



## Fantastically Funny *Figaro* by Murray Kitts

One of my favourite operas in a Downton Abbey setting? Hmm. Well, it worked most of the time. During the overture we are shown briefly the servants (instead of peasants). The set for Act I is much too large for the initial stage business - measuring a space where a bed could fit in a huge room. However, the size of the room allowed for more action. For example, when Dr. Bartolo begins his aria, Marcellina goes upstairs and only returns at the end of his enraged threat of revenge on that villain Figaro. The extra space was generally well used during this act, with the exception of Figaro's final Act I aria played in front of the drop curtain with the whole Abbey bunch turned out. Portraying Cherubino as taking a pleased active part in the proceedings in which all the discomforts of soldiering are outlined might add a comic dimension but is not in keeping with the original plot. Act IV displayed another good use of the set. There were only a few bushes to hide behind. Rather, a large fountain ornament provided hiding places for all the disguised and duped characters in that act. Actually the sets from New Orleans worked very well and allowed Stage Director Tom Diamond to display his mastery of blocking and movement working with a lively cast. Lighting Designer Jason Hand lent his technique to add to the atmosphere, especially of Acts II and IV.

A former colleague of mine once compared the arias in this opera to a string of priceless pearls. Certainly we were treated to uniformly excellent vocal and acted presentations by a fine cast. James Westman used his powerful baritone voice to portray the philandering, aggressive Count. Two excellent sopranos, Nathalie Paulin as the noble, neglected wife and Sasha Djihanian as the wily, feisty Susanna delivered beautifully their arias and joined in a lovely duet in Act III. John Brancy as Figaro, another baritone, planned unceasingly to win the battle for Susanna from the Count. However, I cannot give a fuller comment on this singer as his most important aria in the opera was omit-

ted in order to facilitate scene changes and to keep down costs. Most regrettable. Mezzo Lynne McMurtry was an unusually well-sung Marcellina, determined to have Figaro as her husband. Baritone Peter McGillvary, as Dr. Bartolo, overconfidently plotted to have revenge on Figaro by assisting Marcellina in her marriage plans. Tenor Aaron Ferguson as Basilio (and as Don Curzio, the stuttering notary) acted as a pander for the Count and as a general troublemaker but was not as effective in ensemble as he might have been. Mezzo Wallis Giunta (2007 finalist in the Brian Law Competition) in the trouser role of Cherubino, the "amorous butterfly", gave a spirited performance of a young lad who is always in trouble. Soprano Johane Ansell as Barbarina, so in love with Cherubino, sang well her Act IV aria. Finally bass-baritone Sean Watson portrayed the bibulous gardner Antonio trying to save his daughter from Cherubino and his flowers from being crushed.

The fact that all the singers but one were Canadians has to be applauded and encouraged by our Society and its Brian Law Opera Competition.

Interim Artistic Director Kevin Mallon certainly kept the glorious music from our great NAC Orchestra at the proper pace. Having listened to and loved this opera for over sixty years I was a little surprised to hear ornamentation in the repetition of the first part of many arias. This is common with Baroque and bel canto opera but I've never encountered it before in a major Mozart opera. The Opera Lyra Chorus, as always under the skilled direction of Laurence Ewashko, had an easy time with the choruses and were exceptionally well placed and managed by the stage director.

*The Marriage of Figaro* started out as a great play by Beaumarchais, the plot then refined into an excellent opera libretto by Da Ponte and transformed into a miracle of music and drama by the genius of Mozart - that was what Opera Lyra presented to us.



Photo by Andrew Alexander

## President's Message

I'm afraid I have to report that the bad fortune which has afflicted our Board has continued with serious operations and illnesses for several of them. This has gone on in conjunction with our efforts to find a suitable date in the springtime, and a more central venue, for the Brian Law Opera Competition 2015. Despite a considerable amount of investigation involving site visits, filling out of forms and making phone contacts, we were unable to come up with a suitable date and venue for a spring competition. We then decided to move back to the fall season but not so late as in the past few years. October 3rd looked good to avoid both Opera Lyra performances and the Live from the Met simulcasts. We booked the Unitarian Congregation for that date, only to find out later that Opera Lyra had changed its usual dates and was now having its final performance on October 3rd. Naturally it was unthinkable that the NCOS would hold the competition in conflict with the staged opera. So we have had to move our date again to the following Saturday, October 10th. This is Thanksgiving Day weekend, but this may work to our advantage as a number of singers who study outside of Ottawa will be planning to be at home for that weekend and will be encouraged to participate. Of course we were not able to get the most desirable venues for the new date. **And so the BLOC will be held in Southminster United Church, 15 Aymer Avenue at 7 p.m., October 10th.**

Also, I would like to recommend to you a DVD recently released by the Met of a performance of *Rigoletto* starring our dear, late friend and supporter, Louis Quilico, in one of his most memorable roles. Having Luciano Pavarotti as the Count is a bonus. See you at the opera.



**The NCOS AGM will be held on Sunday May 24th after the Opera alla Pasta showing of *Salome*.**

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## Membership Renewal

If you have not already done so, it is time to renew your annual membership. If you are not a member we would be happy to have you join us. You can download an application form from our website ([ncos.ca](http://ncos.ca)) by clicking on Membership. Please note that there is now a charge for a printed copy of the newsletter. The completed form and your payment should be sent to Mark Robinson, Treasurer NCOS, 20 Leonard Avenue, Ottawa, ON, K1S 4T7. If applicable, please remember to include your email address on the application form.

For information on the National Capital Opera Society or the Brian Law Opera Competition

contact Murray Kitts at 613-830-9827 or consult [www.ncos.ca](http://www.ncos.ca)

## From the Sublime to the Ridiculous

by Shelagh Williams

The two winter offerings from the Canadian Opera Company (COC), Wagner's *Die Walkure* and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, were given the expected excellent musical renderings, but vastly different dramatic presentations.

