

# Newsletter • Bulletin

Fall

2002

Automne

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

## TEN YEARS OF THE BRIAN LAW SCHOLARSHIP

by Murray Kitts

It all started in 1992 when the NCOS President Bobbi Cain suggested the creation of an opera scholarship aimed at helping young singers and named in honour of Brian Law and his contributions to music and opera particularly in the National Capital area. Despite Brian's initial reluctance to the name (so many of these awards are posthumous) the scholarship was advertised and applications came in. These were screened by a local committee and the finalists chosen. We were so pleased that Brian Law himself would be in Ottawa at the time of the first contest and would serve on a distinguished panel of jurors along with Rosemary Landry, Stuart Hamilton and Iwan Edwards. And so in 1993 a pattern for future competitions was established. Our first venue was St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in downtown Ottawa. The first winner was Laura Dziubaniuk. (See pp.4,5 for news of Laura and the other winners.) Runner-up were also given money to defer their expenses.

Following the success of this first competition and on the advice of the first panel of jurors the Board decided that the amount of the scholarship should be doubled to \$2,000 and given biennially. The 1995 venue was the Unitarian Congregation where ample parking is available. The presence of a kitchen and reception area adjoining the auditorium allowed for a fund-raising dinner to be served to those attending. The pleasant setting and amenities of this building have proved eminently suitable for our competition. 1995 also marked the first year that Rogers Television taped the competition for rebroadcast on a number of occasions, a practice which has continued, giving more exposure to our singers. The 1995 winner was Mary Ann Swerdfeger.

1997 brought no new changes in the scholarship, in the venue or the dinner. A runner-up from 1995, Julie Nesrallah, was the 1997 winner.

In 1999 the competition organizers almost panicked when one of the competitors was forced to drop out at the last moment. Fortunately, Julie Nesrallah was in town and able to give a much-appreciated mini-recital while the jurors were deliberating. This proved so successful that it has now been incorporated into subsequent competition concerts. The 1999 winner was Sandra Stringer.

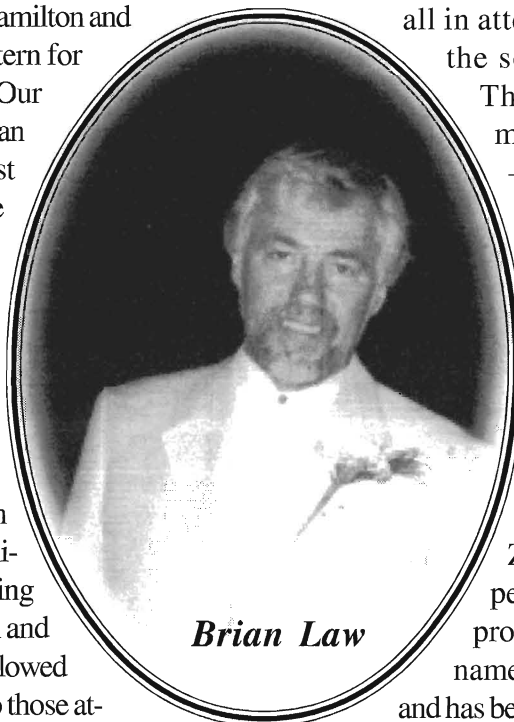
By 2001 a major change took place. The fund-raising dinner was dropped and a reception open to all in attendance was held immediately after the scholarship winner was announced.

The reception allowed the public to meet and congratulate the contestants – an addition to the evening which proved a great success. This year it was Mary Ann Swerdfeger who flew in from New York to give a delightful mini-recital. With money from a bequest it was also possible to increase the amounts given to runners-up. Shannon Mercer was the 2001 winner.

Although Brian Law lives in New Zealand and has attended only one competition he has been kept informed of the progress of the scholarship that bears his name, sends a message to each competition, and has been sent video tapes of the evening. While

visiting Ottawa he has exhibited a keen interest in our activities and has personally helped to raise funds for it. Another enthusiastic contributor is Gerald Finley, one of Brian's former pupils who is now an international opera star.

What's ahead? A wonderful competition in January 2003! For the future, we would like to increase the amount of the scholarship to \$5,000 and the runners-up prizes to \$500. But we need your help! Any donations or suggestions for fund-raising would be appreciated.



*Brian Law*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT...

