



World Premiere of a Canadian Opera! by Shelagh Williams

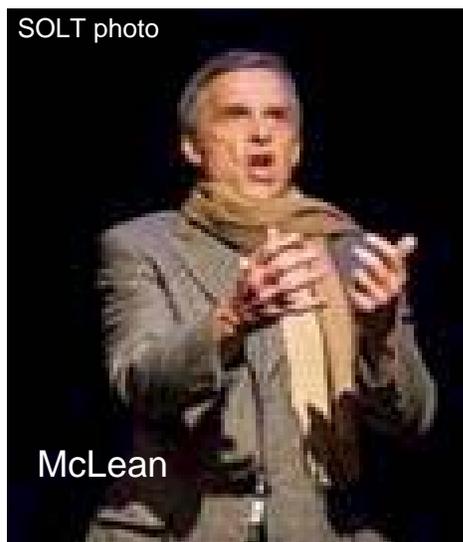
Summer Opera Lyric Theatre (SOLT) in Toronto celebrated its 30th anniversary season of summer opera festivals with its first world premiere: Victor Davies and Eugene Benson's *Tale of Two Cities*. This is Benson's 6th opera libretto, his second for Davies, while Davies has written four other operas, 8 musicals, and many film and TV scores and hundreds of songs. Their experience showed in a well crafted, very moving exposition of the well-known Dickens classic story of English lawyer Sydney Carton and exiled French aristocrat Charles Darnay. Both are in love with Lucie Manette, in London, at the time of the French Revolution and Reign of Terror, in Paris.

SOLT's production was also of the high standard necessary to successfully create this work as a grand opera. SOLT's General Director and here director, Guillermo Silva-Marin, chose an experienced and proven cast. The headliner, as Sydney Carton for both casts, was special guest tenor James McLean, with 20 years resident in Germany singing as first lyric tenor in opera houses in Nurnberg and Essen, plus elsewhere in Germany and Europe, and recently appointed to the voice faculty at Wilfrid Laurier University. Silva Marin chose most of his other principals from singers whom he had already engaged as General Director of both Toronto Operetta Theatre and Opera in Concert! (see Summer 2016 Newsletter)

Silva-Marin is a good and experienced director, and immediately caught our attention in the opening ball scene with the cast in masks and multi-coloured swirling capes, as the French aristocrats blissfully ushered in the New Year of that fatal year, 1789! With swift changes of furniture, we were transported to London and back to France, from scenes in comfortable surroundings to the courtroom and to jail. The cast was well deployed throughout, and the singers' excellent diction (in English) and good acting kept the story line clear. Costumes were suitably old

fashioned yet timeless, and the English men sported stylishly tied neck scarves to distinguish French and English characters, especially when one singer, baritone Austin Larusson, played three roles. Michael Rose as musical director elicited good performances from his singers, but his piano playing was, I felt, uniformly loud and somewhat lacking in subtlety.

In the leading role of Carton, James McLean successfully and sympathetically developed his role



from that of the hard-drinking, nonchalantly brilliant lawyer to the self-sacrificing hero. In our cast, baritone Stuart Graham had a rich voice and forcefully portrayed the nasty, selfish Marquis St. Evremonde, the epitome of the evil French aris-

tocrat taking advantage of his social inferiors. Mezzo Eugenia Dermentzis got Madame Defarge to a T, her voice and manner memorably embodying her implacable antipathy to the upper classes in general and hatred of the Marquis St. Evremonde, and all of his family, in particular, for what he had done to her sister and brother. Strong support from tenors Stefan Fehr as Charles Darnay, ne St. Evremonde, and Sean Catheroy as a limping Dr. Manette, and young soprano Alexandra Brennan as Lucie Manette, enabled the family group saved by Carton to be sympathetically portrayed.

No doubt further work will be done on this opera before its next performances, but this was a most

President's Message – September 2016

We were back at the Pflug's for our annual summer meeting. Perhaps it was the work of the special quality of the food and wines consumed but it seems to me that we accomplished much more at this meeting than usual. More likely it was the great amount of advance preparation that was made for the next Brian Law Competition to be held at Southminster United Church on October 14th, 2017.

Also there's good news for our Opera alla pasta enthusiasts. We have added another session to last years' five and, as a result, can present now what our selection of DVDs will be and when they will take place. We certainly did miss Elizabeth Meller not only for her delicious contributions of food but also her vast knowledge of opera lore and performances. Thanks to her the number of people attending showings has increased substantially over the years.

As far as our bulletin is concerned we are determined to see that information about coming events

arrives before events take place and is thus valuable to our readers. One coming event that I hope you will want to attend will be my tribute to Gerald Finley done in the "High C's and High Tea" style of the Opera Lyra Guild. This will take place on November 6 at 1:30 p.m. The location is still being finalised. Contact me or check the web site for information.

Finally I feel obliged to appeal to you, our members, to be generous in your support especially in this coming year when we celebrate another milestone in the history of our beloved nation. Having recovered from the financial setbacks of three years ago the Board is determined to continue cutting expenses so that most of the money raised from contributions will go to those talented young singers who aspire to thrill us and the world with the wonders of opera.

Murray Kitts

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Editor's Corner

Hopefully you enjoy reading the articles in the NCOS Newsletter. However, as you will have noticed, the articles are mainly submitted by only three or four contributors. I would encourage all of our members to consider submitting an article, especially if you have attended an opera performed in a distant location. Comments on books or DVDs related to opera are also welcome. If you have anything to say, pull out your electronic devices and hit the keys!

David Williams

For information on the National Capital Opera Society or the Brian Law Opera Competition contact Murray Kitts at 613-830-9827 or consult www.ncos.ca

World Premiere of a Canadian Opera! (continued)

enjoyable production, very dramatic, yet touching, and as Sydney Carton at the end sang the famous lines - *It is a far, far better thing I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest I go to than I have ever known* - I found myself in tears!

SOLT's offerings are more usually established operas, both well known and not so, and we started our opera immersion weekend with Handel's *Julius Caesar*, sung in English. We were apprehensive when Silva-Marin's introduction had an addendum: the music director and pianist Maria Jung, who was pregnant, had her baby arrive early! Fortunately, the harpsichordist, Amy Lee, was able to learn the piano part in 10 days, and so the show went on, tho' without harpsichord!

Silva-Marin managed to conjure up Ancient Egypt using six chairs and a throne, with drapes of leopard print falling down to each, and a fancy pedestal! He obviously had a surfeit of excellent female singers, and so *Julius Caesar*, double cast as usual, had six females and only one male in each cast, with four of the male roles being sung as pant roles!

We especially enjoyed mezzo Catharin Carew as a strong Caesar and soprano Sydney Clarke as a feisty young Sesto, set on avenging his father Pompey's assassination. Armenian-Canadian soprano Lynn Isnar as Cleopatra looked marvelous in a regal red gown when she was being queen, and changed into a sexy purple number when she was disguised as Lydia, trying to ensnare Caesar! She also sang beautifully, especially her *Piango*, while tied up by her brother Tolomeo! Baritone Austin Larusson (also in *Two Cities*), the only male on stage, looked great, bare chested and in leather kilt and Egyptian neck-piece, sang well, and actually managed to make Tolomeo's General Achilles seem sympathetic as he romantically pursued Pompey's widow, Cornelia. This haughty Roman was sung by Chelsea Pringle-Duchemin, while Sasha Chaplygina as the evil Tolomeo and Grace Lee as Nireno, the eunuch servant, rounded out the cast. This was a well sung and produced performance, in spite of there being nary a countertenor in sight!

