Tampa