



## The Barber of Seville by Marjorie Clegg and Tom McCool

Like *Carmen* and *La traviata* Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* was an utter disaster at its premiere in 1816. For one thing many in the audience were supporters of a Rossini rival and they were very vocal with hisses and boos from the time Rossini entered the orchestra pit to conduct the piece. Secondly, the opera wasn't totally finished and one of the missing arias was replaced by a popular Spanish song. This did not sit well with the Roman audience. More hissing and booing! As well, a cat came wandering on the stage at a crucial moment of the Act 1 finale. The terrified feline was chased about until it eventually found safety in Rosina's skirts. The mayhem continued in Act 2 with so much hallelaloo in the opera house that the music could barely be heard. The first night was so bad that Rossini didn't bother to show up to conduct on the second night.

However, within a month, and ever since, *The Barber's* popularity has increased to the point that it is now, arguably, considered the greatest of all comic operas. Not too bad for an opera that was composed in three weeks! Even the fact that the overture was "borrowed" from another Rossini opera has not diminished its lustre.

We had high expectations for the Glimmerglass production and it certainly lived up to them. Joshua Hopkins, one of our Brian Law Opera Competition winners, was singing the title role and he did so magnificently. From the moment he appeared -- coming down the aisle of the theatre through the audience -- he commanded the stage with his beautiful voice and impeccable comic acting. He was joined by another Canadian singer in the role of Rosina: the young Emily D'Angelo is someone to watch in the next few years. Ben Schaefer as Fiorello, David

Walton as Count Almaviva, Dale Travis as Doctor Bartolo, Timothy Bruno as Don Basilio, and Alexandria Shiner as Berta ably completed the main cast and contributed to a great ensemble performance supported by the Glimmerglass orchestra conducted by Joseph Colaneri.

In contrast to some of the other versions of this opera we've seen, this innovative production



under the direction of Francesca Zambello used very simple sets. The blue background and minimal props were effective, as were the low-tech touches: for example, the storm was announced by someone walking across the stage carrying a big sign saying "storm" followed by others carrying poles with silver streamers indicating lightning. The effect was charming and the audience loved it.

Verdi considered *The Barber of Seville* "the most beautiful opera buffa in existence". Rossini also felt *The Barber* was his greatest operatic achievement. Both would have been delighted with this Glimmerglass production.

## President's Message – September 1, 2018

It was in the year 2006 that it was listed in our newsletter that I was no longer Vice-President but Co-President (General Administration) along with Bobbi Cain (Brian Law Opera Competition). This was due to Bobbi's failing health, occasioning operations and hospital stays. It was only fitting that with her enormous contributions to the establishment of the Brian Law and its continuance for 15 years that she continued on as long as possible. At our last general meeting in May of this year I rejected my re-nomination as president in favour of becoming a Co-President along with Mark Robinson as the other Co-President. This was not due to any serious or prolonged illness, although old age does take its toll, but because I felt inadequate to supervise the changeover to a completely new system for applications to the Brian Law using the latest electronic methods for complete applications including transfer of fees. No one on our Board of Directors could be more capable to handle the new approach. Mark's efficiency as Treasurer has brought our organization back from financial disaster through hard work and dedication to our cause.

It was Mark and his wife Lesley (our excellent Secretary) who went around with me trying to find a venue in Ottawa which would be a substitute for our long connection with the Unitarian Congregation whose increased fees had threatened our ability to continue. The Robinson's enthusiasm for the concerts given at Southminster United Church led to discussions with their Artistic Director, Roland Graham, and to arrangements to hold the BLOC in their facility. The 2015 Competition which was held inde-

pendently of the Southminster concerts allowed us to stabilize our costs due to the excellent work of the Robinsons and NCOS volunteers. But when we joined with Southminster as part of their musical series in 2017 our costs plummeted and our profits rose. We are looking forward to continuing this very satisfactory arrangement which Mark is already working on. Only Peggy Pflug and I remain on the Board as members present at the inception of the BLOC.

The Live from the Met series looks very good and I will especially be pleased to experience *Samson and Delilah* again. Our Opera alla Pasta series tries to avoid showing recent Met productions but attempts to present well reviewed recent productions as well as older ones of special appeal and operas featuring BLOC winners. I have received only a few suggestions for possible showings and would appreciate getting more. We had an excellent summer meeting where we were able to appoint three new members to the Board to be confirmed at the next AGM in May. We need all the help we can get as in just a little less than a year we will be having our next Competition.

See you at the opera!

