

The National Capital Opera Society
presents

The 10th Brian Law Opera Competition

Gerald Finley, Honorary Patron

*Frédérique Drolet
Bethany Horst
Arminè Kassabian
Erinne-Colleen Laurin
Emanuel Lebel
Jana Miller*

Philippe Sly, guest recitalist

Rob Clipperton, host

19 November 2011

*First Unitarian Congregation
30 Cleary Avenue, Ottawa*

The National Capital Opera Society

The National Capital Opera Society was founded by volunteer opera lovers in 1983 upon the cancellation of the summer opera festival at the National Arts Centre. The Society's original objective was to work towards the complete restoration of the festival.

Today, the Society fosters interest in opera with opera-on-DVD showings, newsletters and social events for members. To aid young, gifted singers of the National Capital Region, the Society established the biennial Brian Law Opera Scholarship Competition (now called simply the Brian Law Opera Competition) and the associated Brian Law Fund, which provides the financial support for it.

The Society also helps young singers striving to gain experience and recognition in opera through its contributions to Opera Lyra Ottawa's Opera Studio and generally supports operatic events in the National Capital Region.

We always welcome new members who share our passion for opera and join us in our activities.

The Tenth Brian Law Competition is dedicated to the memory of Bobbi Cain



Bobbi was one of the founders of the National Capital Opera Society and served as its president through most of the years between 1983 and 2005 when poor health forced her to resign.

In 1991 she spearheaded the move to establish the Brian Law Opera Scholarship. Bobbi's organizational skills firmly established a pattern in 1993 for all subsequent competitions, her contacts in the Canadian music world enabled the NCOS to attract important musicians as jurors and as fund raisers, and her tireless efforts to raise money has resulted in a large increase in the amounts and number of prizes.

The success of the singers who have been assisted by her efforts will always stand as a memorial to her.

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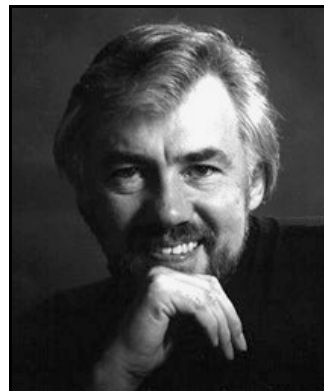
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The Brian Law Opera Competition

The Brian Law Opera Competition is a biennial opportunity for young singers from the National Capital Region (by birth, musical education or residency) who are focusing on an operatic career.

The 1st and 2nd prizes are currently set at \$5000 and \$3000, with a 3rd prize of \$1000 donated by Cav. Pasqualina Pat Adamo.

Notices are sent out to music-education organizations across the country. From all entries received, a preliminary jury chooses up to six finalists. For the 2011 competition, the members of the preliminary jury were Barbara Clark, Laurence Ewashko and Charlotte Stewart. At the public competition each finalist has to perform a selection of three opera arias, one with recitative, accompanied by his/her own accompanist, before a three-member jury.



The Competition, formerly known as the Brian Law Opera Scholarship Competition, was established in 1991 upon the departure of conductor and choir director Brian Law from Ottawa to become Director of the Christchurch City Choir in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Born and educated in London, he immigrated to Canada in 1965. During his twenty-five years in the National Capital Region, Brian Law was the Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master of *Festival Ottawa* for thirteen seasons and again when opera returned to the NAC in 1988. He fulfilled the same role with L'Opéra de Montréal from 1986 to 1989. He also was music director of the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, the Ottawa Choral Society, and founding director of Thirteen Strings. For fourteen years (1965-80) he was Organist and Choirmaster at St. Matthew's Church in the Glebe where he brought the men's and boys choir to a standard of excellence comparable to that of British collegiate and cathedral choirs.

In recognition of Brian Law's many achievements, the National Capital Opera Society established the biennial opera competition. The first competition, for a \$1000 prize, was held in 1993, with Brian Law in attendance, under the distinguished patronage of Maureen Forrester, C.C.

After the death of Ms. Forrester in 2010, bass-baritone Gerald Finley graciously agreed to become the honorary patron. Now one of Canada's greatest singers, he was born in Montreal and grew up in Ottawa, receiving his early music education from Brian Law as a boy chorister at St. Matthew's Church.

To make the competition possible, the National Capital Opera Society established the Brian Law Fund. It is steadily reaching its goal and now stands at over \$30,000, thanks to its many generous supporters. Donations have allowed the greatly increased prizes and are therefore always highly appreciated. They may be made to the National Capital Opera Society, identified as contributions to the Brian Law Fund. A tax receipt will be issued for all donations of \$20 or more. (A donation form may be found at the back of the program).

