

Newsletter • Bulletin

Winter 2012

www.ncos.ca

Hiver 2012

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

1993 - 2011 The Tenth Brian Law Opera Competition

A Fine Score of Tradition Maintained. by Ute Davis

The 10th Brian Law Opera Competition kept the high standard previously achieved and proved a very successful evening. The First Unitarian Congregation venue was full, if not overflowing. In a preliminary round, a local jury consisting of Barbara J. Clark, Laurence Ewashko and Charlotte Stewart selected six finalists from 23 entries. These were: **Jana Miller**, soprano, accompanist Jennifer Szeto; **Erinne-Colleen Laurin**, soprano, accompanist Mathew Walton; **Emanuel Lebel**, baritone, accompanist Judith Ginsburg; **Frédérique Drolet**, soprano, with Judith Ginsburg; **Arminè Kassabian**, mezzo-soprano, with Judith Ginsburg; **Bethany Horst**, soprano, with Judith Ginsburg.

Murray Kitts opened the event and noted that this year's competition was dedicated to Bobbi Cain, a founder and leader of the Opera Society in its earlier years. Rob Clipperton then took over as host for the evening and ran the event with his usual flair. He read letters of congratulation from Honorary Patron Gerald Finley in England and from Brian Law in New Zealand. Rob proved unflappable, despite my delivering a judge almost an hour behind schedule, due to the Santa Claus parade street closures having isolated his downtown hotel! Also, at the last minute, judge Donna Brown had to cancel, due to illness. However it was extremely fortunate that Cavaliere Maria Pellegrini was in the audience and this accomplished soprano and teacher graciously agreed to join the panel of judges. We are most grateful to her for donating her services, together with the distinguished Sandra Graham and Richard Turp.



Each of the six competitors sang three arias with introductory recitative. The accompanists, who are too often not well appreciated in vocal competitions, also gave very talented performances. Following a brief intermission and to allow the judges to confer, Philippe Sly, singing with superb pianist Jean Desmarais, gave us a fabulous 30 minute concert of three operatic arias and two French "art songs" (see p15). The audience truly wanted to hear more and Philippe obliged us

with a most delightful *Fischerweise* by Schubert. Those who last heard Philippe in 2009 when he won the Brian Law competition commented on the smooth maturation of his voice in the interim, under the expert coaching of the Canadian Opera Company and the Merola program at San Francisco Opera. Audience members fluent in the four languages in which he sang commented on his flawless diction.

Rob Clipperton then held the draw for door prizes, donated by Tom McCool and Marjorie Clegg, of opera CD and DVD recordings of some of our previous Brian Law winners. Our judges reappeared and lined up the contestants on stage for Richard Turp with his usual charm and wit to deliver the verdict:

1st prize (\$ 5000) to Arminè Kassabian
presented by Murray Kitts.

2nd prize (\$ 3000) to Bethany Horst
presented by Murray Kitts.

3rd prize (\$ 1000) to Jana Miller
donated and presented by Cav. Pasqualina Adamo

(continued on page 2)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Very good news and very bad news. The good news is that we had a most successful competition and that three excellent young singers were awarded the top prizes. So many people told me that the latest Brian Law Competition had gone so well that I really was not prepared to take some criticisms seriously. In the first place I am "backstage" so to speak and do not hear the singers clearly. I could tell by the audience reaction that, if we had an audience favourite prize, it would have been won by someone who was not one of the top three winners. Fortunately, we had three excellent judges who were unanimous in their decision. Special thanks to Maria Pellegrini who came to our rescue at the last moment. We hope Donna Brown recovered quickly. If someone would like to undertake raising the money for a special prize and also to supervise the voting and counting of ballots on competition night then we could have an audience favourite prize.

The news from Opera Lyra is very disturbing. One of the main purposes of the National Capital Opera Society was to promote the return of opera productions to the main stage of the NAC. To have both one complete production and one unstaged production cancelled is a blow to opera lovers in Ottawa. The only bright spot is the retention of the Young Artists Program which, I'm sure, we will continue to support. Personally I was thrilled when it was announced that Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* was to be presented in concert. The OLO chorus has developed tremendously over the years and was up to the challenges of this work. What a disappointment for the singers as well as the community with the cancellation. We will be watching carefully OLO's plans for the future and I'm sure all our members will do all they can to help the revitalization of our opera company.



