

# Newsletter • Bulletin

Winter

2007

Hiver

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

## Julie is Carmen by Ute Davis

This opera stands or falls, depending on the performance of the title role. With the able assistance of artistic director Richard McKee, Julie Nesrallah makes Carmen grow from a wilful gamin figure in Act 1 under the street-tough shell of a knife-wielding kid into the tragic maturity of a resentful woman in Act 4, saddled with the jealousy of a cast off lover. In the thirty something productions of Carmen I have seen (including four by Ms. Nesrallah) I have never witnessed so fascinating a demonstration of character development on stage. Vocally totally fulfilling in the role, Nesrallah shows that she has “come of age” as an actress. The production was very effective with lively musical direction and a particularly powerful and well-rehearsed chorus, although some of whom carried physical as well as vocal heft. The staging was satisfactory, the costumes, from Malabar in Toronto, were exciting. Don José (Drew Slatton) was vocally good with a plaintive upper register effectively used as in “La fleur que tu m’avais jetée”. However, his descent from inhibited young army corporal to desperate rejected lover was less than well acted. Escamillio (Jimi James) was both vocally and physically a complete success and the ladies in the audience identified with Carmen in finding him most attractive. All the cast sang strongly and it was a pleasure to hear high quality performances from those in secondary roles, Gregory

Sheppard as Zuniga and Malcolm Merriweather as Morales. Steven Stull was an effectively threatening Dancaire,



well supported by Jonathan Howell’s Remendado. The two gypsies, Frasquita (Melanie Brunet Relyea) and Mercedes (Ivy Gamble) were well cast. Donita Volkwijn sang Micaëla, demonstrating a rich, beautiful soprano tone but appearing to have difficulty in being a convincing ingenue. This young lady was, I believe, miscast, but I would

love to see her as Pamina, Mimi or Zerlina.

The atmosphere in Syracuse is welcoming to the outsider and, judging by this production, the quality of their opera is very high. The city has a university with a strong performing arts program, which supplies its student body with subsidized tickets to all performances.



The number of young people in the audience was a delightful eye-opener for those used to Canadian opera. Most students with whom I spoke had already attended several rehearsals and were thrilled to be there again.

In short, this was a thoroughly enjoyable and satisfying production of Carmen with outstanding performances by Julie Nesrallah in the two performances that I attended on 27 and 29 Oct. 2006. I believe that a new Canadian gold standard has been set for this role.

## President's Message

Happy New Year! It looks like a great year for opera lovers in our region. Opera Lyra is presenting Verdi's *Otello* in late March and early April - a very challenging opera but one of the very greatest. Sandra Graham's Opera Workshop is giving performances of Poulenc's moving *Dialogues of the Carmelites* at the end of January and the beginning of February. In Montreal one can see Delibes' *Lakmé*, something of a rarity in spite of its beautiful music and, even more exciting, Haydn's *Il mondo de la luna*, a superb work by this great musician. The simultaneous broadcasts of the Met's Saturday afternoon productions in a local movie theatre at a very reasonable cost will attract many opera enthusiasts and deserve our support. Some of you may be looking for the Brian Law Scholarship competition in January, but we have moved it to November 2007, the 24<sup>th</sup> to be precise. I'd like to acknowledge a generous donation by Beryl Anderson to the Gerald Finley fund raiser, inadvertently omitted from the last newsletter. Of course, donations to the scholarship can be made at any time, most easily when you are renewing your membership for the year 2007. It's such a joy to hear previous winners in various local presentations and to read of their success elsewhere. The last Opera alla Pasta presentation, Prokofiev's *Betrothal in a Monastery* was well received by all who attended and I'm sure our next session in February, Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia*, plus the final one (combined with the AGM) Verdi's *I Lombardi* on April 29<sup>th</sup> will also find favour with our members. See you at the opera.



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## Web site News

by Jim Burgess

In the past month, the layout of our web site, [www.ncos.ca](http://www.ncos.ca), has changed considerably. Most significantly, the navigation links are now at the top of each page, instead of at the bottom. Furthermore, the navigation section remains visible at all times. It will not disappear as you scroll down a long page. Also, the width of pages (previously set to just 600 pixels) has been adjusted to be 80% of the available screen width. Those who have a wider screen (say, 1024 pixels or greater) will find that the text now fills the screen horizontally almost completely, instead of being displayed in the centre, surrounded by wide, empty margins to the left and right. The "Archives" section has also been changed. Rather than seeing just one index page that lists all articles in all issues of the newsletter, you'll first see a page showing year and issues (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer). You select the issue you want to see, and are taken to a page listing the articles in that issue (an "index"). For more recent issues, this page will contain not only the titles of the articles, but also a one- or two-line summary of the article. These changes will hopefully make the web site easier to use. However, people who have bookmarked pages within the web site will encounter a problem: bookmarks within the web site are no longer valid, and you'll no longer see any navigation links. To fix the problem, go to the web site ([www.ncos.ca](http://www.ncos.ca)), navigate to the appropriate page and recreate the bookmark.

## Thank You, Thank You

Many thanks to the following who contributed to the content, production and distribution of this year's Newsletters. Our apologies to anyone who has been overlooked.