When I reviewed last issue's message, I fear I might have been accused of waxing lyrically. Well, today I am very excited by this special issue of our newsletter devoted to the winners of the Brian Law Opera Scholarship. I commend the editor, Murray Kitts, and his computer specialist, Tom McCool, on their commitment in bringing the information to you.

Just think, in January it will be ten years ago that we held the first competition – at that time in St. Andrew's Church. Our guest artist in January will be Laura Dziubaniuk, the young lady who won the first scholarship granted in 1993. It is so appropriate to have her performing for us in January 2003.

You all received a special mailing about the tenth anniversary. To those who responded to the request for contributions to a "Ten Year Fund", may I express our deepest appreciation. We are considering launching upon a professionally-run fund raising campaign over the next several years. We have been introduced to a very reliable lady in the field, and the matter is under consideration by your Board of Directors. For several years I have been speaking of mounting a corporate campaign in support of our work, especially the Brian Law Opera Scholarship, and the results have so far been frustrating. We have to do something, so perhaps this is the way.

Have a pleasant autumn.



## N.C.O.S. Board of Directors

President	Bobbi Cain
Vice-President	Murray Kitts
Secretary	Jean Saldana
Treasurer	Gordon Metcalfe
Events	Peggy Pflug
Membership	Jean Saldanha
Newsletter	Murray Kitts
Publicity	Renate Chartrand

### Members-at-Large

Pat Adamo	Dan Leeman
Donald Metcalfe	Gerda Ruckerbauer

Welcome New Member

Audrey Jessup

## OPERA ALLA PASTA

tentative program and dates

November 17 – Mozart's *Don Giovanni*

February 16 – Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*

May 4 – Berlioz' *The Damnation of Faust*

# Don Giovanni

with Caesare Siepi as the Don, Elisabeth Grummer, Anton Dermota, Lisa Della Casa, Erna Berger, Otto Edelmann and Walter Berry with the Chorus of the Vienna State Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic under the direction of Wilhelm Furtwängler.

A 1954 Salzburg Festival Production

*Opera Alla Pasta - Sunday Afternoon at the Opera*

2:00 p.m. Nov. 17 at St. Anthony's Soccer Club

delicious pasta meal at 5:00 p.m.

## Saturday Afternoon at the Opera

October 5, 2002

*Simon Boccanegra* (Verdi)

October 12

*Tannhäuser* (Wagner)

October 19

*Lohengrin* (Wagner)

October 26

*Götterdämmerung* (Wagner)

November 2

*Roméo et Juliette* (Gounod)

November 9

*Die Liebe der Danae* (Strauss)

November 16

*La Donna del Lago* (Rossini)

November 23

*Turandot* (Puccini)

November 30, 2002

*Der König Kandaules* (Zemlinsky)

## From the Met

December 7

*Fidelio* (Ludwig van Beethoven)

December 14

*Il Trovatore* (Giuseppe Verdi)

December 21

*Elektra* (Richard Strauss)

December 28

*A View from the Bridge* (William Bolcom)

January 4 2003

*Dialogues des Carmélites* (Francis Poulenc)

January 11

*Die Fledermaus* (Johann Strauss, Jr.)



## CD Review

by Tom McCool

### Renée Fleming sings *Rosmonda*

*D'Inghilterra* by Gaetano Donizetti.

Produced by **Opera Rara** and recorded in 1994.

If you missed Renée Fleming at the NAC Gala this CD will give you a chance to hear her in Donizetti's *Rosmonda D'Inghilterra*. If nothing else this recording proves Ms. Fleming's versatility. *Rosmonda D'Inghilterra* (the complete opera) was recorded in 1994 but to take advantage of Ms. Fleming's recent celebrity **Opera Rara** selected those parts of the opera featuring her and issued this CD under the aforementioned title. I guess that's called marketing and it seems like a good idea to me.

*Rosmonda D'Inghilterra* is based on the story of Rosamond Clifford, the mistress of King Henry II of England. Not realizing that Henry is the king of England Rosamond is horrified to discover his true identity. Also unhappy with the situation is Henry's wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine. (Donizetti definitely had a fascination with English queens.) The opera is brought to an unhappy conclusion when Eleanor murders Rosamond.

