

Société d' Opéra
de la Capitale Nationale



National Capital
Opera Society

Summer 2015

NEWSLETTER : BULLETIN

Été 2015

Brian Law Opera Competition 2015

Saturday, 10th October, 7pm
Southminster United Church,
15 Aylmer Avenue, Ottawa.

It's time to mark your calendars for this year's Brian Law Opera Competition (BLOC), which is the National Capital Opera Society's principal event, held once every two years. The programme is not yet fixed. Up to six finalists, chosen by the preliminary jury, will each perform three arias with piano accompaniment. At the end of the evening the winners will be announced and prizes awarded. There is a \$5000 first prize, \$3000 for the runner up and \$1000 (donated by board member Pat Adamo) for the third placed finalist. Tickets to the event cost \$25 (students \$10) and can be purchased at the door or reserved in advance by calling 613-830-9827.

The competition is made possible by generous contributions to the National Capital Opera Society's Brian Law Fund. As a registered charity, the NCOS is able to issue tax receipts for donations of \$20 or more. A hearty vote of thanks goes to all who have contributed to the success of the BLOC. Past winners have gone on to achieve stellar success and we are proud to follow their illustrious accomplishments. Recent past winners include **Meghan Lindsay** (2013), **Arminè Kassabian** (2011), **Philippe Sly** (2009), **Yannick-Muriel Noah** (2007), **Joyce El-Khoury** (2005) and **Joshua Hopkins** (2003).

The competition is open to young singers focusing on a career in opera who were born, are resident or have studied voice in the National Capital Region. This year's application deadline is Friday 26 June 2015

Please encourage young singers you know (ages 20-32) to apply. Applicants are invited to submit a complete package containing the following:

- A completed and signed application form (available from the NCOS website)
- *Curriculum Vitae*, including opera experience, repertoire and names of teachers

- A statement of aspirations and goals
- A recording of the applicant's voice, including three operatic selections with **piano accompaniment only**
- A list of the recorded selections
- A \$25 administration fee

For full details go to our website (ncos.ca) and click on **Brian Law Opera Competition** then **How to Apply**

President's Annual Report. May 24, 2015

We met last year in a state of near crisis. The 2013 Competition left us with a deficit of almost \$10,000. A number of illnesses, both of Board members and their families, and some joint replacements had led to the withdrawal of participation of some key members from the competition night. We managed but barely. The problem before us was to attack directly what had gone wrong and to map out a plan to set things right.

However regretfully, some things were relatively easy to change. The 2013 reception cost of \$1,000 for food has become too much for us. Serving coffee and cookies donated by a Board member was accepted as a reasonable substitute. Great praise was accorded the 18 page program. The additional costs for adding colour were borne by the generosity of Ute Davis. Providing a program with so many photos and so much text seemed useful and desirable, however, the cost was very high when this information can easily be found on the internet. And so it was decided that a new approach to the program would be made, more in line with our reduced resources. The use of the mini-recital as an instrument providing time to the jurors to make their decisions was called into question. It was generally agreed that the expert jurors could easily render a decision during the intermission period plus the time allowed for greetings from Gerald Finley and Brian Law. The mini-recital was then examined. Started as a necessity in a year when only two applicants were to appear in competition, this soon became a tradition. At first the costs were minimal and the returns became quite substantial. Who can forget the overflow crowd who enjoyed Yannick-Muriel Noah's mini-recital and the revenue it brought to us? In 2013 the difficulty in finding a previous winner as recitalist led to a postponement of advertising which surely affected the house numbers at the competition. Again, reluctantly, the Board decided to suspend having a mini-recital in order to save costs which have ranged between \$500 and \$900 in previous years. The time of year and the venue were then discussed. Moving it to a date in the spring was then proposed. After physically investigating three more centrally located venues we found that, avoiding any conflict with student exams, none of the venues were available for us, even our usual one, the Unitarian Congregation. Hoping that we might have more success in the fall a new date was chosen only to find that there was a conflict with Opera Lyra's final opera performance. Again we went to any possible venues but none were available. This brings us to the date, October 10, and the place, Southminster United Church, which is well-known for holding concerts. The date coincides with the Thanksgiving weekend when students can be expected to be home for family festivities. This venue will also save us rental costs. I cannot agree with an opinion offered that we have sacrificed everything. We still provide an opportunity for six finalists to vie for substantial prizes, to meet with professional jurors to discuss strengths and

weaknesses and to be congratulated on their accomplishments to date and encouraged for the future. My hope is that if we can weather a year of austerity we can rebuild for a very special competition in 2017 to coincide with the celebration of Canada's 150th anniversary.

All this might have gone much easier if not for other factors. Joint replacements, necessary operations, falls and mishaps, illnesses, have all taken their toll on Board members. Peggy Pflug, one of three sitting Board members who originated the Brian Law Competition, is again unable to attend and assist as she has for so many years. I still miss the efficiency and good counsel of our beloved Jean Saldanha as secretary. Our new secretary, Lesley Robinson, has proven to be a master of instant communications, introducing us to the use of Facebook and Twitter to foster support. Our treasurer, Mark Robinson, has instituted strict budgeting to ensure that we are able to continue offering help to promising young singers. Vice president Ute Davis has continued to recruit excellent jurors for our competition. She also uses her contacts with potential competitors to encourage participation. The same can be said of Renate Chartrand who, in spite of a replacement recovery, does her best to help our projects. Four times a year Elizabeth Meller chooses operas which will appeal to our group, researches them, prints notes for the audience, makes copies as door prizes and spreads the word to all possible attendees for our Opera alla pasta DVD and food sessions. Such dedication, despite chronic pain, is indispensable and much appreciated. Vera-Lee Nelson was a great hostess for last summer's meeting and is establishing an on-going system of contact with other local performing arts organizations. Our man in Munich, Jim Burgess, continues to update our website and edits a manual entitled "How to Conduct a Brian Law Opera Competition". Finally, there is Pat Adamo, the "godmother" of so many projects involving music and particularly singing in our community. Pat was also there from the establishment of the BLOC. I can always rely on her wealth of experience to give me good advice and on her generosity to an excellent cause. It should be obvious to anyone reading this report that we are in need of some new Board members who are prepared to work hard for a worthy endeavour. Would you or someone you know be willing to help especially in this particular time of need? Our newsletter continues to flourish under the editorship of David Williams with the assistance of Tom McCool. Our many contributors to the newsletter make it most interesting and useful to our readers.

We have had wonderful results with our assistance program. Let's ensure that these continue well into the future.



Terrific Toronto Twosome

by Shelagh Williams

Happy endings abounded in the two Toronto April offerings: Opera Atelier(OA)'s *Orpheus & Eurydice* and Canadian Opera Company(COC)'s *Barber of Seville*.