**Pat Adamo, Jim Burgess, Ute Davis, Marjorie Clegg, Renate Chartrand, Murray Kitts, Tom McCool, Klaus Siemsen, Norma Torontow, Mary Vulsteke, David Williams, Shelagh Williams.**

## Mozart Returns in Style to the COC by Shelagh Williams

The Canadian Opera Company (COC) opened its first season in its new acoustically and mainly visually superior Opera House with a welcome return of Mozart - his *Così fan tutte* - in this anniversary year of Mozart's birth. General Director Richard Bradshaw never felt the Hummingbird Centre barn was appropriate for Mozart, but the new house is ideal for his work.

This production is a long-awaited revival of the COC's *Così fan tutte* which we saw in the Elgin Theatre in June 1991, in that earlier Mozart anniversary year of his death. The story is of two sisters, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, whose soldier fiancés, Guglielmo and Ferrando, wager with the older and wiser bachelor Don Alfonso on their sweethearts' faithfulness. Don Alfonso engineers the soldiers' absence and dresses them as two handsome Albanians who switch and flirt with each others' fiancée. However, with no duenna present and a maid Despina who helps the masqueraders, the odds are stacked against the sisters! Chilean costume and set designer Jorge Jara gave us an interesting and adaptable modular set of hedges, balls and pillars. The backdrop of the Bay of Naples was lovely and Vesuvius even erupted in one of the scenes, thanks to Stephen Ross's excellent lighting! Jara colour-coded each of the four lovers' attractive costumes, so that they could be identified during the subsequent masquerade. This had been especially useful in 1991 when the singers were all tall and slim! Director Daniel Dooner, a former Ottawan, is a staff director at Covent Garden, and it showed — he brought out the piece's humour and physical playfulness, plus some of the wistfulness of blighted idealism. Of course, conductor Richard Bradshaw - he has been busy this fall! - brought the whole together beautifully with his excellent orchestra in the new pit, raised for Mozart, and a cast well chosen and in fine voice. Amazingly, four of the six leads were COC Ensemble Studio graduates (all but Russell Braun and Wolfgang Holzmair) and fortunately

the two young couples were chosen so that one member was tall and slim and the other short and stocky, making it easy to tell the singers apart during the masquerade! We were indeed fortunate that tenor Michael Colvin, Almaviva in Opera Lyra's recent *Barber of Seville*, had recovered from his illness by the end of the run, and we enjoyed his lovely singing as Ferrando. Baritone Russell Braun was his usual suave and elegant self, looking and sounding marvellous as Guglielmo, and with mezzo Krisztina Szabo as Dorabella, herself an excellent actress and singer, they made a handsome couple. In her first lead role out of the Ensemble Studio, soprano Joni Henson as Fiordiligi showed that she has what it takes, her large range easily covering the difficult "Come scoglio" and her mobile face accenting the action. Our own Brian Law Scholarship winner, soprano Shannon Mercer, was a delight as Despina, acting and singing to bring the lively maid to life, yet actually believable in her disguises as doctor and notary! Finally, the only non-Canadian, Austrian baritone Wolfgang Holzmair, an excellent last minute replacement for our performance, made his COC debut as a wily Don Alfonso, a role he will be singing at the Met and in which he is very good - even Despina was shocked at his trickery! It is interesting the difference a few years makes: in 1991 the mere suggestion of sexual intimacy between Guglielmo and Dorabella was slightly shocking, whereas this year we had the matter-of-fact staging of the pair running up stairs and disappearing through a door! This was a most enjoyable production, well put together and played, and worthy of the return of Mozart to the COC! It also completed our experience of seeing excellent productions of all three da Ponte/Mozart operas, in order, in less than two weeks.

The National Post declared: "What a difference the new Toronto opera house makes. The experience of going to the opera here has been lifted to a new level: acoustically, visually, maybe even socially." Certainly, with more promenade space for seeing and being seen, the patrons seemed more stylish than at the Hummingbird!