This is not Donizetti's greatest opera. In fact, he had a distressing habit of following a big hit with what might be described today as a "bomb". *Rosmonda* follows *Lucrezia Borgia*, one of his greatest triumphs, and it is not surprising that this opera has been rarely performed since its premiere in 1834 in Florence. But even when Donizetti was at his least inspired he seemed incapable of composing an opera that was not full of wonderful melodies. In addition there are many rousing choruses and one great duet, "Si, son io", for soprano and mezzo. Is there any composer who could write better for the female voice than Donizetti? Listen to this duet before giving your answer.

**Opera Rara** is to be commended for not only recording this opera but many other seldom heard Bel Canto works. This particular CD is well produced with an excellent cast and orchestra. And, of course, it does have Renée Fleming

*Rosmonda* comes in the usual 2 versions: the complete opera and these highlights. The latter is probably a better choice for this piece.

# Many Roads to Success

by Murray Kitts

## TO EUROPE AND MOTHERHOOD



A lucky child named Nikita Alexander James Savtchenko is being sung to sleep every night by his mother and our 1993 scholarship winner, Laura Ddziubaniuk. Laura studied under Joan Maxwell at the University of Ottawa, receiving her Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance. Subsequent to the Brian Law Scholarship Laura won the Eugen Suchon Scholarship, the Czech & Slovak Music Competition, and the European Mozart Music Competition. She has had further studies at the Kiev Conservatory, in Slovakia at the Sixth International Interpretation Course and in Poland at the European Mozart Academy. In opera Laura was a member of Opera Lyra Ottawa Associate Artist Programme, Opera Ontario, and Opera Brevia Ottawa. Opera rôles include Michaëla in Bizet's *Carmen*, Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust*, and leads in several operas by Mozart and Puccini. Her repertoire in oratorio and in song cycles is quite extensive. Even more impressive is the number of languages (13), including Czech, Slovak and Ukrainian, with which she is quite familiar and sings easily. Laura travelled to Kiel in Germany with her husband, bass Alexander Savtchenko, for his two year engagement with the local opera company. As well

as performing all over Canada (Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver) Laura has had an opportunity to sing in the United States, Poland, Slovakia and the Ukraine. Although she is a full-time mother she still maintains a singing career. We will hear this lovely lady at the 2003 Brian Law Scholarship Competition.

## FROM OPERA TO SOAP OPERA



Yes, it's true. Our 1995 winner Mary Ann Swerdfeger confesses to occasionally moonlighting on *One Life to Live*, a soap opera if I've ever heard of one. It's also true that she plays a socialite and - why not? with her stunning good looks and tons of charm and glamour. But this is only occasionally. Mary Ann is on the staff of the Julliard School of Music in New York, the city where she and her husband, trombonist Nick Martin, settled after their marriage in 1997. After graduating from the New England Conservatory with a Master of Music and a Graduate Diploma in Vocal Performance Mary Ann performed in opera at various summer music festivals in the United States (Charlottesville, Virginia and Aspen, Colorado) and in Japan (Sapporo). Since moving to New York, Mary Ann has diversified into the Musical Theatre appearing in such musicals as *The Phantom*, *Two by Two*, *The Music Man*, *The New Moon*, *Mame*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *All Night Strut*. She is a member of Opera on the Go, an opera company dedicated to bringing opera to at risk children throughout the NYC metropolitan area. She is the mezzo soprano soloist at the Church of St. John the Baptist and the Hebrew Tabernacle Congregation in Manhattan. In addition to her appearance at the 2001 Brian Law Competition, Mary Ann has since come to Ottawa to give a solo recital. A very busy young lady!

## "JULIE TABBOULEH"



Julie Nesrallah (her family nickname is Julie Tabbouleh) is the only Brian Law Scholarship winner to get a recipe published in *The Ottawa Citizen*. (I have made and eaten her tabbouleh and it is very, very good.) Following her studies at McGill University, Julie was awarded the Emerging Artists Grant (\$20,000) by the Canada Council for the Arts. Not surprising for someone with such an effervescent personality, her acting ability has been praised as highly as her vocal dexterity by the critics. Julie has already sung the leading rôles in three of Rossini's operas: Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri* (Pacific Opera, Victoria; Cedar Rapids); Angelina in *La Cenerentola* (Carleton University; Cedar Rapids); and Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Pacific Opera Victoria; Kingston). In addition there have been a number of secondary rôles, notably the Composer in R. Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*. In addition there have been many concert and oratorio appearances. This year alone Julie has sung Mercedes in Bizet's *Carmen*, was invited to sing with the Cedar Rapids Symphony (alto soloist in Mahler's *Symphony No.2*), was soloist in an evening of opera hits with the Montreal Symphony, gave two concerts with the popular tango group, Quartango, made an appearance at the

