

Newsletter • Bulletin

Fall

1999

L'Automne

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

"A Millennium of Opera"

Quickly Get Your Tickets and Reservations! Invite All Your Friends and Reserve a Composer Table

"A MILLENNIUM OF OPERA", an evening of good food, great music, a fund-raising silent auction and door prizes, is hosted by the NATIONAL CAPITAL OPERA SOCIETY on November 6th at "The MacDonald Club", Mr. Keith's Banquet Centre, 109-1220 Old Innes Road in Ottawa. This party is guided by the masterful hand of CBC Radio's Rob Clipperton as Master of Ceremonies.

Cocktails (cash bar) begin at 6:30 P.M., after which a "Theme" dinner pays homage to some of the greatest opera composers of the millennium. Following that is a "Theme" concert presented by emerging singers of the next millennium; sopranos Stacey Ingrey and Alison Smyth, tenor Michael Torontow, and bass-baritone, David Milnes, all from the studio of Yoriko Tanno-Kimmons, and accompanied by Evelyn Greenberg. Throughout most of the evening the silent auction will hold court, and special door prizes will also emerge. Opera lovers from across the region can bask in the

glorious rays of the genius of Verdi, Mozart, Handel, Tchaikovsky, Gounod, Donizetti, and Bernstein.

The evening celebrates the wondrous riches of opera the world has enjoyed over the past six centuries. It also expresses our enthusiasm and support for the singers of the next millennium, both through the evening's concert, and through the Society's work with the Brian Law Opera Scholarship and the support of young artists and opera events in the National Capital Region.

Tickets for this special evening are \$35 each, and are available from HMV (Sparks) and Pflug Optical (Merivale); or by calling 225-0124, 225-2652 (west) or 741-3290 (east) no later than November 3rd. Reservations are necessary for both individuals and for those seeking to reserve "composer tables of eight" and can be made by calling 225-0124.

For further information, call Bobbi Cain at 225-0124.

Opera Alla Pasta — Sunday Afternoon at the Opera

2:00 p.m. Sunday, October 17 at St. Anthony's Soccer Club

LA CENERENTOLA

From the President...

The Autumn is now upon us, and our thoughts have turned to all the things that will keep us busy over the next months - movies for your great pleasure followed by dinner, all at St. Anthony's; a very special evening celebrating the past millennium of opera and heralding the next; and the beginning of work on the next Brian Law Opera Scholarship competition.

We hope that you will support these initiatives in every possible way. I have had a few people respond to my notice about the fund-raiser, but not enough! If you need a letter of introduction from the Society before you feel comfortable approaching people about silent auction donations, just contact me, as one is available. It is very important that you and your colleagues are behind your Board of Directors as we carry out YOUR programs. Opera and its promotion is what we are about: can you help out? Every little bit helps and gives me a feeling that you care. Do you care?

We had a lovely reception for baritone Gerald Finley and his wife, Louise Winter, after their Chamber Music Festival appearances. Wasn't it enjoyable? Hot

Stuff! You will find a few photos in this newsletter. Things at the National Arts Centre seem to be straightening out and perhaps there is hope in the future for a re-instated summer program of opera. We can hope! Due to labour problems, I saw a semi-staged version of Strauss's "Salome" in Montreal, and it was riveting. Sometimes we have to compromise, and sometimes that work's out just fine.

We congratulate Opera Lyra Ottawa on a fine production of Bizet's "The Pearl Fishers". As my opera companion (my 12 year old grandson) said - "It was beautiful!" It was musically pleasing - very well sung with good chorus work, and graceful staging. The costumes looked medieval Greek, but they were OK.

Hope to see you on November 6th, and at our film showings.

Bobbi Cain

At the Finley reception...

Gerald Finley with Bobbi Cain, Louise Winter & Pat Adamo



Mr. Rigoletto

Some time ago, the Society was sent a copy of the new book by Christina Petrowska, "Mr. Rigoletto: In Conversation with Louis Quilico". With his recent honour of a Governor General Performing Art Award, it is timely that we should feature this at this point. An Ottawa opera connoisseur, Donald Metcalfe, kindly consented to review this volume for the Newsletter.