# The Toughest Show on Earth: My Rise and Reign at the Metropolitan Opera.

Volpe, Joseph. New York: Knopf, 2006

BOOK REVIEW: by Tom McCool

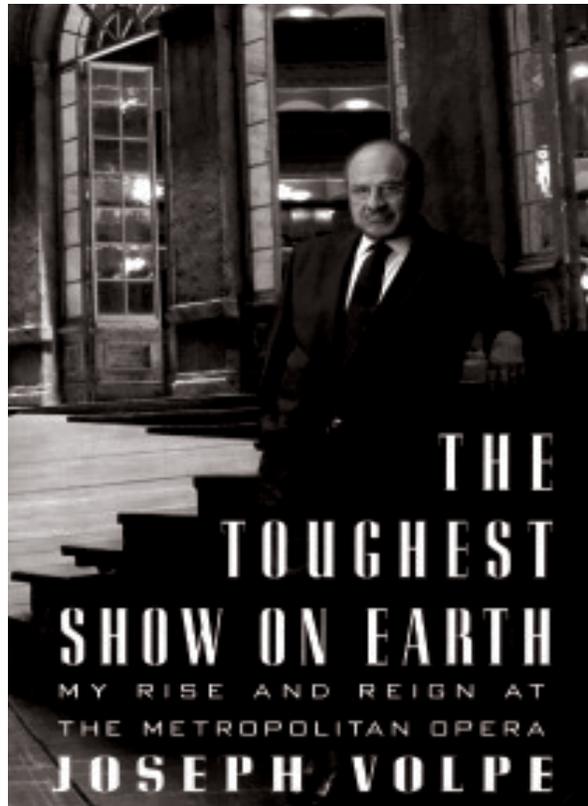
Joe Volpe began his career at the old Metropolitan Opera in 1963 as an apprentice carpenter. On the first day on the job he was ordered to get coffee for the crew. Volpe refused stating that he didn't come to the Met to be a "gofer". This assertiveness would stand him in good stead as he moved up through the ranks at the Met, eventually becoming the big boss in 1990. He retained that position (though with a variety of titles) until August of 2006, when he resigned as general manager of the largest performing arts institution in the world. His story is a remarkable one especially when one realizes that, by his own admission, he "had never studied music...didn't have a degree in arts management" and, in fact, had "barely graduated from high school."

One of the first dilemmas he faced after taking over was the problem of what to do about Kathleen Battle whose bizarre behaviour was becoming increasingly abusive. Volpe eventually decided that he had no alternative but to fire her. This was a difficult decision because Battle was an extremely talented and popular singer at the time. She may not have had the same stature as Callas but she definitely had star power and her dismissal was headline news. Many more sticky situations were to follow and Volpe doesn't hesitate to reveal all the details of his dealings with people such as Pavarotti, Georghiu and Alagna, Stratas, Levine, Zeffereilli and many more. The book describes the behind the scenes and day-to-day workings of the Met and provides insight into the operation of the most prestigious opera company in the world. One of the highlights of the book is the retelling of many personal anecdotes and reminiscences of the people he encountered during his 43 years at the Met. Volpe comes across as an individual who is brutally honest, abrasive and, at times, downright nasty. He also appears to be somebody who was most at home in the carpentry shop. And proud of it!

Perhaps Volpe's biggest challenge at the Met was to find an appropriate balance between artistic considerations and financial reality. A sure-fire way for an opera company to

be financially successful is to stage a string of *Carmens* and *Bohèmes*, operas which are almost guaranteed to be sell-outs. This Volpe did not do! To his credit Volpe expanded the Russian and Czech repertoire, included a number of obscure works in the opera season and

encouraged new operas. During his 16 year tenure there were 26 Met premieres and four world premieres. The world premieres were all by American composers. Not surprisingly in his account of events Volpe focuses on his achievements, and there were many. Not the least was the fact that he was able to last so long at the top. This success did not come without certain costs, among which were two failed marriages. Furthermore, there are critics who do not view his term at the Met



quite as positively as he does.

Among the defects of the book are numerous obvious errors. For example, one of Volpe's predecessors, Edward Johnson, is referred to as "the Canadian baritone". Later he is called the "Canadian tenor". Clearly one description is incorrect. (Johnson was, in fact, a tenor.) At other times different dates are given for the same event. These are minor irritations but they cause one to wonder about some other more important assertions.

Without a doubt this autobiography (like all autobiographies) presents a very personal and subjective perspective of events, a point of view that will not be universally accepted. Regardless, Volpe's career is a most impressive one and his memoir is a "must read" for any opera enthusiast.

# Passionately Yours Puccini

by Marjorie Clegg

# Events You Should Have Enjoyed!

by David Williams

We are always pleased to celebrate the flourishing careers of our Brian Law Opera Scholarship competition winners. In Ooh La La Opera's production of *Passionately Yours Puccini* our first scholarship winner, Laura Dziubaniuk, showed us why she was chosen for that honour.



Laura Dziubaniuk

The production was enjoyed by a sell-out crowd in the National Arts Centre Fourth Stage on October 21<sup>st</sup>. The venue was perfect for the fascinating mixture of music and talk staged by the company. Music was provided by Laura (soprano), her husband Alexander Savtchenko (bass), Susan Blyth-Schofield (soprano, artistic director of Ooh La La Opera), George Valettas (tenor), James O'Farrell (tenor), and Renée Villemaire (pianist). The singers participated in vignettes from *Le Villi*, *Manon Lescaut*, *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Il Tabarro*, *La fanciulla del West*, and *Turandot*. The talk was provided by actor James Bradford, who did a splendid job playing the role of Puccini, introducing each musical piece with a description of his life.

Ooh La La Opera! is a small opera troupe, but one with big plans for the future. Their next production is *Fatal Attractions: A Concert*, March 2, 2007 at the NAC Fourth Stage. See you there!

Opera Lyra's Simply Opera was a delight with the OLO Chorus in excellent form; they continue to excell. Last minute news that Elizabeth Turnbull was ill was initially disappointing, but Shannon Mercer gracefully stepped into the breach and, as well as her scheduled pieces, sang two extra arias. An excellent afternoon's entertainment.

