

Société d' Opéra
de la Capitale Nationale



National Capital
Opera Society

Fall 2017

NEWSLETTER : BULLETIN

Automne 2017

The 2017 Brian Law Opera Competition

Saturday 14th October 2017, 7:30 p.m.

Southminster United Church

15 Aylmer Avenue at Bank Street

Please mark your calendar for this, the National Capital Opera Society's principal event which is held every two years. Again there has been an exciting number and quality of applicants associated with the Ottawa area.

The panel of first-round judges has chosen six talented young singers, whose CVs have been listed on pp 2 and 3; somewhat abbreviated, but you should not have any problems finding more on the internet.

On 14th October they will compete for prizes of \$5000, \$3000 and \$1000; the other three finalists will each receive \$500 to offset expenses.

All will be judged by an expert panel:

Mr. Richard Turp of Montréal, most respected lecturer and diction coach, co-founder André Turp Musical Society and the Canadian Vocal Arts Institute, as well as Director of the vocal program at the Orford Academy.

Dr. James Wright, Ottawa, Carleton University Director of Music and Administrator.

Last but not least we are hoping to be able to confirm the highly talented soprano and teacher

Ms. Nathalie Paulin, born in New Brunswick, now residing in Toronto.

We are also pleased to welcome the well known CBC host and producer **Mr. Laurence Wall** as MC, whose gracious donation of his time and skill is much appreciated.

Our competition is free to subscribers of the **Concerts by the Canal** presentations offered by Southminster United Church (Music Director: **Mr. Roland Graham**).

General Admission is \$25, while Students pay \$10. Please come and invite all of your musical friends. For this modest price you receive a seat at the best vocal competition in Ottawa and attendance at a reception following the event to meet the competitors, their accompanists and the distinguished judges.

The National Capital Opera Society www.ncos.ca is, of course, a not-for-profit organization with registered charity status (should you consider a donation!) and all monies go to young singers trying to establish a career.

Prepared by Ute Davis

THE FINALISTS (in alphabetical order)

by Ute Davis

ALLISON, Joel - Bass-Baritone.

Joel graduated B. Music in vocal performance in 2015 from uOttawa, having studied with Ingemar Korjus and Sandra Graham. He is in post-graduate studies at U of Toronto with teaching from Daniel Taylor, Wendy Neilsen, Russell Braun and Sandra Horst. He won the Norcop prize in Art Song in 2016 and a Richard Bradshaw Fellowship (2016-17) at U of T. He has sung a range of operatic roles in Ottawa, Saskatoon, Toronto and Stratford as well as performing in *Messiah* and a number of oratorio concert productions.

BEAUDOIN, Carolyn - Soprano.

Attending uOttawa 2008-2014, Carolyn studied with Donna Brown and Sandra Graham and graduated with B. Music and M. Music in vocal performance. Studying with Aline Kutan, she attended McGill U 2016-18, winning a student excellence award. She has sung multiple solo parts in concert and in university opera performances as well as with Vox Luminis. She was a Canadian national finalist in the 2017/18 Concours Voix Nouvelles and last performed in Montréal, Toronto, St. Andrew's, NB, and Vancouver.

HOFMAN, Ryan - Baritone.

Ryan graduated B. Music and M. Music in vocal performance at uOttawa. His teachers were Sandra Graham, Christiane Riel and Ingemar Korjus. While in Ottawa he also studied with Maria Pellegrini. This was followed by M. Music in opera performance at UBC, where he studied with J. Patrick Raftery. He has solo part experience with the choruses of Opera Lyra Ottawa, UBC Opera and the Ewashko Singers, as well as singing operatic roles for Pellegrini Opera, Opera Nuova (Edmonton) and UBC Opera. He has recently performed Dr. Bartolo in the Czech Republic.

OLENIC, Jennifer - Soprano.