1993 - 2011 The Tenth Brian Law Opera Competition

A Fine Score of Tradition Maintained (continued)

The National Capital Opera Society is profoundly indebted to the three judges. Each brings enormous expertise in musicology and vocal artistry as well as extensive experience in both performance and teaching. I note that this trio has collective fluency in English, French, Italian, German and Russian. Perhaps, only if our eventual winner had chosen to perform in her native Armenian, might she have given them some difficulty!

Most of the large audience enjoyed the opportunity to meet the judges and congratulate the contestants over snacks and drinks organized by Peggy and Bob Pflug. At the reception I heard appreciative comments of the well-organized event, also praise for the clarity and highly informative program, the handiwork of Renate Chartrand. The NCOS can be justifiably proud of their iconic competition. The 10th Anniversary event showed quality of organization under Chairman Murray Kitts which would have left Bobbi Cain very pleased indeed.

(photos on pages 5 to 8)

Editor's note: Detailed information on the singers' arias can be found on pages 13 to 15.

Thank you

Thank you to all those who have contributed to the newsletter during the past year.

Your grateful editors:
David Williams & Tom McCool

Membership Renewal

A gentle reminder that newsletters will only be sent to members in good standing. The annual membership dues for the NCOS are for the calendar year. Now is the time to renew for 2012; please use the membership form at www.ncos.ca and forward your payment for renewal, with any changes of information, to the Treasurer, Gordon Metcalfe, 1782 Devlin Crescent, Ottawa, ON K1H 5T6

Fraught, Fractious and Fallible Families by Shelagh Williams

For its Fall season, the Canadian Opera Company (COC) presented Gluck's *Iphigenia in Taurus* (originally *Iphigénie en Tauride*) and Verdi's *Rigoletto*, certainly different operatic looks at families, both as to time, style of musical composition and directorial concept.

Iphigenia in Taurus (the Crimea), based on Euripides' play, was a nice follow-up to last season's COC production of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, in another of returning Canadian director Robert Carsen's productions, both first seen at the Chicago Lyric Opera in 2006. *Iphigenia* was Gluck's last big work and masterpiece, the culmination of his "reform operas", and Carsen, again with German set and costume designer Tobias Hoheisel, matched his production to Gluck's use of musical simplicity to emphasize the emotions and drama involved in the story. Using a similar black on black theme, the setting was a huge black box and the costumes were all black but, fortunately, the cast was intriguingly lit by Carsen and Peter Van Praet. They often produced silhouettes or large ominous shadows but I was still glad we were near the front! The opera opened arrestingly with Iphigenia's name chalked in capitals on the back wall and as she sang of her dream recapping her bloody family history, the names of her father Agamemnon, mother Clytemnestra, and brother Orestes were each written on other walls or the floor. These



were later erased as they were killed in her dream - a very clever visual aid! Again, as in *Orfeo*, there are only three major solo roles, but here the excellent COC chorus sang from the back of the pit, being strikingly replaced on stage by a splendid troupe of dancers, under debuting French choreographer Philippe Giraudeau. The dancers portrayed everything from multiple dead bodies littering the floor, the victims of Iphigenia, to the Furies, bathed in red light, tormenting Orestes for killing