A few day's later Maria Knapik and Friends (Ivanka Ninova, Vitalij Dudkin, Donato di Gioia) performed the Mozart *Requiem* with Michael Brousseau conducting the combined Les Chanteurs de Sainte Therese, Semper Fidelis, New World Philharmonic and Ottawa Classical Choirs. This was a very good performance of the *Requiem*, however, I would have also liked to hear the four soloists and choirs in the first half of the concert. Having brought them to Ottawa, it seemed odd to have a piano concerto rather than vocal numbers before the intermission. Those of you lucky enough to be in Sarasota, Florida in February can hear Maria in the lead role in Poland's National Opera, Moniuzko's *Halka*.

The third of our former Brian Law Competition stars to perform in Ottawa within a two week period was Julie Nesrallah who, together with the Strings of St. John's, entertained us with a Musical Banquet. The main course was Julie's rendition of Respighi's *Il Tramonto*, performed in her inimitable style.

Our fourth star, Daniel Taylor, appeared twice with the Bach Choir and the Theatre of Early Music.

Opera Lyra's young artist's gave four performance of Barab's *Little Red Riding Hood* at the NAC fourth stage using essentially two casts. Aimed at the very young, it was encouraging to see that the majority of the audience at the Sunday matinee were less than ten years old. Let us hope that this excellent show will trigger a lifelong love of opera in these youngsters.

Cathedral Arts again brought a first class singer to Ottawa and gave us a chance to hear Calgary born soprano Erin Wall. She sang a number of solo pieces and joined with the Cathedral Girl's Choir in a performance of Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*. A recognized International Opera and Recital Artiste Erin Wall is, unfortunately, seldom heard in our city.

# Outstanding Opera in Ornate Opera Houses

by Shelagh Williams

The moment I saw the title of Congress Travel's October trip, "Danube Mozart Anniversary Cruise", I was hooked! What better way to celebrate this anniversary year of Mozart's birth?!



Shelagh: Hard At Work

The trip was a veritable feast of music, starting with our first evening in Salzburg, Mozart's birthplace. In the beautiful Baroque Hall of the Stiftskeller St. Peter, the oldest restaurant in Europe (since 803), we enjoyed a marvellous Mozart Dinner Concert performed in candlelight by the local Amadeus Consort, an ensemble of two opera singers and five string players in period costume. Before and between the three courses of dinner we enjoyed three mini-concerts, excerpts from, respectively, *Don Giovanni*, *Marriage of Figaro*, and *Magic Flute* — it certainly got us in the right mood!

Soon after boarding the "Amadeus Classic" and cruising the Danube, we were in Vienna. Our first opera experience there consisted of highlights of Mozart's *Magic Flute* at the Schonbrunn Castle Marionette Theatre. This is a fascinating way to enjoy an opera since after a few minutes the expert puppeteers have one believing the marionettes are alive! I had forgotten how real they seem, as we had not seen such a performance since 20 years ago in Salzburg. The first class recording used had Roberta Peters as Queen of the Night, Fritz Wunderlich as Tamino, and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau as Papageno, under Karl Bohm with the Berlin Philharmonic — a superb and now otherwise unattainable musical combination for a "live" performance!

That evening was the highlight we had all been eagerly anticipating: an opera at the beautiful Vienna State Opera House! First built in 1861-1869, it was rebuilt as soon as possible after the bombing of World War Two, and so has some modern salons and, incidentally, a safety curtain with an artistic design that changes each year, thanks to Magna International!



Fear Eats the Soul

Verdi's *Rigoletto* was everything we had expected, quality in every aspect — even surtitles in both German and English! The production was from March 1983, a beautiful traditional set with lovely costumes, and no expense was spared — even 11 dancers in the rear room in the background for the opening party scene in the Duke's palace! I especially liked the staging of the final act at Sparafucile's inn: rather than fumbling about knifing Gilda and stuffing her in a sack, the stage was blacked out as Gilda knocked at the door and the scenery changed during the storm music to reveal the back of the inn and the bank of the river. Here Rigoletto opened his sack to find, to his and the audience's surprise, the body of his dying daughter Gilda, rather than the dead Duke! Musically, the production was first rate, starting with the capable conductor, Italian Renato Palumbo who, in October 2006, took up the post of Musical Director of the Berlin Opera. As the hunchback court jester Rigoletto — even though his costume lacked much of a hump! — we were treated to a definitive performance by baritone Georg Tichy who has been for 33 years a member of the

# Outstanding Opera in Ornate Opera Houses

(continued)

Vienna State Opera ensemble. Gilda was sung by the Sicilian soprano Desiree Rancatore, a sweetheart of a performer who was easy on both the eyes and the ears. As the Duke of Mantua, we had the good fortune to have the young Korean tenor Ho-Yoon Chung, who debuted at the State Opera only three nights previously. He was a real find — good looking, with an appropriate Italianate singing style and a real flair for acting — and most believable as the young, handsome, happy-go-lucky Duke. The Vienna State Opera is expensive — even the programmes are pricey — but for both the house and the music it is definitely worth it!