OA presented Gluck's original 1762 Italian *Orfeo et Euridice* in 1997, his 1774 French *Orphée et Eurydice* in 2007, and now Berlioz's 1859 rescoring of the French rescue opera. This version came about because a century of pitch inflation had rendered the role of Orpheus too high for a French haute-contre. It was therefore revised for the great French mezzo Pauline Viardot, to become the principal version for the next 100 years.

OA brought to this production all of its various resources, ensuring us of a feast of sight and sound and a most enjoyable evening of delightful opera. Director Marshall Pynkoski and choreographer Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg, OA Co-Artistic Directors, fresh from their February success at La Scala with Mozart's *Lucio Silla*, ensured an especially close integration of the three principals and the Atelier Ballet. There is a lot of dancing in this opera, especially the famous *Dance of the Blessed Spirits* (or *Happy Shades*) in the Elysian Fields. Also the original French triumphant dance finale, which Berlioz omitted, has been reinstated, all lovingly choreographed by Zingg. Visually, Gerard Gauci's sets, especially Eurydice's Act I tomb, Margaret Lamb's gorgeous costumes, and Michelle Ramsay's evocative lighting, lightning, and starry night, all combined in an elegant and harmonious whole. Maestro David Fallis drew delightful performances from the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir, as black-clad and box positioned chorus, as well as his three soloists.

In the title role, tall Canadian mezzo Mireille Lebel embodied Orpheus and even used some of Viardot's own ornamentation for his great aria at the end of Act I, before bravely descending to the underworld to rescue Eurydice. Our BLOC winner, soprano Meghan Lindsay, the personification of the god Amour, arrived from on high as a *Deus ex machina* and provided some much-needed comic relief, plus later reversed the usual myth ending by letting Eurydice live! Soprano Peggy Krina Dye only appeared in the second half, but more than made up for this with her heartfelt emotion, as she despaired that Orpheus would not look at her (as ordered by the gods) - although I often feel she goes on a bit much! If I have any quibbles about this performance, they are only two. First, the

most famous piece of the opera, Orpheus's aria of mourning for Eurydice, when she dies the second time, after he finally looks at her in Hades, was delivered with very little expression by Mireille Lebel, showing no evocation of Orpheus's pain and sadness, in stark contrast to Peggy Kriha Dye's elicitation of Eurydice's despair. Secondly, although I love ballet, there actually seemed to be more dancing than singing in this opera performance - and I like to get my money's worth of lovely singing! However, it is better to leave people wanting more, rather than wishing it would end - and an OA production is always a treat for eye and ear!

The COC's *Barber of Seville* was, if anything, even more enjoyable! The COC, in co-production with Houston Grand Opera, Opera National de Bordeaux and Opera Australia, again enlisted the talents of the Spanish theatre collective Els Comediants. I had not been enamoured of their earlier (2011) *Cenerentola*, with its oversized mice, and unattractive costume and negative persona for Cinderella. However, this time, director Joan Font, set and costume director Joan Guillen and lighting designer Albert Faula combined to match the madcap mayhem of the story with an equally zany setting. The actual sets were very easily moved and mainly see-through, and off-white so that the colourful costumes and props stood out clearly. Among the latter were Cubist prop guitars for the Act I serenading chorus and an even larger guitar for Count Almaviva to mount as he sang, and then in Act II an enormous pink piano which served also as

writing desk, table, podium, and bed! The action was non-stop and frenetic and mostly appropriate, as with a mute black-clad duenna, omnipresent in Dr. Bartolo's house, who managed to assist Figaro and the young lovers whenever things got sticky - a useful addition! However, occasionally the singers were upstaged, as when five other Figaros raced around the stage, illustrating his services, while the real Figaro sang his

Largo al factotum. Similarly, the servants' awkward actions dealing with the tree seen through the window, wherein it was in turn white washed, pruned and divested of an entrapped hat, were all distracting to some extent, when one should have been attending to the singers. Also some activities were a bit over the top, such as the chandelier cleaning servant ending Act I hanging dangerously and hilariously from it, but it certainly highlighted the finale's frantic pandemonium!



Photo by Bruce Zinger

Photo by Michael Cooper



Almaviva

Figaro

events. His debuting partners in crime, American tenor Alek Shrader as Count Almaviva and Italian mezzo Serena Malfi as Rosina, were no less capable. Shrader's lovely tenor was an added bonus to the exuberance with which he assumed his Figaro-suggested disguises as a merrily drunk soldier, and then as a hilarious music master cavorting at the piano with perfect timing, all the while showily dispensing bribes and interacting seamlessly with Figaro! Malfi was a delightful Rosina, lovely to see and hear, and believable as the self-assured young miss desperate to escape her prison at Dr. Bartolo's, and sometimes even ahead of Figaro in scheming! Their adversaries were debuting Italian baritone Renato Girolami as an almost loveable Dr. Bartolo and COC Ensemble Studio grad bass Robert Gleadow as music master Don Basilio, boasting a false nose and exuding great presence! Finally, mention should be made of the exemplary work of COC Ensemble Studio members soprano Aviva Fortuna as Rosina's capable governess, Berta, and bass-baritone Iain MacNeil, from Brockville, as Fiorello, the Count's servant and serenade banda contractor! It is so rewarding when a favourite classic opera can be staged in a new and interesting way, still in sympathy with the libretto, even if stretching things a bit! We enjoyed a lively comical and musical treat, a delight from start to finish!

Keeping it all together was Scottish conductor Rory Macdonald, aided and abetted by the marvellous cast and the energetic COC Orchestra and Chorus. The latter managed to sing beautifully in spite of their hilarious police outfits with 3' high pink plumes! Of course, the star was our very own BLOC winner, Joshua Hopkins, as Figaro. Boasting an oddly cut vest in the ever-present pink and with an extra cocked eyebrow, he took it all in his stride and sang delightfully and enunciated his patter songs clearly, while cleverly and resourcefully manipulating

Photo by Michael Cooper



Dr. Bartolo

Almaviva

Berta

Rosina

Figaro

MET Live - not in HD by Marian Cumming

The recently-concluded Met HD season provided an interesting mix of performances, from the comic to the dramatic, featuring some star performers. What was not broadcast was a trio of Verdi masterpieces and Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* which, fortunately for us, happened to be grouped together over a long weekend in April. After a three year absence, it was such a treat to be back ... and actually applaud! It was also wonderful to see the massive crystal chandeliers in the lobby and the auditorium, and to watch the low-hanging ones ascending silently, while slowly dimming, to the gilded ceiling.

