

NATIONAL CAPITAL OPERA SOCIETY
Newsletter

December 1991

SOCIÉTÉ D'OPÉRA DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE
Bulletin

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Have you made your donation to the Brian Law Opera Scholarship?

On Monday evening, 18 November, the Opera of the National Arts Centre was filled to capacity as Ottawa bade *adieu* to a major figure in the music community for the past 25 years, Brian Law, as he departs for the green pastures and woolly sheep of New Zealand. Many spokesmen from many areas of the community have expressed to Brian their appreciation for his many gifts and contributions to choral, symphonic, and operatic music. We in the NCOS were delighted when Brian allowed us to establish the Brian Law Opera Scholarship in recognition of his many years of involvement in opera, both with the National Arts Centre's Festival Ottawa and later with productions by Opera Lyra Ottawa and *L'Opéra de Montréal*.

In the previous Newsletter a form was enclosed for your donations to this endowment fund

established by the Society. To save you from ransacking your archives, the membership form in this issue can also be used for donations. *Now is your opportunity to show your appreciation of Brian Law's talents in a very tangible way: make your contribution today, and speak to your friends!* Make your cheques payable to the National Capital Opera Society—Brian Law fund. By the spring of 1993 we wish to have a solid base of a minimum of a \$10 000 trust fund, from which scholarship awards of at least \$1000 can be made annually. It is up to us all to make this Scholarship fund a successful project of the National Capital Opera Society. Won't you join us?

A list of the donors to date will be published in the next newsletter.

BC

PBS art auction

Those NCOS members who watched the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) art auction on 31 October and 1 and 2 November might have seen a charming watercolour entitled "Maple Keys."

The artist, Gerda Ruckerbauer, has been a member of the the National Capital Opera Society since its beginning and is currently Chairman of the Membership Committee. Gerda studied watercolour painting under Carole Wilson and Margo Will, and oil painting under Rita Shellard.

Gerda donated her painting to the NCOS who, in turn, presented it to PBS as a gesture of thanks for the many delightful hours of opera programming scheduled by the station. In

return, PBS was most generous in mentioning on TV that the painting was sponsored by the NCOS.

MD

Membership renewal

The 1991 membership year ends on 31 December. For your convenience, the last sheet of this Newsletter is a renewal form for 1992 membership that can be removed without spoiling anything else. Your support is important to the Society: please encourage other members of your family and friends to join us too!

NCOS reception after *Acis and Galatea*

Although I knew I would be venturing into a pastoral world, I went to see and hear *Acis and Galatea* at the NAC in September because it was opera and because it was by Handel. What a surprise to find that three of its arias were already among my favourites, with one of them even among my father's repertoire. The production was well on the staged side of "semi-staged" and featured a revival of baroque gestures.

After the performance the NCOS held a reception in the NAC Café for the principals, some of whom were still making baroque gestures as they took their seats. After Jeffry Morgan's welcome speech, Trevor Pinnock took the floor. He was

happy to find that we existed and was very pleased to meet us. He spoke of his enthusiasm for opera and his hopes for bringing it back to the Opera, backing this up by explaining how determined he had been to do *Acis and Galatea* in spite of having had only six days to prepare it.

With the formalities over, whom you spoke with depended on where you sat. I was near the young Scottish bass Brian Bannatyne-Scott, a charming man who clearly enjoys every minute of his developing career. I had equally enjoyed his singing, and not only because he sang my father's song.

JMC

Opera Lyra Ottawa news

Opera Lyra Ottawa reported at its Annual General Meeting on 21 October another very successful year, both financially and artistically. *Madama Butterfly* was sold out and very well received by everyone. The new fiscal year started with *The Magic Flute*, which played to the largest audience ever for OLO.

Details of the forthcoming OLO events *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and the RSVP Gala are given in the section "Opera within reach" in this newsletter. Another event, "Guess who's coming to dinner," takes place on 22 February 1992; for further details you should call OLO at 233-9200.

The highlight of the 1992 season will be the OLO production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, honouring the composer's 200th birthday (or is it his 48th, since his birthday was Leap Year's

Day?), and starring Sandra Graham of Ottawa and Theodore Baerg.