Mr. Rigoletto: In Conversation with Louis Quilico by Christina Petrowska, Captus Press, Incorporated, York University, 1996.

It was exactly forty years ago when I first heard Louis Quilico in a live performance: as one of the vocal quartet in Beethoven's Ninth in 1959, with the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra, at the Capitol Theatre in Ottawa.

Since then, while there have been occasional recitals and orchestral concerts; including a memorable Mahler "Songs of the Wayfarer" in Montreal on July 3, 1968, under the direction of Wilfrid Pelletier; it has been Mr. Quilico's participation on the operatic stage that has attracted most of my attention.

My esteem for Louis Quilico as an opera singer began in Toronto in 1966, with both Macbeth, and Germont in "La Traviata", as part of the Canadian Opera Company season: but since then there have been forty-two other performances in nineteen different operas, including eight "Rigoletto's", that I have managed to attend.

Some of the highlights, all of which are mentioned in Ms. Petrowska's book, have been the marvellous "Otello" at Expo '67 in Montreal, with Jon Vickers and Teresa Stratas; Aeon in "Oedipus Rex" in Toronto, for Stravinsky's 85th birthday celebrations, in the presence of the composer, with Marilyn Horne and Ernst Laefliger; Mr. Quilico's premature debut at the Metropolitan Opera on February 10, 1972, as Goland in Debussy's "Pelleas et Melisande", replacing an indisposed Thomas Stewart; two Count di Lunas in "Il Trovatore" at the Met in 1977 and 1982, opposite, respectively, Renata Scotta and Leontyne Price; two back-to-

back Renatos in "Un Ballo in Maschera", also at the Met, with Katia Ricciarelli in both, and Pavarotti in the first, and Domingo in the latter; two productions in which Louis was featured with his son, Gino: "Don Giovanni" at the COC in 1988, and "Barber of Seville" at the Met in 1989, with Marilyn Horne as Rosina; and of course, all those great Rigolettos from, in my case, 1968 in Toronto, to 1994 in Ottawa.

Always when Mr. Quilico was scheduled to appear in a production, it became a major event, and I'll be forever thankful that I was able to participate as frequently as I did.

Unfortunately, this book does not do justice to this great artist. What we need is a proper biography, which could include all the details and interesting episodes of his career without resorting to a question and answer format. This approach merely becomes tedious, and the reader quickly loses interest.

I found the biography section the best, but it is only six pages; while the conversations on opera extend into eighty-two pages and lack the spontaneity that would make them more acceptable; with the questions seemingly planned well in advance, along with the replies. The section of the book that deals with voice technique amounts to forty pages, and while this no doubt would be of interest to singers and voice students, I'm afraid that it is mostly lost on the average reader.

Ms. Petrowska's intentions are most admirable, and provide us with considerable insight into what was an amazing operatic career. Hopefully in the future a full biography will appear, but for the present we should be grateful for this publication.

—Donald Metcalfe, September 1999

OPERA ALLA PASTA

Our popular opera/dinner series is starting soon so please reserve your Sunday afternoons, and join us at St. Anthony's Soccer Club just off Preston Street for a special opera video followed by a pasta-based dinner (with dessert) with us all together, and a nearby cash bar!

The line-up is:

La Cenerentola

October 17, 2 P.M. - *La Cenerentola* by Rossini, with Frederica von Stade, Metropolitan Opera

Mefistofele

January 9, 2 P.M. - *Mefistofele* by Boito, with Samuel Ramey, San Francisco Opera.

The Marriage of Figaro

April 9, 2 P.M. - *The Marriage of Figaro* by Mozart with Gerald Finley,
Opening of refurbished Glyndebourne Opera Theater.

Please call me if you wish to attend (225-0124), and bring all your friends who enjoy a good afternoon out. It's lots of fun, and we would like to have at least twenty people to join in the afternoon. The cost is still \$15 (for the meal), and if you would like to make a donation to our work, that's also fine.