

# Newsletter • Bulletin

*Spring*

1999

*Le Printemps*

P.O. Box 8347, Main Terminal, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3H8 • C.P. 8347, Succursale principale, Ottawa, (Ontario) K1G 3H8

## Sandra Stringer Wins Brian Law Scholarship

by Tom McCool

The concert was promoted as the "best bargain in town" and that turned out to be an understatement. The three previous Brian Law Competition recitals were enthusiastically received by near capacity audiences and this most recent one proved to be no exception. Holding the competition in January is always a somewhat risky proposition given the uncertain nature of winter weather in Ottawa but the weather did not deter the people from coming. A problem of another kind, however, threatened the success of the concert. One of three finalists, Alex Fleuriau Chateau, unexpectedly withdrew thus creating a situation in which there would be only two singers competing for the scholarship. A competition with only two competitors may not have been the "best bargain in town" especially since all the promotional material had promised three singers. Fortunately, former 1997 Brian Law winner, Julie Nesrallah, agreed to fill in as a guest. Her inspired performance won a spontaneous standing ovation and everything worked out in the end. In fact, Julie's appearance may have initiated a tradition for future competition concerts.

The two finalists were Ottawa native, Sandra Singer, and Opera Lyra Associate Artist, Corianne Bell. Both were excellent! Corianne, a mezzo-soprano, sang selections from Barber, Mozart and Thomas and Sandra, a soprano, chose pieces by Purcell, Mozart and Massenet. In what must have been a difficult decision the jurors, Nicholas Goldschmidt, Michael McMahon and Christiane Riel awarded the \$2,000 Scholarship to Sandra Stringer. Photos of the concert and the dinner that followed are printed on pages 6 & 7.



## From the President . . .

We are slowly recovering from the feverish activity surrounding the Brian Law Opera Scholarship competition and within these pages you will see many associated items. We are glad to announce that, in response to many demands, another video showing in our program of OPERA ALLA PASTA will take place at St. Anthony's Soccer Club on Preston. We will be showing on Sunday, April 18 at 2:30 p.m. Claudio Monteverdi's 1607 *ORFEO* by Lyon Opera starring Gino Quilico and conducted by Michel Corboz, followed by another delicious pasta dinner -- all for \$15.00. Now, all you Gino fans can practice your swoons! In his book, *A Season of Opera, From Orpheus to Ariadne*, Father Owen Lee describes this first serious opera as: "*It looks backward over a century of Renaissance music, and forward across the whole history of opera, for it contains in embryonic form all the major traditions that still govern operatic composition-- recitative, aria, duet, choral and dance interludes, musical characterization, and continuity by leitmotif. .... In Monteverdi, the myth (Orpheus) met its poet at last. And opera was born.*" (Pg. 8; University of Toronto Press)

We were saddened when lagging subscriptions combined with growing restrictions on ticket availability due to heavy demand at the "Met" in New York caused the cancellation of the Daniel Taylor Debut tour to the production of Handel's 123 opera, *GILIO CESARE*, on April 10 at the Metropolitan Opera House in Lincoln Center. However, the good news is that there will be a contingent in New York for this auspicious occasion. Our Raffle winner, Gerda Ruckerbauer, has generously invited me to be her guest to share the prize, and in addition, several others will be there too. We all will be honouring Daniel, along with the Music Officer from the New York Canadian Consulate, Andrea Hossak, at a brunch the morning after his debut. The occasion will not go unnoticed!

Best wishes to you and yours. Spring is nearly here!



## Two Ottawa Singers Featured in Vienna Production

A very special semi-staged concert production of Handel's first opera *RINALDO* was presented at the Vienna 'Wiener Konzerthaus' in January. As you will notice in the program the remarkable Polish contralto Ewa Podles (who will be at the National Arts Centre next January 5/6) sang the role of the crusading general Rinaldo; Cecilia Bartoli sang the maiden Almirena; Daniel Taylor was Eustazio; and Gerald Finley sang the opposing general Argante. This production was accompanied by the Academy of Ancient Music, all directed by Christopher Hogwood. It was broadcast throughout Austria.

