

Newsletter • Bulletin

Fall

1998

L'Automne

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

THE BRIAN LAW OPERA SCHOLARSHIP

The Fourth Biennial Competition

by Bobby Cain

Last spring saw the first meeting of the Brian Law Opera Scholarship Committee — Norma Mellon, Peggy Pflug, Norma Torontow, and Bobbi Cain. Since that time, notices of the upcoming competition, culminating in January 1999, and application forms, have been sent out to former competitors, and most music educational organizations across the country. The scholarship is designed for students aged 22 to 32, focussing on an opera career, and either a native of, or a resident in, the National Capital Region as defined by the NCC. The Scholarship is under the patronage of Maureen Forrester, C.C.

Applications, a package consisting of a tape of three operatic arias, one with recitative, plus a musical CV and a 200 word statement of why opera is so desirable, must be received postmarked no later than November 15th. Then, a preliminary jury is convened, this time a jury made up of Donna Brown, Barbara Clark, Sandra Graham and a NCOS representative. From all the entries up to six finalists are chosen (both male and female if possible) and then notified early in December.

The Competition Recital will be held at the First Unitarian Congregation at 6:30 P.M. on Saturday, January 23rd. We are pleased to announce that the final jurors will be musician and entrepreneur,

Nicholas Goldschmidt, C.C. and soprano Roxolana Roslak, of the University of Toronto, Faculty of Voice, both from Toronto, and Michael McMahon, from the McGill Faculty of Music, Montreal, accompanist to several vocal stars, and coach. Each singer sings a selection of three operatic arias, one with recitative, accompanied by their own accompanist. It is a thrilling evening of up to 18 arias, and what suspense! The jury adjourns to decide the winner and at approximately 8:30 P.M. the winner is announced and presented with the \$2,000 award. The other finalists receive a nominal stipend to help defray expenses. The charge for these proceedings is \$10, the best deal in town!

Since we must feed the jurors and the singers, a dinner is held afterwards, this year catered by our friend Dave Smith, C.M. Total attendance at this dinner can be a maximum of 52 persons, so that means we have 40 places available to members and their friends, or other guests. The total charge for the dinner and the recital is \$45, and reservations must be made and paid in advance by January 15th. All in all, this is a very exciting program of activity which needs your support, both in person and financially. The Endowment Fund for The Brian Law Opera Scholarship is gradually reaching its goal: it now stands at close to \$17,000 thanks to its friends.

Opera Alla Pasta — Sunday Afternoon at the Opera

2:00 p.m. Sunday, September 27 at St. Anthony's Soccer Club

DIE ENTFUHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL

Another Exciting Journey to NEW YORK

Plans are in the early stage for a very special journey to that glorious city of opera, New York. One of the contestants in the first (1993) Brian Law Opera Scholarship competition, counter-tenor Daniel Taylor will be making his Metropolitan Opera Debut on April 10, 1999 in Handel's magnificent opera, GIULIO CESARE. This much sought-after production (tickets were hard to get) includes such singers as Jennifer Larmore and Sylvia McNair. Daniel will be one of three counter tenors in the cast.

Congress Travel is again handling the bookings, and at the moment they are getting final estimates of costs. As you can imagine with the state of the Canadian dollar, costing is fraught with excitement. However, a mailing will go out to everyone along with the launching of a fundraising raffle for two tickets for the trip. These will be priced at \$5 each, so save your pennies. We will be in touch with the Canadian Consulate in New York, and it is hoped that they will honor Daniel as they did Gerald Finley this past January.

I think it is terribly important that we support our young singers in the development of their careers. It is a very hard road to hoe, and also, at the same time, keep some kind of private life together. (Gerald Finley has been commuting between his home in south-east England and Paris where he is singing in MADAMA BUTTERFLY. That way he was able to take his oldest little boy for his first day at school!) It takes a lot of family support of all kinds. Please tell all your friend what is coming up in April. That particular weekend there is an excellent choice of opera --Tchaikovsky's THE QUEEN OF SPADES with, among others Gorchakova, Domingo and Hvorostovsky (no group tickets available) on the afternoon of the 10th, and Floyd's SUSANNAH with Fleming, Hadley and Ramey on the evening of the 9th. It could be a real feast of opera for those of us with enough stamina and funds.

