

# Newsletter • Bulletin

Summer

2004

Été

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

## Pilgrimage to the Opera Mecca by Murray Kitts

On Thursday, April 14, 2005 we leave Ottawa for the Mecca of the opera world – New York City. Some will want to rest that evening but some will want to hear soprano Mary Dunleavy (so wonderful as the Queen of the Night at Gerald Finley's Met debut) in the NY City Opera production of Bizet's *THE PEARL FISHERS* in Lincoln Centre just behind our hotel (the Mayflower).

Next day is set aside for shopping using our own bus to get people to the most elegant shops in the country. But the evening is reserved to meet Floria Tosca and her doomed lover on top of the simulated Castel Sant' Angelo in Rome as seen and heard from the stage of the Met. The stars will, indeed, be shining brightly that night.

Saturday the bus will transport people to one of a great number of outstanding museums. Music lovers may

choose the Pierpont Morgan Library to see an amazing collection of original music manuscripts from the pens of the greatest of the great composers. That evening, we'll dine at the Met and enjoy one of Mozart's most magnificent operas with Gerald Finley as the fearless, philandering Don Giovanni. We will get to meet the star afterwards and experience his warmth and charm.

Somewhere along the way we'll get to meet Pamela Wallin (perhaps interviewed by her for her regular TV programme). Pamela Wallin is Canada's Consul General in New York and has already shown interest in our visit. Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> we return to Ottawa leaving about noon. Final plans are underway and tickets are being purchased now so if you wish to join us don't delay in contacting Congress Travel at 234-3360 for all details.

## Brian Law Competition

President Bobbi Cain was very happy to announce that all the judges who participated in our 2003 competition would be willing to adjudicate again for the 2005 event. The preliminary jurors will be Barbara Clark, Garth Hampson and Charlotte Stewart. Final judging will be made by Darryl Edwards, Christiane Riel and Roxalana Roslak.

Posters advertising the scholarship accompanied by

application forms will be sent out in August to the usual university outlets. As noted elsewhere interested applicants can now use the internet to get additional information and to download application forms.

If you haven't already done so mark January 29, 2005 on your calendar so that you won't miss a great evening of singing.

## NCOS on the World Wide Web

If you have access to the internet and go to this address <http://members.rogers.com/ncos> you will find our own website. It's true that it's not yet complete but there is enough there that I think you'll be quite amazed with what we already have. A tremendous amount of work has gone into this project by two hard-working people.

It all started with Tom McCool taking a course at Algonquin College and starting on this website as his course project. Look at it and you'll see why he received the highest grade for his work. Then the project became stalled because we didn't have anyone with the expertise to get it on the internet.

Along comes Jim Burgess, one of our members and

someone with experience in establishing and maintaining websites. Jim has already put in many hours of hard work in establishing the website and updating and adding to information. It's not finished but Jim is eager to complete it once we obtain some photos and up-to-date information from our Brian Law Scholarship winners.

At present applications for the Brian Law Scholarship can be downloaded from our site and sent in with all the supporting material. This will not only make it easier and faster to apply but will project our society into New Millennium technology that all students nowadays are so familiar with. Many thanks to Tom and Jim for a job well done!

## President's message

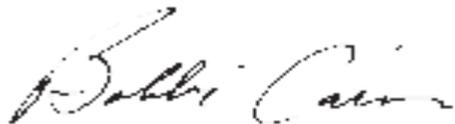
Now spring is here and we are looking forward to the sunshine of the long summer days. I experienced very long days as my daughter and I were recently in Alaska. What a beautiful place, with very friendly people.

Now I hope that you are all gearing up to go and see (and hear) Opera Lyra's upcoming production of "Madam Butterfly" at the Arts Centre in September. That should be a treat. Things are gradually moving towards our first meeting with our new Board of Directors. At that time, the officers other than the President, will be elected. This is according to our constitution.

We are now working on the 2005 Brian Law Opera Scholarship Competition on January 29<sup>th</sup>. Be sure you book this auspicious occasion in your calendar, as it is a very important happening at the Unitarian Congregation in Ottawa West.

