EDUARDO DIAZMUÑOZ LEAVING UI OPERA PROGRAM
Appointed Chair of Conducting and Music Director of the
Conservatorium Symphony Orchestra
Sydney Conservatorium at the University of Sydney

It is with great sadness that we will be saying goodbye to our opera program’s Artistic Director and Conductor, Eduardo Diazmuñoz, at the end of the fall semester, when he moves his base of operation to Australia. His record of outstanding productions for the UI will be a hard act to follow, and our loss is the Sydney Conservatorium’s gain.

Eduardo first came to the UI during the 2003-04 season as the guest conductor for the November and February productions. He began his official appointment as the Director of the Opera Program with the fall 2004 semester. Excellence in performance and passion for one’s endeavors in the arts have been hallmarks of his administration. His insistence on careful preparation for every role set a high standard for the students and all others who participate in the productions. He offered a broad repertory featuring operas from Baroque to modern, encouraging audiences to embrace works that were new to them. Eduardo will oversee our Falstaff production and conduct the performances in November, so we will have time to express our appreciation to him this fall semester for his years of service to the University of Illinois.

DR JEFFREY MAGEE NAMED SCHOOL OF MUSIC DIRECTOR

After serving as Interim Director for the past year Dr. Magee now has the formal title as the School of Music’s Director. His appointment comes at a time of budget tightening throughout the University as the arts compete with other departments for scarce funds. Dr. Magee is determined to maintain the School’s high level of excellence in preparing performers and educators. He has expressed his support for the opera program, and we look forward to offering our assistance to the School of Music through our donations and attendance at the School’s productions. Opera Newslines will check in with Dr. Magee in 2014 to give an update on his first year in this role.

Opera Newslines is issued quarterly by IOTE, Phyllis Cline, Editor. Address: 104 E. Willard, Urbana, IL 61801. Phone: (217) 344-4806. Email: pcline@comcast.net. IOTE is a community support group for the School of Music Opera Program, a department of the School of Music at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Opera Program, the School of Music, and Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.
2013-2014 UI OPERA SEASON

FALSTAFF
November 14, 15, 16, 17
GAY ROBERTS IS THE SPONSOR

William Shakespeare’s plays *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV* serve as the inspiration for Giuseppe Verdi’s final opera, *Falstaff*. His librettist for *Otello*, Arrigo Boito, expertly set Shakespeare’s classics in a comic text that serves a fitting climax to Verdi’s long and illustrious career as a composer of tragedies.

Stage Director Kathleen Conlin, the Barnard Hewitt Professor of Theatre and Director in Residence for the Department of Theatre at the UI, brings to this *Falstaff* production many years of experience as a director of plays by Shakespeare and other theatre giants. She has studied the plays and opera in great detail and is eager to create a memorable experience for the audience. The November issue of *Opera Newslines* will feature an article about her vision for the production and her work with the students to bring these concepts to the stage.

*Falstaff* will be sung in Italian with English titles so that you will be clued in to all the jokes and nuances of Boito’s erudite libretto.

ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD
March 6, 7, 8, 9
IOTE IS THE SPONSOR

Composer Jacques Offenbach, a man of the theatre, achieved lasting fame in the world of music with his witty operettas that satirized the classics, politics of the day, and society’s foibles. His Paris theater, the Bouffes-Parisiens, was the venue for many of his most hilarious earlier operettas that played to full houses every night.

In 1858 Offenbach created *Orphée aux enfers*, a two act piece that parodies the famous Orpheus legend, turning it around into a comedy that keeps the audiences laughing and the revenues coming in. Our production will be directed by Ricardo Herrera, who has directed several past operas for the UI and brings an enthusiasm for the project and a creative imagination that can overcome whatever budgetary constrictions are imposed.

*Orpheus in the Underworld* will be sung in French with English titles so that the audience misses none of the witty text by librettists Hector Crémieux and Ludovic Halévy and can enjoy the rollicking music of the master, Offenbach.

OPERA STUDIO FUNDRAISING EVENT SEPTEMBER 8

The Opera Studio serves a valuable role in the opera program by providing training to the students on how to study and develop their characters and then act their roles on stage. Students in the Opera Studio attend twice-weekly class and rehearsal sessions that focus on the particular scenes in which they will be performing when the Studio presents its programs in the Colwell Playhouse at the end of each semester.

IOTE recognizes the need to give financial support to the Opera Studio along with its sponsorship support to the main stage productions each season. The Studio’s expenses are modest, but their budget is low compared with the funds available for the Tryon Festival Theatre operas, and this budget is not able to cover all the costs of providing the Studio with the sets and props that are needed for the public productions.