The cruise line had laid on excellent pre-performance talks for all three of the complete operas we saw on the cruise, which came in handy as our next port of call was Bratislava, where the surtitles were only in Slovak! Fortunately the opera was *Carmen*, which our lecturer pointed out was being staged on

ules. The Slovak National Theatre, built in 1886, is a delightful building with only 611 seats and ideally situated in its own idyllic square with a lovely fountain in front, only a short walk from the Danube. In fact Bratislava itself is charming!

The production of *Carmen* was a relatively new one, from March 2002, and had a rather spare and basic but innovative unit set based on a metal grandstand rotating on a turntable. With suitable draping and appropriate silhouettes everything from a square to an inn to mountains and of course the bullring could be suggested, with appropriately Spanish costumes to complete the picture. The opera company's Director, Marian Chudorsky, was also creative, especially with the children's early play acting of a bull fight nicely foreshadowing the real thing. Then, in the final scene, the bullfight was depicted symbolically inside the arena, mirroring Jose and Carmen's final confrontation outside of the arena. The death of the bull coincided exactly with the stabbing of Carmen, increasing the dramatic impact. We were also fortunate to have as conductor Dusan Stefanek, who originally prepared and conducted this production, together with several of the original triple cast, headed by alto Jitka Sapara-Fischerova in the title role. She was perfectly cast as Carmen in her appearance, voice and temperament: she actually floored the Captain in her Act I escape! As Escamillo, baritone Martin Babjak, a winner in the 1992 Pavarotti competition in Philadelphia, brought a good voice and presence to the role, while the young soprano, Katerina Silhavikova, was vivacious yet vulnerable as Micaela and brought the part to life. In fact, all of the singers were good, including the children, except for Don Jose, a last-minute substitution who obviously did not know the blocking well and who in both appearance and voice was definitely over the hill. Nevertheless the overall production was good and most enjoyable, relying on local Slovak personnel rather than star imports, and the price was much more reasonable than in Vienna!

Our next stop was Budapest for our third opera in as many nights — and what a performance we got! To start with, the Opera House which opened in 1884 with Franz Joseph in attendance is absolutely beautiful. Franz Joseph decreed that it could not have an auditorium larger than Vienna's but instead they built the second largest backstage in Europe, second only to Covent Garden's! Fortu-

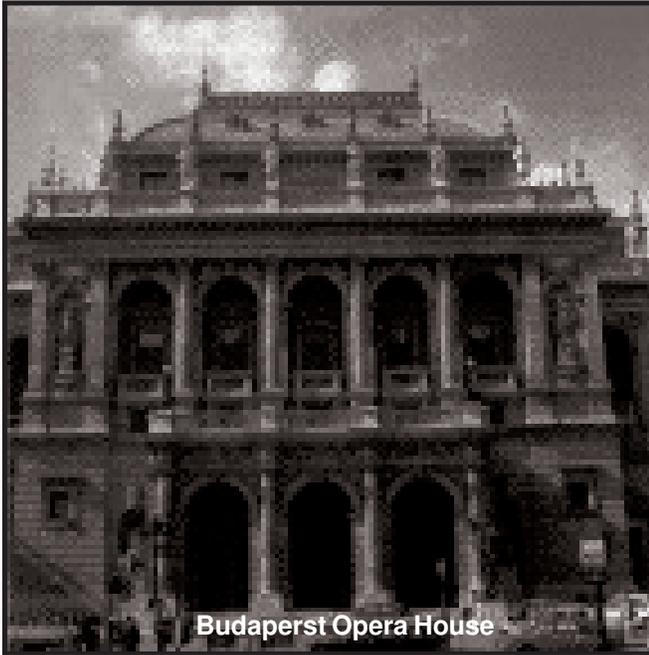


Bratislava Opera House

October 25th, Bizet's birthday! We had rather hoped for a lesser known opera, not seen in North America, but opera choices were determined by cruise sched-

# Outstanding Opera in Ornate Opera Houses

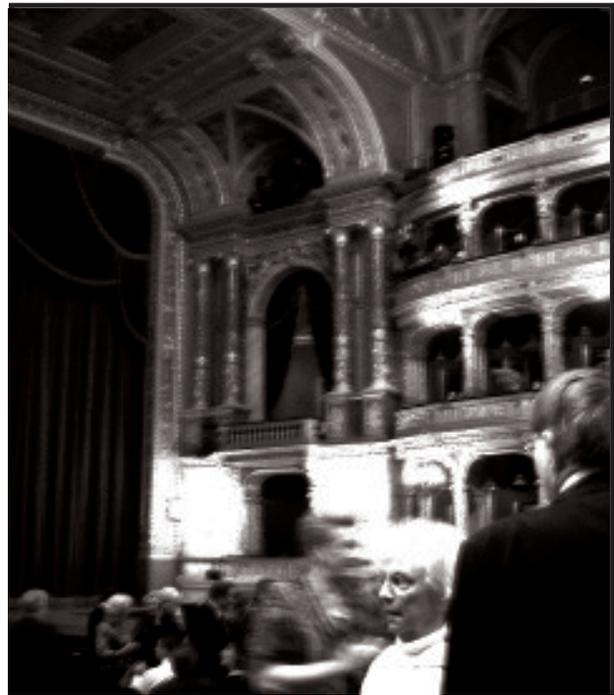
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Budapest Opera House