Long-range plans for OLO include productions of *La Traviata* in 1993, *Don Pasquale* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* in 1993-94, *Rigoletto*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Les Contes d'Hoffman*, and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* again in 1994-95, and *Roméo et Juliette*, *Falstaff*, and *Hansel and Gretel* again in 1995-96.

This is very exciting news for opera in Ottawa. The vision seems to indicate that by the year 2000, Ottawa should benefit from four to six main-stage operas a year in the NAC, put on by Opera Lyra Ottawa, a prominent Canadian professional opera company featuring Canadian talent.

GP

The Lindenhof Restaurant

Have you ever wondered where your busy Board holds its meetings? What walls overhear its weighty deliberations? Where the phrase "Brian Law Opera Scholarship" was first uttered? The answer is the basement of the Lindenhof Restaurant, whose management allows us free use of the room and sells us drinks when we thirst. The Lindenhof specialises in German cuisine (or *Küche*) and is at 965 Richmond Road, just west of Woodroffe. Since the

restaurant is nice to us, perhaps our members might consider returning a favour by dining there. Those who do will find that the Lindenhof is nice to them too.

JMC

Tours for members, updated

On Saturday 29 February, the National Capital Opera Society will attend the Montreal Opera production of *Eugene Onegin*.

We have *only eight places left*, so please make your intentions known as soon as possible if you plan to attend with us. After these eight seats are taken, attendance will be on a ticket availability basis only.

For the other two tours, this is the situation :

<i>Nabucco</i>	18 April	40 places left
<i>La Belle Hélène</i>	29 May	8 places left

Please make your plans now to avoid disappointment. These performances are almost completely sold out on subscription, so individual ticket availability is limited. If you noticed that there are more places left for *Nabucco* than there were in September, this is not because of loss of interest but because a second bus has been booked.

Please call **Morgan Tours** at 722-7572 for registration details.

JDAM

Opera within reach, updated

This is a repeat of our September listing of accessible operas, less those that have already finished.

Ottawa

Opera Lyra Ottawa is repeating last year's production of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* by Gian-Carlo Menotti, with performances on 20, 21, 22, 26, and 27 December, the first three at the Centrepointe Theatre in Nepean, and the last two at the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

At the NAC Opera on 12 January, OLO is putting on "Opera RSVP," an evening of opera favourites chosen by requests made in advance. The guest host will be Leon Cole of the CBC.

Montreal

The Montreal Opera has four more productions this season. A Morgan Tour for NCOS members pays a visit to each opera on those dates marked by asterisks.

Eugene Onegin, by Tchaikovsky, on 22, 24, 27, and 29* February, and on 4 and 7 March.

Nabucco, by Verdi, on 11, 13, 16, 18*, 22, and 25 April.

Così fan tutte, by Mozart, from 24 April to 2 May.

La Belle Hélène, by Offenbach, on 29*, 30, and 31 May, and on 1, 3, and 4 June.

Toronto

In Toronto the Canadian Opera Company is performing:

La Bohème, by Puccini, on 16, 21, 24, 26, 29, and 31 January and on 3, 6, and 8 February.

Roméo et Juliette, by Gounod, on 22, 25, 28, and 30 January, and on 1, 4, 7, and 9 February.

Falstaff, by Verdi, on 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 22, 24, and 26 April.

Il Barbiere di Siviglia, by Rossini, on 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, and 28 June.

All these are at the O'Keefe Centre. At the Elgin Theatre there is:

Mario and the Magician, by Somers, on 19, 21, 23, 26, 28, and 30 May.

Hamilton

At the furthest distance we consider within reach for the purposes of this summary, there is Opera Hamilton with the following production remaining:

Tosca, by Puccini, on 9 and 11 April.

JMC

Calling all techno-peasants

In our last newsletter I got you into the Ottawa Public Library, showed you how to borrow some compact discs and how to return them, and promised to tell you something about the collection there in this issue.

Luckily the Library staff has made it extremely easy for anyone to browse electronically through their collection—yes, and I repeat that it is *easy* for *anyone*.

Of course it's easy for anyone who uses a computer at work or at home and hasn't converted it into an expensive door stop. But even people like this will be able to use a shortcut to finding all the information in the library data bank concerning operas. As for techno-peasants, just follow these instructions. Find the computer terminals; if they are all busy on the ground floor, go upstairs.

