

**Orange County Arts Awards
Annual Achievement Award Nomination-
Outstanding Individual Artist: Robin Follman**

The Orange County High School of the Arts proudly nominates internationally-acclaimed performing and recording artist, soprano, and Orange County native, **Robin Follman**, for a 2008 Orange County Arts Awards Annual Achievement Award in the *Outstanding Individual Artist* category.

Throughout the past year, Ms. Follman has emerged as one of Orange County's most inspiring individual artists, restoring the local community's interest in the art of opera and encouraging the next generation of world-class artists to follow in her footsteps.

Ms. Follman has served as director of the Orange County High School of the Arts (OCHSA) Opera & Choral Conservatory for more than five years. During her tenure at the school, the conservatory has become nationally-renowned for its intensive curriculum offering pre-professional operatic training for talented young singers.

This program for aspiring, young opera singers does much more than provide them with a solid curriculum that will prepare them for higher education and a profession in the arts. Under Ms. Follman's leadership, students in the Opera & Choral Conservatory are afforded once-in-a-lifetime learning and performance opportunities with world-class master artists and guest teachers. Students have had the opportunity to meet professional opera singers like Andrea Bocelli, Luis Ledesma, and Steven Mercurio.

Additionally, Ms. Follman is committed to creating partnerships with professional arts organizations that provide her students with opportunities to collaborate with professional artists. For example, senior students enrolled in the Opera & Choral Conservatory Advanced Arts Program receive an individual professional and academic assessment from a member of Opera Pacific's staff and attend Q & A master classes with Opera Pacific professionals.

Graduates of the Opera & Choral Conservatory have been accepted into some of the nation's finest universities, a testament to Ms. Follman's leadership as one of Orange County's top arts educators. These schools include: The Juilliard School of Music, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Eastman School of Music, Manhattan School of Music, University of Southern California, and Indiana University.

In June 2007, after traveling throughout the world performing with renowned artists like Andrea Bocelli, Ms. Follman gave her first performance on an Orange County stage in more than five years. Orange County High School of the Arts students had the opportunity to perform excerpts from Giacomo Puccini's "La Rondine" side-by-side with Ms. Follman during a special production, the school's annual Season Finale at the Orange County Performing Artscenter. The performance, and Ms. Follman's return to the Orange County stage, was profiled in the *Orange County Register*.

Ms. Follman's commitment to training the next generation of world-class artists extends beyond the campus of the Orange County High School of the Arts to students throughout Orange County and the nation.

During the past year, Ms. Follman produced twenty-five community opera performances featuring students of the Opera & Choral Conservatory, bringing her passion for Opera to residents of Orange County that might not otherwise have access to the arts. Additionally, she committed her time to teach private lessons to five students with special needs / vocal rehabilitation at Providence Speech and Hearing and Chapman University.

Ms. Follman also taught master classes at OCHSA, private studios, and the Breckenridge Music Festival in Colorado. Additionally, as a co-founder of the Professional Opera Singer's Association, she hosted the organization's third annual vocal competition for students ages 7-12.

While serving as an arts educator, Ms. Follman also maintains a career as a professional operatic singer. Following her return to the Orange County stage in June 2007, Ms. Follman was featured in the Pageant of the Masters at the Irvine Bowl and in Opera Pacific's "Opera Under the Stars." She is slated to appear as a featured performer in Opera Pacific's "Grapes of Wrath" in January 2009.

Ms. Follman also recorded two CDs during the past year, "Puccini Heroines" and "Arias of Passion" with conductor Steven Mercurio in Seattle and New York City.

A widely-requested performer on the operatic stage during the past year, Ms. Follman was featured in the roles of Minnie in *La Fanciulla del West* with the St. Bart's Music Festival in the Caribbean, Musetta in *La Boheme* for Opera Columbus in Ohio, and Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus* for Opera Carolina in North Carolina. She also performed a concert with the Fresno Grand Opera in California, and in a tour with the Breckenridge Music Festival throughout Colorado.

On June 1, 2008, Ms. Follman was named the new Artistic Director of the Orange County High School of the Arts. In this new role, Ms. Follman will serve in support of the school's eleven arts conservatory directors as an ambassador for the school, securing partnerships with local and national arts organizations and sharing the school's world-class arts conservatory programs with key leaders throughout the Orange County community. Ms. Follman has already set in motion several exciting developments, including a special opera concert to be held January 27, 2009.

Thank you for your consideration of Ms. Follman for this prestigious award. Her talent, charisma, and generosity to the local community make her one of Orange County's most treasured individual artists.