Registered Charity BN: 12589 8304 RR 0001

Brian Law Opera Competition Committee

Renate Chartrand, Ute Davis, Murray Kitts, Peggy Pflug, Jean Saldanha

The Finalists

Soprano Jana Miller, 25, was born in Ottawa. In 2011 she received her Master of Music degree in Solo Performance, Voice, from the Schulich School of Music, McGill University, where she had taken on roles in several Opera McGill productions. In 2008 and 2009 Jana received further training at the Banff Centre's Opera as Theatre program, and in 2010 she performed Nanetta in *Falstaff* with Opera Nuova. With Theatre of Early Music, Jana has sung Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas*. Last summer she was a participant at the Franz Schubert Institute and next year she will be playing Micaela in *Carmen* with Jeunesses Musicales of Canada.

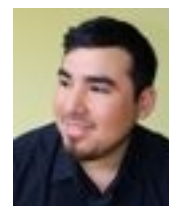


Soprano Erinne-Colleen Laurin, 29, is a native of Gatineau, QC. She received a Bachelor of Music with Honours in Vocal Performance in 2011 from Carleton University, having completed three years of the music program at the University of Ottawa in 2005. Also in 2011, Erinne-Colleen placed First in Operatic Solo at the Ottawa Kiwanis Music Festival and again First at the OMFA Provincial Competition, Voice Open Level. Representing Ontario at the National Music Festival in Nova Scotia, she received the Spirit Award. She has sung operatic arias with ensembles at Carleton University and at the Ottawa Kiwanis Gala Concert.



© Couvrette¹

Baritone Emanuel Lebel, 26, is currently a member of Opera Lyra Ottawa's Opera Studio where he recently played Figaro in *The Barber of Bytown* in performances adapted for children. He holds a Bachelor's degree from the Conservatoire de musique de Québec (2009) and a Master's degree in Vocal Performance from Laval University (2011). While at Laval, he performed in *Gianni Schicchi* and as solo bass in Mozart's *Requiem*. In May of this year Emanuel was a Laureate of Jeunes Ambassadeurs Lyriques and in August he played two parts in John Estacio's *Lillian Alling* at the Opera as Theatre program at the Banff Centre.



Soprano Frédérique Drolet, 26, is a native of Buckingham, QC. She earned both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Vocal Performance at Laval University (2009, 2011) and is currently a member of Opéra de Montréal's Atelier Lyrique. Since her First Place finish at the Canadian Music Competition in 2008 she has received many other awards. At Laval University, Frédérique took on Despina in *Così fan tutte* and several roles in *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*. This year, she appeared as Barbarina in Opera de Montreal's *Le Nozze de Figaro* and played Lucy in *The Telephone* with Atelier Lyrique.



Mezzo-soprano Arminè Kassabian, 27, was born and grew up in Ottawa. She studied at the Schulich School of Music, McGill University, where she earned her Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance in 2007, Master's degree in 2009 and Artist Diploma in 2011. With Opera McGill she performed leading roles in several operas including *Carmen* in *La Tragédie de Carmen*. Last summer Arminè appeared as Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) and Mercedes (*Carmen*) at the Green Mountain Opera in Vermont. She is currently a member of Opera Lyra Ottawa's Opera Studio, recently playing Rosina in *The Barber of Bytown*, an adaptation for children.



Soprano Bethany Horst, 28, was a member of Opera Lyra Ottawa's Opera Studio last season. She performed as Mother/Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* and placed First at the 2011 Studio Competition. In 2008 Bethany received her Master's of Music degree in Literature and Performance from the University of Western Ontario where she sang in *Albert Herring*, *Così fan tutte*, *The Merry Widow* and *Gianni Schicchi*. For Opera Kitchener she played Fiordiligi in 2009. She was the First Place winner at the Conservatory Canada Vocal Competition in 2009 and International Aria Competition, Tennessee, in 2010.

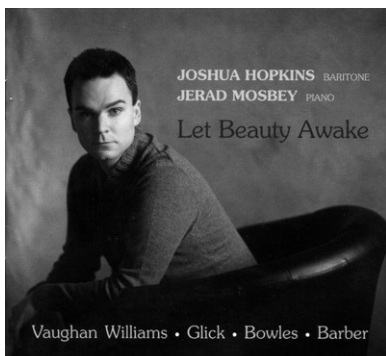


¹ Photo of Erinne-Colleen Laurin © Couvrette/Ottawa (613) 238-5104 www.couvrette-photography.on.ca

This evening's program...

