



'Opera Lite' Series Launches at Walnut Creek Marriott Featuring Bay Area Stars

What: Festival Opera launches its 'Opera Lite' series of popular, lighter opera pieces and Broadway show tunes performed live at the Walnut Creek Marriott. The debut concert, 'Music of the Night' features performances by Bay Area opera stars Carrie Hennessey and Christopher Bengochea with piano accompanist, Simona Snitkovsky. A special prix fixe dinner menu and beverage special will also be offered.

When: Thursday, March 19, 7 p.m.

Who: Christopher Bengochea is a critically-acclaimed and prize winning international opera tenor and a former resident artist of Opera San José. He has also sung principal roles at Atlanta Opera, Opera Idaho, Opera Canada, Townsend Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Livermore Valley Opera, West Bay Opera, Teatro Felice, Festival Opera, and Opera Santa Barbara among others.

Known for her ability to bring great musical and theatrical depth to her performances, soprano Carrie Hennessey is a powerful and talented artist. Ms. Hennessey was seen recently in the Bay Area Premiere of Jake Heggie's *The End of the Affair* and in the role of Blanche DuBois on Townsend Opera and Fresno Grand Opera's co-production of Andre Previn's *Streetcar Named Desire*. Ms. Hennessey's portrayal of the title role in the West Coast Premiere of Tobias Picker's opera *Emmeline* earned her a nomination in the 2010 Bay Area Broadway World Awards for Best Leading Actress in a Musical.

Where: Walnut Creek Marriott, 2355 North Main St., Walnut Creek.

Admission: Free

For more information and reservations:

Festival Opera: www.festivalopera.org or call 925-944-9610.

Walnut Creek Marriott: www.walnutcreekmarriott.com or call 925-934-2000.

About Festival Opera: Based in Walnut Creek and founded in 1991, Festival Opera has focused on developing innovative and creative productions of classic opera from the standard repertory, Opera in the Park, and has added rarely-heard productions, commissions, and new works in recent years. As Festival Opera enters its 25th season, the company remains committed to bringing extraordinary opera to residents of Walnut Creek and San Francisco's East Bay communities. To donate to Festival Opera, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/kahajxw>.

Accommodations: Check into one of Walnut Creek's welcoming hotels and make it an overnight retreat. Find a great rate at www.gowalnutcreek.com/where-to-stay.html.

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