Although raised in Ottawa, Jennifer attended Kenesaw State U and Mercer U in Atlanta, Georgia, graduating B. Music and M. Music in vocal performance. She has studied with Yoriko Tanno-Kimmons, Richard Kosowski and Jana Young. Jennifer has won various NATS student auditions. Her performance career includes opera and operetta stage experience as well as solo oratorio. She has performed in Georgia, Illinois and Ottawa.

VAILLANCOURT, Danielle - Mezzo-Soprano.

Raised in Renfrew, Danielle graduated B. Music and M. Music in vocal performance at the Conservatoire de Musique de Montréal, studying with Adrienne Savoie, Louise-Andrée Baril, Esther Gonthier and Olivier Godin. In competition she has reached the semifinals of the 2015 Concours Prix d'Europe and quarter finals of the Maria Callas Grand Prix in Athens. She has worked extensively with J.-S. Vallée, Jordan de Souza and Julian Wachner at the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in Montréal and has also sung in Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton and in Greece where she was coached by Eilana Lappalainen.

WILLIAMS, Jeanine - Soprano.

Jeanine holds certificates in performing and visual arts and musical theatre, Calgary. She graduated B. Music in vocal performance from U of Lethbridge and is now working on her M. Music at uOttawa, studying with Blaine Hendsbee, Rachel Hopp and presently with Christiane Riel. She has sung in oratorio with the Calgary Philharmonic, Lethbridge Symphony and Ottawa Symphony Orchestras. She has also sung in university opera productions in Lethbridge, Ottawa, *Micäela* in *Carmen*, as well as Mimi in *Bohème* for Opera Nuova, Edmonton.

President's Message – September 2017

Our summer meeting is always an important one so it was good to invite non-board members to attend, to share the excellent food and drink, and to experience the hearty hospitality of the Robinsons whose work as Treasurer and Secretary have meant so much to NCOS.

A Brian Law Opera Competition year is always a busy one. Fortunately a good deal of preparation was possible before arriving at the most pressing decisions. For example, the process of attracting new members and encouraging support from regular and new donors has benefited our financial situation to such an extent that we are able to award a substantial increase in the amount received by finalist runners-up to help them meet ever-increasing expenses incurred in their participation. Our next goal will be to raise the prize money for the first three finalists. The size of our audience on October 14th and the enthusiasm of the financial support of board members and opera lovers will be determining factors in increasing the prizes. The CBC has given our competition quite a boost by naming two of our former top winners as singers who have gained renown for Canada abroad in this special year. Joshua Hopkins and Philippe Sly are right up there with our patron Gerald Finley.

The preliminary jury met in early July, going through the written applications and, most important of all, listening to the three arias, one with recitative, to choose a maximum of six out of the sixteen applications. As usual there were more than six showing potential for future development. Mindful of past competitions where finalists failed in their first try only to succeed in the following one, the jurors asked me to encourage those eligible for the

next contest to try again. Concerning the announcement of the finalists there has been some criticism about how the news was distributed. It has been my practice to make sure that all the finalists have been notified first and have acknowledged that they will be available on the day of the competition before a general announcement is made. Based on past experience the preliminary jury always chooses an extra finalist who could be chosen to fill the place of someone who discovered that they were unable to participate on the designated date.

Opera alla pasta has been so popular that we are considering plans to expand it even more. Suggestions have been received from devotees and more are welcome. Criteria for acceptance include length. No 3 hour operas plus intermissions, please. The proximity of recent Met performances both in theatre and on TV also are taken into consideration. The Glyn-debourne *Traviata* which will be our first offering is a new production worthy of one of Verdi's masterpieces. Live from the Met certainly hit some snags last season with resulting loss of attendance. This next season is looking much better and I am really looking forward to Bellini's *Norma* and the rare performance of Rossini's great work *Semiramide*, not to be missed.

According to all reports I missed some great presentations at Glimmerglass this summer when I would have liked to see the rare Donizetti opera *The Siege of Calais*. Is it really fair for Matthew Sigman in Opera News to characterize Glimmerglass "as a destination for affluent operaphiles from across the country"?

See you at the opera.

Murray Kitts

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

What Makes Glimmerglass So Special?