Our final opera was Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann*. Since Offenbach died before he finished the

work, it exists in several forms and can be played in different orders! We enjoyed a version with the Venice tale coming after that involving Olympia, the doll, and before that with Antonia, the singer. Stella, Hoffmann's love, never appeared, and the epilogue was short and sweet!

Silva-Marin gave us a most entertaining production. Clever use of mirrors in the Venice scene made us see Hoffmann, but not his reflection, while colour coding the courtesan Giulietta and her friends in red was most appropriate. Similarly, the sad scene with the dying Antonia was set in blue. Raisa Nakhmanovich, the music director and pianist, was very good, playing with expression and not covering the singers.

The role of the story-teller Hoffmann was well sung and portrayed by Patrick Jang, interestingly, also a lawyer - one hopes he keeps on with his singing. Mezzo Sway Chen sang both the important trouser role of Hoffmann's friend and protector, Nicklausse, and also Antonia's mother in the final act. Three different sopranos played Hoffmann's past loves. Young Eun Yoo, in a beautiful costume, managed, with a touch of humour, the high coloratura of the mechanical doll, Olympia. Kari Abraham sang the sultry Venetian, Giulietta, and Claudiane Moreau the touching young singer, Antonia. Three of Hoffmann's four evil antagonists were engagingly sung by bass-baritone Korin Thomas-Smith, and the higher Dappertutto by baritone Stuart Graham (also in *Two Cities*). Tenor Edward Larocque played the various servants, including the hilariously deaf Frantz, and bass Mikhail Shemet sang Antonia's caring father. It all finished up in the tavern with a merry drinking song, sending us home happy and well entertained!

Guillermo Silva-Marin wears three hats in the SOLT productions, customarily covering the three roles of stage director, lighting designer and set décor! SOLT annually produces three fully staged, double-cast operas with piano accompaniment, this year all in English, eliminating the need for surtitles. Ten weeks of training and the variety of the repertoire provide younger singers (37 artists this year) with the experience of performing, and opera lovers with great performances of less familiar operas - a win-win situation!

Führerbunker - a New Canadian Chamber Opera

by Shelagh Williams

It is not often one has the opportunity to see and hear a new Canadian opera, and definitely not one by an Ottawa composer! However, June 15th at the Mayfair Theatre, Andrew Ager presented the Ottawa premiere of his 45 minute long *Führerbunker*, which he dubbed “a morbid historical drama”. Happily, this was to a full house - they ran out of programmes and were actually asking for the return of any “extras” for the last arrivals!

As the title suggests, the libretto, also by Ager, is based on survivors’ accounts and covers Adolf Hitler’s last 10 days (Apr. 20-30, 1945) in the bunker under the Berlin Reichs Chancellory. At this time, Berlin is being shelled just before being overrun by the Russians. In a nutshell, in 10 short scenes, Hitler rejects escape, becomes enraged when he realizes he has lost the war, marries Eva Braun, and finally with Braun commits suicide, as the story spirals down inexorably. They are, of course, surrounded by high ranking Nazi colleagues and associates, with whom they interact.

The setting provided four areas: garden, map room, sitting room with nice furniture from St. Matthew’s, and a third room supplied with a large film projector and a small shelved catch-all for various props. The staging was well worked out, moving people around efficiently and effectively, and the costumes, from Malabar, were good. The smoke effect for the cremation at the end was quite amazing!

Ager, not wanting to glorify or romanticize the Nazis, has written modern, spare and non-melodious music, creating a grim, claustrophobic atmosphere. The ongoing noise of shelling throughout added to the feeling of dread. The composer was the music director and played the piano, his minimalistic score providing little support for the cast, which sang over it. Hitler’s music was very uneven and jerky, while sympathetic young Traudl Junge had more lyrical music. Most of the dia-

logue was very brief; the only prolonged selection was when Joseph Goebbels read the *Miracle of Brandenburg* to cheer Hitler up.

The cast was good. Robert Kinar and Bronwyn Thies-Thompson had sung Hitler and Eva Braun in Kitchener last year (see photo), and so were comfortable in their roles. Robert Kinar not only sang well but really looked and acted the part of Hitler, his twitching left hand betraying his unease and physical decline. Bronwyn’s voice suited her role’s high tessitura and she brought out Braun’s almost desperate attempts to make the best of an impossible situation. Caitlyn Tabbenor has a lovely voice and her music, as Traudl Junge, permitted her to sing out pleasantly. Iain MacPherson as General Krebs had a good strong voice, appropriate for a forceful general, especially when chasing a weakling out of the bunker and down the aisle! The rest of the cast handled the difficult music well, and included Bronwyn’s brother Aidan as Albert Speer, and Christian Damus and Joan Fearnley as Joseph and Magda Goebbels.



photo by Zhe Tang

The opera, in German, had been presented in 2015 in Kitchener and Toronto, with English surtitles, and so it was a disappointment that, in a cinema, projected surtitles were not used. However, the programme did include a full libretto. The cast of 12 was large for a chamber opera, and all three guards were probably

not necessary. Occasionally, since the cinema did not have proper wings, the people for the next scene started moving in before the end of a scene, which was a bit distracting and confusing. Also it was not made clear what the positions of all of the cast were, nor who actually survived.

Nevertheless, this was a well produced new Canadian opera, and it was great to see a full house, all there to support a local composer and singers in their endeavours!

Elijah Triumphs Once Again

by Tom McCool

The 75th season of the Ottawa Choral Society concluded with a performance of Mendelssohn's oratorio, *Elijah*. This was the 9th time the Choral Society has sung this particular piece and it proved to be a wise choice. *Elijah* is one of the greatest works in the oratorio repertoire and the Choral Society has obviously mastered the work. For this presentation the orchestral accompaniment was provided by the National Arts Centre Orchestra and the choir was augmented by members of the Ottawa Regional Youth Choir and the Capital Chamber Choir. Under the direction of conductor Duain Wolfe, all combined, along with the soloists, to produce a superb concert.

Taking into consideration that he died at the early age of 38, Mendelssohn's musical output was incredibly large and incredibly varied including symphonies, concertos, chamber music, piano music, overtures and incidental music as well as vocal and choral music. The most famous of the latter is *Elijah*, his last completed composition. The story concerns a biblical leader and prophet confronting a series of natural catastrophes such as drought, famine and earthquakes and, more importantly, attempting to lead his people away from false gods and back to the one true Lord. In the end *Elijah* overcomes all obstacles and is taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot. All of these events serve as an opportunity for stirring symphonic accompaniment, emotional arias and, especially, rousing choruses. During his lifetime Mendelssohn's music enjoyed immense popularity throughout Europe, particularly in England. His two most enthusiastic fans lived in



Buckingham Palace where he was a frequent and welcome guest. In fact, *Elijah* was composed for the Birmingham Music Festival in 1846 and when it was performed the next year in London Victoria and Albert were in the audience. Victoria declared that Mendelssohn was the second *Elijah*.