— Bobbi Cain

SAMSON ET DALILA by Saint-Saens

with Placido Domingo and Olga Borodina

*The Opening of the 1998-99
Metropolitan Opera Season on PBS*

8:00 p.m. Monday, September 28, 1998

From the President...

We are moving into a very busy year for the Society and we need the support of you all, our members, and your opera-loving friends. Our services to you will be very exciting with our program of OPERA ALLA PASTA beginning on September 27th at 2:00 P.M. with the showing of Mozart's DIE ENTFUHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL, followed by a delicious pasta dinner. Please call and make your reservation. The details are elsewhere in this issue. There will be two further films shown, one in November, L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI and in January, LA GIOCONDA, which, by the way, is being performed by L'Opera de Montreal in the late spring. As well, 1999 is the year of the fourth biennial Brian Law Opera Scholarship. Reserve the evening of January 23rd now and then you will be sure to be with us. And — one of the first competitors in this competition in 1993, counter-tenor Daniel Taylor, will be making his debut at the Metropolitan Opera on April 10th and wouldn't you like to be there? As a fund raiser to augment our depleted balances we again will be running a raffle for a trip for two to New York (Will the loonie improve?). More details later. All in all, it is an exciting and busy year for all of us. What can you do to help? This is your organization, and let's all pull together!



OPERA LYRA OTTAWA GUILD

Opera Insights

7:00 P.M. October 5 at the National Library
Lecture & the principals of
THE MAGIC FLUTE \$15

Definitely The Opera

7:00 P.M. November 7 at the National Library
Lecture & laser disk presentation of
LA TRAVIATA \$10

Information: 565-7194

Festival Canada's **ELSEWHERELESS** by Murray Kitts

Like many opera fans, "elsewhere" describes where I'd like to be when a contemporary opera is being performed. However, as a strong supporter of Festival Canada I felt obliged to buy a ticket for opening night and to view Atom Egoyan's film *EXOTICA* in preparation for the performance of his new opera.

Ottawa was at its hottest and most humid the evening of July 16 when the air conditioning system at the NAC failed to function. So I could report that I failed to enjoy the new opera because of the conditions in the theatre. But such was not the case! The hour or so that the performance took sped by, completely engrossing my attention. I was even brave enough to tolerate the heat and stay for the "informal Q&A with the company" which followed.

Rodney Sharman scored his music with one violin, two flutes and two bass clarinets, a bass violin, various stringed instruments – guitar, mandolin and harp, and an exotic collection of gongs and other percussion instruments. This instrumentation was used to complement the action very well and to elucidate the text. Wayne Strongman was the conductor.

The five singers were all good, but would have to be judged more on their ability to follow the director's orders than on the quality of their voices since there were no prolonged vocal sections.

The action of this opera is the antithesis of many conventional operas. For example, in Wagner's *SIEGFRIED*, almost the last hour of the opera has only two characters, Brunnhilde and Siegfried, on stage. This opera has twelve scenes, each one usually with a different set of the five characters, with time shifts happening with each new scene and the entire action occurring over a ten year period. Viewing Egoyan's *EXOTICA* prepared me for his use of the time-shift technique in the opera as well as for the frank sexual content.

In addition, slides and film clips are interspersed into the action often obliging the singers to "freeze" while a visual episode takes place. The

elaborate set and lighting essential to this production were realized brilliantly by the artistic team led by Philip Barker.