nately it was not bombed in World War II and, after a complete renovation for its 100th anniversary in 1984, its gold leaf shines brilliantly! Our opera was Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, the first of his three with a da Ponte libretto! This crackerjack production from 1998 had a set design by Attila Czikos incorporating "bridges" over the orchestra pit on which some of the action and singing took part, so that one felt really involved in the proceedings. Many of the sets were rather stylized, the furniture was minimal, and the garden was made up of potted bushes, giving plenty of room for movement. The action itself, under director Judit Georgy, was energetic and imaginative, with nice touches such as the use of a robe and even a collapsible hoop skirt, rather than the usual boring sheet, to cover Cherubino, the Count, and Susanna, in turn, during various scenes in Susanna's and the Countess's rooms. In the costume department, Nelly Vago dressed Susanna as a lovely bride in white — it was her wedding day, after all — which certainly made her easily identifiable immediately and throughout the piece. Everything was so clearly and delightfully done that it didn't matter that the surtitles were in Hungarian! Young conductor Georgy Vashegy, having founded the Purcell Choir and Orfeo Orchestra in Budapest for performance of early music, is a Baroque specialist and he brought this sensibility and precision to the present work. He had an excellent cast and they

worked well as an ensemble. However, mention should be made of bass-baritone Andras Pallerdi, the lively and good looking Figaro; baritone Viktor Massanyi, who brought a lighter touch than normal to Count Almaviva; the lovely sopranos Eszter Woerdl and Klara Kolonitz who sang Susanna and the Countess respectively; and mezzo Viktoria Mester, who was very good indeed in the Cherubino pant role. At the end carnations from the various bouquets were thrown to the audience as the singers took their bows, to the delight of the onlookers, including my companion who was positive that the beautiful blonde young Barbarina had deliberately thrown hers



directly to him! This was an even better overall production than we had in Vienna, using local Hungarian singers, with not a fat soprano among them, and at a much more reasonable price!

Finally, the trip ended in Prague, which Mozart loved, and which boasts three opera houses, including the National Theatre and the Prague State Opera. However, we were going to Prague's oldest opera house, the beautiful and recently renovated Estates Theatre (or Tyl Theatre), where Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, conducted by Mozart himself, had its premiere in 1787. This was a spe-

# Outstanding Opera in Ornate Opera Houses

(continued)

cial gala performance of *Don Giovanni*, on the anniversary date of the premiere, Oct. 29th! As part of Prague's Mozart 2006 celebrations, the 2002 production had been renewed, with redesigned costumes, and the improved version opened in May 2006. It was another excellent production with a unique set design based on the late renowned Josef Svoboda's "legendary" 1969 production in which the theatre's box fronts seem to continue onto the stage to surround the playing area. Some ingenious shifting of the rear scenery, the addition of a few

flats and two sets of stairs to the actual front boxes provided all the necessary venues! The new costume designer, Theodore Pistek, who received an Oscar for his costume design for the film *Amadeus*, naturally gave us colourful and attractive costumes, plus another delightful bride in white, Zerlina this time. Under the capable stage direction of Jiri Nekvasil and conducting of Robert Jindra the singers performed marvellously: baritones Martin Barta and Frantisek Zahradnicek as Don Giovanni and a lean and lanky Leporello respectively; sopranos Yveta Tannenbergerova and Jitka Svobodova as the Donnas Anna and Elvira; and young tenor Pavel Cernoch, good looking and with a lovely voice, as Don Ottavio. Not only was this a class presentation, with subtitles in Czech and English, there was



Estates Opera House

also a good programme with some English and a full libretto (in Czech). The only cavil was with our seats, which were poor, being at the very top of the theatre and at the side of the horseshoe, providing only limited views — though we were perhaps fortunate to get any seats at all, since it was sold out! This was a memorable production to end our trip!

The excursion more than lived up to its billing as a musical tour, with enough chamber music to keep even an Ottawa afi-

cionado happy! On the ship itself, besides Frankie, the resident pianist (with a Ph.D. in music performance) there were three mainly Mozart concerts with instrumental groups and pairs of opera singers from Vienna. On land, there were concerts at the drop of a hat: pianist Florian Krumpock at the Kaisersaal in Salzburg; a lieder concert with a marvellous accompanist, Andrea Linsbauer, in Palais Lobkowitz in Vienna; three Mozart string quartets by the Kammerton Wien ensemble in Melk Abbey; and a surprise concert of Liszt and Bartok by the superb pianist Agnes Kovacz in Budapest. Finally, in Prague, in Villa Bertramka, where Mozart completed *Don Giovanni* (while staying with his friends the Duseks), the Stamic Quartet played quartets by Mozart and Dvorak. With nine concerts and five operas in ten days, we certainly celebrated Mozart's birth and enjoyed his music!

