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IO-II NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Atlanta Opera Commissions Children's Opera

Libretto Based on Br'er Rabbit Stories by Joel Chandler Harris

The Atlanta Opera has commissioned a one-hour children's opera for its 2011-2012 season. The libretto, written by Atlanta-based librettist and playwright, **Madeleine St. Romain**, will be based on the antics of Br'er Rabbit, a central figure in the Uncle Remus stories popularized by Southern author Joel Chandler Harris in the late 19th Century. The Br'er Rabbit stories can be traced back to "trickster" figures in African folklore, particularly the hare, a character that is prominent in the storytelling traditions of Western, Central and Southern Africa. This production will be a contemporary, light-hearted rendering of several story lines from Native American, African, and Cajun Folklore. The score, composed by Atlanta-based flutist and composer **Nicole Chamberlain**, will be written for four voice types, and will incorporate melodies and rhythms from African, Native American and Cajun music, as well as the blues. The work, currently entitled *Rabbit Tales*, will be performed by The Atlanta Opera Studio in elementary schools October 24 through November 18, 2011 and again February 13 through March 30, 2012. There will be a premiere open to the public on October 29, 2011 at the Wren's Nest, in conjunction with National Opera Week. Further details will be announced at a later date. This is the first opera commission in the company's history.

To book a performance of *Rabbit Tales* and to find out more information, contact Emmalee Iden at 404 881 8883 or eiden@atlantaopera.org.

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About Nicole Chamberlain

Nicole Chamberlain is a composer and flutist living in Atlanta, GA. The bulk of Nicole's work is for the concert setting, but she also has set some films to music, winning "Best Original Score" for the 2003 Atlanta 48 Hour Film Project for the musical "Storyboard in A Major." Nicole's works have been featured on "Live in Studio C," bowed.org, and Dartmouth College's Electronic Music Festival. Nicole was awarded Atlanta Pen Women's Composer of the Year 2008 and her work "Mangosteen" is featured on a new cd of works compiled by the Georgia Chapter of the National Museum of Women and Agnes Scott College. Nicole was selected by The Atlanta Opera to compose a short 10-minute opera in 24 hours for the 2010 competition where she was teamed up with librettist Vynnie Meli. They won "Audience Favorite" for their mini opera "Scrub a Dub Raw." Nicole received her Bachelor's in Music Composition from the University of Georgia where she studied with Dr. William Davis, Dr. Leonard Ball, Dr. Lewis Nielson and Dr. Roger Vogel and was selected for master classes with Charles Wuorinen and Joan Tower. You can find out more and listen to Nicole's music at <http://www.nikkinotes.com>.

About Madeleine St. Romain

Madeleine St. Romain is a writer and multidisciplinary artist living in Atlanta, Georgia. With composer Robert Boury, she has written 3 family operas, *Cedar Tree and River Water*, *Grandmother Spider Steals the Sun* and *Seastruck*. Madeleine's visual art has been shown in Eyedrum, Radial Art Space, and the Dalton Gallery. She has performed with Women on Fire and the Acme Theatre Company in venues throughout the southeast.

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About The Atlanta Opera Studio

Every year, The Atlanta Opera introduces thousands of school-aged children to the art form of opera through a Studio Touring Production. Designed to travel, the Studio Tour features young artists, many of whom are members of The Atlanta Opera Chorus, and are a fun and educational way to present opera to young children. These accessible performances are presented in elementary schools around the Metro Atlanta area and throughout the state of Georgia each fall and spring. Teachers are provided with an education guide to use in their classrooms as they prepare students for the opera experience. The Atlanta Opera education guides feature information about the opera including synopsis and composer information, as well as cross-curricular lesson plans and activities corresponding to the Georgia Performance Standards.

About The Atlanta Opera

Founded in 1979, The Atlanta Opera is one of the finest regional opera companies in the nation, drawing audiences from the entire metropolitan Atlanta area as well as from the Southeast region. Led by Zurich General Director Dennis Hanthorn, The Atlanta Opera strives to expand the experience of its patrons with memorable and exciting opera performances reflecting the highest musical and theatrical standards, while supporting community and educational programs. The company also works to attract the finest international, national, and regional singers, conductors, stage directors and designers. Each season The Atlanta Opera presents three productions with four performances each at the Cobb Energy Centre.

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