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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Chris Guerre, (703) 255-4096 or chrisg@wolftrap.org
Graham Binder, (703) 255-1917 or grahamb@wolftrap.org

Three New Opera Productions, Including D.C. Debut of Verdi's *King for a Day*; *Instant Opera!* at Children's Theatre; Collaborative Concert with the NSO; and Popular Recitals with Steven Blier all in Wolf Trap Opera Company's 2008 Season

20 of the nation's most talented young singers selected from more than 800 applicants

Vienna, VA—The **Wolf Trap Opera Company**, one of our nation's most highly regarded Opera residency programs, proudly presents **three new, full-scale productions this summer at The Barns at Wolf Trap** of operas by Verdi, Strauss, and Handel.

Performances include a **new production and Washington, D.C.-area premiere of Verdi's *King for a Day* (*Un giorno di regno*)**, one of only two comedies written by the famous Italian composer; a new production of ***Ariadne auf Naxos* by Richard Strauss**—the company's first production of Strauss at The Barns; and a new production of one of **Handel's most gorgeous operas, *Alcina***. In addition, the Company presents a now-traditional collaborative concert production—this year, of Bernstein's ***Candide***—with the **National Symphony Orchestra** on the Filene Center stage at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts; **two recitals** at The Barns at Wolf Trap under the artistic direction of **Steven Blier**; and the return of ***Instant Opera!***, a Wolf Trap Opera Company original, at the Children's Theatre-in-the-Woods at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts.

Principal roles in the Company's productions will be performed by the 20 singers selected as the **Wolf Trap Opera Company's 2008 ensemble of Filene Young Artists**. These emerging professional singers were chosen from **more than 1000 applicants** by Kim Pensinger Witman, Director, Wolf Trap Opera and Classical Programming. The 2008 Wolf Trap Opera Company Filene Young Artists are: **Dominic Armstrong, tenor; Anne-Carolyn Bird, soprano; Liam Bonner, baritone; Rebekah Camm, soprano; Leena Chopra, soprano; Elizabeth DeShong, mezzo-soprano; Beau Gibson, tenor; Joshua Jeremiah, baritone; James J. Kee, baritone; Maria Markina, mezzo-soprano; Ryan McKinny, bass-baritone; Liam Moran, bass; Erin Morley, soprano; Marjorie Owens, soprano; Ava Pine, soprano; Rodell Rosel, tenor; Steven Sanders, tenor; Diego Torre, tenor; Jamie Van Eyck, mezzo-soprano; Tamara Wilson, soprano.**

Established in 1971, the Wolf Trap Opera Company continues to earn national and international recognition for its mission to discover and encourage outstanding emerging talent in the opera field, serving singers of exceptional achievement and potential who are ready to make the transition to full-time professional careers. The Company's repertoire is chosen following the national audition process in order to showcase the particular strengths of the ensemble. In addition to the young professional singers, the company also features the work of emerging designers, directors, and conductors; and provides opportunities for aspiring stage managers, administrators, coaches, and technical theatre professionals.

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This year also marks the second year for the **Wolf Trap Opera Studio**, a performance training program created for undergraduate singers. **Joshua Winograde**, a former Wolf Trap Opera Company member, is the Manager of Wolf Trap's 2008 Opera Studio. Studio artists will take classes, perform chorus roles and small parts, and present a scenes program at the conclusion of their residency.

The Wolf Trap Opera Company's 2008 Season

King for a Day (Un giorno di regno)

Giuseppe Verdi

A New Production and Washington, D.C.-area Premiere

The Barns at Wolf Trap

Three Performances: June 13 and 17 at 8 pm, June 15 at 2 pm

(In Italian with English supertitles)

Tickets \$28 to \$68

This summer, the Wolf Trap Opera Company presents a new production and Washington, D.C.-area premiere of ***King for a Day (Un giorno di regno)***, Verdi's second opera and only comedy other than *Falstaff*. Written in 1840, more than ten years before Verdi's powerhouse trio of *Rigoletto-Trovatore-Traviata* would take the stage, *King for a Day* exemplifies how the young composer wrestled with existing forms of the day and began fashioning the musical styles that were to become his own. The new production is directed by Kristine McIntyre and conducted by Brian Garman.