We had seen the COC's *Die Walkure* production on its first appearance in 2004, and then in 2006 in the more understandable context of the full *Ring Cycle* which magnificently opened the new COC opera house. However, it seemed to have improved significantly since then in the clarity of the presentation - perhaps due to the increased skill of the director, Canadian film and movie director Atom Egoyan! The better direction included some simplifications and some real fire where indicated, plus placing the singers near the front so they could be heard! We were presented by Egoyan and Canadian set and costume designer Michael Levine and lighting designer David Finn with a chaotic atmosphere where the set indicated the rubble of a Valhalla in ruins after the struggle for the magic ring, and even the costumes were rather tatty! The costume colour coding was brown, earthy colours in ugly garb for mortals and crisp black for immortals, all styled in the Victorian era, with the Valkyries looking most fetching in long ball gowns and red wrapped wrists.

The first act was very dark, but among the debris were discernible a real fire and a tree with a sword, so Siegmund and Sieglinde had a cosy nest for their encounter. The second act opened with a flash of light and a huge lighting framework overhead disclosing, as might be expected from a film director, what now looked like a ruined movie studio with Wotan and Fricka looking down at and discussing the sleeping Siegmund and Sieglinde, as Gods directing their human underlings. Finally, at the end of the third act, the Valkyries carried in, very carefully, real torches to plant in a ring around Brunnhilde, in a visually stunning ending.



The music was sublime. The COC had obviously scoured the world to find ideal singers, all making their COC debuts, who actually sang, not shouted. It was also Music Director Johannes Debus's first *Walkure*, which may have brought a freshness to his conducting and the whole presentation. In a role debut as Brunnhilde was soprano Christine Goerke, whom we had seen at Glimmerglass in 1997 and then again this summer heading *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and so I was not surprised at her great singing and acting. I was especially taken by the courage she showed in the last act in fighting for her future against her father Wotan. She more than fulfilled everyone's expectations - she will certainly fill the MET in its next *Ring*! The rest of the cast was equally compelling. Danish baritone Johan Reuter was a powerful Wotan, relating well with both Brunnhilde and his wife, Fricka. American soprano Heidi Melton has sung Sieglinde in the States and Europe, and her experience showed, as this pivotal character whose life ties in all the skeins of the story. As Sieglinde's husband Hunding, Russian bass Dmitry Ivashchenko was good looking, especially in an undershirt (!), and sang and acted well - it was too bad the character itself was not as attractive! Visually, German mezzo Janina Baechle was done up as a severe middle-aged Temperance crusader, and as Fricka she bullied Wotan most effectively, having sung the role at Vienna State Opera. The eight Valkyries were worth waiting until the third act for, each young and striking and singing marvellously. From beginning to end, Debus and the Orchestra did a great job pacing these singers.

But what, you say, about Siegmund, whom American tenor Clifton Forbes was scheduled to sing, as he had in the two earlier COC productions? Well, on our evening he was ill, and so we entered the house to hear the unsettling announcement that his cover, the young American tenor, Issachah Savage, would replace him. However, we did receive a programme insert noting that he had won the 2014 Seattle International Wagner Competition, with the main, audience favourite, orchestra favourite and special prizes, and had sung Radames in Houston Grand Opera. Since Siegmund's voice opens the opera, it importantly sets the tone for the performance. We need not have worried - he was wonderful. The first act, which is basically a duet between Siegmund and Sieglinde, had two great voices singing beautifully and rapturously together and over the orchestra. I had tears in my eyes after the first act! Perhaps to support him, everyone was really in great voice, and at Savage's final curtain call, there was an immediate roar and standing ovation



## From the Sublime to the Ridiculous (continued)

such that I cannot remember having experienced before at the COC! He seemed a bit taken aback! I am sure he will be a star of the future, and it was marvellous to have heard him make such a thrilling debut at the COC in this role, in such a splendid production!

In spite of having read many disparaging reviews of Russian director Dmitri Tcherniakov's work, I felt that one should at least see one of his productions. Tcherniakov likes to situate operas in the present day, to remove any supernatural connotations in the story, and to use unit sets depicting a single room, so as to make every action seem more contained and so more dramatic. In his fourth iteration of this *Don Giovanni*, a COC co-production with Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Teatro Real Madrid, and Bolshoi Theatre Moscow, Tcherniakov has given the piece a modern makeover, reworking the relationships into the story of a well-to-do, dysfunctional, possibly Mafia, family. The family tree was usefully emblazoned on the front curtain, warning us of the change in concept to come, and then before the overture began we saw a family gathering in the only set, the great room of the Commendatore's mansion, where he was receiving his daughter, Donna Anna, with her new fiancé, Don Ottavio, and her daughter from an earlier marriage, Zerlina; his niece Donna Elvira with her middle-aged husband, Don Giovanni; and the young shirttail relation, Leporello. The changes to the story started immediately in the opening scene, with the Commendatore not killed by Don Giovanni as usual, but having hit his head accidentally on a bookcase, while Donna Anna obviously knew she was having an encounter

with Don Giovanni, and was actually doing the chasing! Weirdly, several times during the opera family members seemed to not recognize each other, even in full daylight! Similarly, dialogue problems such as a dressed-down Don Giovanni referring incongruously to his "castle", and, at the Ball, unmasked visitors being addressed as "masqueraders", all added to inconsistencies, which became confusing and nonsensical.

Don Giovanni as an older, alcoholic, lonely outsider can work, as can Donna Elvira as sad and ambivalent about the Don. Don Ottavio was not at all the usual wimp but a strong character, and actually was more charismatic than Don Giovanni, plus it was he who engineered the vengeful trick, at the end, of hiring an actor to impersonate the slain Commendatore and so shock Don Giovanni into a fatal heart attack! However, Donna Anna as a highly sexed nympho was a bit of a stretch. In addition, the time scale of the opera was changed from the classical 24 hours to several weeks or months, indicated at the end of each scene by an annoying black curtain which plummeted down, often cutting off earned applause, and then indicated the ensuing time lapse - by the end the lady beside me and I were having giggling fits! Tcherniakov also designed the handsome set and appropriate costumes, ensuring all was as consistent as possible with his concept, but to me it was all very much like a high class soap opera - episodic, disjointed, and overacted. The first act moved quite well, but the second act, with most of the cast lying inexpli-



## From the Sublime to the Ridiculous (continued)

cably on the floor, got too ridiculous and really dragged - certainly not helped by the inserted time lapses!