- Welcome by the president of the National Capital Opera Society
- Recital by the six finalists – for the program see the centre pages.
- Ten minutes intermission
- Announcement of door prize winners
- Reading of a message from honorary patron Gerald Finley, sent from England
- Reading of a message from Brian Law, sent from New Zealand
- Guest recital by Philippe Sly, bass-baritone – for the program see page 10
- Announcement of the winners by the Chair of the Jurors and presentation of the prizes:
1st prize - \$5,000 and 2nd prize - \$3,000 presented by NCOS president Murray Kitts
3rd prize - \$1,000 donated and presented by Cavaliere/Chevalier Pasqualina Pat Adamo, member of the NCOS board.
In addition, the other finalists receive cheques to help cover their expenses.
- Reception: All are invited to meet the jurors, competitors, and guest recitalist in the adjoining hall, where complimentary light refreshments will be available.

The door prizes



Win a CD or DVD
featuring one of
our previous winners!

Julie Nesrallah
Shannon Mercer
Joshua Hopkins

Did you fill out a ballot?

The Jurors

The National Capital Opera Society is very grateful to this evening's jurors for volunteering their time to assist in this competition.

Donna Brown, Soprano

Donna Brown has performed throughout Europe, North America, South America, and Asia, with most of the world's finest conductors and orchestras. She is also a highly accomplished performer of the Art Song.

Ms. Brown has received critical acclaim for her roles as Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Almirena (*Rinaldo*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Michaela (*Carmen*), Nanetta (*Falstaff*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), and Servillia (*La Clemenza di Tito*). She also appeared as Chimène in the world premiere creation of Debussy's unfinished opera *Rodrigue et Chimène* for the opening of the renovated Opéra de Lyon.

For over fifteen years Donna Brown maintained a special collaboration with both Helmuth Rilling and Sir John Eliot Gardiner, recording numerous CDs and DVDs with them. She has been filmed for television in opera and concert in Canada, France, Germany, England, Switzerland, and Japan, and many of her recordings have won awards (Grammy, Diapason d'Or, Gramophone).

After living in Paris, France, for twenty years, Ms. Brown moved back to Ottawa where she now resides and continues to perform regularly in Canada and France with orchestras and chamber music groups as well as in recitals.

Ms. Brown is currently a professor at the University of Ottawa and at the Conservatoire de Montréal. She was a visiting professor at the Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea, the Fondation Schola Cantorum in Caracas, Venezuela, the Bachakademie in Santiago de Compostella, Spain, and has given numerous masterclasses throughout the world.

Sandra Graham, Mezzo-soprano

Mezzo-soprano Sandra Graham has established a worldwide reputation with her sumptuous vocalism which led to top prizes in the International Vocal Competitions of s'Hertogenbosch in Holland, the Montreal International Competition, the International Vocal Competition in Toulouse, France, and the Canadian Opera Company Mozart competition.

Miss Graham has performed in concert and on the operatic stages of Germany, Canada, United States, Holland and China. She has performed and recorded with Helmuth Rilling, Christoff Penderecki, Charles Dutoit, and Vladimir Ashkenazy, appearing with the Cleveland Symphony, the Toronto Symphony, the Montreal Symphony, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Oregon Bach Festival, the Canadian Opera Company, the Welsh National Opera, the Arizona Opera, and the Deutsche Oper am Rhein.

At the Staatstheater Stuttgart, Sandra Graham has been a guest artist since 1992, where she has performed in *Hansel und Gretel*, *Cenerentola*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

The distinguished mezzo's recordings include Raminsh's *Songs of the Lights* with the CBC Vancouver Symphony, Mozart's Requiem and Haydn's Lord Nelson Mass with the Slovak Philharmonic, Harry Somer's *The Fool*, and Prevost's *Ahimsa*. She is featured in a DVD of Jon Vickers, and the PBS biography special about Vivaldi in which she performs the lead role in the opera *Orlando Furioso*, and appears in a recent BRAVO! documentary of the In Contro Chamber Music festival in Italy where she performs regularly.

Miss Graham teaches voice and directs Opera Productions at the University of Ottawa. Sandra Graham and her husband Ingemar Korjus have toured China, giving concerts and masterclasses.