Glimmerglass Festival 2017

by Lesley Robinson



The Setting

Otsego Lake really does glimmer in the sunlight and the bucolic setting of the Alice Busch Theater is the perfect setting, enhancing the Festival's unique character and casual, picturesque charm. The beautiful grounds include picnicking facilities and a nature trail. The house itself is special. Its open walls give the impression of being a part of the great outdoors, but when the walls close and the lights go down, we are transported to another world - sometimes ancient, sometimes modern, sometimes familiar, sometimes unexpected, but always a memorable feast for the senses.

The Repertoire

Glimmerglass habitually introduces tremendous diversity in its four mainstage productions and was bold this year in choosing not to include one of opera's "greatest hits" - a popular Verdi, Puccini or Rossini - certain to appeal to many, but perhaps less refreshing and stimulating to the hard-core audience. This year's selections spanned more than two centuries of repertoire, although the two English language offerings, *Porgy and Bess* and *Oklahoma*, were first produced less than a decade apart.

The earliest piece presented was Handel's *Xerxes*, commissioned by the King's Theatre in London and first performed there in 1738. The theatre was the home of the London Opera scene in the 18th and 19th centuries. Opera was big business for the theatre and constituted an evening's main entertainment event,

interspersed with dancing and short plays. The big stars of the day were the castrati and pieces were written especially for young Italian stars to show off their talents. Gaetano Majorano, whose stage name was "Caffarelli" was in London for the 1737-38 season and premiered the title role of Xerxes. Unfortunately it was a complete flop - the audience was not impressed by the comic elements - and it disappeared from the stage for nearly two centuries before making a comeback to become a favourite among Handel's operas with modern audiences. Thank you, Glimmerglass, for bringing this fabulous music to us.

The Siege of Calais by Donizetti is another fine opera that sadly fell into relative obscurity. Donizetti had hoped for it to be performed in Paris (hence the subject matter), but despite lots of revision to the work, it just never happened. Donizetti was too plain busy to give it any further attention and the work was never performed anywhere other than Naples, and it languished, untouched, for more than 150 years. It was revived in Europe in the 1990s, but it has fallen to Glimmerglass to give this gorgeous work its American premiere and we were privileged to attend the very first performance.



The stage set for the overture of *The Siege of Calais*

Porgy and Bess (1935) is an outstandingly special American twentieth century work. Unlike most operas, it began its life in the theatre, rather than the opera house. After premiering at the Colonial Theatre in Boston, it had a run on Broadway, followed by a tour

What Makes Glimmerglass So Special? Glimmerglass Festival 2017 (continued)

and then a 1942 Broadway revival. This fact, along with its jazzy, popular numbers, sets *Porgy and Bess* apart from most of operatic repertoire, but opera it indeed is, with its masterful score and stunning theatricality. Glimmerglass certainly did it justice.

Oklahoma! (1943), despite its decidedly non-operatic format, has always been a piece dear to my heart. (It was one of my parents' first dates in the heady, post-war optimism of 1947 London, where they stood in line for hours to stand at the back of the theatre and tell the story many times over the years.) *Oklahoma!* is a "book musical" in which the musical numbers are intrinsically and seamlessly part of the drama. Glimmerglass's remarkable treatment of such non-operatic repertoire is greatly to its credit. The balletic dream sequence provides an opportunity for Glimmerglass to show off its multi-disciplinary prowess.

The Artists

This year, as ever, Glimmerglass attracted a fabulous array of guest artists including singers, conductors, directors and designers. In *Xerxes* we were treated to a stellar performance by the magnificent young counter-tenor John Holiday in the title role. Handel's composition allows for the inclusion of another trouser role – *Xerxes*'s brother and rival in love, Arsamenes, sung with verve by Allegra De Vita (a former Glimmerglass Young Artist). Canadian conductor Nicole Paiement brought out the spirited drama of the piece.

