

Thursday, July 21, 2005

Opera announces new artistic director

By **Janelle Gelfand**
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Cincinnati Opera's new artistic director comes from the world of consulting for orchestras and opera companies, and from the high-powered recording industry.

The opera will announce today that Evans Mirageas, 50, is its new artistic director. Mirageas succeeds Nicholas Muni, who resigned in September after eight seasons as artistic director.

"The model I will be pursuing is the model of the impresario," says Mirageas, born in Ann Arbor, Mich., to Greek-American parents. "It's going to be a team effort, with me leading the artistic vision."

Mirageas is neither a stage director nor a musician. It is his first artistic directorship of an opera company.

"I've always been a collaborator," he says. "The way I will work with (Cincinnati Opera) is the way I worked in the Boston Symphony with (music director) Seiji Ozawa., or in the Decca Record Company in the best days, when I had a president who believed in my artistic vision."

At Decca he signed superstars Renee Fleming, Angela Gheorghiu, countertenor Andreas Scholl and Matthias Goerne to exclusive contracts. He supervised 30 opera recordings, including "La Traviata" conducted by Sir Georg Solti and Verdi's "I Lombardi," conducted by James Levine and starring Luciano Pavarotti.

"He is everything we could have hoped for," says trustee Cathy Crain, co-chair of the search committee. "His work with Decca put him in contact with every major conductor in the world, and that's important to us, because a good conductor can make or break (a performance)."

Mirageas will lead the company's artistic team, which will report to Patricia Beggs, who became general director and CEO in November.

Mirageas will divide his residence between Minneapolis, where he lives with his longtime partner, Thomas Dreeze, and London.

"There's nothing we can't accomplish," Mirageas says. "I'm completely energized by what I see here and the potential. Sparks fly in conversation with just about everyone I meet."

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Evans Mirageas

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