Lanaudière International Summer Music Festival and later this year will début with the Victoria Symphony performing Berlioz' *La Mort de Cléopâtre*. In the New Year she will appear as the First Maid in Vancouver Opera's production of R. Strauss' *Electra*. May 2003 will bring a début recital with the Montreal Guitar Trio which will be broadcast by the CBC. Her appearances at the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival are always warmly received and she is to present a joint concert of Spanish songs with guitarist Daniel Bolshoy on Feb. 1 as part of the Chamber Music Society's concert series. We would like to hear more from Julie and have more recipes too.

### QUEEN OF VENUSBERG



Who would have believed it? One year you are selling discs at the HMV store on Sparks St. A few years later in the spring of 2003 you are singing the rôle of Venus in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* in the Czech Republic at Štřekov Castle wherein the opera was written. This is the exciting news that Sandra Stringer sends us from Vancouver where she is in the third year of a course leading to a Doctor of Musical Arts – Opera Performance at UBC. Sandra was well known in Ottawa before leaving for UBC for her performances with Opera Lyra Ottawa as Associate Artist, with the NAC Orchestra and the Ottawa Symphony. As a member of UBC's Opera Ensemble she has sung the following rôles: Cherubino in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*; Meg Page in Nicholai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; Hansel in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*; and Elizabeth Proctor in Robert Ward's *The Crucible*. Sandra has also participated in several UBC Opera Ensemble tours to Germany and the Czech Republic singing the rôles of Don Ramiro in Mozart's *Die Gärtnerin aus Liebe*, Prince Orlofsky in J. Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, the Fox in Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and Melanto in Monteverdi's *Il*

*Ritorno di Ulisse in Patria*. Most recently Sandra reprised the rôle of Elizabeth Proctor at the Usti nad Labem Theatre in the Czech Republic, portrayed Dido in this season's production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and she also appears on the UBC Symphony recording of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. We hope to hear Sandra in Ottawa again soon.

### CANADIAN OPERA STAR-TO-BE



A beautiful young girl stands beside her father during his coronation. Later she sings about the loss of her young fiancé. Finally she witnesses the agonizing death of her father and the horrible murder of her young brother. Quite a challenge for a new member of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble but accomplished remarkably well by Shannon Mercer in this year's COC production of Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*. Shannon first studied at McGill University receiving a Bachelor of Music with Honours in vocal performance and Honours in Early Music. While at McGill, she portrayed Cleopatra in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* and Dido in the Purcell opera as well as singing in Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, Bach's *Magnificat*, and Mahler's *Symphony No.4*. She was also a member of Le Studio de musique ancienne de Montréal. Shannon then went on to complete her training at the Opera School at the University of Toronto, where she appeared as Helena in Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and as Lisette in Puccini's *La Rondine*. Ottawa area residents will be familiar with Shannon's performances in Bach's *St. John Passion* (Cantata Singers), Eleanor Daly's

*Requiem* (Ottawa Choral Society), Rutter's *Magnificat* (Choeur Classique de l'Outaouais) and most recently Mozart's *Missa Brevis in B* (Ottawa Choral Society). On tour in the Netherlands she performed in Blow's *Venus and Adonis* with the COC Ensemble. Other tours have been in France and Quebec with Les Violins du Roi and in the Maritimes with L'Ensemble Arion. She made her début for l'Opéra de Québec as First Lady in Mozart's *Magic Flute*. This summer Shannon joined the prestigious Merola program at the San Francisco Opera. For the coming season of the COC Shannon will sing the stellar part of Oscar in Verdi's *Masked Ball* and Elvira in Rossini's *The Italian Girl in Algiers* and will also make her début in *Schubertiade* with the Albeburgh Connection in Toronto. What a great start to Shannon's career!