James Noone's set for *The Siege of Calais* was an instant attention grabber. Giving the fourteenth-century story a modern setting evoked the universality of the theme of defiance in the face of oppressors and hinted at the twenty-first century misery of refugees in the Calais Jungle, the makeshift camp of asylum seekers awaiting the opportunity to enter the UK. Leah Crocetto gave an expressive and moving performance as Eleonora, Aleks Romano was an earnest and heroic Aurelio and young artist Adrian Timpau, who is rapidly making a name for himself, gave a mature performance as the somber, yet resolute, Eustachio, Mayor of Calais. Conductor (and Glimmerglass Music Director) Joseph Colaneri brought the score to life with energetic zeal. Viva Donizetti and viva Colaneri!

Porgy and Bess was a vibrant production with a bright and lively cast. Talise Trevigne revealed the complexities of Bess, yearning to do the right thing, yet seduced by temptation. South African bass-baritone Musa Ngqunwana returned to Glimmerglass with his rich tones and compelling presence to perform the role of Porgy. They were joined by athletic young tenor Frederick Ballentine, a graduate of a number of prestigious young artist programmes (including Glimmerglass), whose spirited portrayal of Sportin' Life was highly engaging, while Norman Garrett was a suitably shady and menacing Crown.

What made *Oklahoma!* particularly special for me was the stand out performance of Jarrett Ott as Curly. Right from the first optimistic notes of "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'" to the resounding celebratory finale of "Oklahoma!" his ringing tones and affable charm carried the whole show. There were other notable performances from young artists Emma Roos (not an opera singer) as an irrepressible and adorable Ado Annie and Michael Hewitt as an unexpectedly, slightly ambiguous, Jud Fry. (Perhaps he's just too nice a guy to play the baddie!) We were also treated to a performance by this year's Artist in Residence, William Burden, who seemed to be having an awfully good time as the benevolent Andrew Carnes.

A word about the Glimmerglass orchestra – a total of over 50 musicians take their places in the Glimmerglass pit during the season. The exact make up of the orchestra of course varies, but it is a joy to recognize



Members of the Glimmerglass Orchestra warming up

What Makes Glimmerglass So Special? Glimmerglass Festival 2017 (continued)

faces in the pit from year to year. Their artistry is greatly appreciated.

The Young Artists Program

The Young Artists Program is a special feature of the Glimmerglass experience. The quality of the participants is outstanding and, as well as serving as covers for guest artists and as chorus members, a number of them also have the opportunity to take on solo roles, with many of them participating in multiple productions. Thanks to an innovation in recent years, the program is open not only to opera singers – the roster includes young directors, coaches, accompanists, conductors and musical theatre performers (including dancers). It is heartwarming to note that members of the Young Artists Program are always in evidence in the auditorium at performances, supporting their peers.

Pre-performance Talks

I love the pre-performance talks at Glimmerglass. They are invariably thoughtful and informative and given by members of the music staff, sometimes even by the conductors. It is no mean feat to provide enlightenment to a wide variety of operagoers, but somehow the speakers have the skill to speak to both the total neophyte and the irritating know-it-all – yes, there's always (at least) one. The topics covered are varied – sometimes some history of the composition or its performance, sometimes the highlighting of musical themes, sometimes the historical or social context of the work or a word about sources or musical influences. Whatever my own familiarity with what I am about to see, I always come away with something to think about and listen for.

Festival Events

Since 2011, the former Glimmerglass Opera has morphed into the Glimmerglass Festival and both its scope

and its proportions have widened. As well as more than 40 performances of the mainstage productions, the festival calendar now includes over 50 other events including concerts, talks, backstage tours, lunches, dinners and post-performance Q & A sessions. This year there was a specially commissioned youth opera: *Robin Hood* by Ben Moore and Kelley Rourke. Although it remains possible to see all four mainstage productions over a three-day weekend, one could stay a lot longer and have plenty of festival events to attend.