IOTE can ask its members for money through direct mail solicitations, but it is more enjoyable to have the opportunity to meet the singers and directors and to see them in action. The Studio’s directors have embraced the plan to hold a fundraising event at the home of Ronald and Barbara Hedlun on Sunday, September 8, to benefit the Opera Studio. They will present a performance featuring UI opera students, and then enjoy a picnic with IOTE members and guests. If this event is successful, we will consider holding a similar fundraiser at the beginning of the 2014 fall semester.
IOTE is pleased to give its 2013 Award for Excellence to soprano Yaritza Zayas in recognition of her outstanding performance as Florencia in last season’s Florencia en el Amazonas. This role was preceded by her singing Gilda in Rigoletto in 2010, Papagena in The Magic Flute in 2011, and Rosa in Paradises Lost in 2012.

Having family members who are involved in the arts can encourage children to try to develop their own talents in artistic endeavors, and Yaritza’s family supports her artistic pursuits. Her father was an actor and drew cartoons, her mother was a model, one grandmother was a fashion designer, and her other grandmother wanted to be a dancer. Yaritza’s father taught her karate, which, while fun, improved her reflexes and her concentration.

Yaritza comes from Puerto Rico, where she began singing at age five. She attended a grade school specializing in the arts and played the violin. In seventh grade, she auditioned for another arts school as a singer. Although her focus was pop-rock, the school taught classical style singing, which served a good foundation for her later vocal studies.

In high school Yaritza studied voice and piano but was also interested in playing the clarinet, and when the voice faculty did not encourage that she bought her own instrument, took private lessons from the school’s band teacher, and played the clarinet in the school band. She did all this while developing her voice with the goal of becoming a pop-rock singer.

Yaritza enrolled at the Conservatory of Puerto Rico following high school, still interested in pop-rock music but with a growing attraction to classical singing. She also continued clarinet studies for a time but had to drop it after a year because it took too much time away from her vocal studies. She began as a coloratura soprano who could sing very high notes. She continues to sing those notes, but her voice has developed into a lyric soprano, which opens up more operatic roles for her in the professional world.

At the Conservatory Yaritza studied acting as well as singing, enabling her to both sing and move on stage simultaneously. Opera singers of the distant past could get by being “park and bark” singers, if their voices appealed well enough to the public, but modern audiences want performers who can act out the roles they are singing. Yaritza shows an admirable ability to give nuanced performances.

She enrolled at UI in 2010 as a Master of Music student studying with Cynthia Haymon-Coleman. After receiving that degree, she continued as a DMA candidate in vocal performance. She is studying Baroque performance-practice for her minor, and her coloratura ability will allow new performance opportunities in that genre.

Modern music appeals to some opera singers but not to all. Yaritza gained experience singing the music of living composers while studying in Puerto Rico, including a role in a new one-act opera. At UI, she has been especially pleased to work with Stephen Taylor on Paradises Lost because she could consult with him about her role of Rosa. Prior the world premiere at the UI in April 2012, the cast of Paradises Lost performed some of its scenes in Oregon. Composer Stephen Taylor, librettist Marcia Johnson, and the author of the original story, Ursula Le Guin, were all present, which helped the singers fine-tune their performances.

This summer Yaritza spent two months at the Aspen Music Festival. She received a full scholarship to study there, receiving voice lessons, coachings, master classes, and even a class in stage combat, along with some opportunities to perform. She is preparing a package of arias for competitions and auditions from the operas Gianni Schicchi, Giulio Cesare, Don Pasquale, and The Ballad of Baby Doe. She considers these to be the arias that present her voice at its best.

Yaritza’s career goal is to be a professional singer and she is also considering becoming a professor of voice at a university. With her talent and desire to succeed, these are goals that we expect her to meet.
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE WINNER

BENJAMIN KRUNREIG

Tenor Benjamin Krumreig is a young man with a clear goal of becoming a professional singer. He comes from a family of singers, including a sister who is a music teacher. His family is very supportive of his career plans, which is essential for the many years and expensive training necessary for singers to develop professional-level voices and stage acting.

Benjamin has a BM degree in vocal performance from Baldwin-Wallace University Conservatory of Music in Berea, Ohio. The school presents one opera per year plus scenes programs, and he sang roles in *Our Town*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, and *La Bohème*. He also received musical theatre training and sang in a Bach Festival. He won the school’s Concerto Competition, and was able to sing on stage with an orchestra.

