

# OPERA NEWS

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## OPERA WATCH

BY F. PAUL DRISCOLL



Muti, at work with the CSO

**1. RICCARDO MUTI** will lead the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in Chicago concert performances of Verdi's *Falstaff* in April 2016. Ambrogio Maestri heads the cast as Sir John, joined by Daniella Barcellona (Quickly), Eleonora Buratto (Alice), Luca Salsi (Ford) and Saimir Pirgu (Fenton). Other highlights of the CSO's 125th-anniversary season include appearances by harpist Xavier de Maistre, violinist Julia Fischer

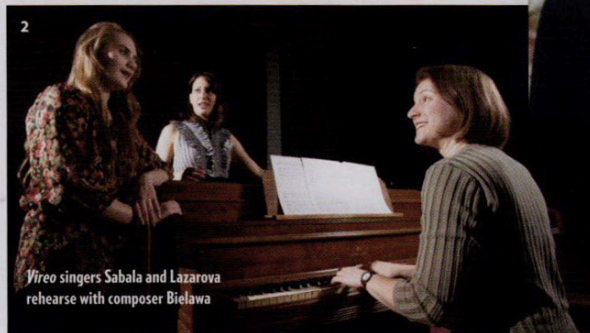


Ryan Center's Faulkner

and pianist Leif Ove Andsnes, as well as a three-week, ten-city tour of Asia.

**2. Composer LISA BIELAWA** has created a new opera expressly for episodic release via broadcast and online media through a partnership with KCETLink's *Artbound*.

The pilot episode of *Vireo: The Spiritual Biography of a Witch's Accuser* was recorded in late Feb-



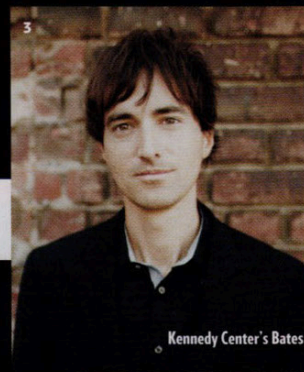
Vireo singers Sabala and Lazarova rehearse with composer Bielawa

ruary at the Yost Theater in Santa Ana, CA, for broadcast in spring 2015. Sixteen-year old soprano **ROWEN SABALA** sings the title role, with mezzo-soprano **MARIA LAZAROVA** cast as her mother. The *Vireo* libretto is by Erik Ehn, and the director is Charlie Otte.

**3.** The Kennedy Center has announced the appointment of **MASON BATES** as its first composer in residence, commencing with the 2015–16 season.

Planned Kennedy Center commissions for Bates, who currently serves as the Mead composer in residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, include works for the National Symphony Orchestra,

Washington National Opera, the Fortas Chamber Music Concerts, and performances of contemporary dance.



Kennedy Center's Bates

**5. WARREN JONES** was the keynote speaker at the 2015 **National Opera Association Convention** in Greensboro, NC. At the closing banquet at the Sheraton Greensboro Hotel, **SAMUEL RAMEY** received the NOA's Lifetime Achievement Award. Ramey also served as a judge for the NOA's Carolyn Bailey and Dominic Argento



Blythe, David Smith-Larsen, Jones and Ramey at NOA banquet

**4. JULIA FAULKNER** has been named director of vocal studies for the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Center, Lyric Opera of Chicago's professional artist-development program. Previously a professor of voice at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, Faulkner has been teaching at the Ryan Center since August 2013.

Vocal Competition, along with **STEPHANIE BLYTHE** and Darren Keith Woods.

**6.** A limited-edition, nine-CD set of recordings by soprano **VIRGINIA ZEANI**, including a complete 1965 *Traviata* from RAI, has been released. For more information, visit [www.virginiazeani.com](http://www.virginiazeani.com).