The terminal will be on. Find the Return key (or, even simpler, the Enter key at the bottom right-hand side of the keyboard). Type in the letter S (lower case, upper case, it doesn't matter) and press Return or Enter. Then type **operas**. Press Return or Enter.

You will then see on the screen a list which looks partly like this:

1. Opéras 5
2. Operas 68
3. etc.

You will then type the number 2. Press Return or Enter.

Now on the screen you will see the first dozen or so of the sixty-odd compact disc sets of operas in the library's collection. They are listed alphabetically by composer first and then by title where more than one opera is held in the collection. If you see an item on the screen that you would like to get more information on, press the number beside the opera listed, for

example, 4. Bizet, G. Carmen (sound recording). Then you will get a listing of artists and the information of whether the discs are available or not. When you are finished with this item press the letter **B** and the Return or Enter to go back (**B** for back, get it?) to the previous listing. If there is nothing of further interest type **N** (for next), and follow by hitting Return or Enter. You will get to see the entire listing this way. And you can always go back by using the **B** key.

You will discover a few anomalies: there are a couple of video recordings listed; *Merrie England*, which is not an opera, is listed; Giordano's *Fedora* is listed as lost; and Mozart's *Mitridate, rè di Ponto* has an annotation saying "not available in the library, ask librarian." Always good advice.

For individual artists like Maria Callas, go back to where you entered the letter S and enter A instead. Press Return or Enter. See what other artists you can find this way. Do have a look at the selection. The librarian assures me that they would welcome suggestions. Perhaps you could send your suggestions to the National Capital Opera Society and we could send in one great list. Enjoy playing with the computer but if you just can't bring yourself to do it, there is still a card catalogue in the audio-visual section, although it's not up-to-date.

MK

Brian Law speaks

I started my interview with Brian Law by asking him about his background before coming to Ottawa. "I was born in London and moved to Brighton on the south coast. My interest in music really began when I joined the choir in Brighton's Christ Church at the age of seven. I was particularly interested in the human voice—I had a good voice as a child and did a lot of singing, met a lot of serious musicians, and was invited in the summer time to sing in English cathedrals—by that time I was tall enough to stand out!

"By the time I was thirteen or fourteen my voice started to change. I was already organist at Christ Church, and I also formed a choir at age fourteen; it was called the Regency Singers. That was in 1955, I think. It was World Refugee

Year and we gave a concert, something quite extraordinary. That was an all-male choir and then I changed it to a mixed choir. I went to college at the age of 18, to the Royal School of Church Music; I also studied at the Royal College of Music and got different degrees. I was dubbed a "competent conductor, choir trainer, organist, and pianist."

That was Brian Law's university background but then I asked him about music at that time. "I was also interested in jazz, have been interested all my life, and I did a lot of work in jazz clubs in London to earn money on weekends, but also because I enjoyed it. I also managed to work on board ships coming and going across the Atlantic—from Southampton to Montreal, one voyage at Christmas and one at Easter and a

couple during the summer. It was enormous fun but also very hard work—very exhausting playing seventeen hours a day almost continuously. For me as a student the money was incredibly good and it gave me a chance to get to Montreal and I remember discovering the cathedrals on St Catherine Street. I also found Oscar Peterson and Errol Garner playing jazz down the east end of St Catherine. These little jazz clubs I never forgot.

“Somehow I’d always known I didn’t want to stay in England. I can’t tell you why that was, but I knew I was more interested in being an explorer—a pioneer—so England had to see me go. The people at the RCM knew about this, so they put my name down and the first thing I knew I was being interviewed by the rector of Grace Church on the Hill in Toronto.”

Brian Law settled in Ottawa in 1965. “I remember being driven downtown by Confederation Square and being told about the “hole in the ground costing a million dollars—they say it’s gonna be an Arts Centre one day,” but none of us believed it. That was my first discovery of the NAC, which was to be an important part of my life.”