As far as we know there was no royalty present in St. Joseph's Church in Sandy Hill on June 17, 2016, but there was an overflow audience obviously eager to hear this season ending concert. All the ingredients for a successful presentation were present: the NAC Orchestra, acclaimed soloists and the augmented choir. The orchestra was, as always, superb; it also played with perfect accompaniment to the singers and the soloists: Monica Whicher, Susan Platts, Isaiah Bell and Russell Braun who were uniformly excellent. (Of special note: a minor solo role, "The Boy", sung by young Ottawa singer, Graeme Thies-Thompson, was also excellent. Over 40 years ago this same role was performed by none other than Gerald Finley.) In oratorios it is usually the choruses that stand out and on this night the choir was nothing less than magnificent.

The Choral Society's program for next season with new Music Director Jean-Sébastien Vallée will include a Christmas concert with Ben Heppner and an all Beethoven concert in March. A detailed brochure of next season's program can be obtained by calling the Ottawa Choral Society at 613-725-2560 and additional information about the Ottawa Choral Society is available on the society's website: ottawachoralsociety.com



Mendelssohn

Drama, Passion and a Parental Guidance Warning - A Weekend of Opera in San Francisco

by Lesley Robinson

The San Francisco Opera divides its season into fall and summer sessions, leaving the War Memorial Opera House available to the San Francisco Ballet from December to May. The schedule of the summer season's performances makes it possible to see all three of the summer productions over a weekend. This year's offerings were Bizet's *Carmen* (also broadcast live at AT&T Park as this year's Opera at the Ballpark, a partnership between the San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Giants), Verdi's *Don Carlo*, and *Jenůfa* by Leoš Janáček.

Our weekend began with a steamy, updated *Carmen*, a co-production with Boston Lyric Opera, based on Calixto Bieito's production, which premiered at El Festival de Peralada in Catalonia in 1999. Bieito is a renowned and provocative Catalan director, much associated with the phenomenon known as "Eurotrash", a style which to many is simply epitomised by too much sex and violence with a splash of nihilism. I was amused by the following Urban Dictionary definition of Eurotrash: "Post-modern, degenerate, trendy, or out-of-style European cultural phenomena masquerading as avant-garde High Art."

I don't think that there was any masquerading going on in this production. It was stark and thought-provoking, evoking raw emotions and a dark foreboding. *Carmen* is indeed a dark story and many productions might be said not to go far enough in revealing the sordid, destructive side of obsession which is at its core. Carmen herself is an enigmatic character - she is at turns seductive, carefree, defiant, sullen and scornful. Yet she is a victim as well as a perpetrator, rushing headlong to her own demise. Skillfully portrayed by Ginger Costa-Jackson (seen in this role several years ago at Glimmerglass), she revealed both her fieriness and her vulnerability. American Tenor Brian Jagde made a soulfully infatuated and impetuous Don José (who is, in my opinion, one of the least sympathetic heroes in all of opera.) The parental guidance warning was for nudity. During a musical interlude, a single dancer represented a matador dancing naked under the moon the night before the bullfight, in an apparently traditional way of securing good luck for the coming contest.

Verdi's *Don Carlo* was a magnificent treat, thanks to some engaging and passionate singing from Michael Fabiano as Carlo and Mariusz Kwiecień as his steadfast

friend, Rodrigo. Their duet is the tune that rings in my head amongst all the music of the evening. There were also fine performances from Ana Maria Martinez as Elisabetha and René Pape as Philip II. Nadia Krasteva was outstanding in her San Francisco Opera debut as Princess Eboli. Verdi's opera is based on a play by Schiller and although the protagonists are real historical figures, the plot is rather fanciful and there is nothing in the historical record to suggest that there was ever any love affair between Carlo and his step mother. (They were actually the same age, both being 14 years old when she married his father. Although not part of the plot, they both died in the same year, Carlos while imprisoned by his father due to his unstable behaviour and Elisabeth from the complications of pregnancy and miscarriage.) The opera is a masterful presentation of the clash between the personal and the political, with the backdrop of the immense power of the Church. For me the stand out feature of the set was the first scene's model of the Chateau de Fontainebleau, a place dear to my heart.

With Sunday's matinee performance we moved into the early 20th century with a production from the Hamburg State Opera of Janáček's *Jenůfa*. This is an eery, haunting work in which intense tragedy and redemption befall simple, country people. We were treated to another stellar cast including Swedish soprano Malin Byström as Jenůfa, versatile American tenor William Burden as Laca and the magnificent Karita Mattila in the role of Kostelnička, Jenůfa's stern step-mother whose chilling action exacerbates Jenůfa's pain. This performance included an open curtain intermission (see photo), a feature of San Francisco Opera in which the audience is invited to watch a narrated scene change, take photographs and ask questions live via Twitter.

We decided to avail ourselves of the opportunity to attend one more event at the Opera House during our weekend. We attended a backstage tour, hosted by the San Francisco Opera Guild and guided by a knowledgeable Guild volunteer. We visited divas' dressing rooms, the prompter's box, costume, wig and makeup areas and the fascinating Opera House laundry, which is busy every day, readying costumes for upcoming performances.

This was a notable weekend of diverse opera experiences. Thank you, San Francisco Opera.



Photo by Lesley

Glimmerglass Festival 2016 - the Glimmerglass

I Know and Love

by Lesley Robinson

Having first attended Glimmerglass Opera more than 20 years ago, it has always been a festival dear to my heart. The casual, picnicky atmosphere of the matinees made it an ideal choice for introducing our children to opera, so Glimmerglass provided some of our children's earliest operatic experiences. In fact the first time the whole Robinson family attended an entire season, our youngest was only six years old. That year (1996) was a fairly typical one, with the offerings spanning the centuries: *Lizzie Borden* by Jack Beeson (particularly enjoyed in all its goriness by our youthful opera enthusiasts), Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera* and *La Calisto* by Cavalli. The company has traditionally mounted four fully staged productions each year. In 2011 Glimmerglass Opera became The Glimmerglass Festival. This subtle name change led to a change to staging three operas plus one work of American musical theatre. The latter is given the full Glimmerglass treatment - it is performed with a full orchestra and no amplification and provides additional opportunities for Young Artists from a variety of disciplines. In addition to this change, the festival includes a variety of concerts, lectures, master classes and other events to expand Glimmerglass into a multi-faceted cultural experience. The regular inclusion of a musical theatre production has somewhat changed the character of Glimmerglass for me, yet this year felt like the Glimmerglass of old - with no particular expectations, I found that I *loved* this season. Here are some highlights from each production which elucidate what I found so enjoyable.

Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (1979) with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim:

Having seen the 2007 Tim Burton film starring Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter and Alan Rickman, with a notable performance from Sacha Baron Cohen, I had never appreciated the music. It just didn't seem very tuneful to me. Then Glimmerglass performed its magic. With operatic performances from Greer Grimsley, Loretta Bybee, Peter Volpe and Young Artist, Christopher

Bozeka, the same music suddenly leapt to life for me and I was catapulted into a whole new appreciation. The staging was imaginative and the setting evoked 1950s London with all its stark austerity. ("There's no place like London!") There were buckets of blood - at each murder, a member of the chorus threw a bucket of "blood" against a wall. At the end, he moved as if to toss the contents of the bucket into the audience, which made us duck, until we realised that this last bucket was empty.