*Murray Kitts*

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## BLOC Winners Star at Operatic Music and Beyond Festival! by Shelagh Williams

I What's the best way to open a music festival? - with an opera and BLOC finalists, of course! In this case it was Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* in a great all-Canadian production by Daniel Taylor and his Theatre of Early Music and starring BLOC 2009 second prize winner **Wallis Giunta**! She looked and sounded marvelous, in a lovely Greek style white gown and matching fancy hairdo. The excellent cast included baritone Geoffrey Sirett as Aeneas, and soprano Larissa Koniuk, cofounder and artistic director of Bicycle Opera, as Belinda. Countertenor **Daniel Taylor**, finalist in the first 1993 BLOC (!), not only conducted but, letting his hair down, also gave us a fierce Sorceress! Tenor Benjamin Butterfield was an exuberant Sailor, running through the audience and providing some much needed comic relief! Bill Coleman directed, and throughout the opera he and fellow dancer Carol Prieur provided interpretation of Aeneas's and Dido's actions respectively, although the latter sometimes almost upstaged the singing. To my surprise, Dido (and her dancer double) actually stabbed herself before her lovely lament! The accomplished accompanying baroque ensemble included Matthew Larkin on harpsichord and Sylvain Bergeron on lute, whose lovely solo in Act I Dido sat to listen to! What a great opening gala!

II A few evenings later **Wallis Giunta** treated us to a *Tribute to Bernstein*. In a black top and spectacular green skirt and with her lovely red hair down, she was alternately excited, wistful, sexy, pensive, funny, and just downright great in a series of beautifully enunciated numbers by Bernstein and contemporaries. She couldn't have done it without superb Ottawa pianist and long time collaborator Bryan Wagorn, now an Assistant Director at the MET. What a performance!

III **Loose Tea Opera** from Toronto presented *Whose Opera Is It Anyway?*, an improvised comedy show based on the TV show. Five opera singers plus a compere and pianist presented adlibbed operas based on audience suggestions, for a roller coaster of fun! Nine different games ranging from one-minute operas, to laments, to contemporary opera, to three divas in turn adjusting the lyrics to *O mio babbino caro*, kept us in stitches! It's a different show every time, and the troupe will be at the Hamilton Fringe in late July! Incidentally, creator and director Alaina Viau has successfully directed SOPAC's two operas in Ottawa last year and this.

IV Later that day 1997 BLOC winner **Julie Nesralah** joined harpist Caroline Leonardelli, playing bespoke transcriptions, in a lovely CD launch concert, *Un Sospiro - Italian Art Songs*. Julie looked great in a flowered gown and big hair, and sang all the important composers, in the NAC's new Rossy Pavilion with, as a backdrop, a view of the Cenotaph - great stuff!

V A special treat was Handel's *The Triumph of Time and Truth* in St. Joseph's accommodating ambience. This involved enormous forces, all under Montreal conductor Matthias Maute. There were four groups - an orchestra composed of Maute's Ensemble Caprice plus the I-90 Collective from Montana, the excellent Ensemble vocal arts-Quebec (EQ) choir, and the large Ottawa Choir (OC) among the audience - plus 5 soloists! A red and black colour scheme ensured visual interest.

The gorgeous music was presented with great verve and style. The orchestra was excellent and the EQ choir sang beautifully throughout. The OC only sang at the very beginning and very end, and certainly swelled the sound gorgeously. However it left them sitting in their good outfits for 11/2 hours in the sweltering heat between their two short contributions - as some of the choristers around us were complaining at intermission!

Among the soloists, the main characters were baritone Geoffroy Salvas as Time and soprano Myriam LeBlanc as Beauty. Our 2001 BLOC winner, soprano **Shannon Mercer**, suitably dressed in red, was Deceit! The other two were tenor Nils Brown as Pleasure and mezzo Maude Cote-Gendron as Counsel. Fortunately we were given the words, because although it was all sung in English the overall diction, and especially of some of the female soloists, was abysmal. Nevertheless, it was all beautifully sung, and most enjoyable.

VI The next highlight was a world premiere! - opening night of Roddy Elias's first opera, *Sleeping Rough*, on homelessness. With a libretto by his wife, Sandra Nicholls, and the collaboration of master puppeteer Norreen Young and her company, it was very well done. Often gritty, it seemed to be an attack on do-gooders who don't think things through, and ended in tragedy for all - truly operatic!

With Matthew Larkin conducting, the music was a blend of classical and jazz. The excellent 12 piece orchestra included an augmented string quartet and jazz musicians, plus Michelle Gott on harp, doing a lot of the

## BLOC Winners Star at Operatic Music and Beyond Festival! (continued)

work! On very short notice, baritone Garry Dahl beautifully sang the title role of Ted, while soprano Helene Brunet was Anna, mother of young Emily, sung breathily by jazz singer Felicity Williams. Kellylee Evans, as Chorus, both acted well with the puppets and sang, in her entertaining jazz style.

Noreen Young not only made the puppets and designed the set, but was one of the five puppeteers so expressively working the 10 puppets, beautifully dressed by Ingrid Harris. It was like being back at Schonbrunn in Vienna, with director Kris Riendeau ensuring that one began to forget they were puppets, not live people! This was an exceptionally well produced and performed opera, and it was certainly exciting to be at an opera's premiere and actually see the composer and librettist alive!

