



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: July 19, 2011

CONTACT: Vera Wilson, 215-735-6999 or Astral@AstralArtists.org

**ASTRAL ARTISTS ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF DON MARRAZZO
AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

PHILADELPHIA, PA – The Board of Directors of Astral Artists has announced the appointment of Don Marrazzo as its new Executive Director.

“We are delighted to have Don Marrazzo join Astral as Executive Director,” said Vera Wilson, Astral’s President and Founder. “Don possesses a vast knowledge of both the administrative and artistic operations of nonprofit arts organizations. He comes to Astral with the special perspective of not only having worked extensively in young artist program development at a national level, but also being a musician himself. We are confident that his broad expertise and keen insights into the classical music industry will lead Astral ably into the next stage of its professional and artistic excellence.”

Mr. Marrazzo most recently served as Director of Casting & Artistic Operations for Glimmerglass Opera, where he was responsible for all mainstage casting, the company’s acclaimed Young American Artists Program, and the music staff, chorus, and orchestra. During his tenure, he revitalized the company’s mainstage casting, elevated the Young American Artists Program to its highest level of achievement via the selection and casting of program members, and created relationships and fostered collaborations with a number of renowned organizations, opera companies, and artists including the New York Festival of Song (NYFOS), The Morgan Library and Museum, the Bavarian State Opera in Germany, baritones Håkan Hagegård and François Le Roux, and pianist and NYFOS Artistic Director Steven Blier.

Mr. Marrazzo began his association with Glimmerglass Opera as the company’s Director of Public Relations. As chief representative to all local, regional, national, and international media, he significantly increased the company’s presence on television and radio, annually secured the attendance of 75 reviewers from the local, regional, national, and international press, and elevated the company’s standing in the community by creating a number of educational outreach and community engagement initiatives.

Prior to joining the staff of Glimmerglass Opera, Mr. Marrazzo worked for KKN Enterprises, a New York City-based PR agency that has managed publicity for an internationally acclaimed clientele including mezzo-soprano Vivica Genaux, tenors Lawrence Brownlee and Anthony Dean Griffey, and baritone Rodney Gilfry. KKN Enterprises also managed the ARIA program – co-founded by James S. Marcus and Douglas

and Wilmer Thomas – which annually bestowed three awards of \$15,000 upon emerging opera singers who had demonstrated exceptional vocal and artistic ability. Recipients of the ARIA award include sopranos Christine Goerke and Celena Schafer, mezzo-sopranos Joyce DiDonato, Vivica Genaux, and Stephanie Blythe, tenors Lawrence Brownlee and Brandon Jovanovich, baritone Nathan Gunn, and bass-baritones Eric Owens and John Relyea.

A native of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Mr. Marrazzo received degrees in vocal performance from the Curtis Institute of Music and the Conservatorium van Amsterdam in The Netherlands.

“I am honored to accept the position of Executive Director of Astral Artists,” said Don Marrazzo of his appointment. “Astral provides an invaluable service to its artists, and I am excited to work with an organization that not only discovers and develops the ‘stars of tomorrow,’ but that is deeply committed to helping its artists understand and realize their place in the world as arts advocates. I welcome the opportunity to build upon the great success Astral already enjoys, to elevate its presence in an increasingly complex and competitive musical world, and to help lead the organization into the next phase of its existence.”

###

Founded in 1992, **Astral Artists** is a non-profit organization that plays a vital role in the discovery and development of the nation’s most gifted classical musicians. Selected from a nationwide pool of applicants at competitive annual auditions, Astral artists are provided with invaluable career development guidance; debuts in Philadelphia and New York City; numerous performance opportunities via Astral’s critically-acclaimed concert series; collaborations with world-renowned musicians; auditions for major presenters, managers, and conductors; and world premières of compositions written for them and commissioned by Astral – **all at no cost to the artist**. Astral reaches approximately 10,000 community members annually through concerts and extensive community engagement programming. Astral’s impressive list of graduates includes soprano Angela Meade, bass-baritone Eric Owens, pianist Simone Dinnerstein, and cellist Mark Kosower. Highlights of Astral’s 2011-2012 season include *Spiritual Voyages*, a three-concert musical celebration of African-, Asian-, and Latin-American cultures sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the *Philadelphia Brahms Festival* sponsored by the Leo Model Foundation and Jacobs Music, and the Philadelphia recital debuts of Astral pianist Alexandre Moutouzkine, violinist Kristin Lee, flutist Julietta Curenton, and soprano Yulia Van Doren. **For more information about Astral Artists, please call 215-735-6999 or visit AstralArtists.org.**

Note to Editors: A photograph of Mr. Marrazzo is available upon request; please contact
Astral@AstralArtists.org.