The first offering, on Thursday night, was Sonja Frisell's production of Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* which had its Met debut in 1988 with James Levine conducting and Placido Domingo in the role of Radames. This time Domingo was on the podium, receiving thunderous applause, even before lifting his baton, and when he did, eliciting some beautiful sounds from the orchestra. As is his wont, Verdi delights in challenging tenors with a difficult aria right off the bat; *Celeste Aida* is no exception. In this case, our tenor, Marco Berti, acquitted himself quite well, in spite of a rather sluggish tempo. *Aida* was sung by Ukrainian soprano Oksana Dyke who has a rich, mellow voice, with secure high notes. Both her *O Patria Mia* and *Ritorna Vincitor* were very moving. In the role of Amneris, mezzo soprano Violeta Urmana's solos were beautifully sung but she was somewhat drowned out during ensembles. Mark Delavan (Amonasro), displayed good technique but at times his voice had a nasal quality to it that was not very pleasing. The two basses, Stefan Kocan and Ievgen Orlov, singing Ramfis and the King respectively, both had powerful voices. The Met chorus, as always, was at its best.

The sets by Gianni Quaranta were epic, taking full advantage of the vast stage. It was particularly noticeable during the Triumphant Scene in Act II when a massive cast moved across the stage in rich white costumes, with blue trim, designed by Dada Sakugeru. The chariot (small by comparison) ushering in Radames was drawn by two beautifully-groomed, taupe-coloured horses who were also very well behaved! Clever use was made of the stage elevator during the scene changes in Act II when Amneris's apartment sinks to the floor with a row of spear-carrying warriors slowing descending to eye level, as well as in the final scene with the tomb ascending from below. The choreography is also worth mentioning. Unlike the usual robotic movements we are so used to seeing, the ballet in this production was more romantic, with male and female dancers flowing easily in and out of intricate formations.

Although there was really nothing intrinsically wrong with the individual singing, this was a lack-lustre performance with little or no chemistry among the singers. I think we have been

spoiled recently by HD productions showcasing excellent singers who can also act. I could not help feeling that we had gone back to the old days when singers were rooted to one spot, kept their eyes on the conductor, waved their arms around and sang. This was particularly true during the Nile scene which is filled with emotions; fear, love, intrigue, betrayal, jealousy - none of that shone through. It would have been a rather disappointing evening had it not been for the majestic staging, rich costumes and, of course, the music.

On Friday night we switched to Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Someone walking out on stage before the curtain goes up always elicits an audible groan from the audience. This time it was to announce that tenor Joseph Calleja (that evening's Edgardo) was getting over "a severe chest infection" but that he would be singing and hoped for our understanding. A collective sigh of relief ...! *Lucia*, based on Sir Walter Scott's novel *The Bride of Lammermoor*, is, in my view, one of the finest Italian romantic operas. With each passage, Maestro Maurizio Benini was able to extract haunting melodies from the superb Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. The current Mary Zimmerman production was first staged during the 2007-2008 season with Natalie Dessay in the title role. Set design was by Daniel Ostling, costume design by Mara Blumenfeld. In keeping with the storyline, the staging was sombre as were the lighting and the costumes, particularly during the first act, and more so, during the final scene in the burial grounds of Ravenswoods. The castle in Act II was sufficiently dilapidated to reflect Ashton's financial woes, but the clever scene change, with the use of "servants" pulling down torn drapes, uncovering what seemed to be furniture but turned out to be chandeliers which gently rose to the ceiling, transformed the room into a great hall. The signing of the contract scene had the entire chorus dressed in varying shades of grey with the exception of Lucia in a stunning bright red gown. It was quite eye-popping.

Russian soprano Albina Shagimuratova was singing her first Lucia at the Met. Her first-act aria *Regnava nel Silenzio*, was poignant and sorrowful, particularly during the part where she describes seeing a ghost by the fountain, but lacked the excitement of a young woman anticipating the arrival of her secret lover. Her mad scene was quite different from the Dessay portrayal where she rolled down the stairs and flitted, wide-eyed, around the stage. This Lucia was more composed, walking down the curved staircase in a contemplative daze, but her beautiful well-modulated singing was spell-binding. Her interaction with the flute was particularly striking with each high note ringing out with crystal clear precision.

Joseph Calleja's Edgardo was both tender and forceful, his indisposition notwithstanding. Listening to his beautiful warm,

MET Live - not in HD (continued)

honey-coloured voice was so reminiscent of the stone buildings at sunset in his native Malta. His high notes were effortless and rang out clearly. His duet with Lucia, *Verranno a te sull'aure*, in the first act was sung with a quiet passion, whilst his angst was palpable in his two successive arias, *Tombe degli avi miei* and *Tu che a Dio spiegasti l'ali* in the last act. The last one highlighting his characteristic *singhiozzo* with his voice breaking ever so slightly, (or was it his cold?).

The baritone and bass voices of Luca Salsi as Enrico Ashton and Alastair Miles as Raimondo complemented each other well and both displayed solid technique, although their movements were rather stiff. Both Theodora Hanslowe as Alisa (Lucia's companion) and Matthew Plenk as Arturo (Lucia's fated husband) were reprising their roles from the most recent (2011) revival, which was also telecast.

Notwithstanding an ominous introduction, this was an excellent performance, as evidenced by the long and enthusiastic applause by the audience, despite the late hour.

The Saturday afternoon performance was Verdi's *Don Carlo*, which was also the radio broadcast. So for those of you who were listening, you will know that the role of Don Carlo, which was to be sung by tenor Yonghoon Lee was in fact sung by Brazilian tenor Ricardo Tamura who made his Metropolitan opera debut as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* in the autumn of 2013. A notification of this change was included in the programme.

This production by Nicholas Hytner made its debut at the Met in 2010 and was conducted by our own Yannick Nezet-Seguin who was again on the podium. He managed to make a flawless transition between the gentle playing of the strings to the forceful playing of the brass, while ensuring that the all-star cast shone in their respective roles. This is very much an ensemble cast with each principal having his or her own challenging role. The costumes by Bob Crowley, who also designed the sets, were rich and beautiful, particularly during one scene where the women in the chorus were dressed in dark blue velvet with light grey fur trim draped over their arms and dropping to the floor, complemented by different styles of hats in matching colour and fur trim.

The first act takes place in the forest near the palace of Fontainebleu in France. This is where we first hear our replacement Don Carlo in yet another challenging tenor aria *Io la vidi* referring to his first glimpse of his intended, Elisabeth of Valois, daughter of the King of France, with whom he falls in love. Ricardo Tamura's voice had not yet warmed up but he sang with enough passion to pull it off. The lovers eventually meet, she discovers who he is, is equally besotted, only to be advised that to maintain peace between Spain and France, she would be marrying his father, King Philip II. Barbara Frittoli's warm soprano

portrayed a tender Elisabeth amply conveying her acceptance of this unhappy turn of events.

Ferruccio Furlanetto was Philip II, a role with which he is very comfortable, having sung it all over the world. His dark velvety bass expressing conflicting emotions: very much in command when dealing with his unfounded suspicions of his wife's unfaithfulness or putting his commitment to his country ahead of his love for his son; yet in his rendition of *Ella giammai m'amo'* his demeanour softens, openly exposing his vulnerability and inner torture.

Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa was sung by Dimitri Hvorostovsky, who, with his flowing white locks and regal bearing, was in fine voice. His warm baritone, his exceptional range and breath control were very much in evidence during the famous Act II duet with Carlo *Dio che nell'alma infondere*. But he was at his best as he lay dying, *Io morro' ma lieto in core*, which was charged with emotion, and displayed the best piece of acting I've ever seen from Hvorostovsky.

Russian mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Gubarova was excellent as Eboli, both vocally and emotionally. Her expressive dark voice was able to go from light and airy in her aria *Nel giardino del bello* to intensity and doom in her *O don fatale*.

I love attending the Saturday afternoon intermission feature, so on the last note of the celestial voice (of the angelic-sounding Heidi Stober) I bounded down three flights of stairs to List Hall hoping to get to it before the doors closed. I did, but instead of the usual quiz they broadcast a singer's round table with Susan Graham, Patricia Racette and Piotr Beczala. All three obviously enjoyed being there and were very amusing, interacting with each other and the audience. Each inserted humorous anecdotes in response to questions submitted by the radio audience. The chimes sounded all too quickly summoning us back to our seats.

James Morris has been a fixture at the Metropolitan Opera for over 40 years. He is listed as a bass-baritone and therefore does not have the sonorous sound of a Ghiaurov or others who have made the role of the Inquisitor famous, nor was he as imposing, but his voice blended well with Furlanetto's during their tense exchange over Carlo's death sentence and the removal of Posa.

During the second scene of Act III as Carlo and a group of Flemish deputies are pleading with Philip for their country's freedom, the tenor's voice started to crack in the lower register. At first we thought it was just temporary and that he'd have time to recover during intermission and the start of the following act as his character was not due to re-appear for a while. But at the beginning of the next act, we got the dreaded announcement

MET Live - not in HD (continued)

from the stage that he was unwell, and although he soldiered on (I don't think he had much of a choice!) he got progressively worse. His voice was literally hanging by a thread during his farewell to Elisabeth *Ma lassu' ci vedremo in un mondo migliore*, and although it added to the poignancy of the moment, it was quite painful to watch (and listen to); one really felt for him. In this version Don Carlo is not spirited into the tomb by his grandfather, Emperor Charles V, in the guise of a monk, but rather is shot to death by the Inquisitor's men with his father Philip II looking on. Whichever way, the end couldn't have come soon enough for our Carlo this afternoon as I am sure he was more than relieved when the final curtain came down. The audience, however, was understanding and very generous with its applause, some even tossing flowers onto the stage. I hope we get to hear him again when he's healthy.

Our second opera of the day was Verdi's *Ernani*. Up to this point, this was not proving to be a tenor-friendly week-end, and it was with some trepidation that we took our seats, leafed through the program, found no inserts, but still waited for an announcement from the stage! Mercifully there was none and the evening progressed with no further ailments.

Ernani is based on a play by Victor Hugo. This is a story of unrequited love (the heroine courted by two, in love with one and engaged to a third), intrigue, duplicity and revenge. The set design by Pier Luigi Sanarutabu, who was also the Producer, was interesting. In Act I, to one side of the stage was an elevated area upon which sat a huge bed draped in a deep red velvet fringed cover with masses of pillows strewn around, and larger than life paintings hanging on the walls. The sets in the other three acts were more understated, although the winding staircases were quite impressive. The costumes by Peter J. Hall, although rich and beautiful, looked heavy and, in some cases, seemed to restrict the singers' movements.

Elvira was sung by Angela Meade; her opening aria *Ernani, Ernani involami* was sung in a well-modulated, magnificent voice and was quite moving. However, from then on, a shrill seemed to creep into her voice and she seemed quite detached from the action, moving awkwardly around the stage, possibly due to her ornate costumes.

And Plácido Domingo was back again, this time on stage, singing the role of Don Carlo. I will preface my next observation with a statement, as I am sure not everyone will agree with me. I love Domingo and I admire the way he has been able to extend his career by conducting and taking on baritone roles. He has given us years of undiluted pleasure in opera houses all over the world, through recordings, CDs, films and performances broadcast in HD. His voice has a dark colour-

ing, power and richness, but it does not sound like that of a baritone, (in fact in the program he is listed as a tenor.) There is a reason for requiring contrasting voice types in any opera, and having a tenor singing a baritone role is not what the composer intended. Having said that, his Simon Boccanegra was his best rendition as a baritone; maybe he should have stopped at that!

Ernani's Don Carlo is the grandfather of our afternoon titular Don Carlo, i.e. Carlo V, at the time he was elected Holy Roman Emperor. A very different image from the spectre of Carlo who was revered, and feared, in the afternoon opera, tonight's Carlo (very much alive) was an unsavoury character, "trying to abduct Elvira after declaring his love for her", "taunting Ernani with insults" and later "taking Elvira hostage". Domingo's portrayal of this less-than-endearing character was not convincing enough until the end when, true to his resolve to change his life if he is crowned Emperor in his earlier *cavatina Oh, de' verd'anni miei*, he actually does.

The highlights of the evening though were tenor Francesco Meli as Ernani (Elvira's lover) and Dmitry Belosselskiy as de Silva (Elvira's fiancé). Meli's voice is best described as a *lirico spinto*, unforced and powerful with a shining top, while Belosselskiy's is a deep, well-modulated booming bass. Their voices blended beautifully together, adding to the drama and filling the house with glorious sounds. They were a real joy to listen to. This was in evidence in the climactic final act of the opera when Ernani and Elvira are finally celebrating their marriage. Their short-lived happiness is marred by the sound of a horn, signifying that the time had come for Ernani to kill himself, a pledge he had earlier made to Silva in return for him not surrendering Ernani to Carlo. Ernani pleads for a moment of happiness but, accusing him of being a coward, Silva hands him a knife demanding that he fulfil his promise, with Elvira looking on.

A postscript! Our preferred seats at the Met have always been in the orchestra. With the exception of our seats for *Lucia*, we decided to try out the front row of one of the boxes in the Dress Circle. This is a good location in terms of not having anyone blocking your view. It is also very good for interacting with the other patrons in your own box and other boxes around you (not that New Yorkers are shy about engaging in conversation in any setting!). The down side is that a good portion of the stage is blocked from view, unless you lean forward, and you are also sitting in straight-back chairs! A word of advice: if you are planning on attending an 8-hour marathon, as we did on that Saturday, book yourselves into comfortable armchairs. Your back will thank you for it!

Book Review

by Tom McCool

Call Me Debbie by Deborah Voigt

New York: HarperCollins, 2015

“You are here to sing!” Debbie Voigt received this message from “Above” when she was 14 years old. Fortunately, in order to carry out that command, she was given a magnificent voice that enabled her to sing beautifully and ascend to the very top of the opera world. She sang the lead roles in most of the great operas and performed in the most famous opera houses of the world. All because of that voice! Unfortunately, she also developed addictive tendencies which threatened her singing career and resulted in a troubled life. In this autobiography Debbie Voigt outlines her rise to the pinnacle of operatic success and describes the excruciating details of the numerous challenges she faced when her addictions took over her life and which she is still attempting to control.