I asked Brian about his feelings on leaving Ottawa: “I could not stay here for a whole career—I’ve always known that—my predecessors Gerald Wheeler and Ian Fellows said, ‘You can’t survive more than seven or eight years. The press will kill you and you’ll have to leave.’ In fact they never did. I’ve managed to survive. Time went on and I found things to do. I came to St Matthews, then there were the Cantata Singers, the Ottawa Symphony, the Thirteen Strings—always something to do, never any pressure to leave. But over the last five or eight years I’ve come to realize there isn’t much more to do here, nothing new: I’ve reached a plateau. I know my work here is sort of done, I was rather scared what it would be like for the next fifteen years—I didn’t think I’d be particularly challenged—so I was looking around. When I was in Barcelona a year ago with Franz-Paul Decker, and my choir was singing there, I told him I needed a change. ‘If you see a job over there in New Zealand, let me know.’ And sure enough, within a few months I got a phone call from him, telling about a wonderful concert he’d been to. Two rival choirs had decided to amalgamate. ‘They’re

looking for a conductor. Can I give them your name?’ I said, ‘Sure you can.’ So that was it. They phoned me up and flew me out and wooed me for three or four weeks last Christmas and it happened.”

Brian Law is obviously very pleased but very nervous. “I have to tell you that giving up what I have here—the success I have here, the sheer happiness and the friends and everything that I’ve built up—is very tough. It’s not easy at all. I wish it wasn’t so far away—it’s so monumental.”

At this point I asked Brian a rather direct question which he wasn’t in the least hesitant in answering: “In your time in Ottawa, did you ever yearn to be the permanent conductor of the NACO?” “Oh, no, never did it cross my mind, or, I’m sure, their minds. This is an international orchestra and it has to have an international conductor.” I then asked him about his last performance of *The Magic Flute*, presented in the Theatre. “Yes, I liked it—but it’s a lousy place to have an opera, it’s very difficult to make things work, but I thought it got better as it went along and ultimately went very well in all aspects, including my own work. I very much enjoyed doing it and it’s the very finest thing I’ve done with Opera Lyra.”

Brian then went on to talk extensively about Mozart operas produced in Opera Atelier’s way in Toronto. “They are obsessed with baroque music; for me it was a very profound experience!” Brian Law’s next Mozart performance will be *Don Giovanni* in New Zealand.

His collaboration with the NAC all these years was so intense and fruitful for both, it was a natural question to ask him at this point about the future of the NAC and opera. “If I’m to guess, I would think that with the NAC not having any plans for opera next summer, they would have no reason to oppose an Opera Lyra production on the main stage. I would hope that within two or three years Trevor Pinnock will be producing a baroque opera festival of some sort. It makes sense, don’t you think?”

Brian talks warmly of young upcoming singers he has worked with and trained such as Gerald Finley. “I think there’s great potential and an exciting voice there. Every time I hear him he’s sounding better. He sang superbly last night with Thirteen Strings, and I’m glad that he will

be singing Guglielmo in Glyndebourne next season, then going back to do *Figaro* in Toronto the year after. And he's been asked to audition for Salzburg—so there are good singers out there."

I asked Brian what he liked best after music. "Escaping from everything that has to do with music. I like to be alone and in the country and preferably with animals. I have a farm—do you want to buy a farm? I live alone, by choice. Solitude is very important to me. I have no problems with this, I like to go home, go for a walk at midnight with the dogs, look at the cattle, have a nice quiet drink. Solitude replenishes me."

"Do you listen to music when you're not making music?" I asked him. "I always want to and I rarely have time to. Even in the car I don't listen to music—I enjoy driving too much. I'm hoping in New Zealand I'll be able to listen to more music. It is a slower pace of life down there."

To illustrate his up-tempo pace here, Brian tells me about a flash trip to New York to do a concert at St John the Divine and straight back to Ottawa for a Thirteen Strings concert—something he won't be doing down under.

Hobbies? "I walk, which I love doing in the morning with the dogs: not jogging, just walking." Favourite singer or conductor? "I admire the energy of Georg Solti, the elegance of Bernard Haitink, and I could listen to Jon Vickers sing anything." That unfulfilled wish in music? "Yes, there's one work and it's Mahler's Eighth Symphony. I was hoping that I would end up doing that here before I left, but it has not happened, but I'm not crying my heart out." As I listen to Brian I have no doubt he'll get around to doing that Mahler in New Zealand.

Once Brian Law arrives in Christchurch, he launches into rehearsals of Handel's *Messiah* and two Christmas concerts, then he goes on summer holidays (trekking at Milford Sound, perhaps) and back to work again in February with *Don Giovanni*, guest-conducting the baroque orchestra in Dunedin, then *The Damnation of Faust* in Wellington with his choir, and the mad race is on again.