Francesca

Last, but definitely not least I must mention Francesca Zambello, the Festival's Artistic & General Director who is definitely part of what makes Glimmerglass special. Francesca is everywhere, welcoming, hosting and working the crowd. Whether coming out to introduce the performance (and beg for donations), driving people around in a golf cart or standing around by the gift shop, encouraging the punters to sample the wares, Francesca is omnipresent. It is in large part thanks to her vision and energy that Glimmerglass continues to grow and flourish. (We already have our tickets for 2018.)



Francesca on golf cart duty – photo by Mark

The Glimmerglass Festival has released the details of its 2018 schedule. The four productions will be *West Side Story* (Bernstein/Laurents and Sondheim), *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Janáček/Tesnohlídek and Lole), *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini/Sterbini) and *Silent Night* (Puts/Campbell).

Spot the Difference: *Médée* at Opera Atelier and *Le Carnaval de Venise* at the Boston Early Music Festival

by Lesley Robinson



The poster for *Médée* reflects the street outside the historic Elgin Theatre in Toronto

Marc-Antoine Charpentier's *Médée* and André Campra's *Le Carnaval de Venise* were both first produced at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal in Paris in the final decade of the seventeenth century, so these two works by French composers with French libretti have much in common.

With an invitation to take the production to the Theatre Royale at the Palais de Versailles as part of Canada's official 150th birthday celebration, there was a tremendous buzz of excitement around Opera Atelier's presentation of Charpentier's *Médée* in Toronto earlier this year. Co-artistic Director Marshall Pinkovsky was rightly proud when he made his usual enthusiastic and grandiloquent pre-performance announcements. The entire cast of singers and dancers together with Tafelmusik's wonderful musicians were all going to France to perform in the production at Versailles.

This production was a glorious celebration of all things Atelier, the company being the perfect vehicle for French baroque opera. *Médée*, described as a French lyric tragedy with a libretto by Thomas Corneille (younger brother of the more famous Pierre Corneille), was first performed on December 4, 1693. *Le Carnaval de Venise* premiered on January 20, 1699, billed contrastingly as a comédie-lyrique with a libretto by Jean-François Regnard, a comic poet, second only in his time to Molière. *Le Carnaval de Venise* was produced this year as the fully-staged centerpiece opera at the Boston Early Music Festival, part of a larger festival of opera, concerts, exhibitions, workshops and related events. The venue was another historic theatre, the Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College, Boston.



The auditorium of the Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College, Boston

Médée featured Opera Atelier regulars Peggy Kriha Dye as Medea, Colin Ainsworth as Jason, Mireille Asselin as Créuse, our own Meghan Lindsay as Nérine and Olivier Laquerre in the multiple roles of Vengeance, Soldier and Arcas. *Le Carnaval de Venise* had a significantly larger vocal cast, with most cast members taking on multiple roles. The lead female part was taken by Montreal's Karina Gauvin and a number of Atelier performers were also in the cast. Mireille Lebel has performed with Atelier in the past and will join the cast for both of Atelier's productions for the upcoming season, notably taking on the role of Cherubino in October/November's production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. Jesse Blumberg as well as the ubiquitous Olivier

Spot the Difference: *Médée* at Opera Atelier and *Le Carnaval de Venise* at the Boston Early Music Festival (continued)

Laquerre appeared in both *Médée* and *Le Carnaval de Venise*, the latter being a fine vehicle for Mr. Laquerre's considerable comedic talents. He too returns to Atelier in October in the role of Antonio in *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Both Opera Atelier and the Boston Early Music Festival have their own dance companies which were put to good use in these two operas. Whilst the ballet sequences in *Médée* flow as an intrinsic part of the drama, the comedic nature and structure of *Le Carnaval de Venise*, with its multiple tableaux and play within a play, give the impression of a sort of seventeenth century variety show.

Both Tafelmusik and the Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra have much in common, playing early music on original instruments. In Boston the orchestra played with no conductor and no pit. The violinists sat opposite each other around a long table. These were two fabulously authentically presented French Baroque operas with so much in common, yet the experiences were so different. Perhaps this is explained in part by the difference between tragedy and



comedy. The classical tradition lends itself more readily to tragedy, whereas contemporary subject matter is more likely to yield an uplifting and delightful romp. Either way, we are privileged that these artistic endeavours are alive and thriving.