his own mother. The opening family history was illustrated by all the dancers repeatedly miming the throat-slashing of the various family members, alternating the sexes of victims and perpetrators as appropriate, with water flowing to represent the blood - effective, but possibly a record number of deaths in one opera! Young Spanish conductor Pablo Heras-Casado managed the COC orchestra well, providing a strong basis for his superb soloists. Among the minor roles, BLOC winner bass-baritone Philippe Sly, now a member of the COC Ensemble Studio, sang A Scythian Man, and was tall and lithe enough to blend in with the dancers on stage. It was certainly luxury casting to have Canadian bass Robert Pomakov for the Old Servant and Canadian mezzo Lauren Segal as the goddess Diana. Suitably stentorian was bass-baritone Mark S. Doss as the villainous Thoas, King of Scythia, forcing Iphigenia to sacrifice all newcomers to save his own skin from a prophesied death. It was not until the very end that Iphigenia realized that her next victim was to be her long-lost brother, Orestes, but his best friend Pylades appeared in the nick of time to kill Thoas. Then Diana's voice absolved Orestes and sent the Greeks home to Mycenae, for Orestes to reign as king. When we first heard young Canadian Joseph Kaiser he was a baritone, but he has now blossomed into an even better tenor, with the good looks and stage presence to give us a strong faithful Pylades. Canadian baritone Russell Braun was of course stellar as Orestes, and sang well with Kaiser as each tried to save the other from death. Making her COC debut, American mezzo



Fraught, Fractious and Fallible Families (continued)

Susan Graham has made the role of Iphigenia her own, and she brought all her knowledge of the opera to play as she worked musically through her bleak psychological journey, near-mad at times, to the happy ending. To signify this new dawn, the black box rose to let in a piercingly bright light, illuminating Iphigenia, Orestes and Pylades, surrounded by the omnipresent dead bodies. We were glad we had been to the MET production last winter in NYC, since it was very understandable and spelled things out. The COC production with no set to speak of, no props, no visual Greek references, sometimes poor sight lines, and not even the physical appearance of the goddess Diana from on high at the end when she arrived to put everything right, was definitely not as clear, and would have been a real challenge to a new opera-goer. Nevertheless, this production melded an excellent directorial concept and execution with surpassing musical values to provide an exciting, satisfying, unforgettable evening.

Christopher Alden is probably my least favourite director, and it was his much maligned and controversial production of Verdi's *Rigoletto* prepared for Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2000 - but never revived! - that was to be the basis for the COC's new production. A decade later and possibly after some revisions, the production was not as objectionable as I had feared! Fortunately our pre-opera chat lecturer explained Alden's concept for the opera - it was all a flashback nightmare of *Rigoletto*'s! This conceit and setting made for a dramatically interesting creation, but not everything quite worked, resulting in some incoherent and illogical scenes. He had Canadian set and costume designer Michael Levine and lighting designer Duane Schuler provide a huge, lush nineteenth century London gentleman's club, a symbol of male domination, and it was used

for ALL the scenes in the opera - possibly a cost-saving measure! However, club members, all dressed alike in tails, also watched and upstaged scenes supposedly in other locales and wandered about, so one wasn't quite sure whether or not they were part of the action - all very confusing! Fortunately COC Music Director Johannes Debus had the excellent orchestra, chorus and soloists to please our ears, even if our minds and eyes found the production wanting. Robert Pomakov was an excellent Count Monterone, delivering an awesome curse to the Duke and Rigoletto, and, in one of Alden's usual unpleasant touches, receiving for his pains an actual on-stage hanging (using an unbelievable dummy!). Canadian mezzo Megan Lathem was fine in her nominal role as Gilda's home companion, but also got to serve in the club, spoon feed the Duke and pull a rather tatty curtain back and forth across the stage to indicate non-existent scene changes, all very distracting. At the inn, Canadian bass Phillip Ens was a great ominously threatening assassin Sparafucile, but debuting American mezzo Kendall Gladen as his sexy sister Maddalena could not be heard. All three singers in the principal roles were making their COC bows. Russian soprano Ekaterina Sadovnikova proved visually and vocally up to the role of *Rigoletto*'s

beautiful, precious daughter Gilda, giving us a charming *Caro nome*, and tried to escape the clutches of the kidnapping courtiers by climbing a white ladder which miraculously descended from the club ceiling - certainly a novel way to play the scene! The Duke of Mantua of American tenor Dmitri Pittas was good looking, with a suitable swagger, and a lovely voice for his signature *La donna e mobile*. There was another rather clever bit of stage business at the inn at the end, when the Duke took off his clothes to seduce Maddalena and left them about for Gilda to put on to disguise herself as a boy! - most of the other undress was