Daniel Taylor's parents attended this performance, and spoke of the immense pride they felt at hearing two Canadians in this prestigious concert. We, too, can be very proud of our Ottawa singers. We are grateful to Dr. and Mrs. Taylor for providing this program page to the Newsletter.

wiener  konzerthaus

Samstag 16. Jänner 1999 - 19.00 Uhr  
Zyklus Oper konzertant / 2. Konzert  
Großer Saal

Georg Friedrich Händel (1685 - 1759)

«Rinaldo»

Dramma per musica in drei Akten (Erstfassung HWV 7a)

uraufgeführt am 24. Februar 1711 in London (Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket)

Libretto von Aaron Hill und Giacomo Rossi

nach dem Epos «La Gerusalemme liberata» (1575)

von Torquato Tasso (1544 - 1595)

Konzertante Aufführung in italienischer Sprache

Ende ca. 22.30 Uhr

Pausen nach dem 1. Akt (20') und 2. Akt (5')

The Academy of Ancient Music

Goffredo Hillary Summers Alt

Almirena Cecilia Bartoli Mezzosopran

Rinaldo Ewa Podles Alt

Eustazio Daniel Taylor Countertenor

Argante Gerald Finley Bariton

Armida Maria Costanza Nocentini Sopran

Mago/Araldo Robin Blaze Countertenor

Donna/Siren Rachel Elliott Sopran

Dirigent Christopher Hogwood

**WRITTEN SUBMISSION BY THE NCOS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CANADIAN HERITAGE, RE HEARINGS ON THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE, FEBRUARY 2, 1999**

As illustrated in the attached document (see pages 10-11), the National Capital Opera Society, formed in 1983 when the National Arts Centre (NAC) suspended Festival Canada and associated in-house opera production, has been a staunch supporter of the NAC. Many of the Society's actions over the past fifteen years have been designed to promote public and private sector support for the work of the Centre and to augment community enthusiasm for the institution that ranks as one of North America's finest facilities for the generation of a wide variety of artistic endeavor.

Since the mid-1980s serious concerns have arisen about the vision inherent in the philosophy of the leaders of the National Arts Centre. The administrative structure should be secondary to the many artistic activities and should be supportive of such, but not dominant. The financial exigencies forced upon the Centre by the reduction of public sector funding have been unfavorable, and untenable. It is all too easy, and even fallacious, to pinpoint the arts in their many forms as unproductive candidates for such cuts: many studies over the past years have indicated that the arts industry has an economic multiplier of over two point five - in other words for every dollar spent, there is a return to the general economy of \$2.50. The National Arts Centre is there to exhibit and enhance the achievements of artists of many callings, coming to patrons from across our great country and internationally. The institution belongs to all Canadians and must not be deemed a second-rate establishment capable of assimilating financial cuts.

The first indication that there was a sea change in the federal attitude towards the National Arts Centre was the designation of the very dedicated Jean Riley as the Chair of the Board of Trustees. It was hoped that this body could achieve a more visible and supportive stance towards the work of the Centre, and this indeed took place.

It was with great excitement and anticipation that our organization welcomed the appointment of John Crompton to the Chief Executive Officer position. Here was a capable arts manager, known for his creative vision and contacts, who could lead the National Arts Centre into the next century out of the dismal abyss that had encompassed the agency. Our Board of Directors met with Mr. Crompton some six months after his arrival, and was impressed with his quiet energy and enthusiasm as he spoke of the plans for the revitalization of the Elgin Street side of the building; of his hopes for enriched private sector involvement; and even fed us tidbits of hope about opera. During his tenure there was a noticeable change in the environment at the Centre - a rush of excitement in the air that bespoke of the enthusiasm of the employees in the many positive, and visually apparent, changes that were taking place. That creative synergy infected all elements of this most important national institution, and we could all sense it and respond in kind. We, like many in the arts community, mourned his departure. We plead for the retention of that fervent artistic vision incorporating the many areas crucial to Canada's cultural being.