VII We enjoyed a really first class art song recital courtesy of German baritone Holger Falk's exceptional interpretation and pianist Steffen Schleiermacher's exquisite playing. Presenting *Erik Satie and Charles Ives*, Falk really knew how to put an art song across. He adjusted his voice, and used his mobile face and his lithe body most effectively, while exhibiting exquisite diction in both English and French! He was by turns ironic, over the top and sad with Satie, and overly patriotic, nostalgic and funny with Ives - it was a master class in the art! They had earlier given a liederabend of *Hanns Eisler and Franz Schubert* which left German-speaking friends ecstatic, and we also heard the pianist in a fascinating *Music in the Time of the Great War*. Altogether fantastic!

VIII The big blockbuster concert this year was dedicated to *John Rutter* and his music - it sold out so quickly they added a second, which we got tickets to! - some people even enjoyed the first so much, they went twice! Rutter is the much performed English composer and conductor, well-known mainly for choral works. Accordingly, he had under his baton both the Capital Chamber Choir and Ottawa Children's Choir, plus the Elmer Iseler Singers from Toronto, as well as an augmented Thirteen Strings and several soloists. Rutter's joyful *Look at the World* opened the concert, followed by his lovely instrumental neo-Baroque *Suite Antique*, with soloists Joanna G'froerer on flute and Fred Lacroix on harpsichord.

The highlight of the concert was the Canadian premiere of his new *Visions* (of Jerusalem) specially

written for a Yehudi Menuhin Competition Celebration in 2016, for Ottawa's own Kerson Leong, junior winner in 2010 at 13! This is a novelty: a violin concerto written with a part for boys' choir! - here taken by the Children's Choir plus women of the other choirs for good measure! Kerson has developed into quite a violin virtuoso, as his encore of Tarraga's *Memories of the Alhambra* (and an earlier concert) amply demonstrated.

The finale was another Rutter major work, his *Magnificat*, sung in Latin with an extra verse in English *Of a rose*. With Thirteen Strings plus Matthew Larkin on organ, lovely Ottawa soprano Mireille Asselin as soloist, and using both adult choirs, they certainly made a joyful noise unto the Lord - a fitting ending of a most enjoyable concert by and tribute to John Rutter.

IX Mireille Asselin, now singing at the MET, as well as Toronto's Opera Atelier, gave a delightful concert, with the Amici Trio: *Mireille Asselin with Amici*. It was the launch for an album of Canadian music, *Inspired by Canada/Notre Pays*, with lovely arrangements all by Amici pianist Serouj Kradjian. Mireille, dressed appropriately in red, was in fine voice in a pot pourri of favourites and relative to absolute unknowns, ending beautifully in Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah!*

X The closing gala was sung a cappella by the marvelous *Chanticleer* - 12 superb male voices covering the range from soprano to bass! Julian Armour booked them when they were here two years ago, and the first date they were available was July 18 - so he extended the Festival one day for them! As before, the first half was gorgeous - mainly early and Renaissance music - while the second half was more modern fare. A highlight was the beautiful countertenor of Cortez Mitchell in Gershwin's *Summertime* from *Porgy and Bess*! What a great vocal ending to the Festival!

XI There were other singers showcased, including soprano Bronwyn Thies-Thompson with a violinist and baroque and step dancers, tenor Dr. Fraser Rubens singing with an illustrated presentation on *Music and Medicine*, and soprano Aline Kutan and the Molinari Quartet with the *Schafer @ 85* production, among the 33 concerts (of a total of 75) that we attended!

Julian Armour's programming is always so interesting and entertaining, but this year's vocal and operatic slant was very close to my heart!



## Thomas Hampson in Concert

by Tom McCool

In addition to the opera and Broadway musical productions staged at the Glimmerglass Opera Festival every summer a number of other shows, frequently showcasing prominent personalities, are also presented. This summer among the headliners were Bill Murray, Rosanne Cash, Margaret Atwood and Thomas Hampson. Hampson is a renowned American singer who has been a star of the operatic stage since the eighties, singing over 80 baritone roles at opera houses all over the world as well as giving recitals and making recordings.

On August 19 he was featured in a concert titled *BEYOND LIBERTY* – Song of America. The American songbook is a rich musical treasure trove and in this show, Hampson, ably supported by a contingent of Glimmerglass musicians and production staff, performed some of these songs for a sold-out opera house. The program included *Beautiful Dreamer*, *Shenando-*

*ah, America the Beautiful* and variations on *The Star Spangled Banner* with “texts promoting temperance, equal rights for women and the abolition of slavery”. Some of the material was familiar but much of it was not. Opening and closing with *The Star Spangled Banner* the whole gamut of American history was on display throughout the concert. Among the various writers and composers who either wrote the words or composed the music were Stephen Foster, Charles Ives, Carl Sandburg, Walt Whitman, Scott Joplin, Charles Ives, John Corigliano and Leonard Bernstein.