# Glimpses of Glimmerglass, 2002 by Shelagh Williams

We set out for our favourite midsummer addiction — Cooperstown, N.Y.'s Glimmerglass Opera — prepared for all four of this year's offerings, a nice blend in the "bridal" categories of something old: Haydn's *Orlando Paladino*, something new: Adamo's *Little Women*, something unusual: Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, and something tried-and-true: *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci*.

We started off with *Orlando Paladino* by Haydn. By whom? you say! Well Haydn was in charge of music for the wealthy Esterhazy princes, at Eisenstadt, with summers at Esterhaza, which had two opera houses, one for regular operas and one for mari-onette opera, and an opera every day at 6! Haydn therefore prepared/adapted/edited and conducted other composer's operas and wrote his own as well. This one is based on the fantastic stories of Charlemagne's nephew Roland (Orlando), a crusader knight (Paladin), which were fodder for several other composers as well. The director, James Robinson, made a new English translation of the text for this production, but it is a basically weak libretto alternating startlingly between farce and seriousness: a 'heroic-comical' opera. Orlando is madly infatuated with the beautiful princess Angelica from Cathay, and he and his squire Pasquale chase after her and her lover, the gentle Saracen knight, Medoro, who in turn are fiercely defended by Rodomonte, King of Barbary. In the frantic toing and froing Pasquale and the shepherdess Eurilla meet and fall in love; mortal enemies Orlando and Rodomonte become the best of friends; the sorceress Alcina arranges for Orlando to completely forget Angelica and his madness, and unites/reunites the four lovers; and it all ends happily! John Conklin, the set designer and Glimmerglass Assistant Artistic Director, made the most of the far-cical aspects, for example giving Eurilla cut-out sheep, in his trademark abstract setting, and the direction was overly broad in several places. However, Haydn's music was marvellous, and well portrayed the characters: Rodomonte had his rage aria, and Pasquale had a boasting aria where he lists his own exploits to woo Eurilla. The conductor, Guido Rumstadt from Heidelberg, was on the forte piano for recitatives. In spite of the libretto the presentation as a whole held together and was most entertaining. The cast was almost entirely from the Young American Artists Program, YAAPs, who brought great energy to their roles, and in the case of James Valente, as Medoro, both a good voice and eye candy! Only the major roles were taken by established singers, including Canadian John Tessier as an entertaining Pasquale. Next year they will be performing Handel's "Orlando", with counter-tenor Michael Maniaci, a former YAAP we heard last summer at Glimmerglass in Handel's *Agrippina* and this past season in Toronto as Nero in Opera Atelier's excellent April, 2002, production of *Coronation of Poppea*.

Even the *Cav/Pag* production which we saw next was not just "the usual". Both one-act operas were set in the same Italian village, rather than in Sicily and in Calabria, and they were presented in the reverse order: *Pag* first, then *Cav*! The director, Robin Guarino, obviously was influenced by Pirandello and questions of what is real and what is the play, and the set designer, John Conklin

again, followed this lead with a very bare bones single set consisting of a central stage around which were ranged bleachers holding the villagers. These of course appeared in both operas, and the two stories were blended, with aspects of each inserted in the other, so that the action followed sequentially, with Canio beaten up in *Cav* for killing a villager in *Pag*! This proved slightly distracting as one tried to identify the *Cav* characters already in *Pag*, and then confusing in *Cav* when characters one thought were killed in *Pag* appeared still alive in *Cav*! — illusion or reality? These verismo style operas require experienced actors/singers and the cast was well up to the demands of both music and libretto, with Canadian John Mac Master in the leading role of Canio, under Glimmerglass Music Director Stewart Robinson as conductor. We had only seen *Cav* and *Pag* with one or other of the three Puccini *Il Trittico* operas, and were glad to finally see them together, and this concept was interesting, and at least kept one entertained.

*Little Women* was a pleasant surprise, as we had not been impressed by the television production. Louisa May Alcott's autobiographical classic translated well into opera, with three main threads: sister Meg's wedding; Jo and her rejection of Laurie, the boy next door; and sister Beth's death. Both music and libretto were by Mark Adamo, and the opera had its debut in 1998. However there are several musical themes in the opera and the music is sufficiently tonal to be enjoyable, especially the German lied on Goethe written for Prof. Bhaer, Jo's gentleman friend, beautifully sung by Canadian YAAP Joshua Hopkins. The opera was attractively staged and costumed, and was conducted by John DeMain, who makes a habit of conducting new music and world premieres. In addition, the young people were well played by YAAPs or former YAAPs, while the authority figures also fared well in their interpreters. Of interest to Ottawans, the assistant director was Larry Edelson, formerly from Ottawa, and now based in N.Y. City, with his Pro Musica Tours. When we spoke to him, he was very busy, but seemed to be enjoying his work at Glimmerglass.