We will also chose what movies we are going to show at Opera A La Pasta next year. If you have any burning choices, call me at 225-0124.

Cheers to all!!



## Favourite Ottawa Artists in Concert

Join award-winning mezzo-soprano *Julie Nesrallah* and classical guitarist *Daniel Bolshoy* for a concert and dinner on Saturday, July 17, 4 pm to 7 pm, and help raise money for Opera Lyra Ottawa.

Carole and Bob Stelmack will host this OLO fundraiser at their home, 46 Baslaw Drive. The event will begin with a concert followed by a buffet dinner. Wine and soft drinks will be served.

The cost is \$60 per person (minimum) for the event, to be donated directly to Opera Lyra. You will receive a tax receipt for the entire amount of your donation.

Space is limited. There is only room for 60 people so make your donation early to Opera Lyra by contacting Isabelle Dubois, Elizabeth Howarth or Laura Evans. Telephone 233-9200.

## N.C.O.S. Board of Directors

President

Bobbi Cain

### Board Members

Pat Adamo

Renate Chartrand

Ute Davis

Murray Kitts

Dan Leeman

Gordon Metcalfe

Peggy Pflug

Jean Saldanha

The president was elected at our Annual General Meeting. The additional offices will be filled at our next Board meeting.

## Opera Insights

### MADAMA BUTTERFLY

Meet the director and the principals for a presentation and discussion of this great opera at the National Library

August 30th, 7 pm

## Pre-Opera Chats

Opera Lyra Ottawa Guild presents Pre-opera Chats on the Mezzanine of the NAC at 7 pm prior to the Opera.

For *MADAMA BUTTERFLY* the speakers are:

Yoriko Tanno-Kimmons in English on Saturday, September 11 and Wednesday, September 15.

Fabien Tousignant in French on Monday, September 13 and Saturday, September 18

**Mark  
January 29, 2005  
on your calendar**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT: National Capital Opera Society Annual General Meeting, April 25, 2004

Isn't it marvellous to sit and see and listen to opera! It's so nice to share that experience with others, to sit back and let the glorious tones waft through your senses that say to you – I love opera. We wish to share this experience with as many people in the National Capital Region as we can – we say “come and join us”!

The year 2003 was our twentieth anniversary, and what a year it was! We started off in January with the Brian Law Opera Scholarship with Honorary Patrons Hamilton Southam and his wife.

We had five competitors on that snowy evening in January and, as you all should know, a gentleman won the prize; baritone Joshua Hopkins outdistanced everyone. Wasn't it nice to have a male winner for a change!

Throughout the year we had our “Opera Alla Pasta” functions - combining an opera film with a delicious Italian dinner following. We need more people to join us at St. Anthony's where this is held. It really is a pleasant way to spend a Sunday afternoon. There are many events advertised or reviewed in our award-winning Newsletter. Editor Murray Kitts and his right-hand man Tom McCool do a great job putting it together. Starting this year our Web Site will be more glamour- us with some new input by our talented member Jim Burgess.

With the government restraint in all sectors, our dream of having actual opera production by the National Arts Centre becomes more and more remote. We are fortunate to have the work of Opera Lyra Ottawa and many of our members join us in supporting their undertakings. This year the Society returned to being able to make a \$750 donation to the OLO Young Artists' program.

Given that we were celebrating an anniversary, much of the year was devoted to planning a very special celebration dinner and concert held in mid-November featuring soprano Maria Knapik. The evening, with its silent auction, was a roaring

success with the hall packed to the rafters, and with cheers resounding to the rafters for our guest artists. What a great evening we had!

As you may have noticed in the Newsletter, Gerald Finley is starring in *DON GIOVANNI* at the Metropolitan Opera next April. More information will be distributed about that today and later, and I hope as many of you as possible are able to join our bus trip to celebrate our favourite baritone's appearances in New York.

All through the past year I have given thanks for the members of the Board of Directors and their helpers, especially when I had to have surgery in later November.