Coming back to Canada as a guest conductor is also in his mind. He's scheduled for a return visit to Ottawa in 1993. In a brief discussion on the Brian Law Opera Scholarship, Brian had this to say: "Opera is a very tough world. Who knows, someone will win the scholarship and go on to become one of the great stars of the future—my hope is that it will help with study."

Brian's favourite operas are *Peter Grimes*, all the Mozart operas, and Vaughan Williams's *Riders to the Sea*.

In closing this interview Brian Law had a few incisive quotations which I'm sure he won't mind my repeating, so here goes: on the New York Met, "The Met is a barn of a place." A bad opera house? "The Sydney Opera House." On himself: "I'm a conductor, a performer, a go-getter and a very private person."

An Ottawa paper recently mentioned how private a person Brian Law is. I do hope this article will have made him known better to the Ottawa public he served so well these last 26 years. Thank you, Brian, from all of us, and may your wonderful gift of music remain with you in your new musical and artistic ventures.

GP

Opera films at the Bytowne, updated

With half our movie season over, we are looking forward to our next film, *Macbeth*, on 19 January, at the Bytowne Cinema. Shirley Verrett and Leo Nucci sing the starring roles in this very dramatic Verdi opera. Veriano Luchetti is Macduff, and Samuel Ramey is heard but not seen as Banquo. The conductor is Ricardo Chailly.

I want to reassure those of you who experienced poor sound quality at the premiere screening of

this film at the Bytowne some months ago. The problem was caused by a malfunctioning projector, which has now been repaired and is performing satisfactorily.

Not only are the films very good: the higher the attendance, the more money raised for the scholarships awarded by the Society. At each showing there will be a draw for a prize. Mark the date now and plan to attend, regardless of the weather!

Tickets are \$7 including taxes and can be bought at our ticket outlets (see below) or at the door. Allow enough time to find parking on the surrounding streets, and join us for complimentary refreshments at 1:30 pm. The films start at 2 pm.

Mark your calendar now for our final film of the season, Zeffirelli's acclaimed production of *La Bohème*, on March 1.

HM

Save the CBC FM stereo networks

On 14 October 1991, Marjorie Clegg, President of the NCOS, sent the following open letter to:

Mr. Gérard Veilleux, President of CBC
Mr. Patrick Watson, Chairman of CBC
Mr. Perrin Beatty, Minister of Communications
The Editor, *The Citizen*

According to several announcements on the radio and in the local newspapers, the CBC may be shutting down the English and French FM stereo networks. These rumours are distressing and impel me to write an open plea to safeguard the existence of some of the best radio programming in North America.

Many hours of my life have been spent listening to music on the CBC networks; both English and French stations provide excellent programs. They are the only ones dedicated to playing mostly classical music, doing so with an informative, scholarly approach to musical broadcasting. They are the *only* stations I listen to.

CBC and Radio Canada are the only national radio broadcasting services, and help to draw the country together. They encourage classical talent through their talent competitions and by broadcasting other Canadian and international competitions and festivals. Saturday Afternoon at the Opera is a long-standing and much-loved tradition which must not disappear.

Radio is only worth having if the CBC FM stereo networks and their classical music programming remain. Please don't take them away!

On 24 October, Michael McEwen, Executive Vice-President, answered the letter on behalf of the CBC. In his reply, Mr. McEwen explained the financial difficulties of the CBC and the need for "stable, multi-year financing. Discussions towards this goal are taking place with government officials, who are fully aware of the problems we face and of the consequences should these not be resolved." Mr. McEwen also stated that the CBC is "heartened by the reaction of so many Canadians such as yourself who care about the CBC and its continued presence in their lives."

A shortened version of our President's letter appeared in *The Citizen* on 2 November; within days, the Government had announced its funding for the CBC—and the spectre of losing the stereo networks disappeared, at least for the moment.

Adequate funding is a perennial problem for the CBC. We must be ever-vigilant lest we find an excellent service gone.

MC

Wanted

The National Capital Opera Society is in need of several pieces of business equipment. If you have items you or your company would be willing to donate to the NCOS (in return for a receipt, of course), please contact Marjorie Clegg at 594-2988 (evenings) or leave a message with Bobbi Cain (225-0124). Here are those we have thought of; if you think of others, please let us know:

- portable typewriter
- computer
- printer
- photocopier

We also welcome your help with the following activities:

- telephoning members to advertise events
- planning and organizing events
- writing articles for this newsletter
- distributing brochures and posters for display in stores, libraries, schools, etc.

