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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 7, 2013

Seventh Annual Irene Dalis Vocal Competition Awards \$50,000 Among Emerging Opera Stars

San José, CA ---- **Opera San José General Director Irene Dalis** is pleased to announce the results of the **Seventh-Annual Irene Dalis Vocal Competition** held May 4, 2013 at the **California Theatre** in downtown San José.

Ten finalists selected from the annual three-day West Coast Auditions for Singers performed some of the most beloved opera arias vying for \$50,000 in cash prizes. At the end of the evening soprano **Katharine Gunnink** from Cloverdale, California was awarded First Prize and \$15,000 for her stirring performance of “L’altra notte” from Boito’s *Mefisofele* and “Stevo, Stevo ja vim” from Janacek’s *Die Jenufa*.

“**Katharine Gunnink** was simply sensational and demonstrated such high vocal standards that she not only won over the judges, but the audience members as well” said **Irene Dalis**. “I must say that this was the best talent we have seen in the seven years of this competition and I am grateful that I did not have to judge. It would have been very difficult to select a winner from these fine operatic artists.”

Second Prize (\$10,000) was awarded to soprano **Christine Hageman**, who sang “Tu, che di gel sei cinta” from Puccini’s *Turandot* and “Nun eilt herbei” from Nicolai’s *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Ms. Hageman was also awarded the title of Audience Favorite, selected by popular vote during the final intermission, and received an additional \$5,000 for a grand total of \$15,000 in cash prizes. Third Prize (\$5,000) went to mezzo-soprano **Lisa Chavez** who performed “Acerba voluttá” from Cilèa’s *Adriana Lecouvreur* and “Amour! Viens aider ma faiblesse!” from Saint-Saën’s *Samson et Dalila*.

The other seven finalists each received a prize of \$2,000:

Alexander Boyer, tenor; New York

James Callon, tenor; California

Silas Elash, bass; Pennsylvania

Betany Coffland, mezzo-soprano; Kansas

Jennie Litster, soprano; Nevada

Christina Major, soprano; Texas

Isaiah Musik-Ayala, bass-baritone; California

Judges for the competition were **Ian Campbell**, General Director and Artistic Director of San Diego Opera; **Dale Johnson**, Artistic Director of Minnesota Opera; and **Joshua Winograde**, Senior Director of Artistic Planning for the Los Angeles Opera.

Sal Pizarro from the *San José Mercury News* presented the Audience Favorite Award and accomplished pianist **Catherine Miller** returned this year as accompanist for both the vocal competition finals and the preceding auditions.

The Seventh Annual Irene Dalis Vocal Competition is sponsored by the Irene Dalis Fund for Singers, with additional funding provided by Marjorie Holloway Cook.

Photos: Photo Credit: Robert Shomler

http://www.shomler.com/temp/idvac504/1375_7228s.jpg

Caption: The ten finalists from the Seventh Annual Irene Dalis Vocal Competition

http://www.shomler.com/temp/idvac504/1375_7230s.jpg

Caption: (L to R): Lisa Chavez (Third prize), Katharine Gunnink (First Prize), Christie Hageman (Second Prize and Audience Favorite)

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