

Newsletter • Bulletin

Fall

2001

L'Automne

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

Join the Celebration for BRIAN LAW

by Murray Kitts

The evening of December 18, 2001, will be an extraordinary one for music lovers in the National Capital Area. For many, attendance at a performance of Handel's *Messiah* at the NAC is an annual event. But this year something really special has been included. Conductor Brian Law is coming from New Zealand to conduct an oratorio which is one of his specialties. What a thrill for the Ottawa Choral Society to be again conducted by the man who led them for so many years - Brian Law. This would be reason enough for celebration.

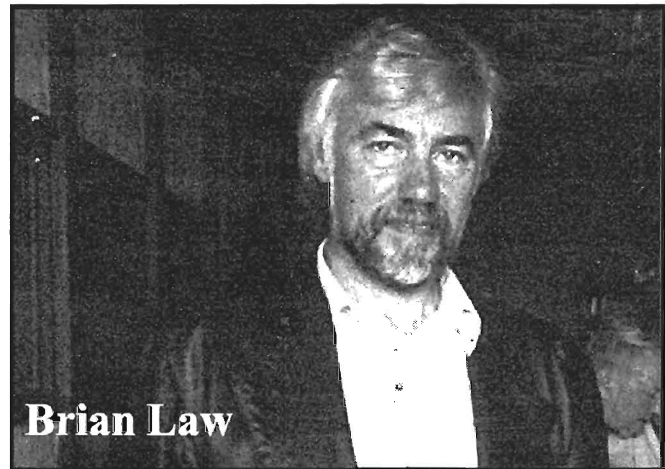
But there is much more. From England where he now makes his home comes Gerald Finley, former resident of Ottawa and former student of Brian Law, to sing the extraordinarily difficult bass-baritone part in the oratorio. Gerald has an enviable international reputation singing not only in Britain and the continent but in New York as well. He has starred in many fine opera and oratorio recordings. As one of our members says, "Gerald Finley always receives high praise from the critics." Gerald has said he would be honoured to be part of the tribute to Brian Law.

Add to this another Brian Law musical protégé, Daniel Taylor, will sing the beautiful alto arias. Daniel is at the start of a most promising career, and like Gerald has made his début at the Met and has begun already to make splendid recordings. He and Gerald (with superstar Cecilia Bartoli) recently recorded Handel's *Rinaldo* under the direction of Christopher Hogwood.

Two other outstanding Canadian singers - Ottawa's own Donna Brown and Benjamin Butterfield will be the soprano and tenor soloists.

What an opportunity for all our members and friends to meet Brian himself and two of the singers he moulded after the opening night of this favourite Handel piece!

What an appropriate occasion to raise some money for the Brian Law Opera Scholarship!



Brian Law

The National Capital Opera Society has reserved the Salon at the NAC so that you and your friends can come and meet Brian Law and Friends after the performance.

Food and beverages appropriate to the hour will be served and a cash bar will be available for those who desire something more festive.

Naturally, reservations are necessary - so telephone 225-0124.

As usual with a fund-raiser of this kind part of the admission price goes to the rental and food and part can be acknowledged with a receipt for a charitable donation. For a \$50.00 ticket, each purchaser will be issued with a charitable donation receipt for \$30.00. The NAC Salon can accommodate less than 200 people, so now is not too soon to make your reservations.

We are justly proud of this scholarship, of the contestants who have entered the competition (including Daniel Taylor), of the winners and especially of the musician whose contributions to the life of the National Capital led us to name it after him. Here is a wonderful opportunity for you to meet Brian Law and to show your support for the Brian Law Opera Scholarship. Our only regret is that the patron, Maureen Forrester, is ill and probably will be unable to attend.

From the President . . .

I don't think any of us will forget this second week of September 2001. We all witnessed the horrendous events that took place in the United States and despaired of man's inhumanity to man (I suppose that phrase is not gender perfect, but you know what I mean.) But, a most interesting event took place the weekend before that event – this was the announcement by the National Arts Centre of a visionary strategic plan for the future of that institution. They spoke glowingly of our beloved Summer Opera Festival, and despaired of its abandonment. While opera is not a major plank of the Centre's plan, it certainly is an important element. We need to keep up the pressure on Maestro Zukerman, and we need to support the opera production we presently have. That degree of support provides a marker for the future.

The next several months will be most exciting for us all. On December 18th, Brian Law will conduct the first of two "Messiah" presentations at the NAC. As outlined in this issue, the Society will host a post-concert fund raising reception for the Brian Law Opera Scholarship in Le Salon at the NAC, with special guests, "Brian Law and Friends", the latter namely Gerald Finley and Daniel Taylor. For the price of \$50 you will receive a charitable tax receipt for \$30, and the goodies of the reception including a cash bar, as well as tea and coffee. This is a very important undertaking for the NCOS and I urge you to put on your best bib and tucker and come and greet the Maestro and the all the singers.