The Crucible (1961), Robert Ward:

The pre-performance talks are always a special feature of Glimmerglass and we were privileged to hear the conductor Nicole Paiement (of Ottawa) give an interesting talk about the music of *The Crucible*. The highlight of this piece for me was in the magnificent performances by the two principal singers, mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton and baritone Brian Mulligan as Elizabeth and John

Proctor, the couple whose relationship is at the centre of the drama. The evening ended with a revealing Q & A session following the performance with Francesca Zambello, Nicole Paiement and some of the singers. I was particularly touched to hear Jay Hunter Morris's heartfelt comments about performing with such dedicated cast members in this important piece.

La Bohème (1896), Puccini:

One might be tempted to think *Not another La Bohème*, yet for me every production of this opera is de-

cidely special. It was the first opera I came to know, listening to a scratchy old recording in my bedroom and following along with a dog-eared copy of the libretto (which I still own). This year's production at Glimmerglass was sung by talented young singers: Michael Brandenburg as Rodolfo, Raquel González as Mimi, Hunter Enoch as Marcello and Young Artist Vanessa Becerra as Musetta. It was believable and moving. Talking of highlights, *La Bohème* contains my favourite moment in all of opera. It is the moment in "O soave fanciulla" at the end of the first act, when Mimi joins Rodolfo in a spectacular high note, as they surrender to their love.



Photo by Lesley
Christopher Devlin of Montreal at the fortepiano. Principal Coach & Accompanist for *The Thieving Magpie*.

Glimmerglass Festival 2016 - the Glimmerglass

I Know and Love (continued)

Mimi sings "Ah! tu sol comandi, amor!" in a blissful resignation to their joint destiny. It gets me every time.

The Thieving Magpie (1817), Rossini:

It's hard to pinpoint a highlight in this production, since it was an overall delight. The character of the magpie was ever-present, both in her portrayal by choreographer and dancer Meg Gillentine and in the music. We are all familiar with the famous overture, but the magpie flits musically through the entire opera. Ms. Gillentine's magpie was mischievous and thoroughly entertaining. Before the performance she was milling

about amongst the audience outside the theatre, examining people's jewellery, stealing chips from picnic tables and even trying out an audience member's shiny walker, before deciding to give it back. Apart from the endearing magpie, the most memorable performance for me was from tenor Michele Angelini - perhaps it's just that I love all of Rossini's tenor roles, but Mr. Angelini certainly acquitted himself admirably.

Thank you again, Glimmerglass. We have already made our reservations for next year.

DVD/CD Corner by Murray Kitts

It seems to me that lately all the usual critical sources for opera DVD's have been very limited in their coverage. Could it be that opera fans are tired of buying well-sung but far-out opera stagings? It is relatively easy to recommend the 2015 Glyndebourne production of Donizetti's *Poliuto* (Opus Arte) as it is the only DVD of this opera available. Hailed by critic Charles Osborne as one of Donizetti's finest operas, the excellent cast includes Michael Fabiano (whom most of you saw in *La bohème* with Brian Law winners Joyce El-Khoury and Joshua Hopkins), Ana Maria Martinez and bel canto specialist Igor Golovatenko. The story, adapted from the play *Polyeucte martyr* by Pierre Corneille, ends with the Christian hero and his wife being thrown to the lions by the command of the Roman governor. The staging is 20th century (bad enough) and baptism as a Christian involves shaving off all the hair from the head (even worse). Even so this could well be a future selection for Opera alla pasta. There is a recent CD of Donizetti's *Les martyrs* (Opera Rara ORC52) which is to a French libretto and composed by Donizetti to a newly worked version of *Poliuto* with Joyce El-Koury as the soprano. This recording has been picked by The Gramophone magazine as one of six finalists for The Best Opera CD of the Year.

Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* has been given some wacky productions, but none wackier than this one from the Salzburg Whitsun Festival (Decca) but

with a brilliant cast: Andres Scholl as Caesar, Cecilia Bartoli as Cleopatra, Anne Sophie von Otter as Cordelia, Philippe Jaroussky as a very cute Sesto and even veteran Jochen Kowalski in the travesti role of Cleopatra's duenna. Once Pompey's head is taken from sight the comedy is much easier to enjoy. As for me – I am a great fan of Cecilia ever since that wonderful concert at Lanaudière many years ago. Another pick for Oap?

The choice of Jonas Kaufman as tenor for a new Sony DVD from a 2014 Bavarian State Opera production of Verdi's *La forza del destino* in company with Anja Harteros and Ludovic Tezier as leads should be enough to convince an opera lover to buy this version. But wait a minute. I can accept the setting as a post 9/11 world but other aspects of the production are downright bothersome. It all begins well enough. The Marquis of Calatrava is shot and killed accidentally in the first act. Why then is his body prominently lying on stage all through the first part of the second act and then is resurrected in the rest of that act to sing the role of Padre Guardiano as well as in the final act? Leonora is dunked in a baptismal pool to show her acceptance as a protected hermit. (No kidding) Fra Melitone is definitely not the comic character intended by Verdi as he hands out molded cardboard containers of food instead of doing all the funny business with the soup. Look at this once, then play it with your eyes closed to enjoy the magnificent singing and music.

The 2016 Glimmerglass Quartet by Ute Davis

Glimmerglass Festival is a non-profit organization presenting four new productions of opera and musical theatre in rotation every July and August. Founded in 1975, the company continues to attract an international audience to the scenic Cooperstown area in upstate New York, which also happens to be the home of the Baseball Hall of Fame. Opera may have less historical justification for its presence in the middle of a field outside the town, but that is where the Alice M. Busch Opera Theatre was built in 1987 to become the summer oasis for opera lovers in Southern Ontario and Northern New York. Francesca Zambello was appointed Artistic & General Director in 2010.



Photo by Karli Cadel

In 2017 you might want to enjoy Donizetti's *The Siege of Calais*, Handel's *Xerxes*, Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* plus the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Oklahoma!*

Following a car ride, which takes about as long as a drive to Toronto, we usually arrive on a Friday afternoon, check into our B&B and get ready for a quick dinner, the opera introduction and on to our first performance. The introductions tend to be first class and are usually presented by the conductor of the night and/or another member of the musical staff. This year's program consisted of:

***The Crucible*:** Our first opera, more or less contemporary, was our most anticipated. The *Crucible*, 1961 vintage, music by Robert Ward, is set against the 17th-century Salem witch trials, like the Arthur Miller play upon which it is based, inspired by the 20th-century communist witch hunt of Senator Joseph McCarthy. It turned out to be our most disappointing evening, though I am happy that I finally saw *Crucible* other than as a play. Was my view of this influenced

after a long drive? Act 1 was thoroughly confusing. A major cause was the matching of each married pair with one black and one white. At the risk of appearing racist I find this yet another example of the Zambello "political correctness" overdone. The confusion was reinforced by surtitles which were too long and in small print, shown too briefly. Even with knowledge of the stage play I had difficulty identifying who was who, worsened by the rapid entry and exit of multiple characters. Diction was poor from several of the young artists in the cast although the libretto is in English! By contrast, the major singers, Jay Hunter Morris, Brian Mulligan, Jamie Barton and David Pittsinger all sang well and clearly. Conductor Nicole Paiement of Ottawa/Montréal appeared very tense, but the music pleased with its mix of Protestant hymn tunes and modern rhythms.