I want to acknowledge the contributions of:

- Pat Adamo, whose arrangements were key to the “Opera Alla Pasta”, and who along with Ute Davis takes great pictures.;
- Renata Chartrand, whose specialty was publicity generation and distribution;
- Ute Davis, who is an excellent photographer and filled in for Rogers when they left us in the lurch for the 2003 Brian Law Scholarship competition;
- Murray Kitts, who was Vice-President, and as mentioned is Newsletter editor;
- Dan Leeman, who was a terrific helper at “Opera Alla Pasta” showings and with the Brian Law Scholarship staging;
- Gordon Metcalfe, who has tailored his Treasurer's role to fit his schedule;
- Peggy Pflug, who is expert on planning the food end of things, and who throws great barbecues;
- Jean Saldanha, who has worked very hard as Board Secretary, as well as looking after Membership;
- Norma Torontow, who distributes the Newsletter; and
- Tom McCool, who works with Murray on the Newsletter.

To all these folks and any others who have helped us I wish to say a sincere “thank you” for all that they have done to help keep the Society going. Thank you. Bobbi Cain

# March Madness in Florida by Tom McCool

Florida in March brings to mind images of sunny weather, blue skies, sandy beaches, spring training baseball and everything associated with “spring break”. March is the ideal time to be in Florida and one of the best places to be in Florida is Sarasota. This small city has all the aforementioned Florida attractions plus a few more. It has a superb botanical gardens, a magnificent art museum (the Ringling), and a newly renovated and expanded Performing Arts facility which provides a home for the Sarasota Ballet and serves as a venue for Broadway roadshows and concerts. And, Sarasota has the Sarasota Opera, reason enough to visit this charming city on Florida’s Gulf Coast.



**Ringling Museum**

The opera season in Sarasota begins at the beginning of February and runs until the end of March. During this two month period there is an opera usually every evening (except Mondays)

with matinee and evening performances on either Saturday or Sunday. The repertoire consists of four different operas along with an occasional concert. Of the four operas two can be classified as the “war horse” type with the two others being works that are seldom performed. This year the four were *TOSCA*, *DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE*, Massenet’s *WERTHER* and Verdi’s *IL CORSARO*. (An assessment of the quality of the performances follows on the next page.) At present Sarasota Opera is in the midst of an endeavor to stage all of Verdi’s twenty-eight operas that is scheduled to conclude in 2013, the 200th anniversary of the great composer’s birth. On the basis of the repertoire it should be obvious that this is an opera company that places a premium on innovation. Another good example of innovation occurred two years ago when both versions of Verdi’s *MACBETH* were staged in the same season. An additional programming bonus is that it is possible, because of the way the schedule is arranged, to see all four operas on a weekend.

That appealing feature motivated me to register in an Elderhostel program that did offer all four operas on a week-end. Thus, on a Thursday evening last March I joined with forty or so other opera enthusiasts to prepare for an opera feast. This package deal included good seats at the op-

era house on Friday evening, Saturday afternoon and twice on Sunday. (Not included was a special Verdi concert that was held on Saturday night. Many of the group members opted to attend this concert.) Also included were accommodations and all meals from Thursday evening until the following Monday. The accommodations were satisfactory (Day’s Inn) and the meals were not gourmet but they were OK. Another feature built into the program was transportation to and from Sarasota Opera for all events. Most convenient!

After an orientation session the first event was a tour of the opera complex. This facility, which is owned by the opera company, consists of an opera house with seating capacity in the 1000 range, a restaurant, offices, rehearsal halls, etc. It is a facility that most opera companies would envy. Following the tour, which provided a unique perspective to the upcoming productions, we were treated to two different presentations. The first consisted of staged scenes from various operas sung by cast members and apprentices of the company. The second was focused on the four operas we would be seeing. It was an illustrated lecture of sorts with staged scenes by cast members. Both presentations were excellent! The price of this Elderhostel program was \$710. Unfortunately, those are U.S. dollars. And unfortunately that does not include transportation to and from Sarasota. Still, taking everything into consideration I believe that this package represented excellent value.