Richard Turp, Tenor

Richard Turp was born in Montreal but from the age of 6 was raised in London, UK. Having graduated from University of London (Russian Regional Studies and Music), he began vocal studies with his father, the renowned tenor, André Turp. For a decade he worked principally in Europe as an operatic tenor but did appear with his father in L'Opéra de Montréal's production of Verdi's *Macbeth* in 1983.

From 1988 to 1991 he was the Artistic Director of the Montreal International Music Festival, then joined L'Opéra de Montréal as Director of Special Projects for two seasons. He became Artistic Director of the Lachine Music Festival in 1997, a post he still holds today. In 1997 he co-founded and assumed the artistic direction for fourteen years of the André-Turp Musical Society that presented a prestigious vocal series in Montreal. He is a co-founder of the Canadian Vocal Arts Institute and since 2009 directs the vocal program at the Orford Academy.

Richard Turp is regularly invited to adjudicate vocal competitions and is a board member of both the Jeunesses musicales du Canada and Opera Canada magazine. He has worked extensively for both the French and English networks of the CBC and assumed the artistic and musical conception and writing of several series (*Opera Easy*, *Opera Stories*, *Portraits of Mozart*, *Shakespeare in Music*, *Klassical Kabaret*, *Musical Voices*) for BRAVO television.

He has lectured widely, including for L'Opéra de Montréal, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, and The Wagner Society and has hosted two editions of the Opera Canada Awards Gala (the Rubies). In addition, he has written many program notes for musical organisations and record companies and has been a frequent collaborator with *Opera Canada* and *Opera Now*. Richard Turp has taught vocal literature at UQAM and L'Université de Montréal and French vocal diction at McGill University.

Rob Clipperton, Host



Rob Clipperton is a former host and producer at CBC Radio in Ottawa. Rob retired in the fall of 2007 after twenty-eight years behind the microphone, while his program *In Town and Out* was the highest rated CBC Saturday morning show in the country. Rob continues to play an active role in the musical, cultural and charitable communities of the National Capital Region. He is in constant demand as a Master of Ceremonies for concerts, recitals and special events. His voice continues to be heard on audio-guides at the National Gallery of Canada. Now that life isn't quite so hectic, Rob and his wife Peggi spend more time at their country home, a log house on the shores of a quiet lake in West Quebec.

The Board thanks...

The jurors: Donna Brown, Sandra Graham, and Richard Turp

The preliminary jurors: Barbara Clark, Laurence Ewashko, and Charlotte Stewart

Host: Rob Clipperton

The First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa, Beaudry's Flowers & Silk Greenhouse, Marjorie Clegg, Bastien Kruidenier, Helene Kruidenier, Cheryl Laflamme, Tom McCool, Sabine Rohlf, Al Saldanha, David Williams

Brian Law Opera Competition Program

Jana Miller, Soprano

Jennifer Szeto, Accompanist

Recitative: "Giunse alfin il momento..."

Aria: "Deh vieni, non tardar," from *Le nozze di Figaro* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(Knowing that Figaro is listening, Susanna pretends that she is impatiently awaiting another lover.)

Aria: "Da tempeste..." from *Giulio Cesare* by George Frideric Handel
(Overjoyed with being saved by Caesar, Cleopatra compares her heart to a ship escaped from a terrible storm.)

Aria: "Je suis encor tout étourdie," from *Manon* by Jules Massenet
(Dazzled by the sights and sounds of her first coach ride Manon almost forgets that she is being sent off to a convent.)

Erinne-Colleen Laurin, Soprano

Mathew Walton, Accompanist

Recitative: "Eccomi in lieta vesta..."

Aria: "Oh! Quante volte," from *I Capulet e i Montecchi*, Vincenzo Bellini
(Attired as Tybalt's bride, Juliet longs for death if she cannot be united with Romeo.)

Aria: "Ach, ich liebte," from *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(Constanze reveals to Pasha Selim that her separation from a past love has left her only sorrow and tears.)

Recitative: "Ô Dieu! Que de bijoux..."

Aria: "Ah, je ris de me voir..." from *Faust*, Charles Gounod
(Trying on the jewels, Marguerite feels she has been transformed into a king's daughter.)

Emanuel Lebel, Baritone

Judith Ginsburg, Accompanist

Recitative: "Hai già vinta la causa..."

Aria: "Vedrò mentr'io sospiro" from *Le nozze di Figaro*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(The Count, realizing that Figaro is planning to trick him, plans to revenge himself on his imprudent servant)

Aria: "Mein Sehnen, mein Wähnen" from *Die tote Stadt*, Erich Wolfgang Korngold
(In Paul's dream, a Pierrot expresses longing for past ecstatic days with his lost love.)