Opera in Local Cinemas

by David Williams

The Bytown Cinema

A Night At The Opera, September 25, 6:45p.m. and September 26, 4:15p.m..

Let your hair down as the Marx Brothers join forces to disrupt the stuffy world of opera by wreaking havoc on the music, stage, and audience. They take it upon themselves to help advance the careers of two struggling young singers (Allan Jones and Kitty Carlisle) and finally make a shambles of *Il Trovatore*. (Recommended by Shelagh Williams)

The Magic Flute (Mozart), October 21, 12:45p.m.

From the Royal Opera House, directed by David McVicar and starring: Roderick Williams, Siobhan Stagg, Mauro Peter and Sabine Devieille.

Cinéma Aylmer

La flûte enchantée de Mozart (Royal Opera House), 22 septembre 3:00 p.m., 27 septembre 7:00 p.m.

Julia Jones conducts this spell-binding production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* with a wonderful cast including Roderick Williams as Papageno.

Don Carlos de Verdi (Opéra national de Paris), 20 octobre 3:00 p.m, 25 octobre 7:00 p.m.

Conductor, Philippe Jordan; Director, Krzysztof Warlikowski; Philippe II, Ildar Abdrazakov; Don Carlos, Jonas Kaufmann; Rodrigue, Ludovic Tézier.

La favorite de Donizetti (Bayerische Staatsoper), 17 novembre 3:00 p.m, 22 novembre 7:00 p.m.

Conductor, Giacomo Sagripanti; Director, Amélie Niermeyer; Léonor de Guzman, Clémentine Margaine; Fernand, Matthew Polenzani; Alphonse X, Ludovic Tézier; Balthazar, Mika Kares; Don Gaspard, Matthew Grills; Inès, Elsa Benoit.

Events You Could Have Enjoyed

by Shelagh Williams

NAC Young Artists Programme

This summer Russell Braun, conveniently in town to star in *Louis Riel*, was on the faculty for the voice sector. Besides giving a master class, he participated in a lovely concert with the four voice students, singing a duet with each, ranging from lovely and charming to great fun. The students themselves each had a solo, and sang Brahms quartets together, all with Jean Desmarais at the piano. They had earlier taken part in the noon hour *Works in Progress* Concerts in different repertoire, and later joined the final Senior Student Chamber Concert series. A nice vocal summer interlude!

If Music Be The Food Of Love

A rare out of term chance to hear some great uOttawa Music School grads, this July 7th concert by tenor Kieran Foss, bass-baritone Kevin Burke, and pianist Ylan Chu was just one delight after another! Keiran started with some lovely Purcell songs, including the title one, and later gave us 10 of the 20 parts of Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin*, helpfully developing the story for us as he sang. Kevin favoured us with Schubert's *Schwanengesang* rearranged to tell a story, and then Ravel's shorter *Don Quichotte a Dulcinée*. They finished with a Purcell duet, vocally duelling with each other! They were beautifully and thoughtfully accompanied by Ylan, now doing a Doctorate in Music with Paul Stewart at Université de Montréal. We are so lucky to have such musical talent in town - and maybe we'll hear the singers in the BLOC next time!

Music and Beyond Festival

This year's offerings were quite exceptional, from a vocal standpoint. First and foremost was *400 Years of Opera*, in First Baptist, hosted and narrated by Pierre Vachon, musicologist and Communications Director with Opéra de Montréal (OM), and accompanied by Maxime Dubé-Malenfant, an assistant répétiteur with OM. It got off to a great start with the *Libiamo* from *La traviata*, with soprano Myriam Leblanc and tenor Danny Leclerc, and then illustrative arias were sung by a total of four excellent singers. The century by century programme proper began, appropriately for his 450th birthday, with Monteverdi's *Possente spirito*, from *Orfeo*, sung by baritone Max Van Wyck. He was outstanding in this and later in *O du mein holder Abendstern* from Wagner's *Tannhauser*. Mezzo Marjorie Maltais wowed

us with a fantastic Vivaldi aria from *La Giselda*, and also a lovely *Non più mesta* from Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. Duets and ensembles carried us through the centuries, with the two ladies combining for a lovely *Belle nuit, o nuit d'amour* from Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann*. They finished with Bernstein's *West Side Story*, illustrated by Danny Leclerc's *Maria* and the ensemble in *Tonight, Tonight*. This was a fascinating event, supplemented by Myriam Leblanc giving an earlier solo recital of soprano arias.