MC

A book for Mozart lovers

Reminiscences of Mozart, by Michael Kelly. Introduction by William Rueter. Toronto: The Aliquando Press (Wm. Rueter, 236 Major St., Toronto M5S 2L6). \$45.

Bobbi Cain recently came across this curious and fascinating book that one of our members received as a present from a friend. Here we reprint some extracts, with permission.

Introduction

Mozart, sublime composer, remarkable musical genius, has left an extraordinary legacy of compositions; currently about 835 works have been declared authentic. No composer is more fully represented in recordings or on the radio and concert stage.

However, we have relatively little knowledge of the character and personality of Mozart. The following pages contain some contemporary observations of the composer from an unusual source: the reminiscences of the Irish singer, actor, and manager, Michael Kelly.

Born in Dublin in 1762, the son of a wine merchant, Kelly learned singing & piano determinedly at an early age. (Kelly's father gave a piano to one of his son's teachers, Michael Arne, while Arne was detained for debt, on condition that young Kelly would receive a daily lesson). With professional guidance Kelly's voice developed rapidly. At age sixteen he sailed for Naples for further vocal instruction. Kelly travelled to Rome, Florence, Brescia, and Treviso - the first British male singer to perform in Italy.

Kelly met & knew many of the major musical figures in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. His great opportunity came when he was employed in the court theatre of the Emperor Joseph II. With the English singer Nancy Storace (who created the role of Susanna in "Le Nozze di Figaro"), in 1783 Kelly arrived in Vienna, which he describes as "a place where pleasure was the order of the day and night." As a member of Joseph's theatre, Kelly met Salieri, visited Haydn in Eisenstadt (but regrettably left no record of their conversation), & sang in operas by Gluck.

Then Kelly met Mozart, six years his senior, and became an intimate friend. During the three years that Kelly knew him, Mozart wrote -- among many works -- 12 piano concerti, five of the six "Haydn" quartets, the Linz symphony, two piano quartets, three piano sonatas, "The Impresario" and "Le Nozze Di Figaro." Indeed, Kelly may have heard some of these works, but his lack of comment reflects his contemporaries' attitude: music was considered ephemeral. Kelly's description of the first performance of "Figaro" reveals much about Mozart as composer and friend.

For personal and professional reasons Kelly left Vienna in February 1787. He became the first tenor at London's Drury Lane Theatre and acting manager at the King's theatre. He operated a music shop, was involved in the wine trade, & composed music for 62 theatrical works.

When Kelly died in 1826, Mozart's reputation as a supremely gifted composer was firmly established, and it grew with the gradual rediscovery of his music. Now his popularity is assured, with some opera productions relocated to contemporary New York settings, and his Requiem played as background music in trendy bookstores.

It may be true that every generation gets the Mozart it deserves. Fortunately Mozart's music survives -- and the diminutive Austrian continues to command our respect, admiration, and love. W.R.

***** There were three operas now on the tapis, one by Righini, another by Salieri ("La Grotta di Trofonio"), and one by Mozart, by special command of the Emperor. Mozart chose to have Beaumarchais' French comedy, "Le Mariage de Figaro," made into an Italian opera, which was done with great ability by Da Ponte. These three pieces were nearly ready for representation at the same time, and each composer claimed the right of producing his opera first. The contest raised much discord, and parties were formed.

The characters of the three men were very different. Mozart was as touchy as gunpowder, and swore he would put the score of his opera into the fire if it was not produced first. His claim was backed by a strong party; on the contrary, Righini was working like a mole in the dark to get precedence.

The third candidate was maestro di capella to the court, a clever shrewd man, possessed of what Bacon called crooked wisdom, and his claims were backed by three of the principal performers, who formed a cabal not easily put down. Everyone of the opera company took part in the contest. I alone was a stickler for Mozart, and naturally enough, for he had a claim on my warmest wishes, from my adoration of his powerful genius and the debt of gratitude I owed him for many personal favours.

The mighty contest was put an end to by His Majesty issuing a mandate for Mozart's "Nozze di Figaro," to be instantly put into rehearsal; & none more than Michael O'Kelly enjoyed the little great man's triumph over his rivals.