## Mozart Opera Quiz Questions

1. Which two operas did Mozart write for Prague?
2. Which two operas did Mozart write at the age of eleven?
3. Marc Chagall created the decor for which 1967 MET production?
4. The aria "Della sua pace" is sung in which Mozart opera?
5. Who were the singers of the Don and Leporello who switched roles midway through the run of the MET's 1989/90 *Don Giovanni*?
6. Which Mozart opera inaugurated the original and the second Glyndebourne opera house?
7. Which was the first Mozart role for a castrato?
8. Which Pope awarded Mozart "The Order of the Golden Spur"?
9. What was the name of the opera that Paul Griffiths wrote using 24 Mozart numbers?

# Metropolitan Opera Live on the Big Screen

by Renate Chartrand

Six MET Saturday Matinees will be broadcast live in HD into select movie theatres starting at 1:30 pm. In Ottawa they will be shown at SilverCity, Ogilvie and Blair Rd. near the Transit Station with lots of parking. Tickets are \$23.15 for adults and \$17.35 for seniors and children (online at [www.cineplex.com](http://www.cineplex.com) or advance purchase at SilverCity). This is exciting news. We hope you will be able to enjoy it.

## *The Magic Flute*, December 30, 2006

Director and filmmaker Julie Taymor brings her theatrical vision to *The Magic Flute*. Dancing bears, flying birds, a giant serpent are brought vividly to life through ingenious use of puppetry. This abridged 100-minute version, in English, features a winning young cast conducted by James Levine.

## *I Puritani*, January 6, 2007

Soprano Anna Netrebko, in Bellini's *I Puritani*, inhabits the role of the fragile Elvira who delivers one of opera's wildest mad scenes when abandoned at the altar. With its vocal fireworks and opportunities for real acting, this has been a supreme role for great singing actresses.

## *The First Emperor*, January 13, 2007

The world-premiere broadcast of Chinese composer Tan Dun's epic opera, *The First Emperor*, features Plácido Domingo as Emperor Qin. Tan Dun's music is a fascinating mix of East and West and the monumental production is staged by filmmaker Zhang Yimou with costumes by Oscar-winning designer Emi Wada.

## *Eugene Onegin*, February 24, 2007

Renée Fleming joins Dmitri Hvorostovsky for this broadcast of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. The sweeping dramatic arc of this opera—youthful longing, rejection, regret, a desperate plea that comes too late—is perfectly mirrored in Tchaikovsky's achingly beautiful music and in the stunning lighting of this strikingly minimal production.

## *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, March 24, 2007

In the Met's new production, by acclaimed theater director Bartlett Sher and his Tony Award-winning team from *The Light in the Piazza*, the dashing young Peruvian tenor Juan Diego Flórez proves why he is one of the world's greatest Rossini singers, in his calling-card role of Count Almaviva.

## *Il Trittico*, April 28, 2007

This gripping new production by Jack O'Brien and a team of leading theater designers showcases the amazing technical resources of the Met stage as well as a brilliant ensemble cast, not to mention Puccini at his most hauntingly lyrical and dramatic. The Met's celebrated music director, James Levine, conducts.

# All Opera Lovers

**It is time to RENEW your  
membership or  
join NCOS for 2007!**

The membership year runs from January to December. Please fill in the enclosed form and join us for another year of musical activities!

Membership has its privileges but it also has its responsibilities such as financial support of the NCOS and the Brian Law Scholarship. Even this newsletter costs money to produce and mail. Those of you lucky enough to have profitable investments might wish to donate stocks to the Brian Law Scholarship. Pay no capital gains and get a receipt for the full amount of your donation. Do it now before the government changes its mind!

Our future Scholarship winners will need all the help we can give them.

## Congratulations

The talents of our Brian Law Scholarship winners continued to be recognised in 2006. Congratulations to Joshua Hopkins who won the £20,000 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award and to Shannon Mercer who received the \$25,000 Virginia Parker Prize from the Canada Council for the Arts and the \$15,000 Women's Musical Club of Toronto Career Development Award.

## Opera Quiz Answers

1. *Don Giovanni* and *La Clemenza di Tito*.
2. *La Finta Semplice* and *Bastien und Bastienne*.
3. *The Magic Flute*.
4. *Don Giovanni*.
5. Samuel Ramey and Ferruccio Furlanetto.
6. *Le Nozze di Figaro*.
7. Idamante in *Idomeneo*.
8. Clement XIV.
9. *The Jewel Box*.

## Opera Lyra Ottawa Guild

### *Definitely the Opera*

*Lucie de Lammermoor*  
Monday January 15, 2007

*Otello*  
March 6, 2007

*La Traviata*  
May 8, 2007

DVD big screen presentations of the operas.

### *Opera Insights*

*Otello*  
March 19, 2007  
Hosted by Tyrone and Joanne Paterson

### *You Gotta Love Mozart*

Hosted by Murray Kitts  
February 13 & 21, 2007

All of the above events take place at 7:00 P.M.  
in the auditorium at Library and Archives  
Canada, 395 Wellington Street.

### *Joy of Opera Luncheon*

February 4, 2007. 12 Noon, RA Centre 2451 Riv-  
erside Drive. Information: 613-233-9200 x334  
[www.operalyra.ca](http://www.operalyra.ca). Advance reservations required.