The last several months have been unfortunate for the NAC and have given rise to many questions of the proper delineation of responsibility between the administration of the Centre and the advisory Board of Trustees. The 1986 Hendry Task Force Report called for increased communications between the two bodies, but when does such exchange become interference? Surely the stated mandate of the National Arts Centre is explicit on areas of responsibility. If not, it should be clarified, and would seem to be a necessary factor in the future successful management of the institution.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Bobbi Cain, President: National Capital Opera Society

# Where are They Now?

There have been four competitions for the Brian Law Opera Scholarship. In this issue we report on the 1999 winner, Sandra Stringer, who has now returned to her studies at the University of British Columbia and this month is singing Cherubino in a staging of Mozart's *MARRIAGE OF FIGARO*. But what has happened with the previous three winners.

## 1997- Julie Nesrallah



Adamo

In August 1998 Julie was awarded the prestigious \$20,000 (Cdn.) Emerging Artists Grant by the Canada Council for the Arts. She made her main stage debut in the lead role of Isabella in Rossini's *L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI* for Pacific Opera Victoria's 1997/1998 season; her New York operatic debut as the Young Mozart in the American Opera Music Theater's production of *THE JEWEL BOX*; her Connecticut Grand Opera debut as Cherubino in *LE NOZZE DI FIGARO*; as the title character in Rossini's *LA CENERENTOLA* in Cedar Rapids 1998/99 season; and the Dritte Dame for Opera Lyra Ottawa's *DIE ZAUBERFLOTE*. In February 1999 she drew the following review for her portrayal as Der Komponist in Strauss's *ARIADNE AUF NAXOS* in Pacific Opera Victoria's production: "*In the role of the Composer, young Julie Nesrallah, fresh from music school at McGill University, was particularly memorable, both as actor and singer. Her mezzo-soprano voice cascaded forth in rich, expressive splendour, leaving the character of the altruistic Composer with depth and pathos*" (Robert Jordan, special to *Globe and Mail*, Feb 22, 1999)

Recent concert engagements include performances of De Falla's *El Amor Brujo* with the Charleston Symphony; Haydn's *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Thirteen Strings; the Mahler *Symphony No. 2* with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra; the Rossini *Stabat Mater* with the Laval Symphony Orchestra; Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* and Berlioz' *La Mort de Cleopatre* with the McGill Symphony Orchestra; and has recently debuted with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. Julie has performed a myriad of solo recitals in both the United States and Canada, and will sing in recital for the National Gallery of Canada this season. Those in attendance at the January 1999 Brian Law Opera Scholarship evening were privileged to hear her in a glorious recital appearance -- Rossini, Mozart and Bizet -- following the competition itself.

# 1995 - Mary Ann Swerdfeger

Since winning over five other competitors in the 1995 Scholarship Competition, Mary Ann has been actively pursuing her performing career. (Upon graduating from The New England Conservatory in Boston with her Masters Degree in Vocal Performance, she participated in several exciting festivals including the Ashlawn-Highland Summer Festival Apprentice program at the President James Munroe mansion in Virginia; the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan (festival founded by Leonard Bernstein); and the Aspen Opera Theater Center in Colorado. She was featured in recital on CBC Radio and performed locally throughout the Boston vicinity in many productions and concerts.

In 1997 Mary Ann married Nick Martin, an American trombonist and they relocated to New York City in the fall of that year. Since moving there, she has been working steadily in musical theater. Her 1998 productions included Sigmund Romberg's *The New Moon* with Rockwell productions in Pennsylvania; Goldie in Richard Roger's *Two by Two*; and Carlotta in Yeston's "Phantom" (the one with the great music with the Downtown Cabaret Theatre in Connecticut. Mary Ann was also honored to perform on Rockwell's cast recording of *The New Moon*. Upcoming productions include *Damn Yankees* and *Rose Marie*.

# 1993 - Laura Dziubaniuk

This sparkling young lady was the winner of the first scholarship competition, chosen by jurors Brian Law, Stuart Hamilton, Iwan Edwards and Rosemarie Landry. She has been a laureate in numerous other Scholarships including the 1996 European Mozart foundation Scholarship. From 1991-97 she was a member of Opera Lyra Ottawa's Associate Artist Programme, affording her the opportunity to understudy several leading roles, as she did for Opera Ontario in 1995. This work has led her to further studies at the Kiev Conservatory in the Ukraine, the Sixth International Interpretation Courses in Slovakia and at the European Mozart Academy in Poland.