Concerning the theme of the opera, let me quote from Egoyan's notes: "...five characters...learn a language, fall in love, create elaborate fantasies, and witness a country fall apart...This is a story about colonialism and self-determination – in relationships, states, and states of mind." Clearly a complex tangle of themes, difficult to present. I was most struck by the way in which the Ambassador "abused" Malcolm, the African servant employed by the embassy. There seemed to me to be a parallel to the way in which a pedophile abuses an immature and trusting child. Taking advantage of Malcolm's difficulty with the English language, his naivete, his optimism and his affectionate nature, the Ambassador abuses Malcolm morally and intellectually. This leads to madness and death as a revolution takes place.

As Malcolm, Marcus Nance gave an astonishing performance, changing from the inarticulate (because of language, not intelligence) servant to the one betrayed, exacting a horrifying revenge. As the Ambassador, Benoit Boutet acted with considerable restraint compared with previous appearances at the Arts Centre allowing his mad scene to make a full impact on the audience. A word of caution – the mad scene, involving the eating of monkey brains (of a particular livid red colour) and dancing with the dead monkey, bits of brain scattering around, is not for the squeamish.

Finally, in the post-discussion session, Atom Egoyan indicated that this was not the final form of the opera. Certainly a good deal of elaboration of some of the characters and incidents would improve it. In addition, Rodney Sharman declared how thrilled he was to have his music presented at the NAC, the mecca for Canadian composers and musicians. All members of NCOS can share in his satisfaction and take pride in one result of our efforts to promote opera in our area.

The SINGSPIEL of Franz Schubert

by Gerda Ruckerbauer

By the end of the 18th century, Vienna was home to many immigrants coming from the "outer" regions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They came as well from many other varied musical backgrounds including Italy, Germany, Croatia, Poland, Greece, Turkey, the Scandinavian countries and France. It was this racial/ethnic melting pot from which arose the "Viennese Classical Style". The style was created in large part by composers not Viennese by birth but who considered Vienna as their musical home. For example: Haydn came from Rohrau, near the Austro-Hungarian border, Beethoven came from the Rhineland, Hummel from Bratislava, Gluck was born in Bavaria and Mozart came from Salzburg. Italy was the source of the main influence of opera composers such as Salieri, Rossini and Verdi. This cosmopolitan musical environment is considered, along with hereditary factors from his parents, to have shaped Schubert's own musical style.

Franz Peter Schubert, born 31 January 1797 in Vienna, was the thirteenth of fourteen children. Only three of his brothers and a sister survived. The father (Franz Theodor) from Moravia and the mother (Ellisabeth) from Silesia, were married in Lichenthal. The father was a school teacher, first at Lichenthal, then from 1801 in Vienna. In 1803, Franz became a pupil in his father's school where a formal musical education was not included as part of the curriculum and so was a matter for family and friends of the pupils. Franz's older brother, Ignaz, taught him the piano and his father taught him violin starting at the age of eight. The organist and choir-master of the local parish church, Michael Holzer, gave Franz lessons in singing, organ, figured bass and counterpoint.

In 1804 Schubert was interviewed by Salieri and found fit to sing for services in the Court Chapel.

So, Franz entered the Imperial and Royal Stadtkonvikt in 1808 which gave him the best musical education available in Vienna. Salieri introduced him to opera and assisted him in the study of opera scores as well as other aspects of music. At age 16 he withdrew from the Konvikt because the studies interfered with his "urge to compose". In 1813 he began his studies at Normal School which led to his becoming a teacher. Although Schubert was an adequate teacher, composing was always of primary importance.

While his lieder (songs) were and are considered brilliant and his non-vocal music excellent, his Operas/ Singspiel are deemed of little importance. In fact, some musicologists consider them failures. Nevertheless, some of them have been performed (primarily in Austria and Germany) on stage and on radio and some have been recorded.

Schubert began composing "Music for the Theatre" at 14 years, while he was still enrolled at the Stadtkonvikt. Unfortunately, music and action for the stage presented a challenge for which he was less equipped than for his other compositions.