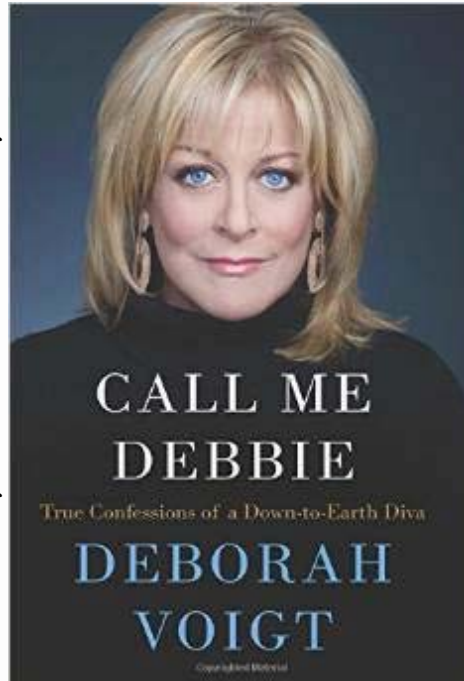
Debbie came to prominence singing in the operas of Wagner and Strauss...roles such as Brünnhilde, Isolde, Salome and Ariadne. These are among the most difficult roles in opera and she was able to master them. One of her outstanding attributes as a singer is her versatility. Although known primarily for the heavy-duty music associated with Wagner and Strauss, she is equally at home in the operas of Verdi, Puccini and Mozart and other composers. Furthermore, as anyone who saw her as Annie Oakley in *Annie Get Your Gun* at Glimmerglass a few years ago can attest, she excels in Broadway musicals.

Some years ago the Met began transmitting their operas to theatres world-wide in a program called “The Met: Live in HD”. Probably the most anticipated event in these very popular performance transmissions was Robert Lepage’s production of Richard Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Debbie sang Brünnhilde, one of the principal roles in the series of operas. Her talent was on view to the world and she received rave reviews. She also became one of the hosts for the HD program and was outstanding in that

non-singing role. It was clear that Debbie Voigt had the magic touch.

Growing up, her musical idol was Karen Carpenter, the pop singer who died at 32 of heart failure related to years of struggle with anorexia nervosa. She literally starved herself to death! Debbie was just the opposite...she was addicted to food from an early age, eventually ballooning up to well over 300 pounds. Because of her excessive weight she was fired from the Covent Garden production of *Ariadne auf Naxos* because she was too fat to fit into the costume (that infamous “little black dress”) the director mandated. This incident, as well as health concerns, led her to submit to gastric bypass surgery which helped to reduce her weight significantly. Her other addictions could not be solved by an operation. She was, and is, an alcoholic and abused alcohol alarmingly. But perhaps her most serious addiction was men. The latter situation was compounded by disastrous choices she made as regards partners. All of her personal struggles are candidly described in harrowing detail. She holds nothing back and much of it makes for uncomfortable reading. Her story is operatic in scope and how she survived is something of a mystery if not a miracle!

Despite her troubled history Debbie Voigt remains one of the most popular, best liked and most respected singers in opera today. The subtitle of this book is “True Confessions of a Down-to-Earth Diva”. This is a perfect description! If you are looking for a compelling story that is both heartrending and inspirational about a brilliantly gifted opera talent, look no further. This book is for you. *Call Me Debbie* is available from all the usual sources (Chapters, Amazon etc.) and the Ottawa Public Library has multiple copies.



***Bluebeard's Castle/Erwartung* at the COC**

Anatomy of a Double Bill by Lesley Robinson

The main rationale for pairing short operas for performances on a single ticket would appear to be making it worthwhile to mount productions of pieces which might otherwise not make it to the stage. Artistic reasoning also comes into play, with the most well-known example of a double bill being the pairing of Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* with *Pagliacci* by Leoncavallo, so habitually associated that they are known together affectionately as "Cav and Pag". These two verismo pieces have been performed perpetually, although not exclusively together, since the early days of their performance history in the early 1890s.

So apart from the length - the pairing of Bartok's *Bluebeard's Castle* with Schoenberg's *Erwartung* makes for a rounded two hour running time, including the intermission - why should these two operas be incorporated in a double bill? *Bluebeard's Castle* has been presented recently with other offerings. At the 2013 Edinburgh Festival, *Bluebeard* was paired with *Dido and Aeneas*, a tale of love, abandonment and death from a totally different era. LA Opera presented the same combination in 2014. This season the Met staged *Bluebeard's Castle* along with Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* in one of two double bills included in this year's HD broadcasts. The two operas are very different, but the Met's production did accord them a certain cohesiveness. Most recently, in April 2015, the State Opera of South Australia in Adelaide somewhat bizarrely presented *Bluebeard's Castle* in a double bill with *Il segreto di Susanna* (*Susanna's Secret*), a comedy by Italian Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari. *Bluebeard* was performed in German and *Susanna* in Italian. Both pieces have roughly the same running time and were composed just two years apart, but they have little else in common.

Erwartung has been rarely performed and almost always in a double bill with *Bluebeard's Castle*. Both were written in the same period, during the years preceding the First World War. A production was mounted at the Royal Opera House in 2006 (with *Erwartung* first) and a new production is on the calendar for May 2015 at the architecturally stunning Göteborg Opera House in Sweden. These compositions share a haunting atmosphere of mystery tinged with horror and their pairing makes artistic sense.

Influenced by Freudian psychoanalysis, the pieces share a psychological complexity and dreamlike quality. Schoenberg's librettist, Marie Pappenheim was actually a medical student who based the text of *Erwartung* on language used by patients undergoing psychoanalysis.

The COC's current production is a revival of Robert Lepage's 1993 staging. This was Mr. Lepage's first foray into opera and the production has travelled far and wide from New York to Hong Kong, from Edinburgh to Melbourne, always to great critical acclaim. The set works brilliantly for both pieces, enhancing their cohesiveness. The stage is surrounded by a golden frame, evocative of the paintings of Gustav Klimt whose "golden period" coincided with the period of these compositions. This enhances our impression of observing a work of art. In *Bluebeard's Castle*, images of increasing light are projected onto the wall of the castle, as each door is opened and both Judith and the audience are increasingly enlightened. That same wall forms the base from which surrealistic objects and figures emerge, enhancing the dreamlike quality of *Erwartung*. Movement also plays an important role. Schoenberg said, "In *Erwartung* the aim is to represent in slow motion everything that occurs during a single second of maximum spiritual excitement, stretching it out to half an hour." This is exactly the impression given by Lepage's staging. Figures emerge from the wall in seemingly impossible, gravity-defying slow motion.