Aria: "Vision fugitive" from *Hérodiade*, Jules Massenet
(Unable to sleep, Herod drinks some drugged wine which enables him to envision Salomé in his arms.)

Frédérique Drolet, Soprano

Judith Ginsburg, Accompanist

Recitative: "Oui pour ce soir..."

Aria: "Je suis Titania la blonde" from *Mignon*, Ambroise Thomas

(As Queen of the Fairies in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Philine sings a brilliant polonaise.)

Aria: "Otvét' mne, zorkoe svetilo" from *The Golden Cockerel*, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov

(The beautiful, but deadly Queen of Shemakha attempts to ensnare King Dodon with her Hymn to the Sun.)

Recitative: "Ah, tardai troppo..."

Aria: "O luce di quest'anima" from *Linda di Chamounix*, Gaetano Donizetti

(Linda sings of her coming meeting with Carlo, the man she loves, and with whom she is sure she will be united)

Arminè Kassabian, Mezzo-soprano

Judith Ginsburg, Accompanist

Aria: "Seien wir wieder gut!" The Composer's Aria from *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Richard Strauss

(Although poetry is good, music is the holiest of arts.)

Recitative: "Ah! scostati!..."

Aria: "Smanie implacabili" from *Così fan tutte*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(Dorabella wildly and melodramatically works herself into a suicidal state because of the departure of her lover, Ferrando.)

Aria: "Nobles seigneurs, salut!" from *Les Huguenots*, Giacomo Meyerbeer

(The page, Urbain, delivers a note from a mysterious fair lady.)

Bethany Horst, Soprano

Judith Ginsburg, Accompanist

Aria: "Da tempeste..." from *Giulio Cesare*, George Frideric Handel

(Overjoyed with being saved by Caesar, Cleopatra compares her heart to a ship escaped from a terrible storm.)

Aria: "Ach, ich fühl's," from *The Magic Flute*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(Misunderstanding Tamino's silence, Pamina mourns her lost love, even wishing for death to end her sorrow.)

Recitative: "C'est des contrabandiers..."

Aria: "Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante," from *Carmen*, Georges Bizet

(Searching for Don José, Micaëla finds herself alone in the mountains, trusting in God to protect her in such a fearsome place.)

Intermission: 10 minutes

Guest Recital

Philippe Sly, Bass-baritone Jean Desmarais, Pianist

“Ah! per sempre...” from *I Puritani*, Vincenzo Bellini

“Chanson triste” by Henri Duparc (poem by Jean Lahor)

“Le temps des Lilas” by Ernest Chausson (poem by Maurice Boucher)

“O du mein holder Abendstern,” from *Tannhäuser*, Richard Wagner

Prince Igor’s Aria from *Prince Igor*, Alexander Borodin

Philippe Sly, bass-baritone

Bass-baritone Philippe Sly is currently a member of the prestigious Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio where he is appearing this season in *Iphigenie en Tauris*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi* and *Semele*, and understudying roles in *Rigoletto* and *Tosca*.

Philippe is one of five \$15,000 prize winners of the 2011 Metropolitan Opera’s National Council Auditions and, representing Radio-Canada, the 2012 winner of the Young Soloist Prize, presented in Brussels by “Radios francophones publiques” (RFP), giving him valuable exposure in France, Belgium and Switzerland. In 2010 he was a winner of the Ottawa Choral Society’s New Discoveries Auditions for Young Artists and in 2009 he won the top prize of the Brian Law Opera Competition.

Recently Philippe performed as Bartolo in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with the San Francisco Opera’s Merola Opera Program and appeared in the role of Pilatus in Bach’s *St John Passion* with Kent Nagano and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. Upcoming engagements include a concert of opera arias with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra in Kuala Lumpur.

Philippe holds a Bachelor of Voice Performance degree from McGill University where he played Marcello in *La Bohème* and Nick Shadow in *The Rake’s Progress*. He sang Escamillo in *La Tragédie de Carmen* at the Banff Centre and Masetto in *Don Giovanni* with the Opera Workshop at the University of Ottawa.



Jean Desmarais, pianist

International performing artist and pedagogue, pianist Jean Desmarais earned his Masters degree and Premier Prix in Piano and Chamber Music at the Conservatoire in Montreal and continued his studies in Paris, Berlin and in the USA. He studied with Monique Collet-Samyn, Anisia Campos, Denis Brott (Montreal), Monique Deschaussées (Paris), Dalton Baldwin (USA) and Joanna Stielier (Berlin).