Various authors in their writings on Franz Schubert state that he wrote from 12 to 20 singspiel. The list as available is outlined at the top of the following page. With the exception of one composition, all of the "Works for the Stage/Theatre" which Schubert wrote contained spoken text. Hence, the term, *singspiel*. In addition to the following list there is also a "Pastiche" of Schubert vocal music based on Schubert's life put together as a singspiel. This operetta was quite a success in Viennese and other theatres. In English theatre it is known as LILAC TIME or BLOSSOM TIME.

| No. | Deutsch No. | Year | Age | Title |
|-----|-------------|-------------|-----|----------------------------|
| 1 | D11 | 1811-12 | 14 | DER SPIEGELRITTER |
| 2 | D84 | 1013-14 | 16 | DES TEUFEL'S LUSTENSCHLOSS |
| 3 | D190 | 1815 | 18 | DER VIERJAEHRIGE POSTEN |
| 4 | D220 | 1815 | 18 | FERNANDO |
| 5 | D239 | 1815 | 18 | CLAUDINE VON VILLA BELLA |
| 6 | D326 | 1815 | 18 | DIE FREUNDE VON SALAMANKA |
| 7 | D435 | 1816 | 19 | DIEBUERGSCHAFT |
| 8 | ??? | 1817 | 20 | DAS DOERFCHEN (lost) |
| 9 | D647 | 1819 | 22 | DIE ZWILLINGSBRUEDER |
| 10 | D137 | 1819 (1814) | 22 | ADRAS (fragment only) |
| 11 | D644 | 1820 | 23 | DIE ZAUBERHARFE |
| 12 | D701 | 1820 | 23 | SAKUTALA |
| 13 | D723 | 1821 | 24 | DIE ZAUBERGLOECKCHEN |
| 14 | D732 | 1821-22 | 24 | ALFONSO UND ESTRELLA |
| 15 | D787 | 1823 | 26 | DIE VERSCHWORENEN |
| 16 | D791 | 1823 | 26 | RUEDIGER |
| 17 | D796 | 1823 | 26 | FIERRABRAS |
| 18 | D797 | 1823 | 26 | ROSAMUNDE (also D644) |
| 19 | D918 | 1827 | 30 | DER GRAF VON GLEICHEN |

#1 DER SPIEGELRITTER D11 (The Looking Glass Knight)

Librettist: August von Kotzebue

Recorded 1978 (VOCE-19)

CAST: Edith Mathis, Christine Weidinger, Eberhard Buechner, Thomas Moser. The Orf Symphony Orchestra Conductor: Theodor Guschlbauer.

This was to have been a three-act "magic" play. Only one act was written, (almost complete) and the work was abandoned by the 14-year old Schubert. The reason is not known.

#2 DES TEUFEL'S LUSTENSCHLOSS D84 (The Devil's Pleasure Palace)

Librettist: August von Kotzebue

Taped by the French Radio (ORTF) for the Schubert year and broadcast August 8 1998 by Radio Canada, L'Opera Du samedi, narrated in French and sung in German.

CAST: Rodrigo Orrego, Hans Sotin, Michel Legrand, L'Ecuyer Oswald, Anne Marie Rodde, Jean Marie Poile. L'Orchestre de Radio France Conductor: Marek Janofsky.

In the castle of the title, the main character, Oswald, is put through all manner of trials by his father-in-law to test his character and worthiness. He comes through his ordeals and is reunited with his Luitgarde in a peremptory happy ending.

#3 DER VIERJAEHRIGE POSTEN D190 (The Four-Year Posting)