Oratorio, concert and chamber music performances have taken her throughout areas of North America and Eastern Europe including concert venues in Ottawa (remember the NCOS Kiev evening); Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver; Lancaster USA; Krakow, Poland; Bratislava and Piestany in Slovakia; and Kiev in the Ukraine. Her repertoire covers many areas of opera, oratorio and concert literature. In the late summer of 1999 she travels to Kiel, Germany (north of Hamburg) where her husband, bass Alexander Satvchenko has a two year opera "house contract". From this base, Laura's agent in Munich will introduce her to the wider European audiences.



# The Brian Law Competition & Dinner

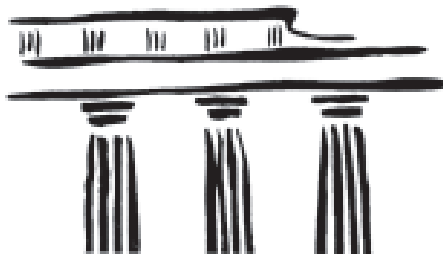
January 23, 1999





Photography by Pat Adamo

# TOSCA



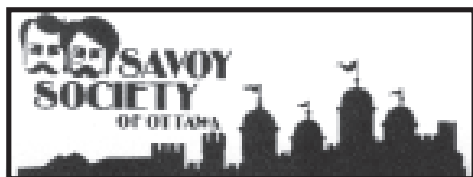
Opera Lyra Ottawa  
April 3, 5, 7 & 10  
National Arts Centre

Conductor: David Agler  
Director: Brian Macdonald  
Tosca: Joanne Kolomyjec  
Cavaradossi: Manrico Tedschi  
Scarpia: John Avey

Tickets: 233-9200

Gilbert & Sullivan

# The Yeomen of the Guard



April 9-11 & 14-17

CentrepoinTE Theatre

Tickets: 727-6650

# The Gypsy Baron

(Operetta by Johann Strauss II in Concert in German with English narration)

Franz-Paul Decker, conductor

Cast to include Theodore Baerg, Jean Stillwell, Joseph Rouleau, Jacklyn Short Pipher  
& The Ottawa Choral Society

National Arts Centre

April 28 & 29

Tickets: 594-9400

Jacques Offenbach

*La Fille  
du  
Tambour-Major*  
The Drum Major's Daughter

Le Theatre lyrique de Hull

in celebration of its 35th anniversary presents  
Shawne Elizabeth in this 3-act comic opera

Conductor: Yves Leveille Director: David MacAdam

May 14, 15 & 16 (mat)

Eglise St-Benoit Abbe 170 Sherbrooke St. Hull

Tickets: Ticketmaster (755-1111) and Caisses  
populaires de l'Outaouais Information: 819-669-9769



## Opera Alla Pasta — Sunday Afternoon at the Opera

2:00 p.m Sunday, April 18 at St. Anthony's Soccer Club

# ORFEO BY CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

## Opera Lyra Ottawa Guild

*Opera Insights* 7: 00 p.m. Monday, March 22,

An evening of "opera talk" you simply won't want to miss! Join Jeffry D.A. Morgan to learn about the music, history and themes of *Tosca* and meet the artists in Opera Lyra Ottawa's production.

National Library of Canada Tickets: \$15

*Joy of Opera Luncheon* Noon Monday April 25 M.C. Rob Clipperton

Champagne punch, hot & cold buffet, cash bar, concert with associate artists & special guests

Mr. Keith's, 1220 Old Innis Road Tickets: \$30 (Guild members) \$35 (non-Guild members)

*Swing While You Sing* Noon Sunday May 30

A 4-ball, best-ball golf tournament....fun for golfers, non-golfers and wannabe golfers

The Meadows Golf Club Hawthorne Road

Tickets: \$95 (Single) \$180 (Pair) includes power cart, dinner, gifts & prizes

For additional information about Opera Lyra Ottawa Guild events: 260-2804

### 1999 Juno Awards

Classical album (solo or chamber ensemble)

Angela Hewitt, *Bach: Well Tempered Clavier - Book 1*

Classical album (vocal or choral performance)

Gerald Finley & Stephen Ralls (piano), *Songs of Travel*

### Wanted: Newsletter Editor

If you are interested in power, prestige and wealth this is the position for you. Call Bobbi Cain at 225-0124 for details. (Well alright, the wealth part is a bit of a stretch.)