Our final opera was *Dialogues of the Carmelites* — a rather serious ending — the lady in our B&B with the not-so-opera-loving husband wisely didn't take him to this! It is a far cry from Poulenc's surrealist *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* which we saw at the N.Y. Met in March. Poulenc wanted *Dialogues* to be performed in the vernacular, to be understood, and so it actually premiered in Italian, and was sung here in English, with supertitles, under conductor Stewart Robinson again. It is an opera requiring, of course, a large number of good female voices, plus a fine chorus, and with a judicious blend of experience and YAAPs this was achieved — they even imported from England Dame Anne Evans to play the new Convent prioress. The setting by Donald

Eastman consisted of an ingenious back wall with sections which opened for doors, and buttresses that moved forward to divide off cells and rooms, all effectively and unobtrusively, and two very long tables which transformed into many things during the course of the piece. The opera was well sung and well paced, building to the final heartbreaking scene with the sisters singing a "Salve Regina" as each mounts the scaffold and walks off, followed by the loud thwack of the guillotine, until they are all beheaded, and there is total silence. The audience was stunned into silence also, before breaking into applause — as also happened in Toronto at the COC a few years ago. When well done, this opera is a spellbinder.

We were fortunate to be able to attend five of the YAAP recitals, three by singers with named roles, including Amy and Laurie of *Little Women*. This year 749 people applied for the 30 YAAP positions, and so the quality of the chorus and smaller/adolescent roles was assured. These work under "important directors and conductors who provide high standards of achievement." (from the Glimmerglass Bylaws)

When we were in Cooperstown, just after the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, the weather turned extremely hot. Although our training in Julian's Church Saunas would have stood us in good stead, it was not needed. The sliding doors over the screened sides of the Alice Busch Opera Theatre close to darken the afternoon performances, but are opened at intermissions for the cooling breezes off the lake. In the evenings the walls are left open after the first intermission — nearly freezing us the first evening!

Each year there is a small artistic exhibit on opera, usually about one of those being performed, at the back of the theatre. This year's was slightly different: in anticipation of the centenary of the artist's death, the operatic lithographs of Henri Fantin-Latour (1836—1904) were on display. We knew him for his flower paintings, and the National Gallery's show a few years ago, and so this was a revelation. It seems Fantin-Latour was such an opera fanatic that when given tickets to the third Ring cycle at Bayreuth, he postponed his wedding to go to the operas!

Next year's Glimmerglass Opera playbill shows another eclectic mix of operas: Handel's *Orlando*, *The Good Soldier Schweik* by Kurka, Offenbach's *Bluebeard*, and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Again, by late July or August, when the operas are all in production, you can, by choosing carefully, see all four of them in 4 or even 3 days. With the opportunity to see three operas that you haven't seen 20 times before, it should prove to be an interesting season!

## Glimmerglass: the Elderhostel Way **by Tom McCool**

"Education is not just for the young." This might well be the premise that the Elderhostel movement was founded upon in 1975. From humble beginnings it has grown into the largest travel organization in the world providing more than 10,000 educational travel programs in over 100 countries for individuals over 55 years of age. At the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, Elderhostel even has their own building dedicated exclusively to Elderhostel programs that run year-round. A very important element of the non-profit Elderhostel mission is to provide excellent programs at a reasonable cost. Don't expect gourmet meals or luxury accommodations on an Elderhostel trip. But do expect excellent value for your money...even if you are paying in Canadian currency.