Before choosing UI, Benjamin auditioned for and was accepted to several prestigious universities and conservatories. An undergraduate piano teacher recommended UI, which Benjamin eventually chose because of the many performing opportunities and his desire to study with Jerold Siena after having a voice lesson with him while visiting campus. He enrolled at UI for a Master of Music degree in the fall of 2012.

Benjamin lost no time taking on roles in the UI operas during his first year here, singing Arcadio in *Florencia en el Amazonas*, Freddy in *My Fair Lady*, and Reverend Kimball in *The Threepenny Opera*. He sang in the chorus of *The Pirates of Penzance* at the Allerton Music Barn Festival last September and as a soloist in March for Sinfonia da Camera’s performance of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*.

During his first year at UI, Benjamin took classes with Julie Gunn and Dennis Helmrich in vocal literature, Charlotte Mattax in Baroque music, and Katherine Syer in opera history and production. He especially enjoyed the opportunity to sing in a Spanish opera, both on the main stage in Daniel Catán’s *Florencia en el Amazonas* and in scenes of Catán’s works for the Opera Studio.

Summer training programs are invaluable for an aspiring singer, and Benjamin has attended several. In 2008, he sang Monastatos in *The Magic Flute* for the Operafestival di Roma. In 2009, he traveled to Alaska to sing in the scenes programs for the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival. The next summer, he spent in New York with the Summer Voice Festival of the Manhattan School of Music performing in scenes programs and attending master classes.

In the summer of 2012, Benjamin participated in the Ohio Light Opera program for young singers, and he joined the company again this summer for two months of performing in seven shows, including the role of Ralph Rackstraw in *HMS Pinafore*. This program provides lodging and a salary, unlike many summer training programs that cost thousands of dollars for tuition and housing.

Benjamin values his lessons with Professor Siena. He describes Siena’s original voice lessons as helping him open his voice and sound to the point where he realized he could become a professional singer. He is now working on the passagio, tenor ring, keeping the vowels bright and vertical, and not pushing the bottom of his voice. To a non-singer, this description reveals intricacies in vocal training that explain why it takes so long to become truly professional in the art of singing. It is certainly more involved than just opening your mouth and vibrating your vocal cords.

Benjamin expects to finish his MM degree in the spring of 2014 and to apply for summer young artist programs at Santa Fe, Merola, Carmel and the Bach Festival. He is interested in competitions such as the Lotte Lenya Competition and the Oratorio Society of New York. He is also considering auditioning for young artist programs and artist diploma programs at the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati, the New England Conservatory, and the University of Michigan. With the excellence shown in his work so far, Benjamin’s goal of having an international singing career appears well on its way. We anticipate more talented performances from him this season.
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD WINNER

JORGE BELONNI

IOTE presents its Encouragement Award to one undergraduate student each spring. The student is chosen by the opera director for demonstrating outstanding talent and advancement in performance and vocal development during the school year.

At the April 2013 Awards Luncheon, IOTE was pleased to give this award to Jorge Belonni, a bass-baritone from Bayamón, Puerto Rico, who finished his Bachelor of Music degree in the spring and is now enrolled in the Master of Music program at UI. He was encouraged to choose UI by his friend Yaritza Zayas and is studying with Cynthia Haymon-Coleman.

During the 2012-13 season, Jorge performed the role of the Captain in *Florencia en el Amazonas* in November, a character of dignity and honesty with a common sense approach to life. He then made a big switch when he sang Bob, one of Macheath’s gang of thieves and scoundrels, in *The Threepenny Opera* in April. Both roles provided valuable stage experience that young singers need as they transfer the vocal talents developed in the voice teacher’s studio to portraying real characters on stage.

Jorge is very tall and, in his youth, he was focused on basketball. His grandmother encouraged him to sing, telling him that he had his grandfather’s voice and should develop it. He did some singing in high school but did not appear in stage productions. He then attended the University of Puerto Rico with a scholarship to study choral music and enjoyed it so much that he sang in five choirs. A new choir conductor advised him to pursue a music career.

Performing in a zarzuela at the University of Puerto Rico convinced Jorge that he could enjoy theatrical work and do well at it. His mother was excited to see his early performances, but as he continued to perform, she became a bit blasé and took his talent more for granted.

After graduating from the University of Puerto Rico, Jorge sought more training at the Conservatory of Puerto Rico, where he sang Balthazar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and Der Tod in Viktor Ullmann’s *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*. He spent time working on developing his vocal technique, but he was still focused on becoming a choral director rather than pursuing a professional career as a singer.

Jorge describes his voice as a bass-baritone that is moving up to a mid-range baritone. An important element of his vocal training is sounding natural and not forced. He is approaching the development of his high notes carefully so that he can maintain this natural sound, and he will be working more in the future on dynamics, expanding his repertoire and feeling more comfortable in presenting characters on stage.