photo by Michael Cooper



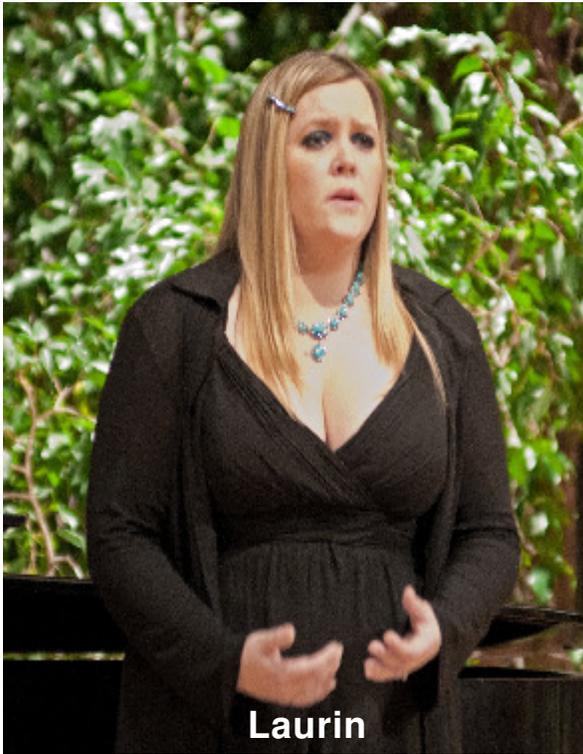
2011 Brian Law Opera Competition

The Winners

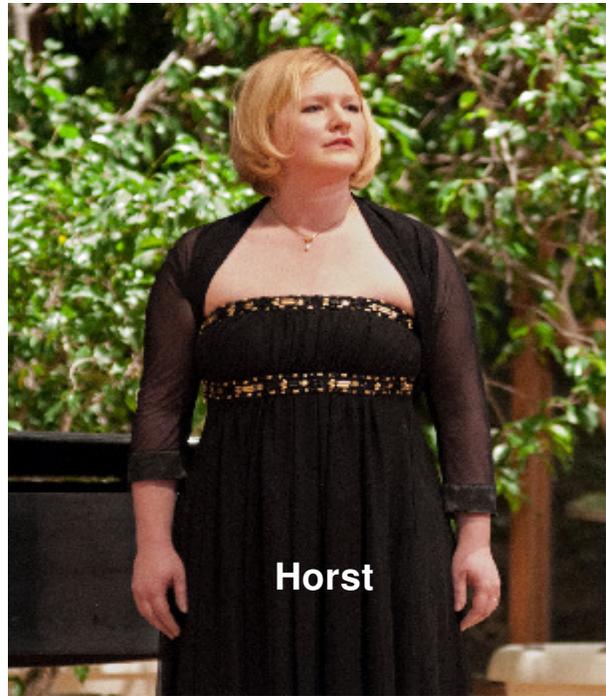


The Finalists





Laurin



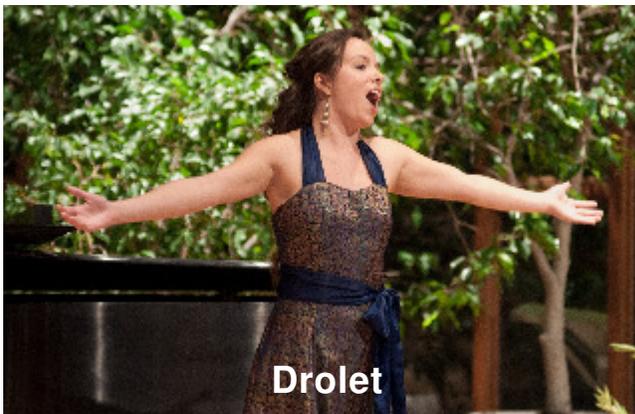
Horst



Miller



Lebel



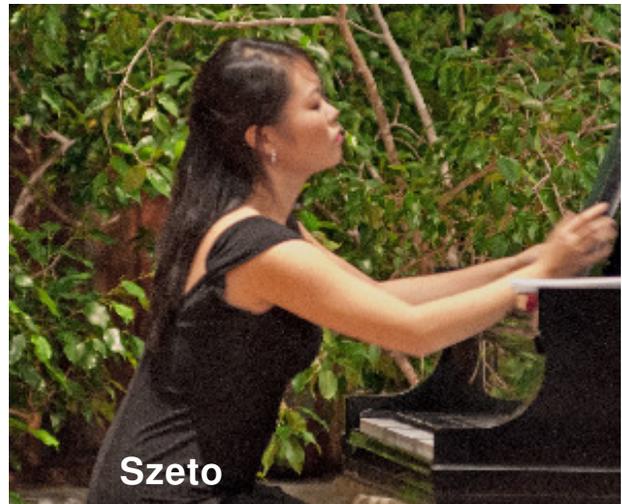
Drolet



Kassabian



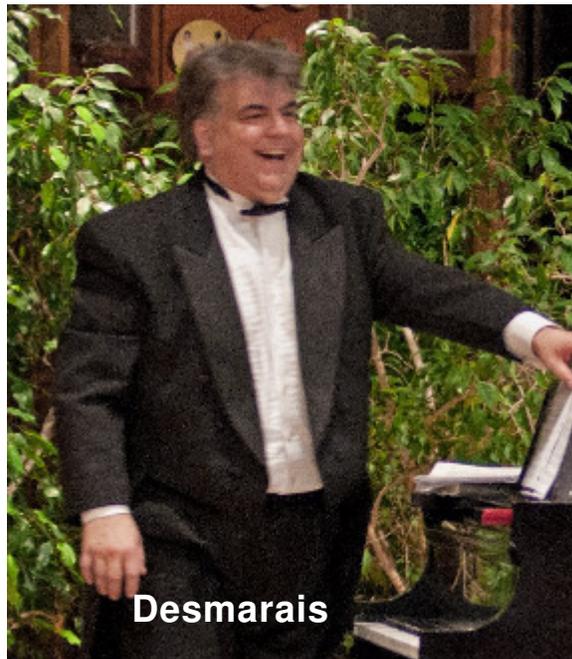
Ginsberg



Szeto



Walton



Desmarais

Accompanists

Judith Ginsberg

Mathew Walton

Jennifer Szeto

Guest Recitalists

Philippe Sly

&

Pianist Jean Desmarais

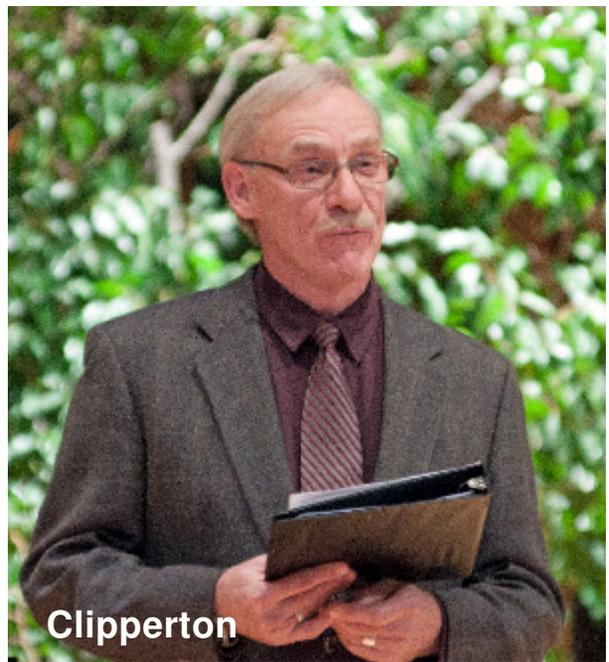


Sly

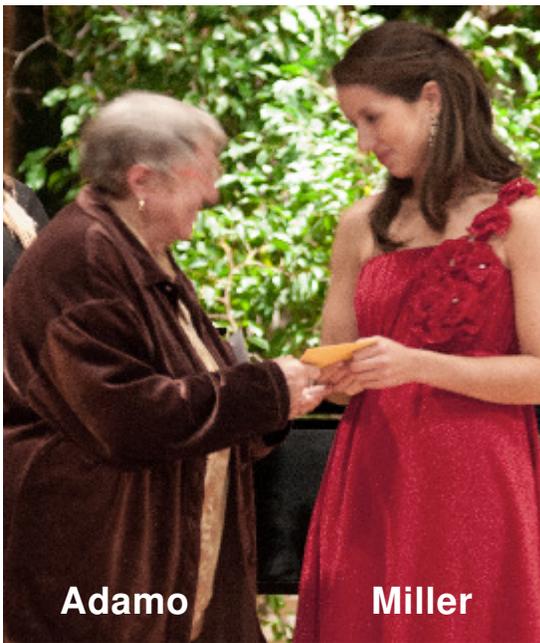
Photos by Klaus S.



Kitts



Clipperton



Adamo

Miller



Sly

Turp



Drolet

Turp

Kassabian



Drolet

Chartrand

Fraught, Fractious and Fallible Families (continued)



quite gratuitous. Hawaiian baritone Quinn Kelsey spent a good bit of the opera sitting in a chair at the front of the stage, with the action behind him, but when given a chance proved an ideal Rigoletto, able to stalk the stage awkwardly without the addition of a cosmetic hump and to act both the nasty court jester and loving father, all the while vividly singing his heart out. One missed the storm but, fortunately, for the final scene between Rigoletto and Gilda, Alden had the sense to keep it all very