There was a very definite patriotic emphasis throughout the concert and in this regard Glimmerglass Opera Festival should be commended for staging a production which is very much needed in today’s divided America. Following this show *BEYOND LIBERTY* will be going on tour throughout the U.S.A.

## Verdi’s Joan

by Murray Kitts

We are presenting on October 14<sup>th</sup> at Opera alla Pasta a newly released DVD of Verdi’s *Giovanna d’Arco*. Why this particular early opera by the great composer? This question was asked by many opera lovers in Milan when the new music director, Riccardo Chailly, announced that this work would open his inaugural season in 2015. Why begin with an opera which hadn’t been performed at La Scala for 150 years? Because Chailly knew that this was an early masterpiece if presented properly. The result – tremendous popular and critical reception for the performances.

To really appreciate and understand Verdi’s opera on Joan of Arc there are a number of important things to know. The first thing to look at is the date of the first performance, which is 1845. An essential date next to this one is 1920 when Joan of Arc was proclaimed as a saint. So you are not going to see and hear an opera about someone who has been rehabilitated as a saviour of her country and a Christian saint. As a matter of fact the motives and actions of this young, perhaps illiterate, girl were severely questioned and even mocked by writers like Shakespeare (understandably) and Voltaire (nastily). Since she died in 1431 it took ages to attempt to properly evaluate her. For example, George Bernard Shaw’s famous play *St. Joan* was written in 1923.

Verdi wrote his opera to a libretto based on a play by the great German writer Friedrich Schiller whose plays supplied the composer with the plots of five of his operas. Schiller’s play, *The Young Maid of Orleans*, written in 1801, was enlivened by a love interest between Joan and an English soldier! When Temistocle Solera (librettist of four other Verdi operas) presented his libretto to the composer much of the action of the play had been condensed and Joan’s love interest was changed from an Englishman to Charles VII, king of France. Joan’s voices, which are mentioned in the actual record of her trial and claimed by her as being those of saints, are represented by two duelling choruses. The demonic voices urge her as someone young and beautiful to find love while the angelic voices urge her to remain pure and fulfill her destiny as the saviour of France.

The opera to be shown on October 14<sup>th</sup> takes advantage of all modern stagecraft to present the music and drama of this great early work by the incomparable Verdi. As for the La Scala chorus and the principals, Anna Netrebko, Francesco Meli and Carlos Alvarez, critic Steven Hastings in Opera News declares the live performance at La Scala “the most vocally resplendent evening of Verdi singing heard here this century.”

Wow! Don’t miss it.

## Opera in the County: Wellington Water Week! by Shelagh Williams

While contemplating a wine-foraging long weekend in Prince Edward County, we came across an intriguing ad for *Popera*. This was a programme presented by the COC Ensemble Studio, at the Drake Devonshire in Wellington, as part of Wellington Water Week! This was the inauguration of Wellington Water Week, an initiative of which COC Music Director Johannes Debus and his wife, violinist Elissa Lee, are the Music Directors. They fell in love with Wellington and the beautiful views of the waters of Lake Ontario, which inspired the musical week's programme.

The 2018-19 COC Ensemble Studio consists of returning members baritone Samuel Chan, soprano Lauren Eberwein and mezzo Simone McIntosh and new members sopranos Anna-Sophie Neher, from Gatineau, and Lauren Margison (Richard's daughter), mezzo Simona Genga and bass baritone Joel Allison (2015 and 2017 BLOC prize winner).

I In the afternoon (August 26<sup>th</sup>) we enjoyed the debut performance of a concert devised and sung by soprano Danika Loren, just

graduated from the COC Ensemble Studio. Entitled *Helpless*, it was about Ophelia (ancient Greek meaning: "help") and encompassed songs by Richard Strauss interspersed with spoken text from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, with Stephane Mayer on the piano. A clever programme included text and English translations of the songs and a cut of Millais' atmospheric painting of Ophelia floating to her death appropriately on the water. Loren wore a lovely diaphanous floating gown, with her hair down, and sang and declaimed beautifully, giving out samples of the flowers as named - I received a hand made poppy brooch! It was a total performance, well conceived and carried out, making for a memorable concert.

II The gala *Popera* that evening was quite marvellous. Champagne and oysters in the garden got us in the mood, and then we were led, and serenaded, by the singers into the pavilion for dinner and, both before and between courses, the programme. We heard the seven singers in collaboration with two pianists from the Ensemble. The programme included entertaining renditions of opera's "Greatest Hits", whether solos, duets, trios or ensembles. Starting off with Figaro's

lively *Largo al factotum* and *Musetta's Waltz*, the gems just followed in a torrent, including a particularly lovely *Ombra mai fu* (Handel's *Largo*) and a gracious flower-accompanied *Flower Song* from *Madama Butterfly*. Joel Allison had several highlights: Figaro's solo *Se vuol ballare*, Don Giovanni's duet *La ci darem la mano*, and one of my favourites, the *Così* trio *Soave sia il vento*. The finale had all seven singers participating in the Venice scene from *Tales of Hoffmann* involving the glorious *Barcarolle* duet!