However, this is not the only way to go to Sarasota Opera. Other tour companies, I’m sure, have similar packages. And, because the location of the opera complex is in close proximity to hotels and motels it would be quite feasible to attend without becoming involved with a tour group. There are numerous flights from Ottawa to Sarasota, including one direct flight which this past year was on Saturday. It is a long drive but driving is another option, especially if you have other plans down south. If you do decide to do it on your own make sure that that you have your accommodations reserved, Also, be certain to have your tickets beforehand as ever opera performance is usually a sell out



**Sarasota Opera**

# Sun, Sand and Song by Shelagh Williams

Having not been south to Sarasota Opera for ten years, we thought it was time to visit Florida in March and check the productions in their beautiful little Mediterranean Revival Opera House. Artistic Director, Victor DeRenzi, has very strong views on the selection and style of the four opera season his company presents — usually all the operas are new productions created by Sarasota Opera.

DeRenzi believes in traditional productions, which the composer would recognize, were he alive to see them! This stood us in good stead Friday with the first opera, *THE MAGIC FLUTE*, set beautifully and colourfully by Troy Hourie in recognizable ancient Egypt, with appropriate costumes by resident costume designer, Howard Tsvi Kaplan. It started well, with three lively Ladies, and a wonderful dragon, but then went downhill, with lacklustre action and acting under director William Gustafson, and a less than stellar Tamino, a non-stratospheric Queen of the Night and a non-sepulchral Sarastro — perhaps I was overly fussy about my third Magic Flute in as many months! Fortunately Patricia Johnson sang Pamina beautifully and Mark Walters was a lively and tuneful Papageno, and of course the exquisite Mozart music was well played by the excellent orchestra under conductor Peter Leonard.

Saturday afternoon's production was a high note with Massenet's *WERTHER*, based on Goethe's German novel of the doomed love between the romantic young poet Werther and the unhappily married Charlotte. The Paris Opera-Comique first rejected *WERTHER* as too depressing, but when Vienna wanted another opera to follow the popular *MANON* and accepted and premiered *WERTHER* in 1892, it was so successful that the Opera-Comique was forced to stage it the following year. The Sarasota production was a marvellous whole, with each aspect perfectly matched: realistic German scenery by David P. Gordon, with appropriate costumes, and sensitive direction by Ira Siff and conducting by Steven White. The singers were also good, although we were a bit taken aback at first when it was announced that Charlotte had been replaced — because of a back injury to the original mezzo-soprano. We needn't have worried: Studio Artist Kellie Van Horn filled in seamlessly, looking, performing and singing as if she had been originally cast in the role. Soprano Meredith Barber and baritone Justin Ryan were also very successful as Charlotte's perky younger sister Sophie and Charlotte's stalwart husband Albert. In the title role, tenor Rafael Davila was ardent and compelling. The final scene, with the shot and bleeding Werther dying in Charlotte's arms after she finally kisses him, was heart-

breaking — at least a two hanky ending!

DeRenzi's favourite composer is Verdi, and the Sarasota Opera continues its major programming thrust to perform ALL of Verdi's works by 2013, the bicentenary of Verdi's birth. This year's opera is Verdi's twelfth, *IL CORSARO*,



premiered in 1848, but not a favourite of Verdi's and among the three least performed of his operas! — this exemplifies another aspect of DeRenzi's vision: reviving neglected masterworks. The libretto by Francesco Piave, based on Byron's poem *The Corsair*, is a rather convoluted tale about Corrado, the pirate, and his love, Medora, who cannot bear to live without him. Corrado goes off to fight the Turks, is captured by Pasha Seid, but saved by Gulnara, Seid's favourite harem slave, who stabs Seid, her hated master, because she has fallen in love with Corrado. Meanwhile, Medora, fearing Corrado is dead, takes poison just before Corrado and Gulnara return safely, then dies in Corrado's arms, and Corrado in despair jumps off the cliff into the sea! The opera has everything: great orchestral writing; good musical characterization, especially of the strong-minded Gulnara; the prison scene with Corrado's fine aria in chains; and the final closing trio of Medora, Gulnara and Corrado. To perform this, Sarasota Opera pulled out all the stops: Maestro DeRenzi himself conducted, Troy Hourie supplied sets evocative of eastern Mediterranean venues, Howard Tsvi Kaplan gave us a beautifully clad harem and suitably rough pirates, Nathaniel Merchant kept the action moving, and resident lighting director Jeff Davis dramatically lit the whole. The principals were all good — tenor Gabriel Gonzalez as Corrado, sopranos Barbara Quintilliani as Gulnara and Dara Rahming as Medora, and baritone Joshua Benaim as Pasha Seid — and were ably as-

