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OPERA CAROLINA SINGERS TO PERFORM AT HOSPICE GALA

Lexington, North Carolina, August 16, 2010 - Members of Opera Carolina will present selections from their 2010-2011 concert series at the "*Friends of Hospice*" gala on August 27, 2010. Featured performers include Mary Kathryn Withers, soprano; Daidree Tofano, mezzo soprano; John Kaneklides, tenor; and Noah Rice, tenor. Pianist Emily Urbanek will accompany the vocalists.

The theme for this year's benefit is "*An Evening in Tuscany*" and will be hosted at Childress Vineyards. The Italian venue will be reflected in all aspects of the event from the music and menu to the décor and auction packages. All have been carefully designed to capture the authentic ambiance of southern Italy.

When the doors open at 6:30 pm, guests will be greeted to musical selections from favorite Italian operas including *La Traviata*, *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. At the onset of the live auction and later in the evening, Opera Carolina will present a number of operatic and contemporary favorites including *Love Changes Everything* and *Sure on the Shining Night*.

General Director and Principal Conductor, James Meena, will participate in the evening's festivities as the presenter of a deluxe, auction package that includes dinner and a night at the opera. Since joining Opera Carolina in 2000, the Company has flourished under his direction with his added commitment of introducing opera to the general public. Through a program launched in 2003, "*Opera Up Close*" has introduced opera to Carolina communities through a series of diverse performances presented in non-traditional venues. More information regarding the company and its upcoming season is available online at: www.operacarolina.org.

The opportunity to involve vocalists from the company originated with agency CEO, Lisa T. Hathaway. Both her uncle and cousin are members of the company and wanted to support the fundraising efforts of the agency. After an initial meeting with the two, Mark and Daidree Tofano, they suggested involving others from Opera Carolina. Tofano later approached Maestro Meena, a hospice supporter, and he welcomed the opportunity to engage members of Opera Carolina for the Italian-themed benefit.

The event also features a silent auction with jewelry, pottery, themed gift baskets and a variety of premier gift certificates. The live auction will begin at 8:00 pm and will showcase designer furniture, dinner parties and destination packages including a tour for two to Tuscany, Italy. A select number of signed, southern realist prints donated by art collectors Wayne and Frankie Sowers will also be on auction.

For ticket or more information regarding this year's benefit gala, contact Hospice of Davidson County, 336.475.5444. Tickets are \$75 per person with limited seating available.

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