Mr. Desmarais has been guest soloist of various orchestras including the National Arts Centre Orchestra, l’Orchestre Philharmonique du Nouveau-Monde, I Musici of Montreal and Orchestra Filarmonica del Estado de Chihuahua and collaborated with artists such as Kiri Te Kanawa, Ben Heppner and Pinchas Zukerman. As pianist in the Ensemble Pierrot and the Program of Composers (NAC and Orchestre de la francophonie), he participated in the creation of more than a hundred Canadian works.

Last summer, he performed the “Emperor” concerto with the Orchestre de la francophonie and appeared in several concerts at the festival *Music and Beyond*. This coming season he will perform two concerts dedicated to Claude Debussy and in recital with superstar double bassist Joel Quarrington.

Because for his passion for vocal art, Mr. Desmarais was assistant of Lorraine Nubar and Dalton Baldwin at the International Music Academy of Nice and is regularly invited as a coach and accompanist at the Canadian Opera Company. He also has been on the faculty of the NAC’s Summer Music Institute (Vocal Program with soprano Benita Valente).

Past Winners – Where are they now?

1993 *Laura Dziubaniuk*



Soprano Laura Dziubaniuk, an Ottawa native, has been an active performer and music educator since 1989. Opera, Oratorio, Concert and Chamber Music performances have taken her through North America and Europe.

She holds a Bachelor of Music Degree in Vocal Performance and Education. She was a laureate in several international vocal scholarships and Canadian vocal competitions which enabled her to further her studies at the Kiev Conservatory in Kiev, Ukraine, the Sixth International Interpretation Courses in Piestany, Slovakia, and the European Mozart Academy in Krakow, Poland.

From 1991-97, Laura was a member of Opera Lyra Ottawa Associate Artist Program where she understudied lead roles: Rosalinda (*Die Fledermaus*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Marguerite (*Faust*), Mimi/Musetta (*La Bohème*), Countess/Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), and Gilda (*Rigoletto*). She also was a member of Opera Breva Ottawa, Bytown Opera Works, singing Violetta (*La*

Traviata), and of Ooh-La-La-Opera.

Her performances include: Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, Thirteen Strings, Divertimento Orchestra, Blackburn Chorus, Johannes Brahms Choir, Les Jeunesses Musicales du Canada, Les Jeunes Ambassadeurs Lyriques, Philharmonic Society of Montreal, Toronto's Ontario Place, Vancouver's Russian Centre, Lancaster Opera in the U.S.A., Krakow Opera in Poland, concert halls in Slovakia, and Kiev Opera and concert halls in the Ukraine.

Laura has worked with many private schools, music schools and continuing education programs in the Ottawa-Gatineau area, and maintains a private Music Studio. She was the Music Director for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, All Saints Westboro Anglican Church and the Cumberland Community Singers.

1995 *Mary Ann Swerdfeger*



After winning the Brian Law Opera Scholarship in 1995, mezzo-soprano Mary Ann graduated from the New England Conservatory Opera Program with a Master of Music and a Graduate Diploma in Vocal Performance. She then performed extensively in opera, recital, and musical theater throughout the United States, Canada, and Japan.

In 2005 Mary Ann graduated from The City University of New York's Lehman College Campus with a Master of Teaching in Music Education through the New York City Teaching Fellowship, a program that recruits professionals to teach in high-needs urban schools. As a NYC Teaching Fellow, Mary Ann taught general music, singing, and choral music in the south Bronx and in Staten Island.

Mary Ann is the artistic director of the opera workshop program at the prestigious LaGuardia High School of Art, Music and the Performing Arts in Manhattan (the "Fame" school), where she also teaches voice and Music History. She continues to study voice with Irene Gubrud and to coach with David Rebhun in Manhattan while maintaining her own private studio for Voice and Piano.

1997 Julie Nesrallah



Julie Nesrallah dazzles audiences with her rich tone, engaging personality and expressive interpretations. As a mezzo-soprano, her favourite role is Carmen (*Carmen*), others include Isabella (*L'italiana in Algeri*), Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Angelina (*La Cenerentola*), Der Komponist (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), Maddalena (*Rigoletto*), MegPage (*Falstaff*), Dritte Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*), Queen Elizabeth (*Maria Stuarda*), and Queen Henrietta (*I Puritani*).