The Elmer Iseler Singers, appropriately in St. Joe's for its acoustics, were, as expected, excellent. The 20-voice ensemble concluded their concert with a large selection of Canadian works, for *Canada 150*.

This year the Studio de musique ancienne de Montréal, singing in St. Barnabas, consisted of only 5 voices plus a lutanist. Director Andrew McAnerney explained the programme of 15th and 16th century pieces *Of Love, Drinking and Revelry*, each of which was beautifully sung and / or played.

The much-anticipated concert by BLOC finalist Wallis Giunta, thankfully all in English, was understandably packed, and she and pianist Stephen Philcox certainly delivered! She looked gorgeous in a striking red gown with grey-filled slits at the front and back and with her long red hair hanging down over one shoulder. With her lovely voice and good diction, she favoured us first with Samuel Barber's mostly irreverent *Hermit Songs*. Canadian Robert Fleming's *Confession Stone*, covering Jesus' life from birth to death from the standpoint of his mother, Mary, was, with exceptional diction, beautifully and feelingly sung. For the second half, Wallis braided her hair over her shoulder and sat on a stool for a more relaxed and conversational rendition of Rufus Wainwright's *Songs for Lulu*. Family and friends swelled the audience, which was most appreciative of her performance - as were we!

National Music Festivals Competition, Ottawa

This year, for *Canada 150*, Ottawa hosted the National Competition of provincial winners from Music Festivals across Canada, such as Ottawa's own Kiwanis Music Festival. The competition itself, in 8 categories, covered two full days, Aug. 10th and 11th, with the final overall competition for the Grand Award on the Saturday evening. The sessions were very interesting and competitive, with the audience changing with every

Events You Could Have Enjoyed (continued)

province's representative, as both competitors in other categories and regular provincial fans moved about to support their province's candidates. The row behind us, all from Manitoba, even brought provincial flags to encourage their singer!

We of course concentrated on the voice competition, held at Tabaret Hall. This was a very strong field which produced several exceptional mini-recitals. It included baritone Ryan Hofman, a uOttawa grad, now at UBC and so representing BC. Ryan came in second, and will be participating in this fall's BLOC.

It was great to have the opportunity to hear some of the top voice talent from across the country.

Shaw Festival: Me and My Girl

The Shaw Festival's musical this year was the delightful *Me and My Girl*, with music by Noel Gay, the *nom de plume* of a church organist with a talent for writing hit musicals in the thirties! Cleverly updated by Stephen Fry for a successful multi-year run starting in 1985, and now directed by Ashlie Corcoran, Thousand Islands Playhouse Artistic Director, the musical's big production number was *The Lambeth Walk* to grandly close Act I. For the Cockney long lost heir, it starred Michael Therriault, snagged this year from Stratford, with an enthusiastic cast of singers and tap dancers: great fun!

Events You Should Enjoy

by David Williams

Southminster United Church presents:

(i) *Farewell, my beloved canary!* October 18, 12 noon. Georg Philipp Telemann's comic mini-opera, *Kanarienvogel Kantate* (Funeral music for an artistic canary) along with baroque chamber works for tenor by Bach and Handel. David MacAdam, tenor; Emily Redhead, violin; Pemi Paull, violin, viola; Joan Harrison, cello; and Roland Graham, harpsichord.