Musically, the production was first rate, with debuting German conductor Michael Hofstetter corralling his excellent forces - COC Orchestra and mainly Canadian singers - to treat our ears to Mozart's marvellous music. Tcherniakov certainly drew strong performances from his singers. Baritone Russell Braun, already having sung the role in the Madrid production, really rose to the occasion as the exhausted, ageing rake yet still magnetic Don Giovanni, meanwhile singing beautifully, but infinitely sadly, his *La ci darem la mano* and *Serenade*. We have seen tenor Michael Schade sing Don Ottavio at Covent Garden and he was equally good here, although his voice in his two great arias was a little sweeter back then. Soprano Jane Archibald gave us a beautifully turned out sexy Donna Anna, while singing like an angel! Young soprano Sasha Djihanian was a knowing little minx, with a fine way with her arias, as Zerlina. Having already sung in the Aix and Madrid productions, American bass-baritone Kyle Ke-

telsen, with his gum-chewing and yo-yoing, kept us well entertained and managed a good vocal and acting relationship with Don Giovanni. Of the two debuting Americans, Jennifer Holloway, in mainly inelegant outfits, still managed to portray a sympathetic Donna Elvira, never happy yet singing bravely and hopefully, while baritone Zachary Nelson as Masetto was ignored by Zerlina, as she sang an aria to Don Giovanni's coat. Musically this production of *Don Giovanni* was a triumph, but dramatically it was unbelievable and not to my taste, although it would probably appeal to soap opera fans!

To quote Arthur Kaptainis in the National Post: "If COC general director Alexander Neef wanted to solidify the reputation of the company as a roadhouse for trashy European productions, he could not have done better. If his intention was to shine light on Mozart's operatic masterpiece, he could not have done worse." It would seem that the COC is becoming an opera house where, sadly, one closes one's eyes to enjoy the music.

## Dark staging of *Lucia* saved by soprano

by Murray Kitts

Victoria's Pacific Opera presented an unusually violent, even brutal, production of Donizetti's masterpiece *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The director, Glynis Leyshon, chose to set it in a 1930's Scotland where the Fascist Party has taken possession of Enrico, Lucia's brother. How much historical fact might lie behind this interpretation is quite debatable. In any event, Enrico soon shows his nasty side by taunting Lucia's chaplain, Raimondo, throwing him to the ground and threatening him with a stave. Later on in the opera, in spite of this original contempt, Normano is able to convince the Fascist element not to attack the hero, Edgardo, who has appeared suddenly at Lucia's wedding. To convince her to marry his ally, Enrico has gone as far as threatening Lucia with a dagger, plunging it fiercely beside her into a desk onto which he has pinned down his sister.

Fortunately the presentation was not dominated by all these shenanigans but by the glorious singing of Tracy Dahl, a true bel canto expert. She threw herself into the role of Lucia, at first rejoicing with her companion Alisa, well sung by Michele Bogdanowicz, about her rapturous love for Edgardo. Then she hopelessly tried to defend herself against the attacks of her brother concerning her marriage to his ally, and finally relived the joys of

love and the anguish of murdering her bridegroom in the famous "Mad Scene". An extraordinary performance. Baritone James Westman certainly had no difficulty portraying the despicable Enrico. Ernesto Ramirez as Lucia's true love is one of those tenors with technical mastery and great musicality but who lacks the sheer physical power to project the passionate emotions expressed in his denunciation of Lucia's supposed betrayal and in the anguished prelude to his suicide at the news of Lucia's death.

The sets were uniformly dark and gloomy and the costumes as well, with one exception; the ghost of the woman, who was murdered and thrown in the well and who appears in the scene between Lucia and Alisa, wore a bright scarlet dress. I was a little disappointed with the size of the chorus, probably because of the great early stereo recordings with large forces backing up singers like Joan Sutherland.

This was my first visit to a Pacific Opera production in the Royal Theatre, and Timothy Vernon and his staff should be commended on their efforts to produce live opera in Victoria. In April, Arminè Kassabian will be reprising her role as Suzuki in this company's *Madama Butterfly*.

## Consent and Comeuppance - a New Take on *Don Giovanni*

by Lesley Robinson

The Canadian Opera Company's new production of *Don Giovanni* attempts to cast new light on this age-old story of seduction and retribution with an updated setting and a considerable rethinking of the relationships between the characters. This leads to a troubling view of a man in disintegration. Unfortunately what troubles me most is that despite great singing and brilliant acting, it just doesn't work.

Don Giovanni's character works best when we can see him as the loveable rogue of Moliere's play, which is, after all, a comedy, albeit with some troubling overtones. However reprehensible his behaviour, just like all those gullible women, we can't help loving him and when he is finally dragged down to hell, we find ourselves protesting - he wasn't *that* bad, was he? In this modern setting we may be encouraged to consider present day sensibilities when it comes to matters of consent and sexual power, but our conclusions need not be any different. In fact the women do all freely give their consent. They are merely seduced by what turn out to be false promises. In the opening scene it is Anna who is begging Giovanni to stay. It is only when she gets caught in the act, that she tries to wheedle out of it by crying rape and murder over what is really only self indulgence and self defence. The one character who remains unchanged in this version is Anna's gullible fiancé who is happily duped by her and eloquently vows to avenge her honour, but actually does nothing. Michael Schade's portrayal of Ottavio is perfect.

COC's version presents the characters as members of a single family with the power relationships being between generations instead of between classes. This does provide an opportunity for some interesting symmetry, with the same characters sitting around the same table at the beginning and at the end. However it is problematic. Giovanni is an opportunist, travelling far and wide

and taking advantage of his anonymity to seduce women from France to Turkey. The only reason he might seduce several women in the same family would be because the opportunity had presented itself. Then he would run off into the night to go and do the same thing somewhere else. It is when the women meet as strangers that they come to understand the extent of his betrayal. Knowing who he is at the outset changes everything. Giovanni becomes a victim, brought down by mind games. We see him beginning to unravel even in the first act. Russell Braun puts in a virtuosic performance in his portrayal of this unfamiliar, vulnerable and crumbling Giovanni.