Julie has been the recipient of the Canada Council for the Arts Emerging Artist Award & Mid-Career Grant. She performed at the Opera Canada Awards and An Evening for Peace in Montreal for Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan. In 2004, she was invited to perform for Her Royal Highness Princess Haya in Amman, Jordan, to launch an endowment fund for underprivileged girls to study music in Canada.

Julie has been a guest of many festivals including the Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival, the Macau International Music Festival, the Vancouver Chamber Festival, Festival Vancouver, the Orford Summer Festival, the Lanaudière International Music Festival, Nova Scotias Musique Royale and the Indian River Summer Music Festival in Prince Edward Island.

Symphonic Engagements have included the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Ottawa Symphony, the Laval Symphony, the Victoria Symphony, l'Orchestre Métropolitain, the Toronto Philharmonia and the Plattsburgh Symphony. She was heard in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Bach's *Mass in b minor* in Brussels, and in recital in Paris.

Julie is well known throughout Canada as the host of Tempo, CBC Radio 2's flagship national classical music program.

1999 Sandra Stringer



Mezzo-soprano Sandra Stringer is a graduate of the Doctor of Musical Arts program from the University of British Columbia. With the UBC Opera Ensemble, she appeared in many of their main stage productions singing such roles as Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Meg Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*, and Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Sandra also participated in several UBC Opera Ensemble tours to Germany and the Czech Republic.

A native of Ottawa, Sandra was an Associate Artist with Opera Lyra Ottawa for two years, performing roles in *Aida*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Madama Butterfly*. She has also appeared as a guest soloist with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, Thirteen Strings, and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

Sandra's more recent accomplishments include her Vancouver Opera debut as Flora in Verdi's *La Traviata*, the creation and performance of a production of Poulenc's *La Voix humaine*, which was the subject of her DMA thesis, and her engagement in The Opera Project's production of *Così fan tutte* in the role of Dorabella. In 2007, Sandra appeared in Vancouver Opera's new First Nations production of *Die Zauberflöte* as Second Lady and she participated in the world premiere of Boca del Lupo's adaptation of Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Last year she was a soloist in Haydn's *The Creation*, with the Lethbridge Symphony Orchestra.

Sandra is currently on staff at the University of Lethbridge where she teaches voice and contributes to the Opera Workshop program as both director and assistant director.

2001 Shannon Mercer



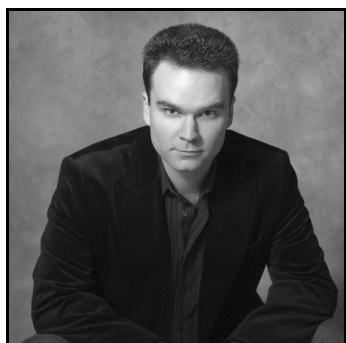
Particularly praised for her performances of baroque and contemporary music, soprano Shannon Mercer maintains a challenging balance of opera, concert and recital appearances, performing across Canada and the US.

A highlight of her 2011-2012 season is a tour in Canada of Ana Sokolovic's *Love Songs*, a one-woman virtuosic tour-de-force opera produced by The Queen of Puddings Music Theatre. Concerts include Bach's *St. John Passion* with the Arion and the Portland Baroque Orchestra, Mozart's *Requiem* with the Colorado Symphony, as well as performances with Les Voix Baroques, the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and a special Young People's concert entitled *The Bear* with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Shannon's discography includes eight recordings on the Analekta label: the latest release *Vivaldi - The Return of the Angels*, the follow-up to their JUNO Award-winning *Gloria! - Vivaldi's Angels*, *O Viva Rosa*, devoted to Francesca Caccini, *Wales - The Land of Song* with the Skye Consort, the JUNO nominated *Bach and the Liturgical Year* and others. She also starred in the comic opera *Burnt Toast*, available on DVD.

Shannon began her operatic career as a member of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio and San Francisco Opera's prestigious Merola Opera Program and has performed many major roles since: Sesto in *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, Oscar in *Un ballo in maschera*, Elvira in *L'italiana in Algeri*, Despina in *Così fan tutte* with the COC, as well as Pamina in *The Magic Flute* and Nanetta in *Falstaff* with OLO.

2003 Joshua Hopkins



Baritone Joshua Hopkins kicked off his 2011-2012 season with his European debut as Argante in Glyndebourne Opera's Touring production of *Rinaldo* and will make company debuts singing the title role of Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with both Vancouver Opera and Kansas City Opera. He will also appear in Bach's *Magnificat* at Carnegie Hall and Nielsen's *Symphony No. 3* as well as Mozart's *Mass in C minor* with the New York Philharmonic.