Secondly, at Brian Law Opera Scholarship time, we are holding another of our fabulous dinner parties. This time we will honour our famous Canadian singers, with glorious music, scrumptious food, and an elegant silent auction. This party on the evening of January 25, 2002 will be held at St. Anthony's Supper Club, and won't we have fun?! Root through your attic or spare room, and bring us your less-prized donations. Also if you know any sympathetic merchants who would donate goods, we would be happy to write a cheerful thank you note. Mark these dates on your calendar and do be with us.



NCOS Board of Directors 2001 - 2002

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Verdi Requiem

Monday, October 1, 2001
8:00 P.M.
Southam Hall, NAC

Measha Brueggergosman

Sandra Graham

Philip Castagner

Gary Relyea

&

The Ottawa Chorale Society

Free Lecture by
Jean-Jacques Van Vlasselaer
7:00 P.M. in the Salon

Ottawa Symphony Orchestra

David Currie, Music Director

Information: 747-3104

Don't Miss SALOME!!!

SALOME

Salome, though distinctly curvy,

Is not an opera for the nervy;

Nor should you show it to a child,

For it is based on Oscar Wilde.

All characters depicted must

Be hopelessly consumed by lust,

Except the Baptist, who loves God;

Herod desires Salome's bod,

So does the Captain of the Guard;

Salome wants the Baptist, hard;

But fiercely as they all have burned,

In no case is the lust returned.

Right from the start, one justly fears,

The thing is bound to end in tears.

This chance is very soon increased;

Salome, at Herod's feast,

Performs a wriggly dance so well

The King exclaims: 'Oh, what the hell?'

'I'll give you anything you wish!'

'John Baptist's head upon a dish!'

Quickly replies the vengeful girl.

'Why not a diamond or a pearl?'

Herod suggests: 'I don't desire

To kill a prophet I admire.'

She makes him do what he has dreaded,

And John the Baptist is beheaded.

When the poor fellow's gate is sealed,

His head is brought in on a shield;

Salome stands and swings her hips

And kisses him upon the lips.

Herod with loathing now is filled

And quickly has Salome killed.

You will not easily believe a

Company can find a diva

Who looking like a teenage tart,

Can sing a long soprano part

And act it also which entails

Dancing the Dance of Seven Veils;

And you are right; they tend to do

This opera when the moon is blue.

- Paul Griffin in *How to be Tremendously Tuned Into Opera*



Drawing: Aubrey Beardsley

Opera Lyra Ottawa

Opera Brunch

Sun, September 30, 2001 Noon

Opera Insights

SALOME

National Library October 4, 2001 7:00 p.m.

A Day with Stuart Hamilton

National Library 9:30 a.m. Sat Nov 10, 2001

Joy of Opera Luncheon

Mr. Keith's 12:30 p.m.
Information: 233-9200

~~Wed Dec 12, 2001~~
Sun.

A Midsummer Idyll

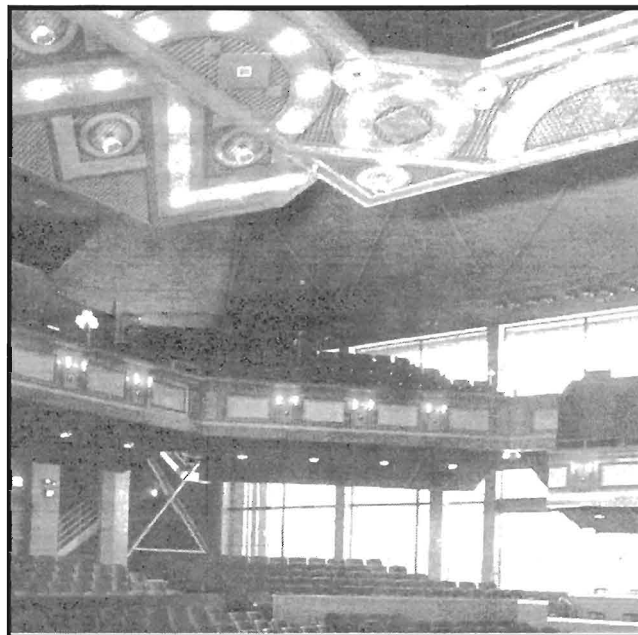
by Shelagh Williams

One of our favourite summer pastimes is visiting Cooperstown, N.Y., home of the Baseball Hall of Fame — and of the Glimmerglass Opera! In an idyllic setting by Lake Otsego, in a specially constructed small opera house, the company produces delightful opera productions during July and August. This is their 26th season and they have been in their new house since 1987.