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

sisted by the large chorus of Studio and Apprentice Artists as pirates, Turks, and harem girls. *IL CORSARO* is early Verdi, but foreshadows later masterpieces, and when seriously and vigorously done is most enjoyable and great fun!

One more of DeRenzi's tenets is the utilisation of at least 3 languages among the 4 operas staged, and Sunday we had an Italian double-header, with *IL CORSARO* in the afternoon, and *TOSCA* in the evening. *Tosca* was the blockbuster production of the season with everything done magnificently by Maestro DeRenzi, as conductor, and his wife, dramatic soprano Stephanie Sundine, as director. Designer David P. Gordon travelled to Rome to see the specific sites to get the sets right, and they were spectacular and detailed, and all the more so when one goes backstage and sees the small stage, with only one set of wings, and the limited number of flies (for 4 operas), with which he had to work. The costumes, equally impressive, were from Toronto's Malabar Costumes. Baritone Todd Thomas was outstanding as Chief of Police, Baron Scarpia, both vocally and in his menacing portrayal of evil incarnate. In the other major roles, soprano Julie Makerov as *Tosca* and tenor Todd Geer as Cavaradossi were also musically and dramatically effective, and the remainder of the cast was up to the high standards they set — a most satisfying evening to finish off our visit.

We were also fortunate to secure tickets to the special Saturday evening Verdi Concert. This included several

short selections, the American premier of an early *Messa solenne*, and the full Triumphant Scene from *AIDA*, these last two with full orchestra, soloists and chorus! The soloists in this concert were mainly the younger principals plus some of the Studio Artists, a group of 15 young singers in Sarasota Opera's development programme who performed supporting roles, were understudies, supplemented the chorus in *IL CORSARO*, and performed in outreach programmes, all in preparation for principal roles in Sarasota, or elsewhere, next year.

The Opera Chorus was made up of 24 Apprentice Artists, selected from hundreds of applicants, who were in a second tier training programme where they were given intensive coaching, and sang in the chorus, in small main stage roles, and also in the fully staged and costumed Opera Scenes programmes. The Scenes at Noon programme which we attended was comprised of a scene each from *LIZZIE BORDEN*, *CARMEN*, and the hilarious laundry basket scene from *FALSTAFF*, with the treat of Todd Thomas (Scarpia from *TOSCA*) in the title role! This year the stage director for the Apprentice Artists was Martha Collins, from Ottawa!

Next year the selections for the January 29-March 19, 2005, Sarasota Opera playbill are: *DON GIOVANNI*, *CAV/PAG*, *STIFFELIO*, and *LAKME*

# Summer Opera

## Glimmerglass

### Opera

Cooperstown, N.Y.

*LA FANCIULA DEL WEST* (Puccini) July 1,3,11,25,30  
August 2,7,14,17,21,23

*PATIENCE*(Gilbert and Sullivan) July 2,5,10,18,22,27,31  
August 8,12,14,20,24

*IMENEO* (Handel) July 17,19,23,31  
August 3,6,9,15,19,21

*THE MINES OF SULPHUR* (Richard Rodney Bennett)  
July 24,26 August 1,5,7,10,13,16,22

(Many performances are already sold out)

Information: 607-547-2255 [www.glimmerglass.org](http://www.glimmerglass.org)

## Chautauqua Opera

Chautauqua N.Y.