(ii) *Autumn reflections*. November 29, 12 noon. Contrasting 20th-century song cycles by Jean Papineau-Couture, Alban Berg and Ralph Vaughan Williams on themes of life, love and nature featuring Isabelle Lacroix (soprano) and Parvaneh Eshghi (piano).

Almonte in Concert presents: *Secrets of Christmas*. December 2, 7:30 p.m. Famous Canadian baritone Gino Quilico and a dynamic trio of violinist Pascale Croft, cellist Marianne Croft, and pianist Dominic Boulianne ring in the season with a traditional Christmas programme of sacred and secular works, along with other beloved Christmas tunes.

The Ottawa Choral Society is delighted to share with **Chamberfest** the 2nd Annual Christmas Collaboration. December 14 and 15, 7:30 p.m., St. Joseph's Parish Church. *In Terra Pax*, a rendering of Gerald Finzi's exquisite work, along with Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, and then some familiar carols to

get you into the spirit! Starring Caitlin Wood, soprano; Russell Braun, baritone; and Matthew Larkin, piano.

St. Luke's Church Recital Series presents:

(i) September 17 at 7:30 p.m. Sophie De Cruz (soprano) with Giancarlo Scalia (piano) featuring arias by Puccini, Donizetti and Verdi as well as art songs by Donaudy, Gastaldon, Tosti and Scalia's own composition *Ideale*.

(ii) November 26 at 7:30 p.m. Aditi Magdalena (mezzo) with Huguette Voyer (piano) presents *Come again?* an Advent adventure in art song, featuring Vaughan Williams' *Songs of Travel*, Samuel Barber's *Hermit Songs*, Hebrew songs of spiritual longing, and French songs of romantic desire.

(iii) December 10 at 7:30 p.m. **Coro Capriccio** (chamber choir) presents an evening of Christmas choral music sung by one of Ottawa's newest chamber choirs in one of Ottawa's acoustical gems.

The Ottawa Symphony Orchestra presents *A Tribute to Maureen Forrester*, November 20, 8:00 p.m., National Arts Centre. Honouring her memorable life and career, these performances feature a new song cycle for mezzo-soprano and orchestra by Howard Shore, performed by Canadian Susan Platts. Tenor John Mac Master joins Platts for one of Forrester's signature works: Mahler's symphonic song cycle, *Das Lied von der Erde*.

Opera alla Pasta

DVD presentations begin at 2 p.m. at St. Anthony's Soccer Club and are followed by a delicious meal. Cost: \$25. Call 6138309827 4 days before the video presentation to reserve.

Sunday September 17, 2017

La traviata



This 2016 Glyndebourne production features Verena Grimadeva, the Bolshoi Theatre's soprano, who has been hailed as "the new voice of Russia". She has earned rave reviews wherever she has appeared in Europe and you will understand why when you experience this superb opera creation which has been chosen by Opera News as one of the best DVDs of 2016. Of special interest to Ottawa opera enthusiasts is that 2005 Brian Law winner, Joyce El-Khoury, replaced Verena Grimadeva and performed the Violetta role in this summer's *La traviata* presentation at the Glyndebourne Opera Festival.

October 22, 2017

The Queen of Spades

The rest of the 2017 Opera alla Pasta season has not yet been determined but will be announced on our website and in the next newsletter.

Saturday Afternoon at the Opera on CBC 2017

BEST OPERA SERIES

Opera luminaries introduce favourite recordings with host Ben Heppner

September 9 (Brett Polegato): *Don Carlo* (Verdi)

September 16 (Jane Glover): *The Rake's Progress* (Stravinsky)

September 23 (Karen Cargill): *Madama Butterfly* (Puccini)

September 30 (Jake Heggie): *Susannah* (Carlisle Floyd)

October 7 (Atom Egoyan): *Wozzeck* (Berg)

October 14 (Sandra Horst): *Turandot* (Puccini)

October 21 (Tim Albery): *Peter Grimes* (Britten)

October 28 (Lawrence Brownlee): *La fille du régiment* (Donizetti)

November 4 (Jamie Barton): *Das Rheingold* (Wagner)