## Saturday Afternoon at the Opera

### *“From the Met”*

The Toll Brothers Metropolitan Opera Saturday After-  
noon Live Broadcasts from Lincoln Center in New York.

December 30, 2006	<i>The Magic Flute</i> (Mozart)
January 6, 2007	<i>I Puritani</i> (Bellini)
January 13, 2007	<i>The First Emperor</i> (Tan Dun)
February 3, 2007	<i>La Bohème</i> (Puccini)
February 10, 2007	<i>Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci</i> (Mascagni/Leoncavallo)
February 17, 2007	<i>Jenufa</i> (Janáček)
February 24, 2007	<i>Eugene Onegin</i> (Tchaikovsky)
March 3, 2007	<i>Simon Boccanegra</i> (Verdi)
March 10, 2007	<i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i> (Wagner)
March 17, 2007	<i>Faust</i> (Gounod)
March 24, 2007	<i>Il Barbiere di Siviglia</i> (Rossini)
March 31, 2007	<i>Die Aegyptische Helena</i> (Strauss)
April 7, 2007	<i>Andrea Chenier</i> (Giordano)
April 14, 2007	<i>Turandot</i> (Puccini)
April 21, 2007	<i>Giulio Cesare</i> (Handel)
April 28, 2007	<i>Il Trittico</i> (Puccini)
May 5, 2007	<i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> (Gluck)

## *Opera Alla Pasta — Sunday Afternoon at the Opera*

February 25, 2007

Rossini's *IL TURCO IN ITALIA*

Called a dramma buffo the libretto is by Felice Romani who worked with Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti on at least twenty operas. First produced at La Scala in August, 1814 the story concerns a poet, in search of a subject, manipulating the Turkish prince, Selim, sung by Ruggiero Raimondi and the capricious and temperamental Donna Fiorilla, marvellously portrayed by Cecilia Bartoli, not to mention his wife and her husband and her would-be lover in a hilarious set of intrigues. Conducted by Franz Welser-Most the Zurich Opera orchestra and chorus add brilliance to this excellent production from 2002. Although not as successful as L'Italiana in Algeri this opera was revived in 1950 by Maria Callas and since then has been accepted as one of Rossini's most delightful comic operas. The performance starts at 2:00 p.m. at St. Anthony's Soccer Club. Dinner follows at 5 p.m. **Reservations required: 613-830-9827 or [kmitts1637@rogers.com](mailto:kmitts1637@rogers.com)**

# Opera Within Reach

## OTTAWA

### Opera Lyra Ottawa

*Black & White Opera Soiree* February 17, 2007

*Otello* by Verdi March 31, April 2, 4 & 7, 2007

All performances are at the NAC. Information:  
613-233-9200 x221 [www.operalyra.ca](http://www.operalyra.ca)

### Cathedral Arts

Nicole Cabell May 19, 2007

Performances are at Christ Church Cathedral  
Information: 613-567-1787  
[www.cathedralarts.com](http://www.cathedralarts.com)

### Orpheus Society

*Guys and Dolls* by Menken March 2 -10, 2007

### Savoy Society

*Iolanthe* by Gilbert & Sullivan March 23-25 & 28-31, 2007

Orpheus and Savoy performances are at Centrepointheatre.  
Information: 613-580-2700  
[www.centrepointheatre.com](http://www.centrepointheatre.com)

## MONTREAL

### L'Opéra de Montréal

*Lakmé* by Delibes Feb 3, 8, 10 & 14, 2007  
Performances are in Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier at Place des Arts

*Il mondo della luna* by Haydn March 27, 30, 31,  
April 1, 2, 4, 2007 Performances at Monument-National.  
Information 1-514-985-2258 [www.operademontreal.com](http://www.operademontreal.com)

## TORONTO

### Canadian Opera Company

*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* by Shostakovich  
Jan. 31, Feb 3, 7, 10, 15, 18, 20 & 23, 2007

*Faust* by Gounod  
Feb. 1, 4, 6, 9, 11, 14, 17, 21 & 24, 2007

*Luisa Miller* by Verdi  
April 10, 13, 15, 18, 22, 28, May 3, 5, 9 & 11, 2007

All performances are at the Four Seasons Centre.  
Information: 1-800-250-4653 [www.coc.ca](http://www.coc.ca)

### Opera Atelier

*Orpheus & Euridyce* by Gluck  
April 28, 29, May 2, 4, 5, 2007

All performances are at the Elgin Theatre.  
Information: 1-416-872-5555 [www.operaatelier.com](http://www.operaatelier.com)

### Opera in Concert

*Zaide* by Mozart January 28, 2007

*Die Tote Stadt* by Korngold April 1, 2007

Performances 2:30 p.m. in the Jane Mallett Theatre  
Information: 416-922-2147 [www.operainconcert.com](http://www.operainconcert.com)

## SYRACUSE

### Syracuse Opera

*Lucia di Lammermoor* by Donizetti March 2 & 4, 2007

Information: 1-315-476-7372 [www.operasyracuse.com](http://www.operasyracuse.com)

**Check for times and other details on the Websites.**