simple and let Verdi speak. On a darkened stage there was a white shroud which Rigoletto opened to reveal many small red hearts covering a dying Gilda as, heartbroken, he realized the curse had come true. Alden may be an inventive director, but his anti-textualisms (staging going against the text) can be very annoying, since one must strongly suspend disbelief throughout, although one could be mollified because the musical values of this production were exemplary, as would be expected from the COC. However, I fear this weird Regietheatre or Eurotrash production may be a portent of more to come at the COC!

Events You Could Have Enjoyed

by Shelagh Williams

Opera Lyra Ottawa (OLO) Opera Studio:

This October's offering was another charming production, *The Barber of Bytown*, a gold rush adaptation by Ann Hodges of Rossini's *Barber of Seville*, originally for Vancouver Opera as the *Barber of Barkerville*, and here for OLO and our Porcupine Gold Rush. Hodges also directed and Judith Ginsburg, OLO's Principal Repetiteur, was music director and pianist for this spirited creation. Mezzo

Armine Kassabian and tenor David Lafleur were the young couple in love, Rosie and Al, aided by baritone Emanuel Lebel as the barber Figaro and thwarted by returning bass Brian Wehrle as Bart. All the familiar tunes, two of this year's BLOC finalists, Al disguised as a Royal Northwest Mounted Policeman, several chases, and Rosie's pies flying about made for a lovely, lively presentation!

Opera Within Reach

Please check the Society's Website (www.ncos.ca) for information about opera productions in Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto and many other centres.

Events you might wish to enjoy by David Williams

Carleton University Baroque Opera Ensemble will present excerpts from *Les Indes galantes* and *Hippolyte et Aricie* by Jean-Philippe Rameau Tuesday, December 6, 2011, 7:30 p.m., Kailash Mital Theatre. The opera will be performed in concert version only without staging. www2.carleton.ca/music/events/

Thirteen Strings will present *Eternal Light Divine* - a spectacular all-baroque Christmas concert featuring Ottawa's own Shannon Mercer. She'll sing Scarlatti's *Christmas Cantata* and some of Handel's most beloved melodies. Dominion Chalmers Church, 355 Cooper St. Ottawa - 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, December 6, 2011. <http://thirteenstrings.ca/>

Cathedral Arts presents *A Christmas Concert* with Marie-Josée Lord and the Cathedral Men and Boys. December 10, 2011, 7:30 p.m. at Christ Church Cathedral. Information: 613-567-1787