Photo by Karli Cadel

Ariana Wehr as Abigail Williams, Frederick Ballentine as Reverend Samuel Parris and Mary Beth Nelson as Betty Parris (in bed)

Day two provided us with two operas: a *Sweeney Todd* matinée followed by an evening performance of *La Bohème*.

***Sweeney Todd*:** This Christopher Alden staging was very simple but effective. It appeared to work outside its original Victorian setting, in which the barber takes revenge on the entire human race. Most critics might disagree with my assessment, wanting more gore and horror. I actually found it to be a good balance between "horror movie" and comedy and after having seen, some years ago, a very bloody version with Bryn Terfel as Sweeney at the Lyric Opera in Chicago, this was much more enjoyable. It is arguably Sondheim's most sophisticated and nearly operatic Tony and Olivier award-winning score, driving, wistful, funny and even

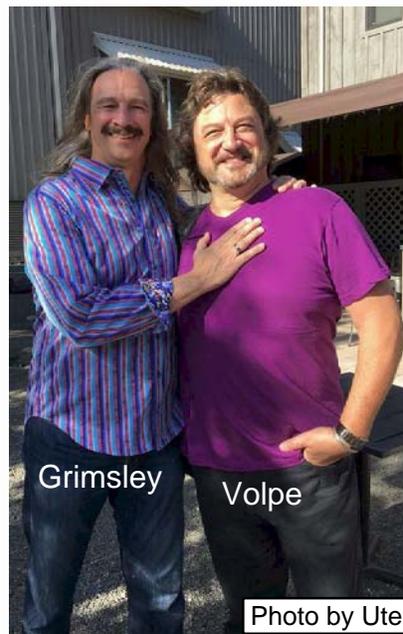
The 2016 Glimmerglass Quartet (continued)

touching with such numbers as “Johanna”, “The worst pies in London”, and “Pretty women”. The music is grand and the production was overall most entertaining. *Sweeney Todd* tells a story of obsession and relentless revenge, spiced with a measure of black humour. Alden’s production opens in a 1960s British church basement or perhaps a community theatre almost indicating a play-within-a-play. I found it reminiscent of some of the Bertold Brecht plays I saw in my youth. There were perhaps too many bare, flat walls with chairs lined up against them, but this appeared to be Alden’s way of making it cold rather than chilling. John DeMain conducted with very fast fire tempo, at times occurring pit-stage coordination problems. This type of music appears to be his “Fach”; perhaps he was tired having conducted too many performances. Teresa Wadden designed costumes deliberately over-the-top and tacky, at times with Elvis-inspired sequins, or in baby-doll pink. Greer Grimsley was a believable barber who sang well, as did Peter Volpe as judge Turpin. Grimsley’s real-life wife, Luretta Bybee was a good and funny Mrs. Lovett whose voice didn’t project comfortably in the middle range where most of her part appeared to lie. I understand that she withdrew from the role after 13 August for the remainder of the run. The Alice M. Busch Opera Theatre is quite intimate with its 914 seats and singers should be able to project without amplification. Everyone on stage, including the chorus, demonstrated high calibre of diction and the London accents were totally convincing, due credit to their coach.

I met Greer Grimsley and Peter Volpe some years ago when each sang for Opera Lyra Ottawa. Greer was a most memorable Macbeth, who went on to a much praised Wagnerian career in Germany. Peter sang Prince Gremin to the Eugene Onegin of Russell Braun. I well remember his amazingly graceful portrayal. Everyone on stage and I, in front row, would



wait for Gremin’s act 3 aria. The Prince tells Onegin of the love and beauty Tatiana has brought into his life. To quote Lord Harewood: “The aria is a favourite of every Russian bass, and it has the important effect in the opera of maintaining Gremin as no lay figure but a thinking, feeling person, part of Tatiana’s background it is true, but real enough to make her loyalty entirely plausible. The solitary aria in fact creates the impression of a truly noble presence.”



Back to Glimmerglass; we were just bemoaning the fact that we did not know how to get backstage, when I walked right into Peter Volpe, who still remembered Opera Lyra and had been sad that it folded. We had a wonderful chat. He then discovered Greer Grimsley across the lawn and walked over with us, agreeing to a Peter and Greer photograph. No, I am not into “selfies”.

La Bohème: What a lovely way to finish the evening! The opera had its debut in 1896, which is roughly when this Glimmerglass production was staged. A touching story set to sublime music is *Bohème*. To keep it brief, the scenery by Kevin Depinet was romantic and lovely. I did not like some of the costumes, especially the one Mimi wears in the last act. If she embroiders to make a living, why does she not wear a simple, embroidered dress of her own, which fits properly? She looked so terribly awkward in bed because the front of her dress was stiff and kept riding up into her face. I blame Erik Teague who was responsible for the frock with a stiff “cardboard” front. The prettiest Mimi dress ever, in my humble opinion, was the beautifully embroidered silky looking dress Angela Gheorghiu wore in a Met production some years back. The Mimi, Raquel Gonzáles, is not a “Young Artist” any more and should have acted a bit more freely and naturally. The two outstanding performers were the Musetta, sung especially well by young artist Vanessa Becerra, who

The 2016 Glimmerglass Quartet (continued)

also acted beautifully and the Rodolfo, Michael Brandenburg, a 2013 Met auditions and 2015 George London winner who was outstanding for his age and level of experience. Joseph Colaneri was the most wonderful conductor. I give huge credit to him for this lovely evening. His left hand shaped every phrase while he gave great support to the singers, especially the younger cast members. Act 2, Café Momus, was too frenetic and cacophonous for my taste but overall it was a thoroughly competent, but not exciting production.

The Thieving Magpie/La Gazza Ladra: What a delight, aided by novelty. This is a rarely staged opera and was my first exposure to it other than on DVD. I would rate it best of the 4 productions seen this year. The superb bel canto music was again in the capable hands of maestro Joseph Colaneri, whose assistant is a young man from Montréal, Christopher Devlin. Christopher used to accompany Maria Pellegrini's young singers many years ago. Maestro Colaneri said of him: "our continuo player will be an important partner in this.....Christopher Devlin, who played continuo for Magpie, has a terrific instinct for this kind of thing". Christopher also undertook a most enlightening introduction to the evening. We all know the wonderful overture, but that seems to be all this delightful opera is known for. Not an opera buffa, comic opera, like most of the Rossini operas we are familiar with and not an opera seria, serious opera, this one appears to fall into the opera semi-seria category, or partly serious work. The piece was written in 1817 for Milan's Teatro alla Scala. It represents a French theatrical genre called "larmoyant", tearful, a type of sentimental comedy-drama mixture stemming from the 18th century in which impending calamity was eventually avoided amidst reconciliations and weeping. Similarities can also be found in the so-called "rescue opera" familiar from Beethoven's *Fidelio*, featuring a last minute reprieve after an intense buildup of threatened doom. Rossini's operatic version of the story provides a much desired