Currently four operas are performed in repertory with — like the bride — something old, something new, something unusual, and something tried-and-true. This summer the operas in each category were **AGRIPPINA** (Handel), **RAPE OF LUCRETIA** (Britten), **L'ETOILE** (Chabrier) and **LE NOZZE DI FIGARO** (Mozart). We passed on the Mozart, electing to enjoy the three operas which we had not seen previously. That is the beauty of Glimmerglass: lovely productions of a variety of operas, generally not the “usual”, with good production values, and the luxury of surtitles, with not a bad seat in the house. In addition, they use mostly up and coming singers, and so we were able to hear the likes of David Daniels in **L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA** and **TAMERLANO**, before he became the “countertenor of choice”, or Isabel Bayrakdarian in her first professional appearance in **IPHIGENIE EN TAURIDE**.

We started off gently with an English version of Chabrier's **L'ETOILE**, written and first performed in 1877. Most people know his orchestral composition “España”(1883), but **L'ETOILE** was unjustly forgotten for years and not revived until 1941. The music is light, similar to Offenbach, and quite marvellous. The story is a typical farce, with disguises and mistaken identities, and the “male hero”, Lazuli, played by a mezzo, but is lots of fun. The sets, costumes and choreography, including a cancan, were all visually top-drawer. However, the acting was perhaps a bit over the top. Nevertheless, Christine Abraham as the tramp Lazuli looked and sang the hero well, and it was nice to hear Canadian Karina Gauvin as the princess Laoula.

Handel's **AGRIPPINA** is a “prequel” to **L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA** and reminds one of “I Claudius” set to music! However, it is a satirical comedy, with light, sprightly music and was very entertaining. It is early Handel, written at the end of his stay in Italy and premiered in Venice in 1710, before his state-



lier London works such as **RINALDO** (1711). Agrippina's various schemes to have the Emperor Claudius name her son Nero as heir eventually lead, through various twists and turns in the plot, to a bedroom scene with Poppea successively hiding Otho, (whom she loves), and Nero, and then entertaining Claudius! The satirical tone was complemented by the production, with the costumes a mishmash which mirrored the characters rather than portraying classical Romans. This was successful, which was a minor miracle, since the original production team was replaced and the company's Assistant Artistic Director took over set design with a new stage director at fairly short notice. In the title role, Alexandra Coku was marvellously gowned and in both her acting and singing represented evil personified. Nero was sung by a mezzo, Beth Clayton, who well portrayed his wilfulness, flicking his Bic lighter! The only sincere character, Otho, was sung by countertenor David Walker who has been at Glimmerglass Opera since 1996. Derrick Parker was a strong Claudius, while the Canadian soprano, Karen Wierzba, was convincing as Poppea. Eventually Agrippina and Poppea get what they have been plotting to achieve, but as the cast took their bows, the surtitles indicated the future deaths of the various characters, to the delight of the audience!

Our final opera, **RAPE OF LUCRETIA**, though exquisitely done, was definitely not a barrel of laughs. It was premiered at Glyndebourne in 1946 as a chamber opera, and this production was set in that period. It has been referred to in N.Y. City as the “Non Rape of Lucretia”, since the staging was fairly static, although effective, with most events not portrayed on stage but commented on by the Choruses or indicated musically. The Male and Female Chorus were cast as a married couple sitting on a couch, she knitting and he reading from an old book a story which unfolded before us. The Roman generals, including Lucretia’s husband, Collatinus, were costumed very properly in WWII uniforms, and the Roman women were also well dressed — Lucretia even wore gloves to commit suicide — but the young Etruscan prince Tarquinius was clad as a villainous young punk. The whole concept held together and the performance was very gripping, with the entire cast singing and acting well: Michelle DeYoung striking as Lucretia, Nathan Gunn malevolent as Tarquinius, and the Choruses, William Burden and Christine Goerke, compelling.

With so many of their offerings being unusual operas, it is a great help that the company provides a pre-show chat one hour before each performance. These are always by people involved with the opera, and provide great insights into the production. It may be the conductor, the theorbo or harpsichord player (who inevitably has to leave a bit early because of a tuning problem!), the rehearsal accompanist, or the music administrator (who tells of the difficulty of getting the right pitch for the bells for Tosca!). A picnic plus the talk gets you in the right mood for the opera.