Also problematic in this version is the relationship between Leporello and Don Giovanni. As the long-suffering servant, Leporello is the one who knows every detail of his master's dalliances, even cataloguing every one of his 640 conquests in Italy and the staggering total of 1,003 in Spain! Despite his grumbling, Leporello, just like the rest of us, can't help loving his exasperating master and no doubt would secretly like to be just like him. The outdoor scenes make no sense when played in the single room of a family house and the scenes of mistaken identity - when Leporello briefly gets an idea of what it might really be like to be the Don - become absurd. If Leporello is a young family member, what is the nature of his relationship with Giovanni? This is a mystery. He seems to be just a young fop who is glad not to be too caught up in the family drama.

It is always interesting to explore new possible interpretations. This one however, is more discomfiting than enlightening. A lot went into the production, which was innovative, creative, beautifully sung and brilliantly acted, but for me it somehow seemed to miss the mark.

## Live at the Met 1

by Lesley Robinson

*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* provided an evening of prolonged enjoyment, with the weekday performance beginning at an astonishingly early 6 pm! One of the best performances of the evening came from a young usher (also an aspiring singer) who handled the confusion of double booked seating (and later some opportunist usurpation of our seats during the second intermission) with tremendous competence and grace.

Despite the magnificence of Wagner's music, one cannot help but wonder why it takes six hours to tell this story, but even on a Tuesday night, it was still early enough to get a bite to eat

across the road after the final curtain. Right from the opening bars, the music was familiar to me from my youth - this was one of my father's favourites and there is something tremendously satisfying in listening with familiarity to music I didn't even realise I knew so well. *Die Meistersinger* is indeed a tour de force.

A word about the sets: somehow at the Met it is possible for there to be an entire town onstage. This is testament to the unique suitability of the Met for mounting a production on the larger-than-life scale of a Wagner opera. I'm glad I saw it live.

## Eight Double Basses and Earplugs - *Die Walküre*

by Lesley Robinson

Wagner's body of work and in particular the four operas of *The Ring* may be shied away from by the uninitiated as notoriously "difficult". To me what is difficult about *The Ring* is neither its length (the entire tetralogy takes about 15 hours to perform) nor its rousing music, suffused with haunting leitmotifs, but these operas are phenomenally difficult to stage because the drama is all in the music. While the music rages and tumbles, there may be very little actually happening on stage.

This is difficult for those of us who love opera for its dramatic content, of which the visual aspect is usually a significant part. Wagner's epic work poses formidable challenges for singers, stage directors and set, costume and lighting designers. If they are not up to the challenge, then audiences may be left with an impression of tedium, despite the gloriousness of the sound emanating from the pit.

Counting the number of double basses in the pit and noticing a percussionist donning his earplugs, it was clear that we were in for a treat at the COC's recent production of Wagner's *Die Walküre*. The ample proportions of the pit were commodious enough for the size and scope of the orchestra, which sounded magnificent under the masterful direction of the COC's Music Director, Johannes Debus. Sitting close to the brass section of the orchestra, we were frequently blasted with its magnificent tones, yet remained aware of the almost constant dramatic rhythm of those eight monumental double basses.

The resplendent noise emanating from the pit notwithstanding, those on stage, as well as the artistic team, were still left with the gargantuan challenge of holding the audience's interest, to which they rose with admirable competence. As a renowned film director, Atom Egoyan (spotted sitting in the front row during the final act and humbly acknowledging applause on his way

to the exit) brings his special expertise to the visual experience for an opera audience. During their famous ride, the Valkyries slide down ropes and negotiate scaffolding, whilst heaving around the bodies of fallen heroes and although it's hard to imagine any stage action that could match the frenzy of the music, there was certainly plenty to look at. Part of the difficulty arises from the subject matter. Wagner uses a strange mythological world to explore vast ranges of human emotion. *The Ring* transcends the common stuff of nineteenth century opera, namely love and death, to encompass power, duty, filial obedience, jealousy, revenge and even incest, yet the flight of imagination required to get one's head around the behaviour of mythological and immortal characters ups the ante in the theatrical experience. In his Director's Notes, Egoyan presents the essential tension in Wagner's work as between the love of power and the power of love. This satisfying expression of the essential conflict is enlightening, yet it highlights the nagging challenge of a visual presentation of such abstract constructs.

In this production the visual impressions seem weighty with symbolic meaning. The set and costumes by Michael Levine eerily evoke a ravaged and war-torn Europe that plunged increasingly deeply into destruction and misery during so much of the century following Wagner's death. The black corseted Valkyrie have an aura of commanding dominatrices, yet despite their power, they are required to submit to the tyrannical whim of Wotan. His wife, Fricka, in high-necked black, gives the impression of a stroppy, betrayed and foot-stompingly vengeful consort. Beware the woman scorned.

Thank you, COC for making my first live experience of a *Ring* opera such a dramatic whirlwind for the senses. Who would have thought that those four hours and 45 minutes could pass so quickly!

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## The Opera Quiz

by Tom McCool

- Which famous composer wrote an opera called *Mozart and Salieri*?
- Which famous poet contributed the libretto?
- Which famous 19th century composer wrote the prequel to *Le nozze de Figaro* and what is it called?
- In *Le nozze de Figaro* what is Figaro's real name?
- In the same opera who are his parents?
- Of which secret society was Mozart a member?
- Which Mozart librettist was also a member?
- In *The Magic Flute* how old is Papagena? Papageno?
- What is the correct title of *Don Giovanni*?
- How many operas did Schubert write?
- Name the subtitle of Beethoven's one and only opera?
- Name three great foreign-born composers active in Paris in the early 19th century and one major work associated with each of them?
- Other than *Fidelio*, name an opera whose heroine is named Leonore?
- Name the "Mighty Five" of Russian Opera?
- One of Tchaikovsky's operas shares its name with a work by Liszt. Which one?