### Metropolitan Opera Radio Broadcasts

March 20 Giacomo Puccini *Tosca*

March 27 Giuseppe Verdi *Rigoletto*

April 3 Carlisle Floyd *Susannah*

April 10 Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky *The Queen of Spades*

April 17 George Frederic Handel *Giulio Cesare*



This summer  
in Upper New York state

### Glimmerglass Opera

*THE ABDUCTION FROM THE SEAGLIO, RIGOLETTO*

*IL RITORNO D'ULISSE PATRIA* (MONTEVERDI)

*CENTRAL PARK* (WORLD PREMIERE)

### CHAUTAUQUA OPERA

*TWO WIDOWS* (SMETANA), *DON PASQUALE*

*HANSEL AND GRETEL, DIE FLEDERMAUS*

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## NATIONAL CAPITAL OPERA SOCIETY (NCOS) LINKAGES WITH, AND SUPPORT OF NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE (NAC), ESPECIALLY OPERA, 1983 TO 1997

September 23, 1983 - Meeting of several members of the Board of Directors with Donald McSween and Walter Prystawski re Summer Festival suspension strategy.

November 25, 1983 - Meeting with Donald McSween and Pauline McGibbon with Bert Loeb and Chairman of NCOA (later to be federally incorporated as NCOS).

September 1984 - Questions posed re position on NAC Opera at all of the all-candidates meetings in the Region re the 1984 Federal Election campaign.

Fall 1984 - Letters to all of the major artists who had performed in all thirteen years of NAC opera productions re quality and reputation of NAC Opera Festival. Complimentary and constructive replies from large percentage.

June 19, 1985 - "FETE OPERA, A Tribute to Thirteen Years of NAC Opera", held in ballroom of Chateau Laurier Hotel, with Rosemarie Landry, Diane Loeb, Glyn Evans, Mark Pedrotti and John Dodington, with 20 members of Festival Ottawa chorus, and 30 piece pick-up orchestra of NAC musicians, with Walter Prystawski, Concertmaster, all under the direction of Brian Law.

March 21, 1986 - Brief submitted to Hendry Task Force on the NAC; representations at public hearings.

March 1987 - Introduced NAC officials to Director and Choreographer from Opera Atelier, Toronto Baroque Opera Group

July 24, 1987 - Co-hosted, with NAC, reception after final performance of semi-staged opera "La Boheme", with members of the NAC Orchestra, honouring the departing and retiring Bruce Corder.

February 9 to March 17, 1988 - "MOZART: His Life and Times", exhibition co-sponsored by NAC and NCOS of Mozart collection of pictures and other memorabilia from the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, in NAC Salon (with tapestry down), with opening reception hosted by the Austrian Ambassador.

May 5, 1988 - Joanne Morrow, NAC Music Producer, guest speaker at NCOS 5th Annual Meeting, re "Producing an Opera at the NAC".

July 8, 9, 1988 - Production in NAC Theatre of Opera Atelier, Toronto; selections from "Zais" by Rameau and Handel's "Julius Caesar in Egypt".

July 21 to 30, 1988 - Petition in Foyer of NAC; collection of over 1001 signatures requesting "Opera at the NAC for Ever, and Ever, and Ever!"; submissions of such petitions to Prime Minister, Minister of Communications and Culture, and to NAC.

July 23, 1988 - Reception following NAC performance of "Marriage of Figaro" in Fountain Room, featuring wedding cake donated by the Westin Hotel.

September 1988 - Letters on behalf of NAC opera and NAC funding to all Regional Candidates in Federal Election campaign.

July 29, 1989 - Reception after final performance of "Don Giovanni" with inaugural presentation of \$1250 "Stage Management Apprentice Scholarship" to Krista Hansen, from National Theatre School.

