



OCONEE PERFORMING ARTS SOCIETY

PRESS RELEASE

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OPAS Names Jeffrey Wells as Artistic Director

Jeffrey Wells joined the Oconee Performing Arts Society team this year as Artist-in-Residence after having performed at the New York Metropolitan Opera last season. His presence here has been by all measures a tremendous success. In addition to performing in three OPAS concerts, he has sung at 17 area churches, and has spoken and/or sung at 27 community events and five area schools. He has performed numerous times at dinner parties with both his culinary and vocal skills. He has personally met and positively impacted hundreds of area residents while attending numerous dinners and luncheons.

Jeffrey will return to the Metropolitan Opera in December to begin rehearsals for his roles in the upcoming season. However, he has accepted an offer from the OPAS Board of Directors to assume a permanent position as **OPAS Artistic Director** beginning in May of 2012. Jeffrey will also continue his association with the Met for select productions.

Jeffrey has already begun programming a variety of great OPAS events for 2012 in addition to the development of a preliminary five-year artistic plan which will include country, pop, jazz, Broadway, and classical. "Although Jeffrey's thirty years in the performing arts business has been primarily in opera, Jeffrey has a wide knowledge of other music genres and performing artists to delight our members and patrons. Jeffrey's artistic vision and personal contacts in the business will enable exciting, continued growth of OPAS," said Gene Elzy, OPAS Board Chair. The 2012 season will be finalized prior to Jeffrey's return to New York and will be announced by the year's end.

"After careful consideration, I am delighted to accept the position of OPAS Artistic Director" said Jeffrey Wells. "I can never express the overwhelming joy my wife, Jo Ellen, and I have experienced during my short tenure as Artist-in-Residence. The people in this area have given us so much love and support over these past six months. It is a blessing to have made so many wonderful lifelong friendships. If there is one thing that has helped me in making this decision to return, it is a consistent quote from my father who taught me at a very young age 'never walk away from a job until it's finished.' I am very proud of what we have accomplished thus far. However, there is much left to do and I believe if we work together, OPAS will have an even brighter and more successful future. Keep the fires burning while I'm away in New York. I look forward to my return next spring with a renewed vision and determination."

For more information on OPAS and their upcoming events, please call 706-467-6000 or visit their website at www.OPAS.org.