Musically the two pieces have little in common. Bartok's work was rooted firmly in the late-Romantic tradition that gave rise to the work of contemporaries Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler, whereas the work of the largely self-taught Schoenberg's was a total departure. I was somewhat alarmed to see the descriptions "athematic" and "atonal" applied to his compositions. Nevertheless, the music of *Erwartung* is just right for its mood of mental anguish and Music Director Johannes Debus led the effervescent COC orchestra with characteristic panache in both pieces. The performance of John Relyea as Bluebeard had enough aplomb to carry the entire evening. This double bill was a complete experience.

NCOS Board of Directors

At the recent AGM, Murray Kitts was reelected as President. Board members elected were Pat Adamo, Jim Burgess, Ute Davis, Murray Kitts, Elizabeth Meller, Vera-Lee Nelson, Peggy Pflug, Lesley and Mark Robinson.

For information on the National Capital Opera Society or the Brian Law Opera Competition contact Murray Kitts at 613-830-9827 or consult www.ncos.ca

Baroque Authenticity by Lesley Robinson

Toronto's Opera Atelier strives for authenticity in its productions of Baroque operas. Its recent production of Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* is typical of the company's repertoire and as such, is both visually and musically, distinctly "Atelier". This fact was brought home to me in all its glory when I had the opportunity to compare Opera Atelier's production with a 2013 DVD recording made at Český Krumlov in the Czech Republic.

Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* has been revisited over the years in a number of versions. Originally performed in Italian in Vienna in 1762, with the part of Orfeo written for a castrato voice, the opera underwent a revision by the composer for a 1774 Paris production in French, with the part of Orphée sung by a high tenor. (Incidentally this version will feature in the 2015/16 season at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, starring the inimitable Juan Diego Florez.) The version performed by Atelier this season was the 1859 revision by Hector Berlioz. Berlioz knew both the original Italian version and the later French version well. He incorporated elements of both and restored some of the original 1762 orchestration. It was Berlioz's 1859 version that adapted the role of Orphée for a female alto, sung this season for Atelier by Canadian mezzo-soprano Mireille Lebel. Atelier regulars, Peggy Kriha Dye and Meghan Lindsay sang the soprano parts of Eurydice and Amour respectively.

Opera Atelier's vision is to produce period pieces in what it calls a "historically-informed" manner, seeking to explore artistically the original intention of composers, librettists and choreographers. Rather than producing a meticulous recreation of the work of the past, Atelier seeks to create something new that would be recognised by the creators as a faithful interpretation of their work. Gerard Gauci's sumptuous sets and meticulous attention to detail are a perennial feature of Atelier's artistic distinctiveness. His intricately painted backdrops and scrims have been an

enduring feature of Atelier's unmistakable style since the company's inception. The Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra under the direction of David Fallis provides the consistent musical element of Atelier's character. As a Co-Founder and Co-Artistic Director of the company, Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg's choreography is ever-present and where would Opera Atelier be without the vision of her Co-Artistic Director Marshall Pynkovski, whose familiar on-stage pre-performance announcements are as much a part of Atelier's persona as anything that happens after the curtain goes up!

Český Krumlov is authenticity itself. The old town is a UNESCO world heritage site and remains largely unchanged since mediaeval times. The castle dates from the thirteenth century and houses the unmodified Baroque theatre, built in 1680-82. The town has become the host of the annual Festival of Baroque Arts, which includes authentic productions of operas of the period, some revived for the first time since they were originally performed in this location in the seventeenth century. The orchestra performs, not only on original instruments, but also in period costume by candlelight. (This happens at all performances in the castle theatre, not only for purposes of the DVD recording.)

The Český Krumlov DVD is of the original 1762 Italian version of the opera with the role of Orfeo beautifully sung and acted by counter-tenor Bejun Mehta. Although not all scenes of the film are actually shot on the stage, we get the overall effect of a performance in this highly authentic setting. The set relies on the mechanisms that were available in the period which gives it a charming sense of an original Baroque performance.

Seen in this light, Opera Atelier may seem to have sacrificed a certain amount of authenticity, but above all the Atelier production can be said to be distinctively and authentically "Atelier".

A Telemann Treat!

Although Georg Philipp Telemann wrote 40 operas, opportunities to hear them come few and far between, making the production of his comic opera *Don Quixote* by Kevin Reeves and Seventeen Voices a chance not to be missed! Add the Ottawa Baroque Consort, plus excellent soloists, and imaginative costumes, set, props, and semi-staging, and you couldn't go wrong!

The performance started with a bang with Don Quixote charging down the church's centre aisle, in armour, on horseback, and with his lance deployed, while singing his opening aria! As Don Quixote, bass-baritone Joel Allison's lovely rich voice was ideal, and his white-dusted hair and beard, grown for the role, made him look perfect for the part! Baritone Hyung Song also had the voice and physique to embody Sancho Panza! Two shepherd-

by Shelagh Williams

esses, soprano Bronwyn Thies-Thompson and bass Harold Swaffield (a Dame part!), plus the choir, kept the music and action bubbling. In the final comic wedding scene, the romantic triangle of bride and loser and winner grooms were well sung and portrayed by soprano Lise Maisonneuve and tenors Michael Ruddy and Chris Oliveira.

To ensure comprehensibility, the recits were sung in English while the excellent programme included both the arias as sung in German and an English translation - a class presentation! Good comic timing and humorous sight gags enlivened the whole, while, under the direction of Kevin Reeves, the charming and tricky Baroque music was lovingly performed by both orchestra and singers - a rare and most entertaining evening!

Pellegrini Opera Makes a Safe Bet with *La Bohème* and Subtitles

by Ute Davis

To my surprise Pellegrini Opera made a good choice at the box office with this “top ten” opera selection of *La Bohème* at Dominion Chalmers Church on 24 and 25 April 2015. Both performances were quite well attended; so the strategy of re-mounting this often performed Puccini “warhorse” appeared to have been a success for this company, produced on a very tight budget.

As in recent years the strength of the production lay in the quality of the music with this most professional sounding ensemble of twelve instrumentalists, led by concert master/first violin Sophia Pan and conducted from the piano by D. Kai Ma who remains the backbone of the company. As the orchestra has increased in numbers, the piano has had to move further and further away from the stage to allow conductor/pianist Ma to be able to see all musicians. Placement of the orchestra to one side, a handicap of this venue, caused the singers some difficulty. Though they were able to see the conductor on a TV monitor, the conductor could not always hear

the singers, which was troublesome to the singers on opening night although slightly improved at the Saturday performance. Perhaps Pellegrini Opera should go back to piano accompaniment as the University of Ottawa opera program under Sandra Graham recently did in their wonderful *Fledermaus* and Rapport Opera in *Così fan tutte*. An alternative would be to add a more visible conductor to the equation.