June 1990 - Submission to Communications and Culture Parliamentary Committee Hearings on the National Arts Centre.

July 29, 1990 - Reception after final performance of "Cosi fan tutti", co-sponsored by the NAC with presentation of \$ 1250 "Stage Management Apprentice Scholarship" to Eric Feeley of Carleton University.

January 9 to February 4, 1991 - "An Exhibition Celebrating the Bicentennial of the Death of Mozart", co-sponsored by the Embassy of Austria, the NAC and the NCOS.

July 18, 1991- NCOS gathering in La Cafe after "Barber of Seville" to present \$500 Production Apprenticeship Scholarship to Carolyn Dufresne of National Theatre School.

September 30, 1991- NCOS gathering in La Cafe hosting NACO Artistic Director and Conductor Trevor Pinnock, and other principals of the NAC semi-staged production of "Acis and Galatea". Pinnock spoke to gathering.

August 14, 1992 - Meeting of several NCOS board members with Jack Mills, Music Producer, in NAC boardroom re problems and constraints of opera production.

October 24, 1992 - In NAC Theatre, "An Evening with Louis Quilico" also with Raul Melo, tenor, and Thomas Muraco, pianist; presented by the NCOS in collaboration with the NAC, with Italian Ambassador present. Reception afterwards in Fountain Room honouring Louis Quilico with accolades from Governor General, Italian Ambassador, Ottawa Mayor, NCOS and others. Fundraiser for the Brian Law Opera Scholarship (NCOS major undertaking with third competition in February 1997).

June 1994 - Motion passed at NCOS Annual General Meeting commending NAC revision in local group rental fees. Letter of admiration for policy along with copy of motion sent to Jack Mills, at that time, Acting Director General.

May 28, 1995 - Joan Pennefather, newly-appointed NAC Director General, speaker at NCOS Annual Meeting re future directions at NAC.

June 4, 1996 - Jean Therese Riley, Chair of NAC Board of Trustees, speaker at NCOS Annual Meeting re present and future plans at the NAC.

Summer 1996 - NCOS audience participation in Forum on "NAC Future" in Studio.

April 8, 1997 - NCOS President congratulates NAC on return of Festival Canada.

June 1997 - Meeting of members of NCOS Board with John Crompton, NAC Director General.

# Opera Within Reach

## OTTAWA

### Opera Lyra

*TOSCA* by Puccini

April 2, 5, 7 & 10

All performances are in the Opera of the NAC. Information: 233-9200

### National Arts Centre

*THE GYPSY BARON* by Strauss

April 21 & 22

Information: 594-9400

### Savoy Society

*THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD* by Gilbert & Sullivan

April 9-11, 14-17

All performances are in the Centrepointe Theatre. Information: 727-6650

## MONTREAL

### L'Opéra de Montréal

*MANON* by Massenet

March 13, 15, 18, 20, 24 & 27

*SUSANNAH* by Floyd

April 22, 24 & 26

*THE CONSUL* by Menotti

May 3, 5 & 8

*LA GIOCONDA* by Ponchielli

May 29, 31 June 3, 5, 9 & 12

All performances are in the Salle Wilfred Pelletier in the Place des Arts

Information: 1-514-985-2258

## HULL

### Le Theatre Lyrique de Hull

*LA FILLE DU TAMBOUR-MAJOR* by Offenbach

May 14, 15 & 16

All performances are at St-Benoit Abbe, Hull  
Information: 819-669-9769

## TORONTO

### Canadian Opera Company

*IL TROVATORE* by Verdi

April 6, 9, 14, 18, 22 & 24

*THE GOLDEN ASS* by Randolph Peters

April 13, 15, 17, 21, 23 & 25

All performances are at the Hummingbird Centre.  
Information: 1-800-250-4653

### Opera in Concert

*SUSANNAH* by Floyd March 27 & 28

*MIGNON* by Thomas May 20

Information: 416-366-7723

### Opera Mississauga

*LA BOHEME* by Puccini May 7, 11, 13 & 15

All performances are in Hammerson Hall at The Living Arts Centre in Mississauga

### Roy Thomson Hall

March 23 — Thomas Hampson

April 19 — Dawn Upshaw