We were fortunate indeed to be seated at dinner beside Liz Upchurch, Head of the Ensemble Studio, and it was interesting to hear her comments plus her assurances that the COC picks the best singers, and then employs them as best they can. Of course, this programme aptly bore this out - the singers were all great!

III The next afternoon was an example of what can happen on the water - a DVD showing of *Magic Flute* from Bregenz, where the stage is an island in the lake! This was the 2013 production, a far cry from the one we saw there 30 years ago

in the 1980s! This newest production was very elaborate, with a rotating stage, fancy lighting and fireworks, and several puppets. It could only have been done outside and on an island, with most everything arriving on, or being subjected to, water! Quite a marvellous 150 minutes, yet also a lovely reminder of the earlier production.

IV Our final concert was called *Meli Melo* (a mix of different things). It consisted of five soloists each playing alone or with piano, and culminating in the five performing Brahms' Quintet for Clarinet and Strings in the second half. This was a class performance, as evidenced by Music Director Elissa Lee and uOttawa's Yehonaton Berick on violins and the NACO's Rachel Mercer on cello! With dinner under a canopy by the lake during intermission, we were sent home fulfilled in both body and spirit!

Wellington Water Week - what we were able to attend - was delightful, with thoughtfully crafted programmes beautifully executed, which bodes well for future editions! The web site is [www.wellingtonwaterweek.org](http://www.wellingtonwaterweek.org) If Wellington can do this, why not Ottawa?



# My Glimmerglass 2018 by Lesley Robinson

We attended all four of the Mainstage productions at Glimmerglass. Joshua Hopkins' delightful performance as Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* is reviewed elsewhere in this newsletter. Suffice it to say that despite the fact that this is one of the most frequently performed operas in the entire repertoire, the production had a youthful freshness about it that made it feel like we were watching it for the first time.

As usual, the Festival's productions spanned the centuries. The most recently composed piece was *Silent Night* by composer Kevin Puts and librettist Mark Campbell, which premiered in 2011 and for which Puts was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music. We saw the 2015 production at Opéra de Montréal and I was curious as to how different a new production might be, considering the specific time and place of the setting. The action focuses on the famous Christmas truce of 1914, during the early months of World War I. I found that the Glimmerglass production highlighted different aspects from the Montreal version. The battlefield set, instead of on a revolving stage, consisted of three levels, so that we



*Silent Night* scrolling projection of names of the fallen

could see the reactions of the Scottish, the German and the French soldiers at the same time, all looking out into the chaotic blackness. This highlighted the similarities between the armies. We saw the parallels between the commanders, the lieutenants and the enlisted men from each country and the tensions caused by the conflict between the need to follow orders and the desire for peace. Although they were speaking different languages, they could understand each other on a basic human level. We saw the soldiers of each army sharing memories of the loved ones they had left behind. They each had the shared desire to return home and share simple moments once again with those they had left behind. For so many, this would prove to be a vain hope. The cast of Young Artists acquitted themselves admirably and the orchestra, under the baton of Nicole Païement, presented an eclectic melange of styles. The

opening scene of a Mozart-style opera contrasts sharply in its frivolous escapism with the harsh realities of the battle scene and a range of emotions is expressed through the music from hope to yearning to loss.

Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* took us back to mid-twentieth century New York. The piece was included in celebration of the composer's centennial. *West Side Story* premiered in 1957, which means that Bernstein was not even 40 when he wrote this rich and intense work of musical theatre. A word about the lyricist: Stephen



West Side Story street art at Glimmerglass

Stephenson, currently a mere 88 years old, produced some wonderfully clever and edgy lyrics for Bernstein's music. Despite his gargantuan inventory of

words and music, I find it difficult to credit any of his work as wittier or snappier than that which he created for *West Side Story*. Glimmerglass's production featured the original Jerome Robbins choreography. Once again the Glimmerglass Young Artists excelled themselves. These were young opera singers making themselves vulnerable by dancing on stage! The entire show was held together by stand out performances from the two leads—Young Artist Joseph Leppek as Tony and the up-and-coming Texan soprano Vanessa Becerra as Maria. Director Francesca Zambello's programme notes highlight the topical relevance of the themes of *West Side Story* for today's America—immigration, gang warfare and rampant tribalism. We still have much to learn from Shakespeare and Bernstein.

This was indeed the first time we had seen a production of *The Cunning Little Vixen* by Leoš Janáček. Conductor Joseph Colaneri's pre-performance talk was inspiring in its excitement for the music and the expertise of the composer. Mr. Colaneri drew attention to many aspects of the score, giving us much to listen for and appreciate. He noted the fact that Janáček was exploring Czech folk music to evoke the countryside. The rhythms of folk music are those of dance as well as song and the sounds of the language also influence the music.