Of all the performers in this opera at that time, but one survives -- myself. It was allowed that never was opera stronger cast. ***** All the original performers had the advantage of the instruction of the composer, who transfused into their minds his inspired meaning. I never shall forget his little animated countenance, when lighted up with the glowing rays of genius -- it is as impossible to describe it as it would be to paint sun-beams.

When I called on him one evening, he said to me, "I have just finished a little duet for my opera, you shall hear it." He sat down to the piano, and we sang it. I was delighted with it, and the musical world will give me credit for being so when I mention the duet sung by Count Almaviva and Susanna, "Crudel perchè finora farmi languire così." A more delicious morceau never was penned by man & it has often been a source of pleasure to me to have been the first who heard it & to have sung it with its greatly gifted composer. I remember at the first rehearsal of the full band, Mozart was on the stage with his crimson pelisse and gold-laced cocked hat, giving the time of the music to the orchestra. Figaro's song, "Non più andrai, farfallone amoroso," Benucci gave with the greatest animation and power of voice.

I was standing close to Mozart, who, sotto voce, was repeating "Bravo! Bravo! Benucci;" & when Benucci came to the fine passage "Cherubino, alla vittoria, alla gloria militar" which he gave out with stentorian lungs, the effect was electricity itself, for the whole of the performers on the stage and those in the orchestra, as if actuated by one feeling of delight, vociferated "Bravo! Bravo! Maestro. Viva, viva, grande Mozart." Those in the orchestra I thought would never have ceased applauding by beating the bows of their violins against the music desks. The little man acknowledged, by repeated obeisances, his thanks for the distinguished mark of enthusiastic applause bestowed upon him.

The same reward of approbation was given to the finale at the end of the first act; that piece of music alone, in my humble opinion, if he had never composed any thing else good, would have stamped him as the greatest master of his art. In the sestetto in the second act (which was Mozart's favourite piece of the whole opera) I had a very conspicuous part as the Stuttering Judge, Don Basilio. All through the piece I was to stutter; but in the sestetto Mozart requested I would not, for if I did I should spoil his music. I told him that although it might appear very presumptuous in a lad like me to differ with him on this point, I did, and was sure the way in which I intended to introduce the stuttering would not interfere with the other parts, but produce an effect. *****

Mozart at last consented that I should have my way, but doubted the success of the experiment. Crowded houses proved that nothing ever on the stage produced a more powerful effect; the audience were convulsed with laughter in which Mozart himself joined, the Emperor repeatedly cried out "Bravo!" and the piece was loudly applauded & encored. ***** At the end of the opera I thought the audience would never have done applauding and calling for Mozart; almost every piece was encored, which prolonged it nearly to the length of two operas, & induced the Emperor to issue an order on the second representation that no piece of music should be encored. Never was anything more complete than the triumph of Mozart and his "Nozze di Figaro," to which numerous overflowing audiences bore witness. *****

NCOS Board Members

President	Marjorie Clegg	Newsletter	Gilles Patry, John Clegg
First Vice-President	Jeffry Morgan	Publicity	Gilles Patry, Maureen Donnelly
Second Vice-President	Gilles Patry	Films	Helen Morgan, Ruth Davis
Past-President	Bobbi Cain	Events	Ruth Davis, Anne Marie Smith
Recording Secretary	Valerie Donnelly	General Liaison	Jeffry Morgan
Corresponding Secretary	Anne Marie Smith	NAC Liaison	Bobbi Cain
Treasurer	Murray Kitts	Opera Lyra Ottawa Liaison	Gilles Patry
Membership	Gerda Ruckerbauer, Maureen Donnelly	Scholarships	Bobbi Cain, Helen Morgan, Gilles Patry

Some telephone numbers

Marjorie Clegg	594-2988 (h)	Jeffry Morgan	722-7572 (w)
Bobbi Cain	225-0124 (h)	Gilles Patry	829-4762 (h)

Ticket outlets

Continental Music	1580 Merivale Rd	723-2766
Counterpoint Classics	46 Murray St	567-3267
Domenic's Music Academy	1767 Carling Ave	722-1021
International Musicland	St Laurent Shopping Centre	746-3913
Morgan Tours	4-965 Richmond Rd	722-7572
Pflug Optical	1580 Merivale Rd	723-2766