## Live at the Met 2

by Lesley Robinson

On the Met's live HD broadcasts the hosts always mention the fact that there's nothing quite like being part of the live audience in the Met auditorium and that is certainly true. The experience is different when it is possible to allow the attention to go where it will, rather than following the whim of the movie director, watching the orchestra and conductor and joining in the spontaneous applause and ovations. Of course every performance is different and one notices different things on each occasion. There are indeed small things that go differently on different days and this can only enhance the experience.

Without a doubt, Joyce DiDonato was the dazzling star of *La Donna del Lago*. (At the live performance we attended, the audience annoyingly, yet spontaneously, applauded the moment she appeared on stage, in the way that a studio audience of a sitcom will applaud when a well-known star enters for a cameo role.) Ms DiDonato's fabulous execution was enhanced by the stellar cast with whom she performed. In an interview for the programme notes, she mentioned how this elevates her performance. She says of Juan Diego Florez, *I know that he makes me a better singer, because he does so many incredible things that I'm like, 'Okay, I've*

*got to match him! I have to bring my A-game!*' The trio in the second act was breathtaking and John Osborn deserves great praise. It is a brave tenor indeed, who will embark upon a coloratura duel with the phenomenal Mr. Florez. The highlight for me was undoubtedly the King/Uberto's aria at the beginning of the second act: *Oh fiamma soave, che l'alma mi accendi! pietosa ti rendi a un fido amator*. This is a supremely touching moment in which we are keenly aware of the ubiquitous conflict between love and duty. This was a moment enhanced in the HD version, when we could watch in close-up how the King held the Scottish flag in one hand and the flowers that Elena had given him in the other. After such beautiful singing (and looking that good) it is really unfathomable to me that this time he doesn't get the girl!

This was a co-production of the Met and the Santa Fe Opera and the set had a definite feel of Santa Fe's open backdrop, with its distant landscape of rolling hills and rolling clouds (supplied at the Met by projection.) I could even imagine a shooting star darting across the New Mexico landscape at just the right moment! The final scene of regal splendour against a totally black background evokes nightfall in an open air venue.

## Handel's *Theodora* revealed as a masterwork

by Murray Kitts

I was also able to attend a splendid performance of Handel's last composed oratorio *Theodora* performed in Alix Gooden Hall at the Victoria Conservatory of Music. This oratorio is not one of the most familiar of Handel's works probably because it was not based on an Old Testament subject, but the story of an early Christian martyr. Recently the piece has been revived and has become known as one of the composer's great works through performances at Glyndebourne and Salzburg.

The front area of the former church could not accommodate all of the performers, the thirty-five members of the Vancouver Cantata Singers and the twenty-seven members, plus harpsichordist and conductor, of the Pacific Baroque Orchestra. The five soloists shared parts of the front pews with some of the audience. Actually after Part One the timpanist and the two trumpeters disappeared after their rousing contributions to the overture, followed at the end of Part Two by the two horn players. But there the resemblance to Haydn's *Farewell Symphony* stopped. Chorus and orchestra produced wonderful sounds as well as extremely moving soft passages in the confines of the hall. The story concerns the condemnation of a Christian maiden of noble birth for

failing to pay homage to the pagan gods that the Romans worshipped in Antioch. Valens, the President of Antioch, was sung with evil relish by bass-baritone Matthew Brook, especially when condemning the virgin girl to the city brothels and ultimately to death. An excellent counter-tenor, Lawrence Zazzo, sang the part of Didymus, a Roman officer who through his love for Theodora has converted to Christianity and joins her in her final fate. Mezzo-soprano Krisztina Szabo sang beautifully the part of Irene, the Christian friend of Theodora, while fine tenor Zachary Wilder tried unsuccessfully to find a way to save his friend Didymus from death. Finally the key role of the heroine was exceptionally suited to the voice of soprano Nathalie Paulin who embraced martyrdom with steadfast courage as she and her loved one were sent to their deaths by fire. Music director, conductor and harpsichordist Alexander Weimann is to be congratulated on undertaking such an ambitious work and producing such a remarkably fine result.

By the way the 20-page full-size program included the entire text, an excellent introduction to the work, as well as bios of the artists – a remarkably fine piece of work.



## Events You Could Have Enjoyed

by Shelagh Williams

**UOttawa School of Music Recitals:** Delightful and amazing treats abound in the many student concerts at UOttawa School of Music. For instance, this December's Chamber Music Ensemble recitals included bass-baritone Joel Allison singing lovely John Dowland songs to a guitar accompaniment, and, later, soprano Teri-Lynn Mitchell singing three unusual *Letters From Composers*, also with guitar, among the expected purely instrumental ensembles. This spring will bring many more Third Year, Graduation, and Master's recitals, plus Ensemble concerts, all free and most welcoming to audiences.

**Music at St. John's:** In early December, the St. John's concert series, organized by pianist Nick Rodgeron, presented Rodgeron accompanying Joel Allison in Schubert's monumental 24-movement song cycle *Winterreise*, to a most appreciative audience! The Strings of St. John's presented a programme of Christmas music and carols with the combined choirs of St. John's and Woodroffe United Church, and highlighted by a lovely performance of Vivaldi's *Gloria* with three soloists, including soprano Hayley Swanton.

**Music and Beyond:** Among the many Christmas offerings was the chance to hear two former BLOC winners, Shannon Mercer and Julie Nesrallah, perform in a Christmas concert. For their solos, Julie, her voice even deeper and richer, sang French repertoire, including *7 Noels de Lourmarin*, with Harpist Caroline Leonardelli, while Shannon presented Oratorio selections from Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. They also sang several numbers with the two choirs, the Ottawa Regional Youth and Canterbury H.S. Chamber, and with the instrumental ensemble. They finished with an encore of the delightful duet of the prayer from *Hansel and Gretel!* Brian Law would have been proud!