La Bohème was fully staged and costumed, but quite a conventional period piece. Due credit should be given to the stage crew directed by Sara Stein and Jean E. Hudson, who smoothly overcame the limitations the church makes on any fully staged opera production. The vocal quality of the cast proved very pleasing. Suffice it to say that both Susan Elizabeth Brown (Mimi) and Emily Klassen (Musetta) took full advantage of Puccini’s superb music to give excellent performances. The sensitivity and pathos of Brown’s rendering of the ailing and rather lost little midinette



photo by Ute Davis

Pellegrini Opera Makes a Safe Bet with La Bohème and Subtitles (continued)

was truly endearing. This was Ms. Brown's first full opera role, an opportunity given to her by the voice studio of soprano Maria Pellegrini. While it took many months of patient rehearsals on the part of Maria Pellegrini, it was worth the effort in the long run. I particularly enjoyed the effortless high "e's" Ms. Brown managed to produce.

Emily Klassen provided a strong and impressive contrast as the flirtatious Musetta and her "Quando m'envo" was so good that she richly deserved to be carried off through the Café Momus audience on the men's shoulders – a highly popular move with all! The quartet of male Bohemians were all very capable singers and each gave an enjoyable performance. Chris Oliveira (Rodolfo) was vocally pleasing as in past productions, but appeared to be troubled by the earlier mentioned sound problems. Joseph Song Chi (Marcello) sang with outstanding power and quality, combined with poise and an impressive stage presence. I look forward to seeing this young man in future productions.

Ryan Hofman (Schaunard), performing with gusto, right after having earned his master's degree at the

U of O, sang with a pleasing and strong voice in this limited role and also promises well for the future. Kyle McDonald (Colline) sang his old coat aria "Vecchia zimarra, senti" with the proper conviction and timbre I expected, judging him after having heard this particular aria at least a hundred times since I started watching opera at the age of 10.

Pellegrini Opera provided for the first time surtitles in both official languages. This was most appreciated by the audience.

Maria Pellegrini, long a distinguished figure of opera in Ottawa and indeed the rest of the opera world, appears gradually to be conferring more responsibility on her son, now the artistic director Vincent Thomas. It remains to be seen what impact this has on the company. On this occasion I felt that it was most ungracious to deny Maria Pellegrini the final bow. I understand that Pellegrini Opera plans to produce a fundraising evening on a Halloween theme, Friday, 30 Oct. 2015 at Sala San Marco. The next opera production will be Verdi's *Rigoletto* at the end of April 2016, again at Dominion Chalmers Church.



D. Kai Ma and the orchestra

photo by Ute Davis

***Silent Night* - a Poignant Commemoration** by Lesley Robinson

Opéra de Montréal's final production of the 2014-15 season was a contemporary piece by renowned young American composer, Kevin Puts. *Silent Night* commemorates the famous truce among First World War combatants which occurred spontaneously on Christmas Eve 1914. Puts zeroes in on the experiences of individual soldiers in the German, Scottish and French trenches. Their personal stories, their reactions and interactions highlight the personal hopes and tragedies in the context of the craziness of the war going on around them. The juxtaposition of the human need for connection with the political nonsense that leads only to destruction, makes for a poignant snapshot of history.

Puts chooses the lives of two opera singers as a focus for the human drama going on in the German camp. The opening scene of the prologue shows them in eighteenth century costume, performing as usual as war is declared. Thus opera itself becomes a sort of metaphor for "normal" life. We meet two Scottish brothers and their parish priest who join up together to fight for their country and a French lieutenant who leaves his pregnant wife to do his duty, in the hope that all will be over within a matter of weeks.

Puts puts his skills to work, using a variety of styles to represent the various lives, memories of home, the call of duty and the chaos of the battlefield. His music has the feel of incidental music for a film with rapidly changing scenes. This is particularly marked in the scenes where the German opera singer is called to a society event to sing for officers, just kilometres away from the raging battle. He breaks down in the face of the absurdity of continuing as normal, alongside the carnage going on so close by.

The set consists of a revolving platform which represents no man's land, where much of the chaotic action takes place and around which the various armies' positions rotate.

Poignantly the British trench is adorned with signs reading "Buckingham Palace" and "Royal Mile" (in Edinburgh) representing home for the Scottish troops and ironically designating the luxury of their accommodations. The German trench bears a sign marked "Hotel Adlon", representing the famous luxury hotel in Berlin. In the French camp home is evoked by the aide-de-camp who makes coffee every day. His alarm clock rings at ten o'clock each morning, to remind him of drinking coffee with his mother. For him home is close by, but it might as well be distant in time and place.

The truce begins when the troops hear each other singing Christmas songs and they cautiously emerge from their positions to meet and agree on this one night of peace. The mixture of languages used highlights the differences among them and at the same time the efforts they make to understand each other. Even in this brief time of camaraderie, there remains a lingering distrust for Jonathan, the young Scottish soldier whose brother was killed and he had to leave on the battlefield. Jonathan vows revenge, but finds himself shaking hands with the enemy.

Much of what is known of these historical events comes from the letters written home by the troops who experienced them. In his letters to his mother Jonathan does not have the heart to break the terrible news of the death of his brother. Instead he writes of what they are both doing and signs his letters from both of them. In one scene sheets of paper fall amongst the snowflakes falling over the battlefield. The letters of the troops are as unique, as plentiful and as ephemeral as the snowflakes.

The all-Canadian cast was ably led by Marianne Fiset and Joseph Kaiser as the opera singers and Phillip Addis as the French Lieutenant and conducted by young American, Michael Christie who, as Music Director of the Minnesota Opera, conducted the premiere of the Pulitzer Prize-winning work.

Seventeen Voyces's *Don Quixote*

by Lesley Robinson

A delightful evening was spent at Southminster United Church when Seventeen Voyces, directed by Kevin Reeves, together with the Ottawa Baroque Consort presented Georg Philipp Telemann's comic opera *Don Quixote*. Joel Allison, bass-baritone, was charming and funny in the title role. His voice sounded particularly luxurious and mellow amid Southminster's churchy acoustics. I hope we can look forward to great things from Mr. Allison in the future. Sancho Panza was sung by Hyung Song, singing for the first time with Seventeen Voyces. Another notable performance

was given by soprano Bronwyn Thies-Thompson who sang the role of Grisostoma, a shepherdess, with poise and radiance. It is supposed not to be easy to do comedy well, but this performance seemed effortlessly funny. Galloping on an imaginary horse and a man in drag are always sure to raise a titter. Special mention must be made of Harold Swaffield's glorious performance as Pedrilla, a shepherdess, in the style of a pantomime "dame". There is talent aplenty in Ottawa!

Events you should enjoy

by David Williams

Opera Lyra Ottawa: OLO will expand its 2015-2016 season to include four different shows.

The season opens in September with Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. Performances are Sept. 26, 28, 30 and Oct. 3 in Southam Hall starting at 8:00 p.m.

In October, 2015, Opera Lyra, with the Toronto company Essential Opera, will present a double-bill of one-act operas, *Etiquette* by Monica Pearce and *Regina* by Elisha Denburg. Oct. 16, 17 at 8:00 p.m. and Oct. 18 at 2:00 p.m. at the Great Canadian Theatre Company.