*STIFFELIO* by Verdi July 9 & 12

*SUSANNAH* by Floyd July 23 & 26

*FAUST* by Guonod August 6 & 9

*FIDDLER ON THE ROOF* by Bock and Harnick  
August 20 & 23

Information: 1-800-836-ARTS [www.ciweb.org](http://www.ciweb.org)

## Lake George Opera

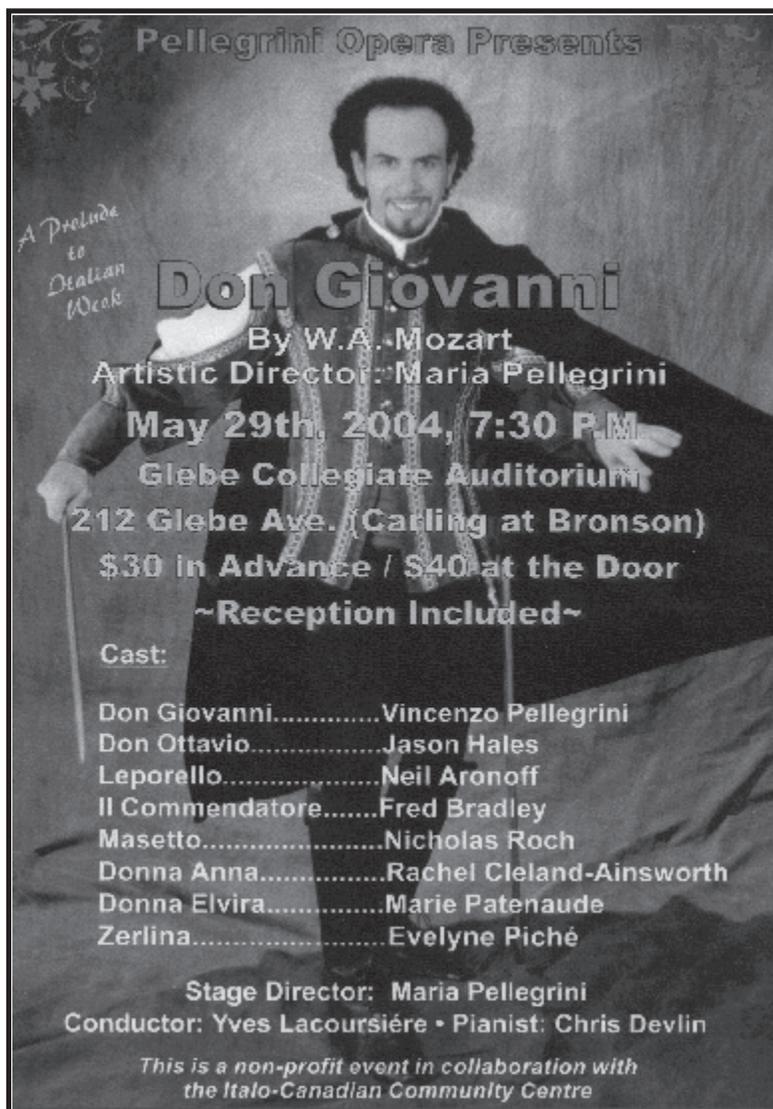
Saratoga Springs N.Y.

*L'ELISIR D'AMORE* by Donizetti July 2, 6, 8 & 10

*CANDIDE* by Berstein July 3, 7, 9 & 11

Information: 1-518-587-3330

[www.LakeGeorgeOpera.org](http://www.LakeGeorgeOpera.org)



Pellegrini Opera Presents

*A Prelude to Italian Week*

# Don Giovanni

By W.A. Mozart  
Artistic Director: Maria Pellegrini  
May 29th, 2004, 7:30 P.M.  
Glebe Collegiate Auditorium  
212 Glebe Ave. (Carling at Bronson)  
\$30 in Advance / \$40 at the Door  
~Reception Included~

Cast:

Don Giovanni.....Vincenzo Pellegrini  
Don Ottavio.....Jason Hales  
Leporello.....Neil Aronoff  
Il Commendatore.....Fred Bradley  
Masetto.....Nicholas Roch  
Donna Anna.....Rachel Cleland-Ainsworth  
Donna Elvira.....Marie Patenaude  
Zerlina.....Evelyne Piché

Stage Director: Maria Pellegrini  
Conductor: Yves Lacoursière • Pianist: Chris Devlin

*This is a non-profit event in collaboration with  
the Italo-Canadian Community Centre*

# Brava Maria !

by Pat Adamo

Ottawa opera lovers were treated to a new concert production of Mozart's *DON GIOVANNI* on Saturday, May 29 presented by soprano Maria Pellegrini.

This article is not a critique but a report on a very special new event that attracted a very formidable house of opera lovers at the Glebe Collegiate.

The stage was tastefully decorated with blue, gold and red curtains, and the staging was very cleverly used including interesting entrances and exits through the aisles of the theatre. I found the staging and acting well-paced and particularly effective; and the period costumes very charming. The concept of singing the recitatives in English and the arias in Italian was very exciting and, of course, informative.

Judging from the enthusiastic applause and response of a very large audience of noted and obvious opera lovers, this was a well presented and satisfying *DON GIOVANNI* indeed.

Congratulations to a splendid cast, musicians, technical staff, and presenter, Maria Pellegrini.

# Coming Soon

## Opera Lyra Ottawa

*MADAMA BUTTERFLY* September 11, 13, 15 & 18

## Canadian Opera Company

*THE HANDMAID'S TALE* September 23, 26, 29 October 1, 5 & 9

*LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR* September 25, 28, 30 October 3, 6 & 8

## Opéra de Montréal

*TURANDOT* October 2, 4, 7, 9, 13 & 16

# SATURDAY AFTERNOON AT THE OPERA

HELMUT LIST-HALLE, GRAZ

June 26 **La Grande-Duchesse de  
Gerolstein**

(Offenbach)

Conductor: Nicholas Harnoncourt

GRAND THEATRE, GENEVA

July 3 **Kat'a Kabanova**

(Janacek)

Conductor: Jiri Belohlavek

KONZERTHAUS VIENNA

July 10 **I Masnadieri**

(Verdi)

Conductor: Bertrand de Billy

BALTIC SEA FESTIVAL, STOCKHOLM

July 17 **Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk**

(Shostakovich)

Conductor: Valery Gergiev

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, COVENT GARDEN

July 24 **Faust**

(Gounod)

Conductor: Antonio Pappano

TEATRO SAN CARLO, NAPLES

July 31 **Gustavo III**

(Verdi)

Conductor: Renato Palumbo

TEATRO DELL' OPERA, ROME

August 7 **Marie Victoire**

(Respighi)

Conductor: Gianluigi Gelmetti

THEATRE DES CHAMPS-ELYSEES, PARIS

August 14 **David et Jonathas**

(Charpentier)

Conductor: Emmanuelle Haim

PHILHARMONIE, COLOGNE

August 21 **The Jacobin**

(Dvorak)

Conductor: Gerd Albrecht

NATIONAL THEATRE, MUNICH

August 28 **Roberto Devereux**

(Donizetti)

Conductor: Friedrich Haider

CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY, TORONTO

September 4 **Peter Grimes**

(Britten)

Conductor: Richard Bradshaw

CBC MCGILL SERIES, MONTREAL

September 11 **Alcina**

(Handel)

Conductor: Bernard Labadie

PACIFIC OPERA, VICTORIA

September 18

**The Tempest**

(Hoiby)

Conductor: Timothy Vernon

OPERA ATELIER, TORONTO

September 25

**Iphigenie en Tauride**

(Gluck)

Conductor: Andrew Parrott

CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY, TORONTO

October 2

**Turandot**

(Puccini)

Conductor: Richard Bradshaw

BAVARIAN STATE OPERA, MUNICH

October 9

**Romeo et Juliette**

(Gounod)

Conductor: Marcello Viotti