**Ottawa Singers:** This new ensemble presented for Valentine's Day its first concert, *Love is in the Air!* With a champagne reception to get us in the mood, we were treated by soprano Ania Hejnar, mezzo Heidi Jost, and tenor Jeffrey Boyd, accompanied by Judy Ginsberg, to such love songs as Burns' *Red, red, Rose, Annie's Song, Tonight, Find me somebody to love* and a Beatles medley. The Ottawa Singers tag line is "Beyond the classical repertoire", and in this vein they plan to present Sir Paul McCartney's *Liverpool Oratorio* at the NAC on November 9th, with the Ottawa Symphony, solosts, and choirs, all under Ty Paterson, former OLO Artistic Director.

**Queen's School of Music: *A Night at the Proms*:** Taking advantage of their beautiful new Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, students and faculty from Queen's School of Music appealed to Anglophiles with their fund-raising *A Night at the Proms*, directed by Gordon Craig and produced and MC'd by baritone Bruce Kelly. The Queen's Symphony Orchestra and pianist Dina Namer accompanied student and faculty soloists and the Queen's Choral Ensemble in Gilbert and Sullivan and Music Hall favourites. Guest performer Canadian lyric tenor Mark Dubois lent added sheen to the musical event. It was a delightful evening, with no need for surtitles, and everyone's diction was impeccable.

**Joel Allison: *The Third and Last Booke of Songs and Aires by John Dowland*:** To take our minds off the cold in early March, we enjoyed a delightful evening of bass-baritone Joel Allison singing the Dowland songs, to the guitar accompaniment of Francois Lacelle. The song lyrics varied from sad to light to downright weird, but all were delivered with perfect diction by Joel's lovely deep voice alongside Francois's adept and precise playing. The venue was Gigspace (part of the Alcom Music Studios on Gladstone), an intimate (46 seats) and licensed spot which was new to us, but ideal for this concert!

**Ottawa Choral Society: *New Discoveries Showcase Recital*:** The Ottawa Choral Society's 2014 biennial auditions of young Canadian singers produced a bumper crop of prize winners. The general public was able to hear three of these winners in a marvellous recital, accompanied by pianist Jordan de Souza, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor. The singers were tenor Charles Sy, now with the COC's Ensemble Studio; soprano Cecile Muhire, now with Montreal Opera's Atelier Lyrique; and mezzo Caroline Gelinias, joining MO's Atelier Lyrique this year. They treated us to solos and duets from opera and art song, both familiar and rare, all beautifully presented. Sy has a great



voice, lovely and unusually strong in one so young, only 23, while Muhire's face and body are most expressive, making her a good actress. It was a class presentation and a real treat for voice lovers.

## Celebrating in Style!

by Shelagh Williams

For energetic, enthusiastic performances, the uOttawa Opera Company, under Sandra Graham's music and stage direction, cannot be beaten. Every year, working with almost nothing but her boundless imagination and teaching skills, she produces marvellous performances.

The first production this year was an exuberant Roaring Twenties *Die Fledermaus*, the huge cast all singing in German, with German, English and French dialogue. On the handkerchief-sized stage, with only a few chairs and tables and two of her signature chaise longues, she managed to accommodate, at various times, all of the singers, or a main scene with comic by-play at the sides. A single grand piano was played adeptly by Daniel Tselyakov (who also had some comic action in the goings on), rather than the more usual orchestra.

The piece was double cast, and both well-dressed casts were very good! The first ensemble we saw, which included tenor Corey Arnold as Eisenstein, soprano Alexandra Givens as his wife Rosalinde, tenor Anthony Boxell as Alfred, her former music teacher and lover, tiny coloratura soprano Maria Bamford as Adele, her maid and an aspiring actress, and baritone Ryan Hofman as Dr. Falke, the instigator of the "fun" at the party, might have had the slightly better voices. Maria Bamford is a member of Actors Equity and her greater experience meant her acting and singing were both marvellous. The second ensemble, including respectively Philippe Blais, Jordane Erichsen, Dominic Grandmaison, Rachel Jewell and Kevin Burke, were mostly better actors, and really got all the facets of the story across well.

Among the excellent chorus, tenor Yanik Gosselin provided a striking deadpan butler, and staid tambourine player, when called on at the party!

The special surprise guest, a *Fledermaus* tradition, was none other than celebrated Canadian bass John Avey, not incidentally the husband of new Voice Professor Christiane Riel, and he stalked scarily on-stage, dressed as a gangster, and sang - wait for it - *Old Man River!* - a choice from left field, but a really wonderful rendition! An excellent bilingual programme including useful notes by Matthew Timmermans accompanied this totally entertaining offering - a class presentation all around!

The second UOOC production of the year was two performances of the delightful *Opera Confections*, consisting of highlights of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and Bizet's *Carmen*. Sandra Graham always directs her students in an entertaining and imaginative manner, and with pianist Paula Lim ensured high musical values as well. For the *Figaro* extracts, Graham and student Yanik Gosselin set the scene for each selection, in English and French, and many recitatives were also in English, so that we understood the humour or poignancy of each scene, and could appreciate the various singers' efforts. The *Carmen* excerpts were very clear and well done, and for Kevin Burke's *Toreador Song* we also got to join the crowd, consisting of the complete cast from both operas, in the chorus - lyrics supplied! It was an excellent and most enjoyable afternoon, well sung and acted - as one expects from a UOOC production!

## A Rare Treat: Berlioz's *Faust*

by Shelagh Williams

In March, the Ottawa premiere of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* was triumphantly presented by Premiere Productions Ottawa (formerly Opera-tunities Ottawa) which specializes in rarely performed works. This *Faust* was a concert performance of an oratorio/opera which is considered almost unstageable! It was hosted by Jean-Jacques Van Vlasselaer, who gave us an introduction on Berlioz and then later expanded on the Faust legend. Jean Desmarais enthusiastically led his excellent cast from the piano, while Laurence Ewashko conducted his superb uOttawa Calixa-Lavallee Choir as the chorus. The bulk of the singing falls to Faust, and in the title role tenor Dillon Parmer shone with his

lovely warm voice. Two uOttawa alumni were imported to sing the other two major roles. Baritone Pierre-Etienne Bergeron, who with Pascale Beaudin headlined an early BLOC gala fundraiser, was a suitably diabolical Mephistopheles. As Marguerite, mezzo Kristine Dandavino was powerful yet charming. The small role of the student Brandeur was filled energetically by final year voice major Hyung Song. This was another top quality and entertaining production by Premiere Productions Ottawa, affording us a chance to hear a rarely performed but fascinating work.