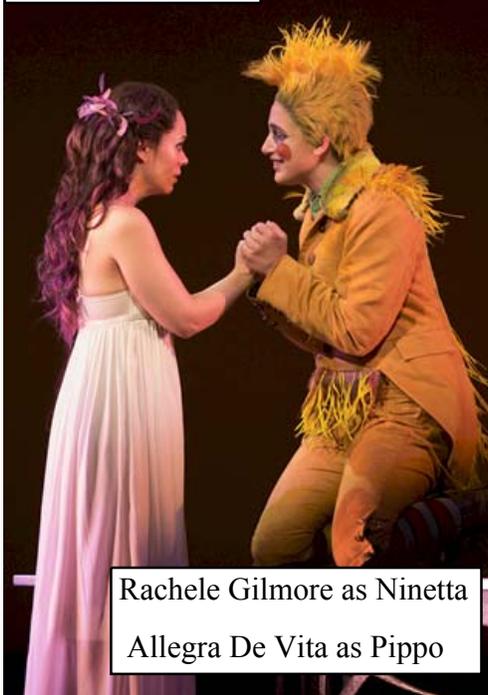
happy ending, with our heroine Ninetta snatched from the gallows at the last moment.

This production showed good colour and pace; it was never lagging. There was a sophisticated sense of the cast laughing at themselves: e.g. Gianetto a bit of a satire of an Italian tenor, reinforced by his "Count Danilo" uniform and the bird theme maintained in costumes of mayor, Fabrigio's hat and friend Pippo's beautiful yellow bird costume. The Magpie was a delight to watch all through the opera, acted and choreographed by Meg Gillentine, a dancer, singer, actor and designer, whose talents have been seen on Broadway, film and television. She also happens to be married to Jay Hunter Morris, who is the father of their two children. Magpie sports a shock of blue hair and an uncannily birdlike gait. She was in evidence throughout; therefore the audience knew who was responsible, even if the characters did not. I could not believe her sense of humour when she sat down in her beautifully designed cage and read a book, written by her husband some years ago. Myung Hee Cho is responsible for this deliciously bird-themed show. Peter Kazaras created the witty and wonderful production. Former Glimmerglass young artist Rachele Gilmore, who sang the enchanting Zerbinetta in last season's *Ariadne*, starred in

the role of Ninetta, and the whole of the cast sang quite beautifully. Ninetta's friend Pippo was Allegra De Vita, a mellifluous mezzo. Gianetto, the male lead, was sung by the imported Rossini tenor Michele Angelini with great distinction and sophistication. The lascivious mayor with his eye on Ninetta was convincingly acted and very well sung by South African Musa Ngqungwana. This powerful bass-baritone is booked to sing Angelotti in the COC *Tosca* in April 2017.

Thus the opera which we saw last proved to be the best. I only wish there could have been a video recording of this production which was outstanding for its bright colours, rapid pacing, excellent singing, superb music and overall joie de vivre.

Photo by Karli Cadel



Rachele Gilmore as Ninetta

Allegra De Vita as Pippo

Events You Could Have Enjoyed

by Shelagh Williams

Ania Hejnar: BLOC finalist Ania Hejnar, along with pianist Judy Ginsburg, performed a concert at the National Gallery, along with the Ottawa Suzuki Strings' excellent senior Stella Boreales ensemble. To accompany the Gallery's Vigee Le Brun exhibit Ania and Judy were performing French music, finishing off with Donizetti's high flying *Salut a la France*, from *La fille du regiment*. You will be happy to know that Ania is in fine voice and still has her high notes, plus her post-pregnancy middle voice is now bigger and warmer in tone!

Ottawa Fringe Festival: Among the musicals this year, *Next Thing You Know* was a 4-hander, and a full 1½ hours long, billed as "Rent for this generation."

A fan favourite from last year, but with new songs, set and costumes, and written and strenuously performed by Rachelle Elie, with music by Luke Jackson, on guitar, *S..t, I'm in Love With You Again* was great fun, with some choruses we could all join in!

Lara Loves Lightfoot, third of a trilogy including *Lara Loves Leonard* and *Lara Loves Lennon*, starred uOttawa Music grad Lara MacMillan on her guitar. It started with *Alberta Bound* and covered her pre-university gap year in Banff.

National Arts Centre Young Artists Programme

Chamber Concerts: Besides the instrumental groups, these two concerts surprisingly each contained offerings from a total of four excellent vocalists: Canadians baritone Hugo Laporte and tenor Marcel d'Entremont and Americans soprano Beth Hagerman and mezzo Hillary Coote. They sang a variety of substantial works, including Barber's *Dover Beach*, several song cycles, a rarely heard Vivaldi, and a Schubert quartet, the latter two accompanied by Fred Lacroix on harpsichord and forte-piano respectively! These were all an unexpected treat!

Music and Beyond, 2016: The opening Gala: *Music and Circus* had a problem when the scheduled tenor had visa problems. Fortunately heart surgeon Dr. Frazer Rubens stepped in at short notice for a lovely *Nessun Dorma!* - his voice has developed beautifully over time!

Studio du musique ancienne de Montreal (SMAM) was absolutely sublime, with St. Joseph's acoustics showing off their a cappella renditions of Orlando de Lassus' polyphonic religious music to advantage. SMAM's new conductor, Ottawa-based Andrew McAnerney (Cantata Singers and Anglican

Chorale), gave a pre-concert chat on this prolific but now rarely-performed Flemish composer. SMAM has just recorded this repertoire, which partially explained their superb performance.

A very interesting lecture by pianist Carl Petersson on his Ph.D. thesis subject, 20th century pianist and composer Leopold Godowsky, included the world premiere of two of Godowsky's songs, nicely sung by Canadian soprano Helene Brunet.

It was nice to hear soprano Donna Brown again, although her choice of repertoire was not what I would have chosen. In the *Music for Life - a Celebration* concert, she sang a set of Brazilian songs with Andrew Mah on guitar. The pair are known as the Duo Brazil.

Soprano Measha Brueggergosman was in great voice for her non-operatic recital. The first half consisted of French art songs by Ravel, Duparc and Poulenc, the accompaniment of the Duparc, by Aya Yamamoto, being especially lovely. The second half was lighter, with works by John Cage, Schoenberg, and William Bolcom, with her enthusiastic performance of his *Amor*. The highlight was her encore, which she dubbed "a cappella spiritual time", since she was in a church, a marvelous and powerful *Were you there when they crucified my Lord?* - truly heartfelt and memorable!

UOttawa Composition Master's candidate Elisar Hanna conducted her oratorio *The Garden*, performed by 4 singers, 3 brass, 2 percussion and piano. The alternation of narrated and sung text, with instrumental sections interspersed, was very interesting.

We attended the *Ukrainian Music and Dance* concert to hear our first BLOC winner, singer Laura Dzubaniuk. We had not heard her in ages, and she treated us to several folk and art songs, and an operatic aria, all of course by Ukrainian composers.

Chanticleer, the 12-voice male chorus, returned after two years for another marvelous, note-perfect performance on the theme *Over the Moon*, with the words helpfully supplied. The first half was more serious and Renaissance music, while the second half was modern, both commissioned and more popular works, ending with beautiful renditions of spirituals.