# A delight for all senses by Nicolas Fleet

*Brunch en parfait accord* — a special outdoor event conceived by local guitarist Simon Berniquez and hosted by the City of Gatineau that married the best of music and food — met with enormous success this August. Seating was limited to 80 per day, and as a member of the audience I felt more like a guest at an intimate banquet with friends than just an attendee at a concert.

We enjoyed four courses prepared by gourmet chefs from top restaurants in the old Hull neighbourhood, each one designed to match the themes of Berniquez’s musical selections: Summer, Love and Romance, Jazz Standards, and Hungarian Dances and Tangos.

“The music came first,” said Berniquez. “I prepared four 30-minute sets designed to match each food service.”

Berniquez’s goal was to “demonstrate the beauty of each instrument.” To that end, he assembled some of the best upcoming musicians in the region: lyric soprano Emili Losier, violin-

ists Erik Johnson-Scherger and Tamers Souza, and cellist Ethan Allers.

A highlight of the show was Losier’s exceptionally gorgeous rendition of “Oh! Mio Babbino.” As always, her singing was sumptuous and expressive. In addition, Losier sang challenging pieces from Schubert, Pergolesi, and Handel before moving on to the contemporary section, which she also performed beautifully. Losier’s outstanding voice never fails to delight, and you could see that she deeply enjoyed sharing the stage. “Working with the entire string quartet and [Berniquez] was a joy. It is always about the people and the music we make,” Losier reflected.

According to Berniquez, talks will begin soon to repeat the event next year, with promotion slated to begin in May. Keep an eye out for your opportunity to secure a spot at this unique event — *Brunch en parfait accord* generated a lot of discussion on social media and the show is bound to sell out quickly in 2019.



Photo credit: Nicolas Fleet

Berniquez

Losier

December 8-9: Soprano Emili Losier joins with the Choeur classique de l'Outaouais to perform Handel's *Dixit Dominus*. See [choeurclassiqueoutaouais.ca](http://choeurclassiqueoutaouais.ca) for details.

## The “Best Ever” Opera- Saturday Afternoon at the Opera on CBC2

- September 15, 2018** Kiri te Kanawa presents *Der Rosenkavalier* by Strauss
- September 22, 2018** Nathalie Stutzmann presents *Tannhäuser* by Wagner
- September 29, 2018** John Nelson presents *Les Troyens* by Berlioz
- October 6, 2018** Stephen Lord presents *Madama Butterfly* by Puccini
- October 13, 2018** Stephanie Blythe presents *The Ballad Of Baby Doe* by Moore
- October 20, 2018** Keith Cemy presents *Ariadne auf Naxos* by Strauss
- October 27, 2018** Measha Brueggergosman presents *Dialogues of the Carmelites* by Poulenc

Check CBC2 for future broadcasts in this series which will continue until Saturday Afternoon at the Opera from the Metropolitan Opera begins on December 1, 2018.



## Glimmerglass 2018 – An Interview with Kelley Rourke

by Lesley Robinson for NCOS

We are privileged to present an interview with **Kelley Rourke** whose long association with the Glimmerglass Festival has contributed so much to its success over the years. Here's a little peek at some of what she does.

**Kelley Rourke** is a librettist, translator and dramaturg. She has collaborated with composer John Glover on projects including *Lucy*, *Natural Systems*, and *Guns n' Rosenkavalier*, among others. Kelley has written libretti for three youth operas at The Glimmerglass Festival: *Odyssey* and *Robin Hood* (both with Ben Moore) and *Wilde Tales* (with Laura Karpman). Kelley's modern English adaptations of numerous standard and not-so-standard operas have been hailed as "crackingly witty" (The Independent, London) and "remarkably well wedded to the music and versification in arias" (New York Times).

Her work has been commissioned and performed by Washington National Opera, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, The Glimmerglass Festival, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Boston Lyric Opera, Young People's Chorus of NYC, Seattle Opera, Minnesota Opera, Carnegie Hall, Urban Arias (Washington, DC), San Francisco Conservatory, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, American Opera Projects, Atlanta Opera and Nautilus Music-Theater, among others.

Kelley has served as guest lecturer at Boston University, Carnegie Mellon University and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and was founding editor of Opera America magazine and a contributor to the New Grove Dictionary of American Music. She is resident dramaturg for The Glimmerglass Festival and Washington National Opera.

**LR for NCOS:** I imagine that few 10 year-olds, when asked what they want to be when they grow up, would answer, "A dramaturg". What would your answer have been at age 10 and how and when did you decide on your career path?

**KR:** When I was 10 I wanted to be a veterinarian. Eight years later, I chose music as my college degree. I took

a summer internship at Glimmerglass in 1994 and fell in love with the world of collaborative art-making -- so different from all those lonely hours in a practice room. I found my way into my current position largely due to the support and mentorship of John Conklin, our long-time associate artistic director.

**LR:** I noticed that in this year's program you are listed variously as translator and librettist and are credited for the projected text for the Mainstage productions. Can you tell us about the differences between these roles?