## ***The Barber of Seville* at the LA Opera**

by Lesley Robinson

This production was part of LA Opera's presentation of operas based on all three of the "Figaro" plays in one season. This is not strictly a trilogy of operas because they all have different composers, but they are all based on Beaumarchais's trilogy of plays (*Le Barbier de Séville*, *Le Mariage de Figaro* and *La Mère coupable*.) Unfortunately, scheduling difficulties required that the final episode, which is actually set 20 years after *The Marriage*, be presented first, earlier in the season. The opera, entitled *The Ghosts of Versailles*, is by the celebrated contemporary American composer, John Corigliano. The "trilogy" is completed with the better-known adaptations, Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. Some cohesiveness was achieved by using some of the same cast members (although not necessarily in the same roles) in the three operas. For example Lucy Schauer who sings the role of Berta in *The Barber*, is Marcellina in *The Marriage* and took the role of Susanna in *Ghosts*. The part of Cherubino is sung by Renée Rapiet in both *The Marriage* and *Ghosts* and Kristinn Sigmundsson appears as Doctor Bartolo in both *The Barber* and *The Marriage* and as Louis XVI in *Ghosts*. The presentation of these three operas is partly in homage to Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, the playwright, inventor, spy, arms dealer, general factotum and international man of mystery who created the character of Figaro in his own image. The plays contain much that is apparently autobiographical.

This production of *The Barber* is a familiar one, since it is the one recorded in DVD at the Teatro Real Madrid (and was a co-production with Teatro San Carlos in Lisbon). The splendid sets and costumes came to LA. Everything begins in black and

white and as all is finally resolved for the happy ending, both set and costumes are transformed, resulting in an explosion of glorious colour. LA Opera provided local stage direction by Trevore Ross, the cast, the LA Opera Chorus under Chorus Director, Grant Gershon and the LA Opera Orchestra under the baton of James Conlon, all greatly appreciated by the audience. Maestro Conlon gives informative and highly entertaining pre-performance chats, leaving a brief ten minutes before the performance to make a dash for the auditorium, find seats and get settled.

The magnificent orchestra accompanied some fine singing and acting. Particularly of note were Rodion Pogossov, young Russian baritone who brought energy and humour to the role of Figaro, Elizabeth DeShong, American mezzo-soprano who brought her rich tones to Rosina and René Barbera, a young, upcoming, Texan bel canto tenor, whose boyish vitality made for a charming Almoviva. A good time was had by all.

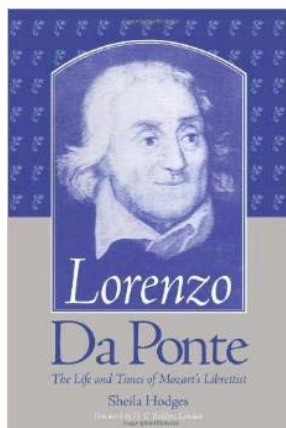
I must mention a highly annoying practice of the LA Opera which led to one of the funniest moments I have ever witnessed in an opera house. Latecomers are admitted at the discretion of the house management, so there was a lot of distracting and irritating creeping around in the darkness during the overture (and even later). Just in front of us, a late-arriving couple were groping for their seats in the darkness. The lady sat down and her husband, with clearly no idea where his own seat was to be found, proceeded to lower himself awkwardly onto his wife's lap. This gave rise to a barely controllable fit of giggles in the row behind. It's a good thing the opera was a comedy!

## **Sheila Hodges. "Lorenzo Da Ponte: The Life and Times of Mozart's Librettist". London, Granada, c1985**

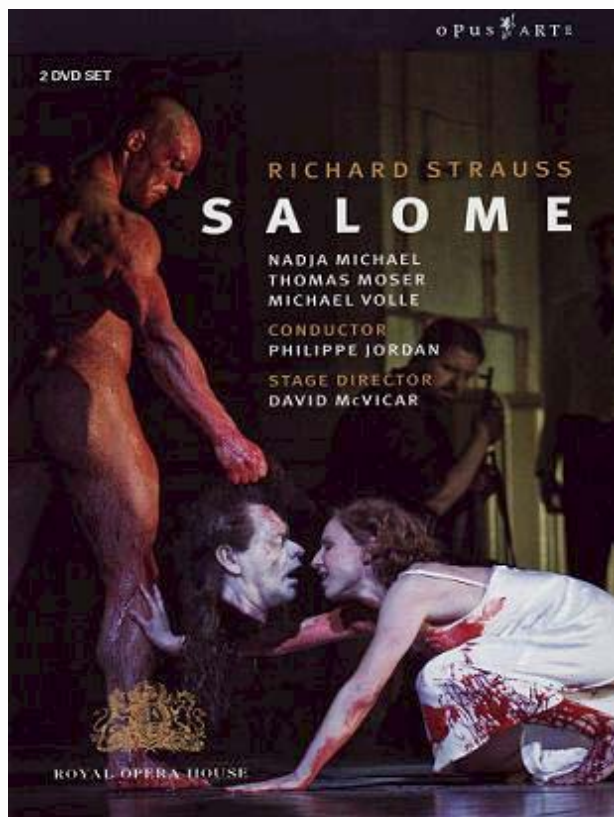
by Shelagh Williams

Everyone knows about Mozart's life, but that of the librettist for three of his greatest operas is veiled in obscurity. Lorenzo Da Ponte was born a Jew in the Veneto, but his family converted to Christianity, the family taking, as was the custom, the surname of the presiding bishop. Lorenzo and his brothers were then eligible for a first class seminary education, and he developed into an excellent Italian poet and, subsequently, librettist. The coverage of his life and work in Vienna as poet to the Italian Opera at the Burgtheatre for 9 years, collaborating with several excellent composers as well as Mozart, is fascinating. At one time he had three libretti (including *Don Giovanni*) for three different composers on the go! He then took over the same role for a like period at the King's Theatre in London, and during these two decades "wrote, adapted or translated near-

ly 50 operas"(!), a list of which is included. His final adventures were in the USA, where he returned to his earlier calling, and spent his last 30 years as a teacher, ending up being named Professor of Italian at Columbia! In his desire to acquaint Americans with Italian literature and opera he also opened an Italian bookshop and, in his eighties, both imported a company of Italian opera singers plus orchestra, and then organized the building of a beautiful Italian opera house in NYC! Luckily for us he wrote and published the memoirs of his long and eventful life - though it was over 40 years before they were permitted to be published in Italy! This engrossing and informative book was written by Sheila Hodges, now Bush, herself long-lived, who presently lives here in retirement in Ottawa! The book is available at the Ottawa Public Library.