Librettist: Theodore Koerner

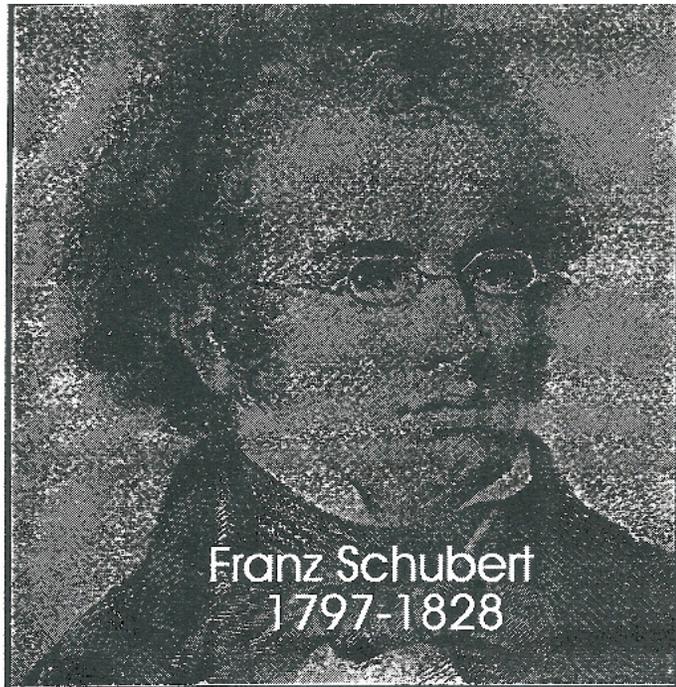
Recorded 1977....ODEON 1C 065-30 742 Q LP

and CPO 999 553-2 CD Reissue

CAST: Dieter Fischer-Dieskau, Helen Donath, Willi Brokmeir, Peter Schreier, Friedrich Lenz, Sunhild Rauschkolb. Munich Radio Orchestra Conductor: Heinz Wallberg.

Completed in 12 days in 1815 this piece is typically light-hearted and improbable. When a regiment leaves its village quarters, one of the soldiers gets accidentally left behind while on sentry duty. He marries locally and leads the life of a farmer. When, four years later, he hears that his old regiment is returning to the village, he fears he will be shot for desertion. The villagers hatch a plot to save him, and all ends happily.

(continued on page 6)



#4 FERNANDO D220

Librettist: Albert Stadler

Recorded 1984....ORFEO C 109 971 A CD reissue

CAST: Edith Mathis, Gabriele Sim, Heiner Hopfner,
Robert Holl.

The ORF Orchestra Conductor: Lothar Zagrosek.

Probably put together in a few days in the summer of 1815, this singspiel is more serious in tone than the earlier works. Eleonora seeks and finds her lost husband, Fernando, being finally reunited with him in a love duet. The absence of a chorus helps to give this work a more intimate emotional focus than its precursors.

#5 CLAUDINE VON VILLA BELLA D239

Librettist: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Recorded 1984....ORFEO C109 971 A..CD reissue

CAST: Edith Mathis, Gabriele Sim, Heiner Hopfner,
Robert Holl.The ORF Orchestra Conductor: Lothar Zagrosek
(2 CD set with FERNANDO)

The singspiel is set in the mountains of Sicily and the complicated plot revolves around lost love, separated brothers and a stern father. All ends happily when the lovers and brothers are reunited and the father forgives the prodigal son. Only one act of this work survives.

#6 DIE FREUNDE VON SALAMANKA (The Friends from Salamanka)

Librettist: Johann Mayrhofer

Recorded 1978....VOCE-19 LP

CAST: Edith Mathis, Christine Weidinger, Eberhard Buechner, Thomas Moser, Hermann Prey.

The Orff Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Theodor Guschlbauer

The plot is "a celebration of friendship and love", from a male perspective, but involving three eligible sopranos. Matches are made and significantly it is the three male friends who point the moral at the close: "Let us praise friendship and love". Schubert destroyed the libretto, but Einstein and several others reconstructed the plot. It is from these reconstructions that the recording was made.

#7 DIE BUERGSCHAFT D435

Librettist: unknown (based on a Schiller poem)

Recording: None known

The opera is based on a classical theme that appealed to Schubert. He completed two acts and began work on the third then abandoned the composition. The plot was taken from the theme of sedition against the tyranny of the King of Syracuse and the various tests of loyalty and friendship arising from the classical story. Schubert used some of the music, and ideas, from his abandoned works like this one for his *leider* and instrumental compositions.