One of the strengths of Glimmerglass is its Young American Artists Program. The YAAPs (who occasionally are Canadian) are chosen from university opera programmes, and this year, of 551 applicants, 256 were auditioned and 25 singers chosen. They play chorus, small roles, and cover in the different operas, gaining a varied experience, and last year we heard one singing (successfully) Rodolfo in **BOHEME** when the tenor fell ill at the end of the season. They also each prepare a 45-minute song recital, which they give during the

summer. This year we hit a bonanza weekend, and were able to hear 8 of the (free) recitals, which are given in lovely venues in Cooperstown and Cherry Valley. Fortunately in the last recital, after **LUCRETIA**, two of the YAAP’s combined in a couple of comic duets, to send us home laughing. Not only does the programme ensure good choruses, it trains future cast members — this year eight were YAAP alumni.

Now that I have whetted your appetites, what is on next year? Glimmerglass Opera will present **CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA/PAGLIACCI**, **DIALOGUES OF THE CARMELITES**, **LITTLE WOMEN** (Adamo), and **ORLANDO PALADINO** (Haydn). By late July or August, when the operas are all in production, you can, by choosing carefully, see all four of them in 4 or even 3 days. However, as one of the ladies in our B&B found out, this may be too much for a not-so-opera-loving husband! Since there are the Baseball lovers also competing for limited accommodation you should secure your room before booking tickets. But don’t be put off — go and enjoy!



A Tribute to Great Canadian Singers

by Murray Kitts

Many of you will recall the outstanding evening when we paid tribute to great opera composers with good food, musical contributions by young singers, and the opportunity to pick up some remarkable bargains at our silent auction.

This was such a success that we decided to repeat the evening on January 25, 2002 – but this time to dedicate it to our great Canadian Opera singers.

Those of us who attend the Opera alla Pasta sessions will welcome the news that the food will be supplied by the chefs at St. Anthony's Hall, who have always produced an excellent meal for us.

Each table will be dedicated to a great singer such as Louis Quilico, Maureen Forrester, Jon Vickers, Teresa Stratas, Ben Heppner and Judith Forst. Gerda Ruckerbauer has been busy for some months already preparing table decorations to match or excel those memorable ones she produced for the Great Composers evening.

We are planning to have some of the vocal stu-

dents from Ottawa University entertain us with operatic excerpts.

Part of the enjoyment of the evening comes from the silent auction – and here we must appeal to you, our members. Do you know any businesses who would be willing to donate something to our funds-raising activities? And what about yourself? In the past many articles have come from individuals. We are sure that if you take a hard look you will come up with something. Articles to be auctioned do not have to be related to opera or even to music. So check your attics, basements or storage lockers to see what you could give us. Contact any member of the Board whose names and telephone numbers appear in this issue.

More details (time, price, reservations, entertainment details) will be given in the next newsletter. But now is the time to look for donations to the silent auction. We are counting on your help to make this as great a success as it has been in the past.

Opera Alla Pasta — Sunday Afternoon at the Opera

For All Members and their Guests —

Location: St. Anthony's Soccer Club, Preston and Queensway (parking is behind the building)

Time: 2:00 pm

Program: October 21, 2001 - *OTELLO* - Verdi
with Jon Vickers, Mirella Freni and Peter Glossop

November 18, 2001- Leoncavallo's *I PAGLIACCI* with Stratas and Domingo
& Mascagni's *CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA* with Domingo and Obraztova
(Both productions by Franco Zefferelli)

Feb. 24

TBA in 2002 - Stravinsky's *THE RAKE'S PROGRESS*

Opera videos on a huge screen, followed by a delightful pasta meal for only \$15. Cash Bar.
Reservations necessary. Phone 225-0124 at least two days in advance.

Join us for this fun time!

Saturday Afternoon at the Opera

LA SCALA, MILAN

September 22, 2001

Il Trovatore (Verdi)

Conductor: Ricardo Muti

Cast: Salvatore Licitra, Barbara Frittoli

Leo Nucci, Violetta Urmana

NATIONALTHEATER, MUNICH

September 29, 2001

Falstaff (Verdi)

Conductor: Zubin Mehta

Cast: Bryn Terfel, Lucio Gallo, Rainer Trost,

Elizabeth Futral, Marjana Lipovsek

BAYREUTH FESTIVAL 2001

October 6, 2001

Lohengrin (Wagner)

Conductor: Antonio Pappano

Cast: Jean-Philippe Lafont, Melanie Diener,

Stephen West, Peter Seiffert, Robert Dean Smith

BAYREUTH FESTIVAL 2001

October 13, 2001

Die Meistersinger von
Nurnberg (Wagner)