Alcina

George Frideric Handel

A New Production

The Barns at Wolf Trap

Three Performances: July 11 and 15 at 8 pm, July 13 at 2 pm

(In Italian with English supertitles)

Tickets \$28 to \$68

Only the third Handel opera production in the history of the Wolf Trap Opera Company, ***Alcina*** is one of Handel's "magical" operas, all of which were based on stories from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* – a 16th-century poem with many fantastical elements. *Alcina* is an exploration of human love in all its guises and features some of the most stunning and beautiful vocal music of the Baroque era. The new production is directed by Eric Einhorn and conducted by Eric Melear.

Ariadne auf Naxos

Richard Strauss

A New Production

The Barns at Wolf Trap

Three Performances: August 15 and 19 at 8 pm, August 17 at 2 pm

(In German with English supertitles)

Tickets \$28 to \$68

An opera within an opera, *Ariadne auf Naxos* takes a lighthearted look into the themes of art versus realism, and the capriciousness of love. Scored for a small, transparent Mozartean orchestra, *Ariadne auf Naxos* is an ideal match for the chamber-sized Barns at Wolf Trap. Strauss' vocal writing, however, calls for voice types not easily found in a company of young artists – a full lyric soprano, a dramatic tenor, and a virtuosic coloratura soprano, among others. This year, however, this rare constellation of singers appeared during the Company's national audition tour and set *Ariadne on the Island of Naxos* on its path to Wolf Trap. The new production is directed by Thaddeus Strassberger and conducted by Timothy Long.

Ticket holders to King for a Day, Alcina, and Ariadne auf Naxos are invited to a free Inside the Opera pre-show talk at the Center for Education at Wolf Trap, next door to The Barns, one hour prior to each performance.

Bernstein's Candide in concert

with the National Symphony Orchestra

Stephen Lord, conductor

The Filene Center at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts

One Performance: July 6 at 8:15 pm

Tickets \$20 to \$55

Conductor Stephen Lord and the National Symphony Orchestra again work their magic in this concert staging collaboration of Leonard Bernstein's ode to optimism, *Candide*. Recent seasons have brought *Carmen*, *Romeo et Juliette*, and *La bohème* to the Filene Center; with the NSO onstage in all of its power and virtuosity and the action playing itself out in front of the orchestra.

Instant Opera!

(Improvisational opera for children of all ages)

Children's Theatre-in-the-Woods at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts

Five Performances: July 15 to 19 at 11:15 am

Tickets are \$5

It's Opera by "Mad Libs!" – Wolf Trap Opera's original, improvisational performances for children. The audience makes up the story, and the actors sing an opera made "to spec" right on the spot. Previous years' masterpieces have included *SpongeBob Steals the Princess*, *Trouble in Disneyworld*, and *The Penguin and the Troll!* Children and adults alike will laugh and learn from during this fun and fast-paced musical adventure.

Wolf Trap Opera in Recital

With Steven Blier, pianist and host

Happy Birthday to Two

Celebrating Bernstein & Bolcom

The Barns at Wolf Trap

Single Performance: May 31 at 8 pm

Tickets are \$38

Steven Blier and five Wolf Trap Opera Company members will celebrate the anniversary years of two of the giants of American musical theater and opera, Leonard Bernstein and William Bolcom.

Tales from the Vienna Woods

The Barns at Wolf Trap

Single Performance: July 19 at 8 pm

Tickets are \$38

The songs return in July, this time for a different kind of anniversary. Steven Blier celebrates his 25th Wolf Trap recital by reprising his first offering, a *Sachertorte* of Germanic Romanticism.

Tickets for Wolf Trap Opera Company performances can be purchased at the Wolf Trap Box Office located at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts at 1551 Trap Road, Vienna, Virginia; by calling 1(877) WOLFTRAP; or online at www.wolftrap.org. For more information, call Wolf Trap at (703) 255-1868.

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