Students are advised to study the text and the music they are to perform before listening to recordings or watching videos of other singers in those roles in order to avoid copying things that may not be correct. Jorge makes a special point of studying how the text and music relate to each other and understanding the composer’s intent. The particular way a composer relates text to music gives singers clues to how the characters should be presented.

Singers at all levels of development are prone to analyzing their performances, even when they have many years of professional experience. Student singers are especially sensitive to second-guessing their work, and Jorge is alert to nuances that he can master as he has the opportunity to take on more stage roles and gain this experience. At UI last season, in addition to his two roles in the opera productions, he sang Raphael and Adam in Haydn’s *The Creation* with the UI Oratorio Society and the UI Symphony Orchestra.

This school year, Jorge will serve an administrative assistantship in the opera office while he takes courses and works on fulfilling the requirements for his Master of Music degree. He expects this degree work to take two years, so we will have the pleasure of seeing him on stage in more productions and watching him further develop his vocal and acting talents. We congratulate Jorge on being selected for the IOTE Encouragement Award.
IOTE FUNDRAISING FACTS

IOTE first organized in 1990 and, after establishing its reputation, began raising money to support the UI Opera Program in 1993. We created an account with the University of Illinois Foundation and put all donations into that account. IOTE established its Award for Excellence in 1994 with a cash grant of $150 to one student. Our award is unique among those given to students in that the recipients are chosen by a vote of their opera singing peers after the final production has closed in the spring.

In 1995, IOTE expanded the Award to cover two students, one female and one male, and, while the money given was still modest, members continued to make donations and build up the UIF account. In subsequent years, the cash grants to the two Award recipients have grown to $1,000 each. In time, the account became endowed, and the Awards are paid using the interest generated by the funds in the account. In 2011, IOTE expanded its grants to students by establishing the Encouragement Award for one undergraduate student per year, chosen by the opera director.

In 1997, IOTE was asked to raise $2,500 to sponsor one opera production per season. We met that goal each year until 2007, when we were told that the basic sponsorship amount was raised to $5000. Again, IOTE members rose to the challenge and donated the increased amount. Our sponsorships are also unique in the number of people who contribute to meet the goal. This shows how much we can accomplished when many people become involved and give at whatever level fits their budgets.

When IOTE began sponsoring operas, a separate UIF account was established to make the money available at any time during the year rather than only during a short period in the spring when the endowed account funds can be withdrawn. We are using that sponsorship account to hold Opera Studio donations that we are now receiving in response to a letter mailed to members in the spring requesting Orpheus in the Underworld sponsorship donations.

IOTE welcomes all people who enjoy opera and want to support the UI opera program, whether or not the member makes donations. Annual dues are kept low so that people of all income levels can join and show their support to the students, faculty, and production staff. If you decide to donate, make the check payable to IOTE; write your choice of Award Fund, Sponsorship, or Opera Studio in the Memo section; and mail to: IOTE, 104 E. Willard, Urbana, IL 61801-6660. We will transmit your donation to the correct fund at the UIF, and you will receive their official acknowledgment. All donations to the UIF are tax-deductible.

THE MIKADO
March 14 at 7:30 PM
FOELLINGER GREAT HALL

Sinfonia da Camera, under the direction of Ian Hobson, music director and conductor, will present a semi-staged production of The Mikado in the Foellinger Great Hall. Dawn Harris directs the antics of Yum-Yum, Nanki-Poo, Ko-Ko, and the rest of the characters.

UI voice faculty members Yvonne Redman and Ricardo Herrera will join Dawn Harris and UI students in performing this charming and forever popular Gilbert & Sullivan operetta. Contact the Krannert Center Box Office for tickets.

LES MISERABLES
AT PARKLAND THEATRE

Steve Fiol directed a moving production of the musical Les Miserables by the Champaign Urbana Theatre Company at the Parkland Theatre in August. It featured UI singers Kyle Pollio as Jean Valjean, Timothy Renner as Javert, Bethany Stiles as Fantine, and Edward Brennan as Enjolras. The music director and conductor was Aaron Kaplan, who received a Masters degree in conducting from UI. KCPA provided space for the staging rehearsals, an important contribution to this community theatre operation. Reviewers and audiences praised the professional level of the production and the enthusiasm of the performers.
APRIL 24 AWARDS LUNCHEON

Each spring the School of Music presents awards and scholarships to students who show outstanding performance and teaching abilities. We congratulate these students for their achievements. This year the voice students receiving recognition at the luncheon were, in alphabetical order:

**JOO YOUNG BANG**—2012 IOTE Award for Excellence
**ELLEN BIALEK**—Division Achievement Award
**JORGE BELONNI**—IOTE Encouragement Award
**JASMINE HENDERSON**—Eliza Meier Frauenhoffer Memorial Award
**CASSANDRA JACKSON**—Charles F. and Helen W. Loeb Voice Scholarship
**RUTH KENNEY**—Geraldine B. Cooke Scholarship and Eliza Meier Frauenhoffer Memorial Scholarship
**KELLY KNECHT**—Division Achievement Award
**BENJAMIN KRUMREIG**—Howard A. Stotler Graduate Fellowship, Golden Lyre Foundation Award
**EMMA LLOYD**—Division Achievement Award
**ANASTASIA MALLIARAS**—Thomas J. Smith Scholarship
**WENDY MUIR**—Thomas J. Smith Scholarship and Geraldine B. Cooke Scholarship
**ALEXANDRA NOWAKOWSKI**—Dorothy E. Bowen Voice Scholarship, second runner up in the John D. and Fern Hodge Armstrong Award
**JACQUELINE PICCOLINO**—Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Fellowship
**TIMOTHY RENNER**—Joseph W. Schlanger Memorial Opera Scholarship, Howard A. Stotler Graduate Fellowship
**MARIEL SAAVEDRA**—Division Achievement Award
**MATTHEW SCOLLIN**—2012 IOTE Award for Excellence
**YARITZA ZAYAS**—Grace Elizabeth Wilson Memorial Award, Sara De Mundo Lo Award

If you would like to establish an award or scholarship for a student contact School of Music Associate Director of Development David Allen, 333-6453, allend@illinois.edu to learn about the requirements.

LYRIC OPERA SCHEDULE
lyricopera.org, 312-332-2244

**Otello**—Verdi—October 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29, November 2
**Madama Butterfly**—Puccini—October 15, 18, 23, 26, 30, January 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26
**Parsifal**—Wagner—November 9, 13, 17, 22, 25, 29
**La Traviata**—Verdi—November 20, 23, 27, 30, December 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 20
**Die Fledermaus**—J. Strauss, Jr—December 10, 13, 16, 18, 21, January 10, 12, 15, 18
**The Barber of Seville**—Rossini—February 1, 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25, 28
**Rusalka**—Dvořák—February 22, 26, March 4, 7, 10, 16
**La Clemenza di Tito**—Mozart—March 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23
**The Sound of Music**—Rodgers & Hammerstein—April 25, 26, 27, 30, May 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

MET OPERA LIVE IN HD SCHEDULE

The Savoy 16 at 232 Burwash Ave. in Savoy will be showing the Live in HD series of Metropolitan Opera productions. Tickets can be ordered online at savoy16.com, by calling 355-3456, or visiting the theatre. Live showings are on Saturdays, Encore showings the following Wednesdays. Live shows begin at 11:55 AM, Encores at 6:30 PM.

**Eugene Onegin**—Tchaikovsky—October 5
Encore October 9
**The Nose**—Shostakovich—October 26
Encore October 30
**Tosca**—Puccini—November 9
Encore November 13
**Falstaff**—Verdi—December 14
Encore December 18
**Rusalka**—Dvořák—February 8
Encore February 12
**Prince Igor**—Borodin—March 1
Encore March 5
**Werther**—Massenet—March 15
Encore March 19
**La Bohème**—Puccini—April 5
Encore April 9
**Così fan tutte**—Mozart—April 26
Encore April 30
**La Cenerentola**—Rossini—May 10
Encore May 14
IOTE MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION FORM

Members receive the quarterly newsletter *Opera Newslines* and are offered opportunities to help UI opera students. Membership begins the month you join and is renewed annually in that month. IOTE raises funds for three student awards that total $2500 per year, $5000 per season to sponsor one of the opera productions, support for the Opera Studio, plus other needs identified by the opera program. All donations to IOTE are administered by the UI Foundation and are tax-deductible. Contact Phyllis Cline at 217-344-4806 or email her at plcline@comcast.net to learn how you can support the UI opera students.

Names(s)_________________________________________________Home Phone________________________
Address_________________________________________________________Cell Phone________________________
City_________________________________________State___________Zip + 4________________________

Email Address______________________________________________________

**DUES:** $15 Individual________$25 Household_______

**DONATIONS:** Sponsorship_________ Award Fund___________ Opera Studio___________

Donations of any amount are welcome. You may include all amounts for dues and donations in one check. **Make check payable to IOTE and mail to: IOTE, 104 E. Willard, Urbana, IL 61801-6660.**