The closing Gala: *The Seven Deadly Sins* afforded a suitably scarlet-clad soprano Jennifer Taverner, accompanied by Thirteen Strings, the opportunity to shine in two showy Handel arias: *Myself I shall adore* (Pride) from *Semele*, and Medea's rage aria (Envy) from *Teseo*. Should sins be so enjoyable?

Events You Could Have Enjoyed (continued)

Ottawa International Chamberfest (CF): The opening night concert, *Femmes*, featured Canadian soprano Marie-Josée Lord. Her program was mainly opera arias with a good accompanying group of piano, violin and cello. Copies of the texts, with translations, were passed out as we entered. She was beautifully gowned, and introduced her material, usually in French, using a mike - but then proceeded to sing, using the mike! We had hoped to hear her voice, not a loud blaring sound, and her delivery and interpretation were not in keeping with either the context or sense of the arias. Mercifully, she toned it down after intermission for the *Ave Maria*, but not for the rest of the concert, except for her encore. Also the publicity photos were misleading and must have been taken in the last century!

The Rising Stars competition finalists, chosen by audition, gave an enjoyable concert at La Nouvelle Scene (a lovely renovated venue). Of the four scholarships, two were won by vocalists with their excellent mini recitals: baritone James Coole-Stevenson and soprano Juliana Krajcovic, a student of Yoriko Tanno.

In conjunction with celebrations for the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, we had a lovely concert by the Vesnivka Women's Choir from Toronto, plus mezzo soloist Stephania Romaniuk, singing both sacred and secular Ukrainian choral music, both traditional and newer works by Ukrainian-Canadian composers.

Kongero, three gorgeous blondes and a funky brunette, sing what they call Swedish Folk'apella, a great sounding and entertaining blend of traditional love songs, medieval ballads, and wordless dances, plus original works of their own.

Commencing an opera-themed weekend, an interesting presentation, *The Future of Opera*, by Roman Borys and Joel Ivany, Artistic Directors of CF and Against the Grain Theatre (AtG) respectively, divulged information on upcoming opera in Ottawa in 2017. Besides the NAC's production of *Riel*, AtG's *A Little Too Cosy* will be coming to Ottawa, plus CF is to host the Bicycle Opera Company.

In a short prelude concert, Canadian operatic bass Robert Pomakov treated us to two sets of songs, Finzi's *Let us Garlands Bring* and Vaughn Williams' *Songs of Travel*, transcribed for the Gryphon Trio to lushly accompany him.

Directly following, was *An Evening with the AtG Theatre*, presenting two contrasting song cycles.

Janacek's *Diary of One Who Disappeared*, in Czech, was semi-staged, with Canadians tenor Colin Ainsworth and mezzo Lauren Segal in the principal roles, with Christopher Mokrewski at the piano. Living composer Osvaldo Golijov's *Ayre*, a blend of the music and texts of four different Middle Eastern cultures, had the ideal proponent in BLOC finalist soprano Miriam Khalil, Damascus-born but Ottawa raised! Her 11-member accompanying ensemble obviously had a ball playing the interesting music! Both works were, of course, well performed and words were supplied, but not surtitles! Why not, when screens were available for ads?

The *Great Mozart Mashup* was glorious, hosted by Eric Friesen and combining the Gryphon Trio, Lafayette String Quartet and Ewashko Singers with soloists. The first half was mainly instrumental, with the groups performing singly, and with one or other combined with James Campbell in the sublime *Adagio* from the *Clarinet Concerto*, Janina Fialkowska in the lovely *Allegretto* from *Piano Concerto #12*, and bass Robert Pomakov in two rare concert arias. The second half was vocal, with the Ewashko Singers singing several great opera choruses and backing deep voiced Robert Pomakov in *O Isis und Osiris* from *Magic Flute*. Lovely Ottawa soprano Mireille Asselin, accompanied by the Gryphon Trio's James Parker, favoured us with two great arias from *Lucio Silla* and *Marriage of Figaro*. It all finished beautifully with Mozart's *Ave verum Corpus*, combining the Ewashko Singer and Lafayette String Quartet - what an evening!

Contemporary Greek-Canadian composer Christos Hatzis' *Constantinople* has been performed with the Gryphon Trio for several years now, tho' not performed in Ottawa since 2010. This present restaging was premiered last November for the Aga Khan's Ismaili Centre, with new visuals, by a large production team. It also enlisted the considerable talents of Middle Eastern contralto Maryem Tollar, representing the Islamic east, and mezzo Patricia O'Callaghan, representing the Christian west. It was an aurally and visually arresting journey, with fascinating music, choreographed and costumed beautifully, and well performed with no intermission to break the mood. However, it was hard to figure out where one was among the continuously performed 7 segments, since sheets of printed handout cannot be perused in total darkness! With all of the projected visuals, surely including the title of a section as it begins should not be too difficult!

Events you should enjoy

by David Williams

St. Luke's Church Recital Series:

Sunday, September 18 at 7:30 p.m.: An evening of opera favourites with Morgan Strickland (soprano), Heidi Jost (mezzo-soprano), Corey Arnold (tenor) and Norman E. Brown (baritone) with Frédéric Lacroix (piano).

Sunday, October 16 at 7:30 p.m.: John Avey (bass-baritone) and Nadia Boucher (piano) showcase timeless classics from both Opera and Broadway.

Sunday, December 11 at 7:30 p.m.: The Ottawa Celtic Choir present an evening of carols and winter songs from the Celtic countries and from Canada

The **NAC Orchestra's** concert on Thursday, December 15, at 8:00 p.m., includes Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* (complete), with English and French surtitles. Starring soprano Emma Bell, tenor Nicholas Phan and bass-baritone Kyle Ketelsen.

The **Ottawa Chamber Music Society** and the **Ottawa Choral Society** present *Happy Holidays with Heppner*, 7:30 p.m., Thursday 15 & Friday 16 December, Dominion-Chalmers United Church. Ben Heppner hosts an evening of favourite carols and stories that will feature soprano Mireille Asselin.

The **Cantata Singers of Ottawa** present *Shakespeare in Song*, Sunday October 30 at 3:00 p.m., St. Joseph's Church. Shakespeare's insights into the human condition have inspired countless composers to set his words. Come and hear music from around the world bring the Bard's works to life.

Thirteen Strings present Handel's *Messiah*. 7:30 p.m. Saturday, December 17, Knox Presbyterian Church & 7:30 p.m. Sunday, December 18, Dominion-Chalmers United Church. Featuring soprano Jennifer Taverner, mezzo-soprano Andrea Ludwig, tenor Zach Finkelstein and bass baritone Giles Tomkins.

Southminster United Church presents (i) *Songs of Autumn*, October 19, 12 noon. Opera selections by Handel and Mozart and lieder by Strauss including Strauss' *Four Last Songs* with Stephanie Piercey Beames, soprano and Nadia Boucher, piano. (ii) *A Sanctuary in Song*, November 16, 12 noon. Featuring works for voice and

piano by Warlock, Howells, Rubbra, Vaughan Williams and Finzi with countertenor Daniel Cabena and pianist Stephen Runge.