Christmas with the Chamber Players of Canada will feature soprano Monica Whicher. 7:30 p.m. December 20, 2011. Dominion Chalmers Church, 355 Cooper St., Ottawa. www.chamberplayers.ca

St. Luke's Recital Series will present *House of Opera, Etcetera*. Sunday, January 8, 2012, 7:30 p.m., 760 Somerset W, Ottawa. <http://stlukesottawa.ca/>

Ottawa Chamber Orchestra will feature Matthew Larkin and Maria Knapik in a concert on January 14, 2012, 8:00 p.m at Dominion Chalmers Church.

The University of Ottawa Opera Company presents Mozart's *Don Giovanni* - January 26, 27 & 28 at 7:00 p.m. and January 29, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. Alumni Auditorium, University Centre (85 University). www.music.uottawa.ca/

The Ottawa Choral Society will feature mezzo-soprano Wallis Giunta in *A Night at the Opera With Mozart* and *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* - Monday, February 20, 2012, 8 p.m., St. Joseph's Church (Wilbrod at Cumberland). www.ottawachoralsociety.com

Edith Wiens will present a Voice Masterclass. 24 March, 1:00 p.m., University of Ottawa. www.music.uottawa.ca/

The Chamber Players of Canada will feature Philippe Sly. 8:00 p.m. March 5, 2012. Dominion Chalmers Church, 355 Cooper St., Ottawa. www.chamberplayers.ca

Carleton University Baroque Opera Ensemble will present *Alcina* by George Frideric Handel. Saturday, March 24, 2012 at 7:30 p.m., Off-campus venue TBA, and Sunday, March 25, 2012, Time TBA, Kailash Mital Theatre. The opera will be performed in concert version only without staging. www2.carleton.ca/music/events/

The Opera Lyra Ottawa Studio Competition will be held on Thursday April 5, 2012, NAC Fourth Stage, 7:00p.m. www.operalyra.ca/

Thirteen Strings will present a semi-staged performance of Handel's greatest opera *Giulio Cesare* in conjunction with the Centre for Opera Studies in Italy. Friday, April 27, at 8:00 p.m., Dominion-Chalmers Church, 355 Cooper St. Ottawa. <http://thirteenstrings.ca/>

The Savoy Society of Ottawa has announced that their 2011-2012 Show will be Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*. April 26 - 29, 2012, Adult High School, 300 Rochester Street, Ottawa. www.ottawasavoyssociety.org/

Music for a Sunday Afternoon will feature , soprano Joyce El-Khoury - April 29, 2012, 2:00 p.m., National Gallery of Canada. www2.nac-cna.ca/en/orchestra

Vancouver Opera this March will be presenting *The Barber of Seville* with former BLOC winner Joshua Hopkins singing the lead role. www.vancouveropera.ca

Saturday Afternoon at the Opera

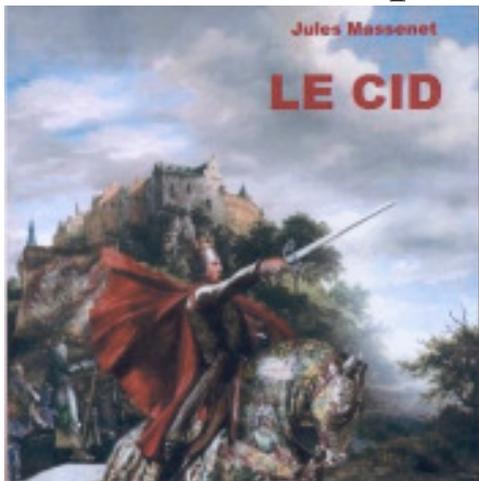
December 3	Handel's <i>Rodelinda</i>
December 10	Gounod's <i>Faust</i>
December 17	Puccini's <i>Madama Butterfly</i>
December 24	Donizetti's <i>La Fille du Regiment</i>
December 31	Strauss's <i>Die Fledermaus</i> (Archival broadcast from January 20, 1951)
January 7	Humperdinck's <i>Hansel und Gretel</i>
January 14	Bellini's <i>Norma</i> (Archival broadcast from April 14, 1971)
January 21	<i>The Enchanted Island</i>
January 28	Puccini's <i>Tosca</i>
February 4	Donizetti's <i>Anna Bolena</i>
February 11	Wagner's <i>Götterdämmerung</i>
February 18	Rossini's <i>Il Barbiere di Siviglia</i>
February 25	Verdi's <i>Ernani</i>
March 3	Verdi's <i>Aida</i>
March 10	Mozart's <i>Don Giovanni</i>
March 17	Mussorgsky's <i>Khovanshchina</i>
March 24	Verdi's <i>Macbeth</i>
March 31	Donizetti's <i>L'Elisir d'Amore</i>
April 7	Massenet's <i>Manon</i>
April 14	Verdi's <i>La traviata</i>
April 21	Wagner's <i>Siegfried</i>
April 28	Wagner's <i>Die Walküre</i>
May 5	Janáček's <i>The Makropulos Case</i>