Conductor: Christian Thielemann

Cast: Clemens Bieber, Emily Magee,

Michelle Breedt, Robert Dean Smith, Endrik Wottrich

SALZBURG FESTIVAL 2001

October 20, 2001

Le Nozze di Figaro (Mozart)

Conductor: Sylvain Cambreling

Cast: Peter Mattei, Angela Denoke,

Christiane Oelze, Lorenzo Regazzo

SALZBURG FESTIVAL 2001

October 27, 2001

Lady Macbeth of
Mtsensk (Shostakovich)

Conductor: Valery Gergiev

Cast: Larissa Shevchenko, Vladimir Vaneev,

Leonid Liubavin, Viktor Lutsiuk, Gennady

Bezzubenko

OPERA ATELIER, TORONTO

November 3, 2001

Persée (Lully)

Conductor: Hervé Niquet

Cast: Nathalie Paulin, Monica Whicher

Laura Pudwell, Rufus Müller, Michael Chioldi

CALGARY OPERA, CALGARY

November 10, 2001

Madame Butterfly (Puccini)

Conductor: Robert Dean

Cast: Liping Zhang, Richard Troxell,

Theodore Baerg, Anita Krause

EDMONTON OPERA, EDMONTON

November 17, 2001

Carmen (Bizet)

Conductor: Mark Graf

Cast: Elizabeth Turnbull, James Westman,

Kathleen Brett, Randolph Locke

CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY, TORONTO

November 24, 2001

Venus and Adonis (Henze)

Conductor: Richard Bradshaw

Cast: Susan Marie Pierson, Alan Woodrow, Timothy Noble

TAPESTRY NEW OPERA WORKS, TORONTO

November 24, 2001

Iron Road (Chan Ka Nin)

Conductor: Wayne Strongman

Cast: Grace Chan, Stuart Howe, Zheng Zhou, ZhuGeZeng

CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY, TORONTO

December 1, 2001

Billy Budd (Britten)

Conductor: Richard Bradshaw

Cast: Russell Braun, Nigel Robson, Jeffrey Wells



Metropolitan Opera Radio Broadcast Season

December 8 Richard Wagner Die Meistersinger von
Nurnberg 12:00

December 15 Richard Strauss Arabella 1:30

December 22 Giuseppe Verdi La Traviata 1:30

December 29 Engelbert Humperdinck Hänsel und
Gretel 1:30

January 5 Richard Strauss Die Frau ohne Schatten 12:30

January 12 Giuseppe Verdi Don Carlo 1:00

January 19 Giacomo Puccini Tosca 1:30

January 26 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Idomeneo 1:00

February 2 Gioachino Rossini Il Barbiere di Siviglia 1:30

Opera Within Reach

OTTAWA

NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE OPERA LYRA

SALOME by R. Strauss Oct 20, 22, 24 & 27

EXTRAORDINARY OPERA CHORUSES Nov 3 & 4
(at Tabaret Hall)

BLACK & WHITE OPERA SOIREE Feb 16, 2002

LA BOHEME by Puccini March 25, 27, 29
& April 1

Information: 233-5431 www.operalyra.ca

CENTREPOINTE THEATRE ORPHEUS SOCIETY

HELLO, DOLLY! Nov 16 - 24

Information: 727-6650 www.orpheus-theatre.on.ca

MONTREAL

L'OPÉRA DE MONTRÉAL

Peter Grimes Sept 15, 17, 20, 22 & 26

Nabucco Nov 3, 5, 8, 10, 14 & 17

Gala Sunday December 2, 2:00 p.m.

La Traviata Feb 9, 11, 14, 16, 20 & 23

Tosca March 9, 11, 14, 16, 20 & 23

Information: 1-514-985-2258

www.operademontreal.com

TORONTO

CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY

Il tabarro & Cavalleria rusticana
Sept 20, 23, 26, 29 Oct 2 & 5

Bluebeard's Castle & Erwartung
Sept 21, 25, 27, 30 Oct 3 & 6

Giulio Cesare in Egitto (Sartorio)
Dec 3, 5, 7 & 9

Salome
Jan 18, 23, 27, 31 Feb 2 & 5

Il viaggio a Reims
Jan 22, 24, 26, 30 Feb 1 & 3

Boris Godunov
April 5, 9, 11, 14, 17 & 20

Julius Caesar in Egypt (Handel)
April 6, 10, 12, 16, 18 & 21

Information: 1-800-250-4653 www.coc.ca

SYRACUSE

SYRACUSE OPERA

FAUST by Gounod Oct 26 & 28

IL TROVATORE by Verdi March 16 & 17

DON GIOVANNI by Mozart April 19 & 21

Information: 1-315-476-7372

www.syracuseopera.com