#8 DAS DOERFCHEN D??? (The Little Village)

There is no information available on this work except that it is one of the attempts Schubert made in the composition of the singspiel. Musicologists seem to disagree as to its fate.

(to be continued in the next issue)

Opera Alla Pasta — Sunday Afternoon at the Opera

For All Members and their Guests —

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

Time: 2:00 pm

Program: September 27, 1998 - DIE ENTFUHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL - Mozart
 Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Conductor: Sir George Solti
 Kurt Moll, Lars Magnusson, Inga Neilson

November 22, 1998 - L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI - Rossini
 Metropolitan Opera, Conductor: James Levine
 Marilyn Horne, Paolo Montarsolo

January 10, 1999 - LA GIOCONDA - Ponchielli
 Vienna State Opera, Conductor: Adam Fischer
 Eva Marton, Placido Domingo

Opera videos on a huge screen, followed by a delightful pasta meal including salad, chicken and dessert. Cash Bar . Total Cost — \$15.00 per person

Reservations at 225-0124 by two days before so we will know how many we are going to feed. *Join us for this fun time!*

An Evening for OPERA Lovers

Favourite opera arias with
 sopranos Shawne Elizabeth,
 Stephanie Piercey and
 Eva Beames

Friday October 16, 8:00 P.M.
 Unitarian Congregation,
 30 Cleary Avenue

\$15 for adults and
 \$10 for seniors and students

Tickets can be purchased at the
 HMV Store on Sparks Street or
 at the door before the concert

Information: 731-3991

Saturday Afternoon at the Opera

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Sept 26 | PORGY AND BESS by Gershwin |
| Oct 3 | LE PROPHETE by Meyerbeer |
| Oct 10 | MACBETH by Bloch |
| Oct 17 | KATJA KABANOWA by Janacek |
| Oct 24 | PRINCE IGOR by Borodin |
| Oct 31 | IL BARBIERE DI SINGLIA by Rossini |
| Nov 7 | LE NOZZE DI FIGARO by Mozart |
| Nov 14 | DIE FLEDERMAUS by Strauss |
| Nov 21 | ROMEO ET JULIETTE by Gounod |
| Nov 28 | NORMA by Bellini |
| Dec 5 | LE NOZZE DI FIGARO by Mozart |
| Dec 12 | CARMEN by Bizet |
| Dec 19 | LA TRAVIATA by Verdi |
| Dec 26 | DIE ZAUBERFLOTE by Mozart |
| Jan 2 | DIE FLEDERMAUS by Strauss |
| Jan 9 | KATJA KABANOWA by Janacek |

Opera Within Reach

OTTAWA

Opera Lyra

DIE ZAUBERFLOTE by Mozart.
October 17, 19, 21 & 24
All performances are in the Opera of
the NAC. Information: 233-9200

National Arts Centre

Kathleen Battle GALA
October 3 in the Opera
Dimitri Hvorstovsky

November 10 & 11 in the Opera
Michael Schade and Russel Braun

November 26 in the Opera
Handel's Messiah

December 22 & 23 in the Opera

Information: 594-9400

MONTREAL

L'Opéra de Montréal

La Traviata by Verdi. Sept 26, 28 Oct 1, 3, 7, 10

Don Carlo by Verdi. Nov 7, 9, 12, 14, 18, 21

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

Information: 1-514-985-2258

TORONTO

Canadian Opera Company

NORMA by Bellini.
Sept 24, 27, 30 Oct 3, 6 & 9

TOSCA by Puccini.
Sept 25, 29, Oct 1, 4, 7, 10

All performances are at the Hummingbird
Centre.

Information: 1-800-250-4653

Opera Atelier

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO by Mozart.
Oct 22 - Nov 1

All performances are in the Royal Alexandra
Theatre

Information: 1-800-461-3333

Opera Mississauga

COSI FAN TUTTE by Mozart.
Nov 14, 17, 19, 21

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

Information: 1-888-805-8888