

Valéry Ryvkin

Conductor



In little more than half a decade, conductor Valéry Ryvkin has proven himself an Artistic Director on the move, aligning the creative talents of artistic planning, and superb music-making alongside an extraordinary insight into administration, fundraising, and incorporation of an arts institution into the fabric of the community. In doing so, Ryvkin has become the Maestro for the next generation. Since becoming Artistic Director of Opera Santa Barbara 6 years ago, Maestro Ryvkin has moved the company from a classy 'mom and pop' effort to a respected and highly cultivated institution with a budget of \$1,200,000 - while also bringing to the company the concept of a Festival Season: a Puccini Festival in 2006 and a Verdi Festival in 2007. His organizational impact was equally felt as the new Artistic Director of the Greensboro Opera, when, during his first season in 2005-06, he was personally instrumental in bringing the company its very first \$1,000,000 donation - a hallmark in the company's 25 year history. Given today's financial environment, it was an achievement of envious proportions. As a result of his creative

leadership, Opera Santa Barbara recently was able to make the extraordinary announcement that composer Stephen Schwartz of Broadway fame - *Wicked*, *Godspell*, *Pippin*, *Pocahontas*, *Prince of Egypt* - has been commissioned to write his very first opera, *Séance*, for the company, to be conducted by Maestro Ryvkin in a world premiere in the Fall 2009.

On the guest conducting front, Valéry Ryvkin yet again made a huge impression leading the 2007 season debut of *Boris Godunov* for San Diego Opera while featuring the Italian bass Feruccio Furlanetto as the Czar. "Under the loving and sympathetic conducting of Valéry Ryvkin, a native of St. Petersburg . . . the work took on an almost chamber opera quality . . . revealing how Mussorgsky used his palette of orchestral colors sparingly and tellingly, with a sense of theme and character appropriateness", noted the *Los Angeles Times*. He returns to San Diego Opera in April of 2008 for a production of *Aida*. Meanwhile, his conducting activities in Santa Barbara take him on a varied journey in the operas *Rigoletto*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Roméo and Juliette*, *Otello*, *Turandot*, *La Bohème*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, as well as an Opera Gala Concert celebrating the 25th Anniversary of his Greensboro Opera. During the 2005-06 season, Maestro Ryvkin conducted the Grand Finale Concert of the famous Merola Program at the San Francisco Opera, followed by a Night of Rising Stars concert at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. During the 2001 season, he led the North American premiere of Rimsky-Korsakoff's opera *May Night* at the Sarasota Opera, while taking on the huge responsibility for the complete preparation at the Metropolitan Opera of the production of Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* at the personal request of Valéry Gergiev.

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Press Reviews

Opera News

"Santa Barbara music director Valery Ryvkin conducted with a superior ear for balances."
(*Séance on a Wet Afternoon* by Stephen Schwartz, Santa Barbara Opera)

"Conductor Valery Ryvkin proved an inspired interpreter, conveying the melodic sweetness and innocence in the score and obtaining first-class playing from the excellent Sarasota Opera Orchestra."
(*Hänsel und Gretel*, Sarasota Opera)

"For Sarasota's first performance, apparently the U.S. premiere, Valéry Ryvkin paced the score with wit, verve and colloquial nuance."
(*May Night*, Sarasota Opera)

"Some credit for this must go to the conductor, Valéry Ryvkin, who never let the pace slacken and extracted fine playing from the Greensboro Symphony."
(*Madama Butterfly*, Greensboro Opera)

"Gately's innovations were largely subtle and sure, complimenting the equally assured conducting of Valéry Ryvkin."
(*La Traviata*, Greensboro Opera)

Opera Magazine

"Conductor Valéry Ryvkin's obvious affection for the piece likewise proved irresistible—the orchestra responded potently to that enthusiasm, often sounding double its size as it reveled in the richness of Rimsky's scoring... conductor Valéry Ryvkin maintained a good ensemble and led with idiomatic flair."
(*May Night*, Sarasota Opera)

European Reviews

"Maestro Valéry Ryvkin drew excellent music making from his cast and orchestra, breathed life and magic into the music, and anchored the performance in authenticity of style."
(*May Night*, Sarasota Opera)

Los Angeles Times

"With an able conductor in the person of Valéry Ryvkin signed on as music director... Ryvkin's cohesive and fluent conducting and Igesz's sometimes hyper kinetic staging usually hold the entire project together."
(*Don Pasquale*, Opera Santa Barbara)

BCGA

Bel Canto Global Arts

Valéry Ryvkin Press Reviews, cont'd.

"The first version (of 'Boris') has been criticized for its monochromatic color and ostensibly for certain musical ineptness. But there was no justification for that here. Under the loving and sympathetic conducting of Valéry Ryvkin, a native of St. Petersburg now artistic director of Opera Santa Barbara, the work took on almost chamber opera quality, an opera rightfully dominated by singers, not the orchestra. Ryvkin and the company revealed how Mussorgsky used his palette of orchestral colors sparingly and tellingly, with a sense of theme and character appropriateness."

(Boris Godunov, San Diego Opera)

San Diego Opera

"As staged by veteran director Lotfi Mansouri and conducted by Russian-born Valery Ryvkin, the production is traditional in the best sense of the word, meaning that it's true to the work's intentions and doesn't resort to attention-getting gimmickry or distortion. The 16th-century-style costumes are striking and the sets are evocative, even if the wooden siding at the inn looks like cut-rate paneling and the backdrop in the czar's living room resembles a massive shower curtain.

The San Diego Symphony was a reliable asset, summoning delicate string pizzicatos as well as brass-fueled outbursts under Ryvkin's confident direction. And the computer-assisted church bells that were pumped through the Civic's sound system provided further proof that this season-opening "Boris" was more than good enough."

(Boris Godunov, San Diego Opera)

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

"The young performers were expertly guided by Valéry Ryvkin, who brilliantly invigorated rhythms and sensitively controlled dynamics."

(L'Elisir d'Amore, Pittsburgh Opera Center)

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