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**OPERA NEW JERSEY HONORS WILLIAM H. AND JUDITH MCCARTIN SCHIEDE WITH THIS YEAR'S CELEBRATE OPERA GALA STARRING DENYCE GRAVES**

September 16, 2009 PRINCETON, NJ – Opera New Jersey announces its 2009 Celebrate Opera Gala.

The fifth annual Celebrate Opera Gala will be held October 17<sup>th</sup> at the Hyatt Regency, Princeton. This year's honorees will be William H. and Judith McCartin Scheide. The main entertainment for the event will be international operatic superstar, Denyce Graves.



“We are thrilled that we can honor the Scheides for their tremendous support of the arts,” said Scott Altman, General and Artistic Director of Opera New Jersey, “and it seems fitting that we can do so with a star of Denyce Graves’ caliber.”

The annual Celebrate Opera Gala is the most important fundraising event of the year for Opera New Jersey. The proceeds directly support Opera New Jersey’s ability to present high quality productions and educational programming that enlighten, entertain, and benefit thousands of adults and children throughout New Jersey and beyond.

Recognized worldwide as one of today's most exciting vocal stars, Denyce Graves continues to gather unparalleled popular and critical acclaim in performances on four continents. Her career has taken her to the world's great opera houses and concert halls. The combination of her expressive, rich vocalism, elegant stage presence, and exciting theatrical abilities allows her to pursue a wide breadth of operatic portrayals as well as delight audiences in concert and recital appearances.

Joining Ms. Graves will be some of the hottest upcoming opera stars of tomorrow: Jan Cornelius, soprano; Cody Austin, tenor; and Andrew Garland, Baritone.

Opera New Jersey’s relationship with Denyce Graves continues in February 2010 with their production of Carmen, also starring Richard Leech as Don Jose and Luis Ledesma as

**Opera New Jersey Honors William H. and Judith McCartin Scheide.**

the dashing toreador, Escamillo. Co-produced with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, there will be three NJ performances; February 5, McCarter Theatre, Princeton; February 7, The State Theatre, New Brunswick; and February 12 at the NJPAC. This production is conceptualized and directed by acclaimed stage director Bernard Uzan. Conducting the fantastic New Jersey Symphony will be Florentine Opera's Maestro Joseph Rescigno. This production will also be repeated on February 12 at the Lyric Opera House of Baltimore.

### **Opera New Jersey**

Opera New Jersey is recognized nationally as a leader among regional opera companies, providing high quality opera performances and exceptional educational offerings. Opera New Jersey seeks to stimulate, promote and satisfy interest in opera, build a strong and diverse audience base for the art form and foster the development of emerging artists. Opera New Jersey received its third straight prestigious Citation of Excellence from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA). The Citation is NJSCA's highest honor and recognizes arts organizations that "exhibit the highest standards of excellence in artistry, operations, governance, public benefit and fulfillment of areas of Council priority. Most recently, Opera New Jersey was honored with a prestigious National Endowment for the Arts Challenge America grant, in recognition of its outstanding educational programming. For more information [www.opera-NJ.org](http://www.opera-NJ.org).

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