Also in October, Opera Lyra will present *Operation Superpower*, an outreach anti-bullying performance for young people. There will be six matinees on Oct. 24, 25, and 31 at 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. in the Arts Court Theatre.

Opera Lyra Studio of Young Artists will present *L'isola disabitata* by Haydn with the Thirteen Strings Chamber Orchestra. May 27, 28, and 29, 2016 at 8:00 p.m. at Dominion Chalmers United Church.

Opera Lyra will present Beethoven's *Fidelio* in Southam Hall, March 19, 23, and 26, 2016, at 8:00 p.m.

Information: www.operalyra.ca.

HIGH C & HIGH TEA will be held on June 28, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. in the Colonel By Room at Ottawa City Hall. The event will begin with Murray Kitts' presentation this year on passion in opera, and will be entitled "Sexopera". If you have any questions, please call Judy Burrows at 613-224-9638 or Mary Frances at 613-730-8450.

Opera Lyra Garden Party: This will be held Tuesday, July 7, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at the Residence of the Ambassador of Italy, 1475 Chemin d'Aylmer Road, Gatineau. Enjoy a magical summer evening of enchanting arias, gourmet Italian hors-d'oeuvres and wines, and enjoy a dazzling fashion show by Earlene's *House of Fashion*. A delightful musical program is being developed and will be announced shortly. Tickets can be purchased by calling the Opera Lyra office @ 613-233-9200 ext. 231. In the event of inclement weather, the Garden Party will be held the following evening on July 8.

Music and Beyond:

Love and Betrayal / Amour et trahison - July 5 @ 7:30 p.m. at Christ Church Cathedral. Acclaimed soprano Dominique Labelle joins Daniel Taylor in a deeply moving program of arias and duets that explore the many facets of love and betrayal.

VOCES8: Eventide - July 9 @ 2:00 p.m. at St. Joseph's Church. Music of Tallis, Byrd, Praetorius, Monteverdi, Purcell, David Blackwell, Rachmaninoff, John Tavener, Giovanni Gabrieli and others. The Canadian debut of this stellar a cappella octet!

Wallis Giunta: Ladies and Gentlemen! - July 9 @ 7:30 p.m. at Southminster United Church. Music of Strauss, Schubert, Montsalvatge, Barber, Vaughan Williams, Berlioz, Monteverdi, Schumann, Duparc, Bolcom, Hahn, and others. There will also be a fashion show from McCaffrey Haute Couture!

An Afternoon of Song and Conversation - July 11 @ 2:00 p.m. at Southminster United Church. Music of Schubert and Brahms. Donna Brown performs and talks about her favourite lieder with pianist Stefan Mendl of the Vienna Piano Trio.

Yannick-Muriel Noah: Firsts, Lasts and Only - July 16 @ 7:30 p.m. at Dominion-Chalmers United Church. Yannick-Muriel Noah, with pianist Jean Desmarais, offers a selection of composers' first and/or final works, including *The Four Last Songs* by Richard Strauss.

Ottawa Chamberfest:

Uncle John: 3 & 4 August at 7:00 p.m., 6 August at 3:00 p.m. at Tabaret Hall, uOttawa. Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, radically reimagined for the twenty-first century by Toronto's Against the Grain Theatre.

Dido and Aeneas: 27 July 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at Dominion-Chalmers United Church: Henry Purcell's greatest of all English operas receives a faithful revival at Chamberfest, under the meticulous eye of conductor Alexander Weimann. Intriguingly joined to tonight's performance is *Aeneas and Dido*, a contemporary masque by composer James Rolfe and librettist André Alexis.

Nesrallah and Leonardelli: 02 August at 11:00 a.m. at Beechwood, the National Cemetery of Canada. Julie Nesrallah and Caroline Leonardelli recreate a French salon concert from the Impressionist period.

Orpheus Society:

Orpheus will present *Anne of Geen Gables*, November 20-29, at CentrepoinTE Theatre, Ottawa.

The Met Live in HD 2015 - 2016

Verdi's *Il Trovatore* - October 3, 2015

Verdi's *Otello* - October 17, 2015

Wagner's *Tannhäuser* - October 31, 2015

Berg's *Lulu* - November 21, 2015

Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*

- January 16, 2016

Puccini's *Turandot* - January 30, 2016

Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*

- March 5, 2016

Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*

- April 2, 2016

Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux*

- April 16, 2016

Strauss's *Elektra* - April 30, 2016

Saturday Afternoon at the Opera

Massenet's *Cleopatre*

June 6, 2015

Koch, Goncalves, Berthon, Bernheim, Saint Martin

Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*

June 13, 2015

DiDonato, Giannattasio, Jordi, Carpenter, Rose

Saint-Saëns's *Henri VIII*

June 20, 2015

Rouillon, Command, Vignon, Gabriel, Gerard, Serkoyan

Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*

June 27, 2015

Radvanovsky, Relyea, Barton, Hymel

Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*

July 4, 2015

Salminen, Heino, Kaappola, Antilla

Chausson's *Le Roi Arthur*

July 11, 2015

Hampson, Koch, Alagna



www.cbc.ca

Our latest information is that, in Ottawa, tickets for *The Met Live in HD 2015 - 2016* will be sold on July 24 for MET and Scene members.

Summer 2015 Opera Festivals

Glimmerglass Opera

Mozart's *The Magic Flute*

July 10, 20, 23, 25, 28 August 2, 7, 10, 14, 18 & 23

Vivaldi's *Cato in Utica*

July 18, 24, 27 August 1, 4, 9, 16, 20 & 22

Bernstein's *Candide*

July 19, 25, 30 August 1, 3, 6, 8, 11, 15 & 21

Verdi's *Macbeth*

July 11, 17, 21, 26, 31 August 8, 13, 15, 17 & 22

Information: www.glimmerglass.org

Chautauqua Opera

Verdi's *Macbeth* July 11

Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* July 31 & August 3

Information: opera.ciweb.org

Opera North

Bernstein's *West Side Story*

July 31, August 1, 4, 5, 8, 11 & 13

Copland's *The Tender Land*

August 6, 9 & 15

Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*

August 7, 12, 14 & 16

Information: www.operanorth.org

Opera Saratoga

Rossini's *La Cenerentola*

July 2, 11, 14, 18 & 26

Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*

July 6, 12, 19 & 21

Beck's *The Long Walk*

July 10, 13, 17 & 25

Information: operasaratoga.org

Westben

Verdi's *La traviata*

July 2, 7:00 p.m., July 3, 4 & 5 at 2:00 p.m.

Marie-Josée Lord Recital

Brian Finley, piano

July 18, 2:00 p.m.

Information: www.westben.ca

Highlands Opera

The Vinedressers

August 19 & 21

The Ontario Premiere of a Canadian Opera by Tobin Stokes

Mozart's *Le Nozze Di Figaro*

August 30, September 1, 2 & 3

Information: www.highlandsoperastudio.com