Elderhostel offers a wide variety of programs ranging from architecture to baseball to wine tours in South America to something as familiar as "Ottawa: Canada's National Treasure." Not surprisingly there are a number of opera programs available. One is in New Mexico at the Santa Fe Opera and others are in Maine, Maryland, Michigan and many other American and Canadian centers as well as internationally. The one that interested me was the Glimmerglass Opera in Cooperstown N.Y. It has a reputation for innovation and for producing works that are seldom staged. Furthermore, Cooperstown is only about 5 hours from Ottawa. "Operaitis" is a costly affliction and although Glimmerglass is not as expensive as many other summer opera festivals it is not inexpensive either. As well, Cooperstown is a busy place in the summer, mainly because it is the home of the Baseball Hall of Fame. Because it is such a popular summer destination Cooperstown can be pricey, especially when it comes to accommodations. This was a factor in my decision to take the Elderhostel route to Glimmerglass.

What follows is a brief summary of my Elderhostel opera experience. We stayed at the Best Western Hotel in Little Falls N.Y. for five nights. Little Falls is a once thriving town on the Erie Canal which has seen more prosperous days. Aside from its canal lock it does possess some intriguing architecture but the reason for its selection as the Elderhostel site is because it is only 30 miles from Cooperstown. This necessitated a 45-minute drive to and from the Glimmerglass Opera on the three days operas were scheduled. The highway coach picked us up at our hotel door and dropped us steps from the entrance of the opera house. When the opera was over we were returned to the hotel. Originally considered a negative the trip through the countryside of up-state New York proved to be a pleasant aspect of the tour. Included in the cost of the program were the following: excellent seats for three opera performances (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*, *Orlando Paladino* and the double bill of *Pagliacci* & *Cavalleria Rusticana*), five excellent presentations on the operas, a variety of tours (Little Falls, the Erie Canal, the town of Cooperstown and the superb Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown), all meals and two wine and cheese receptions. A critical assessment of the operas precedes this report.

The cost of the program was \$595 in U.S. dollars. Counting incidentals such as gas, champagne during the intermissions, etc. the total cost came to approximately \$1000 Canadian. In my view this is good value — the convenience of the whole operation proving even more important than the relatively moderate cost.

# OPERA WITHIN REACH

## Opera Lyra Ottawa

### *Carmen*

Oct 19, 21, 23 & 26

### Opera Appetizer

January 18, 2003

### *Un ballo in maschera*

April 5, 7, 9 & 12, 2003

Information: 233-9200 [www.operalyra.ca](http://www.operalyra.ca)

## Savoy Society

### *The Sorcerer*

March 28 - April 5

Information: [www.savoyociety.org](http://www.savoyociety.org)

## L'Opéra de Montréal

### *Madama Butterfly*

Sept 21, 26, 28 & 30 Oct 2 & 5

### *Cavalleria Rusticana / I Pagliacci*

Nov 9, 14, 16, 20 & 23

### *Rigoletto*

Feb 8, 13, 15, 17, 19 & 22, 2003

### *Die Zauberflöte*

March 15, 20, 22, 24 & 29, 2003

Information 1-514-985-2258 [www.operademontreal.com](http://www.operademontreal.com)

## Canadian Opera Company

### *The Queen of Spades*

Sept 26, 29 Oct 25, 8 & 11

### *Oedipus Rex (with Symphony of Psalms)*

Sept 27 Oct 1, 3, 6, 9 & 12

### *Turn of the Screw*

Dec 3, 5, 6 & 8

### *A Masked Ball*

Jan 24, 29 & 30 Feb 2, 5, 8 2003

### *Jenufa*

Jan 25, 29, & 31 Feb 4, 6 & 9

Information 1-800-250-4653 [www.coc.ca](http://www.coc.ca)

## Syracuse Opera

### *La Bohème*

Oct 25 & 27

### *Boris Godunov*

Performed by Teatro Lirico D'Europa  
March 15 & 16, 2003

Information: 1-305-476-7372

[www.syracuseopera.com](http://www.syracuseopera.com)

## Opera Mississauga

*La Bohème* Nov 23, 24, 26, 28 & 30

### *The Barber of Seville*

Feb 22, 23, 25 & 27 & March 1 2003

Information 1-905-306-0060 [www.operamississauga.com](http://www.operamississauga.com)

## Opera Lyra Ottawa Guild

### Opera Insights

Oct 7 *Carmen*

March 24, 2003 *Un ballo in maschera*

7:00 p.m. at the National Library

### Definitely the Opera

Nov 7 *Aida*

Feb 11, 2003 *La cenerentola*

March 11 *Rigoletto*

7:00 p.m. at the National Library

For additional details: [www.operalyra.ca](http://www.operalyra.ca)