

Press Contact:  
Virginia Perry, 408.437.4463; 650-799-1341; perry@operasj.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
May 21, 2012

### ***Sixth Annual Irene Dalis Vocal Competition Awards Nearly \$50,000 Among Emerging Opera Stars***

San José, CA ---- **Opera San José General Director Irene Dalis** is pleased to announce the results of the **Sixth Annual Irene Dalis Vocal Competition** held May 19, 2012 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 nearly \$50,000 in cash prizes. At the end of the evening soprano **Rebecca Davis** from Carol Stream, Illinois was awarded First Prize and \$15,000 for her stirring performance of “Dis-moi que je suis belle” from Massenet’s *Thais* and “Dove sono i bei momenti,” from Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*.

Second Prize (\$10,000) was awarded to mezzo-soprano **Maria McDaniel**, who sang “Cruda sorte...già so per pratica” from Rossini’s *L’Italiana in Algeri* and “What a movie!” from Bernstein’s *Trouble in Tahiti*.

Third Prize (\$5,000) went to tenor **Cesar Sanchez** who performed “Recondita armonia” from Puccini’s *Tosca* and “Questa o quella” from Verdi’s *Rigoletto*. Mr. Sanchez was also awarded the Audience Favorite prize, selected by popular vote during the final intermission, and received an additional \$5,000 for a grand total of \$10,000 in cash prizes. “Cesar Sanchez is a wonderful young artist who demonstrated such high vocal standards that he 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 six 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.”

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

Kearstin Piper Brown, soprano; Illinois  
Christie Hageman, soprano; Montana  
Christina Major, soprano; California  
Julie Anne Miller, mezzo-soprano; California  
Mathew Edwardsen, tenor; Illinois  
Krassen Karagiozov, baritone; Bulgaria  
Silas Elash, bass; Pennsylvania

Judges for the competition were **Henry Akina**, General & Artistic Director, Hawaii Opera Theatre; **Ward Holmquist**, Artistic Director, Lyric Opera of Kansas City; and **Brad Trexell**, Director of Artistic Operations, Opera Colorado. **Richard Harrell**, Opera Program Director, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, **Peter Jaffe**, Music Director and Conductor, Stockton Symphony, and **Timm Rolek**, Artistic Director and Conductor, Lake Tahoe Music Festival, served on the preliminary panel.

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

***The annual Irene Dalis Vocal Competition is sponsored by the Irene Dalis Fund for Singers.***

**Photos:** Photo Credit: Robert Shomler

<http://operasj.org/wp-content/gallery/2012-irene-dalis-vocal-competition/idvc2012finalistshires.jpg>

Caption: Irene Dalis pictured with the ten finalists from the Sixth Annual Irene Dalis Vocal Competition

<http://operasj.org/wp-content/gallery/2012-irene-dalis-vocal-competition/idvcfirstplacehires.jpg>

Caption: Irene Dalis pictured with soprano Rebecca Davis, First Prize winner of the Sixth Annual Irene Dalis Vocal Competition

<http://operasj.org/wp-content/gallery/2012-irene-dalis-vocal-competition/idvcwinnershires.jpg>

Caption: (L to R): Maria McDaniel (Second prize), Cesar Sanchez (Third prize), Irene Dalis, Rebecca Davis (First Prize)

**Press Room:** <http://www.operasj.org/pressroom.html>

###