**KR:** A librettist is the architect of an opera -- my most important task when wearing that "hat" is structuring a story for the stage, and specifically for a stage on which music will do a good deal of the storytelling. I also write the words that people will sing. This summer, in addition to serving as librettist for *Odyssey*, I wrote a singing translation for *The Cunning Little Vixen*. That means I had the task of retro-fitting an English libretto to Janacek's existing score.

For projected text, or supertitles, my job is to help the audience enter into the world of a foreign language opera.

I try to be as direct and simple as possible, so that audiences can quickly look up, then back down to the stage. Timing is also a huge part of the work - I don't want to step on a punch line or major plot point.

**LR:** I would guess that translating *The Cunning Little Vixen* would be a big challenge. How did you go about getting the balance between the rhythm of the language and the meaning?

**KR:** How did I go about it? I wish there was a formula. Some phrases come easily; other times I rewrite an idea or plot point 27 times in English... clean my apartment... watch a few cat videos... break for lunch... watch a few more cat videos... and then try again... before I get to one that fits the contours of the music.

I resist the idea that it is meaning versus rhythm. I don't think the original author of a text is ever well served when we reduce their work to word-for-word



**Kelley Rourke**

## Glimmerglass 2018 – An Interview with Kelley Rourke (cont.)

"literalness." Any writer whose work is worthy of translation is also thinking about sound, rhythm, the peculiarities of his/her language and cultural associations, etc. ALL of these things contribute to what the original text "means." None of those things can be exactly reproduced in another language, of course, and the challenge is heightened when you're fitting words to music. I am looking for a big-picture "meaning" that comes as close as possible to recreating the experience of receiving the piece in its original language. In order to do that, I have to widen my scope beyond a word-by-word reading to think about rhythm, sound, and what vowels allow singers to float their high notes.

**LR:** You have been involved in the youth productions that have featured lately on the Glimmerglass calendar. Tell us about the experience of writing for and working with such young artists.

**KR:** I love working with members of the Glimmerglass Youth Chorus. It's not just a terrific opportunity for local kids to work in a professional environment, it's a chance for us "pros" to remember our young selves. These kids are amateurs in the original sense of the word: they do it for love.

When it comes to writing for young performers and audience members, I don't approach the assignment any differently than I approach a project "for adults." To be honest, I don't really like the idea of "children's theatre." If a work is clear and compelling, you will draw in the kids (and the adults accompanying them). We see kids of all ages at our MainStage shows. Not everyone will "get" every part of every production, but that's OK.

I think all storytellers could learn something

from "The Simpsons" -- with its mix of fart jokes and sophisticated social and cultural commentary, there's something for everyone! (I'm quite proud of the fart joke in the titles for *Barber of Seville*.)

**LR:** With festival programs planned well in advance, when do you start work on upcoming productions and how much time is spent on getting each production from the conception to the stage?

**KR:** I am already thinking about and researching 2020 shows, but I'm really digging into 2019 now that 2018 is done. The amount of time per project varies widely -- I've done a full singing translation in 10 days, but sometimes it can take 2-3 months. Every project has its own challenges.

**LR:** I know that you have been involved at Glimmerglass for a number of years. Tell us how the Festival has evolved from your perspective and how you see that continuing in the future.

**KR:** There have been so many changes over the years, large and small, but I keep coming back for the same reasons. When I came to Glimmerglass 25 years ago, I found a place where theatre professionals at all stages of their careers come together to learn from each other and make something special. I found a place where the audience is passionate about art and ideas. For me, the ever-expanding offerings don't represent a change as much as they represent a process of becoming more deeply who we are as a company - and as a community.

Thanks to Kelly Rourke for sharing her precious time with us. We congratulate her on her contributions to another successful year at Glimmerglass.

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## My Glimmerglass 2018 (continued)

The work is lavishly orchestrated and Mr. Colaneri drew our attention to the use of the bow in the strings section to evoke the atmosphere of the woodland setting. The creative team did much to engage the audience in the story. Kelley Rourke's new English translation draws the audience in to the action. Dave Bova's hair and makeup and Erik Teague's costumes bring the anthropomorphized forest creatures to life. This was another cast of mostly Young Artists including Joanna Latini as the

Vixen, whose performance was lively and touching. At the heart of the production was the role of the Forester, sung by the magnificent Eric Owens, returning for a third season as Artist in Residence. This was a fine introduction to the work.

Thanks, Glimmerglass for another great season. We'll be back—we already have our tickets for next year's Festival.

## Live in HD from the Met 2018-19

**Verdi's "Aida" (October 6, 2018):** The HD performance will star Anna Netrebko, Anita Rachvelishvili, and Aleksandrs Antonenko under the musical direction of Nicola Luisotti.

Encores: Nov. 3, Nov. 5, Nov. 7 & Nov. 11.