Opera highlights of past seasons include his Metropolitan Opera debut as Ping in *Turandot*, transmitted live around the world in HD, Marcello in *La bohème* at the Houston Grand Opera, where he also covered the title role of *Billy Budd*, Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*, Junior in Bernstein's *A Quiet Place* at New York City Opera, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* at Opera Lyra Ottawa

and Arizona Opera, Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* at Opera Pacific, and Valentin in *Faust* with Calgary Opera.

On the concert stage, Joshua made his debut with the Cleveland Orchestra under the baton of Vladimir Ashkenazy in *Peer Gynt*, sang in Bach's *Magnificat* and Händel's *Dettingen Te Deum* with Les Violons du Roy, *Messiah* with the National Arts Centre Orchestra and Trevor Pinnock. Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* with Hans Graf and the Houston Symphony, and Bach's *St. John Passion* with Bernard Labadie and Ensemble Arion.

Joshua's debut solo recording "Let Beauty Awake" with ATMA Classique was released in 2010. It features songs of Barber, Bowles, Glick, and Vaughan Williams.

Recipient of a 2011 grant from the Canada Council for the Arts, he was the winner of the Verbier Festival Academy's 2008 Prix d'Honneur, the 2006 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award, and a prize winner at the prestigious ARD Musikwettbewerb of 2006.

2005 Joyce El-Khoury



Soprano Joyce El-Khoury is a 2011 graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program and a graduate of the Academy of Vocal Arts (AVA) in Philadelphia.

In the 2010-2011 season Joyce returned to the Metropolitan Opera as Frasquita in *Carmen* and was Esmeralda in *The Bartered Bride* with Maestro James Levine in a collaboration with The Juilliard School. She made her role debut as Mimi in *La bohème* with Lorin Maazel at the Castleton Festival and her Tanglewood Music Festival debut performing Beethoven's 9th Symphony.

In the previous season Joyce sang Mozart's Requiem at Carnegie Hall and in recital with the Metropolitan Opera "Met in the Parks" Recital Series. She played the role of Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* and *Suor Angelica* at the Castleton Festival and Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera Lyra Ottawa.

Future engagements include her European debut in March 2012 as Violetta in *La Traviata* with the Welsh National Opera, Violetta with Knoxville Opera and Mimi with Opera Lyra Ottawa. In concert she will perform Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Munich Philharmonic, and Bruckner's *Te Deum* and Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Baltimore Symphony. Her recording debut will be with OPERA RARA as Antonina in Donizetti's *Belisario*,

Joyce is a First Prize winner of the Opera Index Competition and of the George London Foundation, and Second Prize winner in the Gerda Lissner International Voice Competition.

2007 Yannick-Muriel Noah



Soprano Yannick-Muriel Noah triumphed as *Madama Butterfly* both with the Canadian Opera Company and with the Staatsoper Hannover in Germany, a role she also covered with the San Francisco Opera. A Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio graduate, she sang her first *Aida* in Klagenfurt where she had made her Austrian début as *La Wally*. With the COC, she also sang the title role in *Tosca*, Mona in *Swoon*, and the Queen of the Night in the *The Magic Flute* school tour.

Other recent engagements include *Tosca* with Edmonton Opera, Verdi's *Requiem* with Victoria Symphony Orchestra, and *Mefistofele* in Valencia, singing Margherita opposite Ramòn Vargas. In the UK, she premiered the title role of the new opera *Sante* at the Aldeburgh Summer Music Festival.

In the 2011-2012 season Yannick-Muriel performs Nedda in *Pagliacci* with Opera Lyra Ottawa, *Aida* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Heidelberg, Germany, a touring *Aida* in Spain and will return to Hannover for *Madama Butterfly*.

Yannick-Muriel's many awards include the top Canadian award from the George London Foundation, the Lys Symonette Award from the Lotte Lenya Competition, the 1st Prize of the Palm Beach Opera Vocal Competition as well as their first-ever Audience Favourite Award. At the 2009 Concours Musical International de Montréal, she won the 2nd Prize and in 2007 she won various prizes in the Hans Gabor Belvedere International Singing Competition.

A native of Madagascar, she holds a Bachelor of Architectural Studies with a Minor in Italian from Carleton University.

2009 Philippe Sly (Recitalist)

See page 10 for his biography

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We wish to acknowledge the generosity of Bobbi Cain and John Clegg who remembered the society and its projects in their will.