Concerts by the Canal (A Southminster Music Production) presents *Heavenly Handel*, Saturday October 29 at 7:00 p.m. Handel's sublime and seldom performed *9 German Arias* for voice, violin and continuo with soprano Isabelle Lacroix.

Seventeen Voyces presents *Welcome Yule*, December 3, 7:30 p.m., St Matthew's Anglican Church & December 4, 4:00 p.m., Ashbury College Chapel. Christmas music throughout the ages, and the beautiful *Messe de minuit* by Marc-Antoine Charpentier.

uOttawa Master Classes:

David Lutz, voice and collaborative piano. Saturday, October 15, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Pérez Building.

Joel Ivany, voice. Lecture: Friday, December 2, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Master Class: Saturday, December 3, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Room 109, Pérez Building.

The **Archville Chamber Music Series** presents: *Harmonic Generation*, Sunday, December 4 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Church of the Ascension. An evening of Christmas choral music. The evening includes a concert, festive tapas and a complimentary drink.

The **Ottawa Bach Choir** presents *'Twas But Pure Love* Saturday, November 26, 8:00 p.m. St. Matthew's Church. The concert features the repertoire the choir recorded this past summer for its new CD and includes festive music for the season from the Renaissance to the Contemporary periods, in no less than nine languages, from England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, China and Canada, with two Canadian recording premieres! The choir is joined by harpist Caroline Léonardelli and organist Matthew Larkin.

The **Ottawa Brahms Choir** will present their Christmas Concert *Celebrating Mozart* at St. Thomas the Apostle Anglican Church, Sunday, December 4, 3:00 p.m., under the direction of Christopher Askwith.

The Met Live in HD 2016 - 2017

Wagner *TRISTAN UND ISOLDE* (New Production)

Live: October 8, 2016 Encore: November 12, 2016

Mozart *DON GIOVANNI*

Live: October 22, 2016 Encore: November 26, 2016

Saariaho *L'AMOUR DE LOIN* (MET Premiere)

Live: December 10, 2016 Encore: February 4, 2017

Verdi *NABUCCO* (First Time in HD)

Live: January 7, 2017 Encore: February 11, 2017

Gounod *ROMÉO ET JULIETTE* (New Production)

Live: January 21, 2017 Encore: February 18, 2017

Dvořák *RUSALKA* (New Production)

Live: February 25, 2017 Encore: April 8, 2017

Verdi *LA TRAVIATA*

Live: March 11, 2017 Encore: April 15, 2017

Mozart *IDOMENEO* (Rare MET revival)

Live: March 25, 2017 Encore: May 6, 2017

Tchaikovsky *EUGENE ONEGIN*

Live: April 22, 2017 Encore: June 3, 2017

R. Strauss *DER ROSENKAVALIER* (New Production)

Live: May 13, 2017 Encore: June 17, 2017

Saturday Afternoon at the Opera 2016-2017

September 10

Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

September 17

Otello Verdi

September 24

Tosca Puccini

October 1

Freischutz von Weber

October 8

St. Francois d'Assise

Messiaen

October 15

Falstaff Verdi

October 22

The Indian Queen Purcell

October 29

The Marriage of Figaro

Mozart

November Listings for Saturday Afternoon at the Opera will be available at the CBC website. Additional information (casts, conductor etc.) for all the operas listed here can be accessed at the CBC website and at the Metropolitan Opera website.

December 3

Manon Lescaut Puccini

December 10

L'Amour de Loin Saariaho

December 17

Salome Strauss

December 24

Hansel and Gretel

Humperdinck

December 31

January 7, 2017

January 14

January 21

January 28

February 4

February 11

February 18

February 25

March 4

March 11

March 18

March 25

April 1

April 8

April 15

April 22

April 29

May 6

May 13

L'Italiana in Algeria Rossini

Nabucco Verdi

La Bohème Puccini

Roméo et Juliette Gounod

Il Barbiere di Siviglia Rossini

Rigoletto Verdi

Carmen Bizet

I Puritani Bellini

Rusalka Dvořák

Werther Massenet

La traviata Verdi

Guillaume Tell Rossini

Idomeneo Mozart

Fidelio Beethoven

Tristan und Isolde Wagner

Aida Verdi

Eugene Onegin Tchaikovsky

Der Fliegende Holländer

Wagner

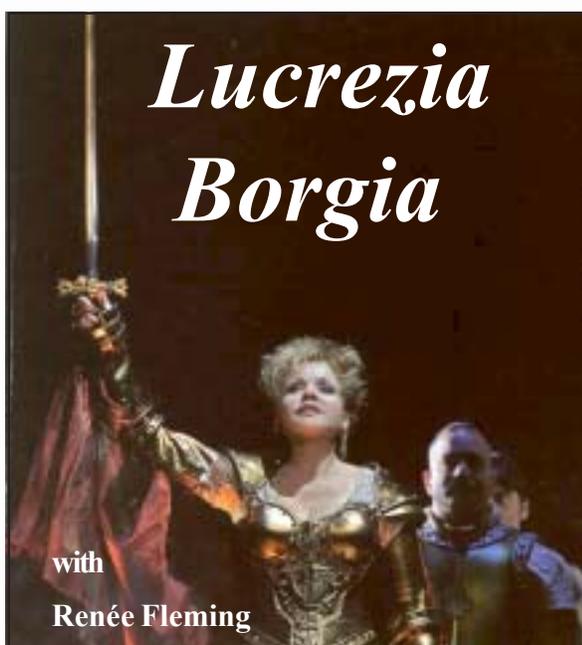
Cyrano de Bergerac Alfano

Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

Opera alla Pasta

DVD presentations of outstanding operas from the great opera houses of the world followed by a delicious meal.

Opera alla Pasta presentations are held at St. Anthony's Soccer Club at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoon. The cost is a modest \$25. Call 613-830-9827 at least 3 days before the date of the DVD presentation in order to reserve a place. For additional information on Opera alla Pasta contact Murray Kitts at 613-830-9827.



October 2, 2016

This DVD of *Lucrezia Borgia* from San Francisco Opera has all the elements for a great opera production: superb singers, beautiful melodies, magnificent choruses, spectacular costumes, an impressive set and a superior libretto with larger-than-life characters. This is a traditional presentation of a "grand opera" in the truest meaning of that term. Donizetti was at the top of his game when he composed *Lucrezia Borgia* and many opera aficionados claim this is the best of all his works, even superior to *Lucia*.



November 20, 2016

Englebert Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, based on the fairy tale, was filmed for TV in 1981 in Vienna. It remains as fresh and magical as when it was first presented. This production features an all-star cast of great singers (Fassbaender, Gruberova, Prey) with the Vienna Boys Choir and the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Georg Solti. One reviewer summarized his comments thusly: "beautifully staged, beautifully costumed, beautifully played and utterly enchanting." This is an opera for all ages with some of the most exquisite music ever written.

The rest of the Opera alla Pasta season:

January 15, 2017 *Otello* - Rossini

March 19, 2017 *Les vêpres siciliennes*
- Verdi

February 19, 2017 *Don Quichotte*
- Massenet

May 21, 2017 *Der Zwerg* - Zemlinsky &
La cambiale di matrimonio - Rossini