Detailed descriptions of each broadcast indicating specific times and casts are available at The Met's website: <http://www.metoperafamily.org>

Opera alla Pasta

Sunday Afternoon at the Opera

Two excellent productions of two great operas....

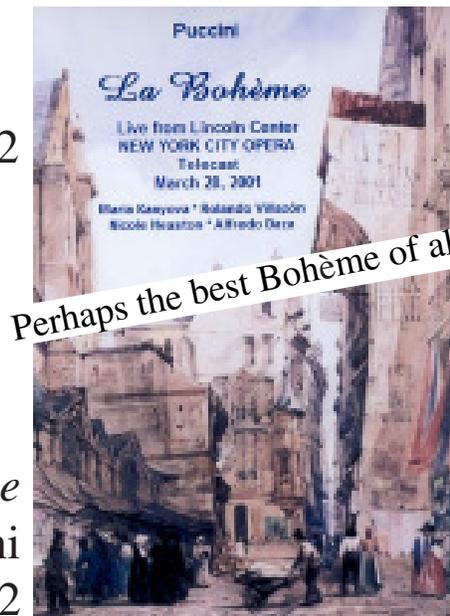


Le Cid
by Massenet
February 19, 2012

Domingo as Spain's great hero



La Bohème
by Puccini
May 20, 2012



DVD presentations begin at 2 P.M. at St. Anthony's Soccer Club and are followed by a delicious meal. Cost: \$20. Reserve at least 4 days prior to the showings by calling Elizabeth Meller at 613-721-7121

The Met: *Live in HD*

Rodelinda – December 3

Faust – December 10

The Enchanted Island – January 21

Götterdämmerung – February 11

Ernani – February 25

Manon – April 7

La Traviata – April 14

For complete details of the Metropolitan Opera's Live in HD Series (including the dates of the encore transmissions) please consult The Met's website:

www.metoperafamily.org

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 liebe," 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.)

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

Ute Davis wrote:

Philippe Sly gave us a fabulous 30 minute concert, singing with superb pianist Jean Desmarais. The amazing, young winner of the recent Metropolitan Opera’s National Council Auditions opened with a grippingly dramatic “Ah! per sempre” from *I Puritani*, he went on to display the lustrous bass-baritone timbre with excellent phrasing and length of line in a broad range of works. Philippe then sang French “art songs” by Duparc and Chausson and the breathtakingly beautiful “Oh, Du mein holder Abendstern” from *Tannhäuser* which has moved me

to tears on each of the three times I have been privileged to hear him perform this. He finished with Prince Igor’s aria. The audience truly wanted to hear more and Philippe obliged us with a most delightful “Fischerweise” by Schubert.

Those who last heard Philippe Sly two years ago when he won the Brian Law competition commented on the smooth maturation of his voice in the interim, under the expert coaching of the Canadian Opera Company and the Merola program at San Francisco Opera. Audience members fluent in the four languages in which he sang commented on his flawless diction.