**Saint-Saëns' "Samson et Dalila" (October 20, 2018):** The opening night production will get its live transmission on Oct. 20, 2018, with Roberto Alagna and Elina Garanca in the title roles.

Encores: Nov. 17, Nov. 19, Nov. 21 & Nov. 25.

**Puccini's "La Fanciulla del West" (October 27, 2018):** Jonas Kaufmann and Eva-Maria Westbroek star in the Puccini opera under maestro Marco Armiliato.

Encores: Jan. 5, Jan. 7, Jan. 9 & Jan. 20.

**Muhly's "Marnie" (November 10, 2018):** Isabel Leonard leads the new production. Christopher Maltman and Iestyn Davies also appear in the Muhly opera.

Encores: Jan. 26, Jan. 28, Jan. 30 & Feb. 17.

**Verdi's "La Traviata" (December 15, 2018):** Yannick Nézet-Séguin leads Diana Damrau, Juan Diego Flórez, and Quinn Kelsey in a new production by Michael Mayer.

Encores: Feb. 9, Feb. 11, Feb. 13 & March 3.

**Cilea's "Adriana Lecouvreur" (January 12, 2019):** The New Years Eve new production will also get a run on the big screen with Anna Netrebko and Piotr Beczala in leading roles. The new production is by David McVicar and also stars Anita Rachvelishvili.

Encores: Feb. 23, Feb. 25, Feb. 27 & March 17.

**Bizet's "Carmen" (Feb. 2, 2019):** Clémentine Margaine takes on her signature role opposite Roberto Alagna under Louis Langrée. Aleksandra Kurzak also stars.

Encores: March 9, March 11, March 13 & March 31.

**Donizetti's "La Fille du Régiment" (March 2, 2019):** The Donizetti work will showcase Pretty Yende and Javier Camarena in the leading roles alongside Stephanie Blythe as the Marquise of Berkenfield and Alessandro Corbelli as Sulpice.

Encores: April 6, April 8, April 10 & April 16.

**Wagner's "Die Walküre" (March 30, 2019):** The second opera in Wagner's tetralogy gets an HD showcase with a cast that includes Christine Goerke, Eva-Maria Westbroek, Stuart Skelton, Jamie Barton, and Greer Grimsley under Phillippe Jordan.

Encores: April 27, April 29, May 1 & May 5.

**Poulenc's "Dialogues des Carmélites" (May 11, 2019):** Nézet-Séguin leads a cast that includes Isabel Leonard, Adrienne Pieczonka, Erin Morley, and Karita Matilla among others in Poulenc's masterwork.

Encores: June 8, June 10, June 12 & June 23

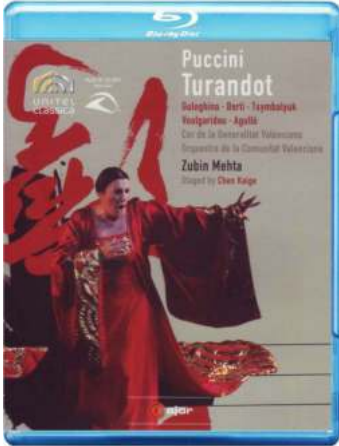
--from *OperaWire* ([operawire.com](http://operawire.com))

**Cinemas may not show all encores. Check with your local cinema for exact dates.**



# Opera alla Pasta

*DVD presentations of outstanding operas followed by a delicious meal.*



September 16, 2018 *Turandot* by Giacomo Puccini

This 2008 opulent staging from Valencia, Spain is directed by Cannes-winning director Chen Kaige with sumptuous costumes and palace sets designed by other Chinese artists. The excellent international cast of singers is headed by Maria Guleghina who gives a triumphant performance in the title role. The Choir and Orchestra of Valencia are under the direction of Zubin Mehta.



October 14, 2018 *Giovanna d'Arco* by Giuseppe Verdi

From LaScala in Milan comes a 2015 production of one of Verdi's early operas. Only a modern production with all recent technical developments could present such a spectacle to match the drama. The trio of Anna Netrebko, Francesco Meli and Carlos Alvarez present unforgettable performances in the lead roles. The famed LaScala Chorus has an unusually prominent part in the opera. Riccardo Chailly conducts the Chorus and Orchestra in this magnificent presentation.



November 25, 2018 *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

This is a dazzling 2017 production from the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. The cast includes stars of the Mariinsky plus their famed Chorus and dancers. Based on a poem by Pushkin, the story begins like Cinderella, starts to turn serious, but the intervention of a Swan Princess makes everything right with miraculous events along the way. Colourful cannot begin to describe the costumes and sets. Rimsky-Korsakov's glorious score is played by the Mariinsky Orchestra directed by Valery Gergiev.

*Opera alla Pasta presentations are held at St. Anthony's Soccer Club at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoon. The cost is a modest \$25. Call Murray Kitts at 613-830-9827 or Lesley Robinson at 613-769-5957 at least 3 days before the date of the DVD presentation in order to reserve a place or for additional information about Opera alla Pasta.*