# Opera alla Pasta!



*Salome* by Richard Strauss

**Nadja Michael** (Salome)

**Michael Volle** (Jochanaan)

**Michaela Schuster** (Herodias)

**Thomas Moser** (Herodes)

**Philippe Jordan** (conductor);

**David McVicar** (director)

**Orchestra of the Royal Opera House**

**Sunday May 24, 2015, 2 p.m.**

The staging (design by Les Devlin) was inspired by Pasolini's 1975 film "Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom" and this is a very apt metaphor for the Strauss-Wilde opera: we're now being treated to a front row seat and allowed to see what effect Fascism has on the human spirit. Nadja Michael is stunning in the title role. Thomas Moser is a fantastic Herod, very funny and not afraid to be unpleasant in the suggestion of incest, for which I applaud him. The "Dance of the Seven Veils" is no longer a literal striptease, but a surrealistic pas-de-deux for Salome and Herod, in which they move through seven different rooms in Herod's mansion, each room representing a phase in the development of their disturbing relationship. Michael Volle is a solid Jochanaan, and Michaela Schuster finds some surprising moments of mother/daughter pathos in her turn as Herodias.

Much has been made of Duncan Meadows' nakedness in the end, that it is a cheap trick, a gimmick, gratuitous, etc. Well, in my most humble of humble opinions, it may be cheap, but hey – it works! Meadows' naked, muscular backside, splattered with blood, holding a still bleeding severed head is a very powerful image, and one that will haunt you. After Salome takes the head, Meadows walks away and rolls up in the fetal position on the floor – again, another incredibly powerful (and human) moment. In fact, although Meadows of course never sings a note in the mute role of Namaan the Executioner, in many ways he gives one of the most riveting performances: his big eyes and huge, expressive face were made for the stage.

Review by S. P. Mabrey

**Opera alla Pasta** presentations are held at St. Anthony's Soccer Club at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoon. The cost is a modest \$25. Call 613-721-7121 at least 3 days before the date of the DVD presentation in order to reserve a place. For additional information on Opera alla Pasta contact Elizabeth Meller at 613-721-7121.

## Events you should enjoy

by David Williams

**Cathedral Arts** presents Bach's *Johannes-Passion* with Nils Brown (Evangelist), Gary Dahl (Christus) and Christopher Malory (Pilatus). April 3, 3:00 p.m. Christ Church Cathedral Ottawa. <http://ottawa.anglican.ca/cathedral>

**Thirteen Strings** will present Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* plus Vivaldi motets; the orchestra will be joined by Virginia Hatfield, soprano, and Vicki St. Pierre, mezzosoprano. Friday 3 April, 8:00 p.m. Dominion Chalmers United Church. <http://thirteenstrings.ca>

**Project TEMBO Fundraiser:** A concert featuring pianist Mauro Bertoli and opera singer Ania Hejnar Throop. April 17, 7:00 p.m. Glebe St. James United Church. Tickets at 613-237-3824 or at the door.

**Christ Church Cathedral** presents *Vivat Britannia*: a concert in celebration of St. George's Day, featuring the Cathedral Choirs and Garth Hampson. Saturday, April 18, 2:00 p.m. <http://ottawa.anglican.ca/cathedral>

**Pellegrini Opera** will present Puccini's *La Bohème*, April 24 & 25, at 7:30 p.m. Dominion Chalmers United Church. Information: 613-236-3736 [www.pellegriniopera.net](http://www.pellegriniopera.net)

The **Ottawa Symphony Orchestra**, joined by the **Ottawa Choral Society**, will present Verdi's *Requiem* conducted by Jordan de Souza. Soloists are Michele Capalbo, Megan Lathan, Adam Luther, and Mark Steven Doss. April 27, 8:00 p.m. NAC. [www.ottawasymphonyorchestra.com](http://www.ottawasymphonyorchestra.com)

The **Ottawa Bach Choir** will present *Now is the Month of Maying* - madrigals and part-songs by Arcadelt, Janequin, Monteverdi, Morley, Haydn and more. Saturday, May 2, 2015, 8:00 p.m. St. Matthew's Anglican Church. [www.ottawabachchoir.ca](http://www.ottawabachchoir.ca)

The **Ewashko Singers** will present the Canadian Premier of *Liturgy No 3* (English Mass) by Roman Hurko. May 9, 8:00 p.m. St John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Shrine, 952 Green Valley Crescent. <http://www.ewashkosingers.com>

**Seventeen Voyces**, with the Ottawa Baroque Consort, will present a semi-staged performance of Telemann's opera *Don Quixote* featuring Joel Allison as Don Quixote. Friday, May 29, 2015, 7:30 p.m. Southminster United Church. [www.seventenvoyces.ca](http://www.seventenvoyces.ca)

The **Ottawa Classical Choir** presents Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Igor Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* on Saturday May 30, at 7:30 p.m. Dominion Chalmers United Church. [www.ottawaclassicalchoir.com](http://www.ottawaclassicalchoir.com)

**Orpheus Musical Theatre** will present *Hairspray*, May 29 - June 7, 2015 at Centrepointe Theatre. Tuesday to Saturday 7:30 p.m., Sunday 2:00 p.m. [www.orpheus-theatre.ca](http://www.orpheus-theatre.ca)

**The Savoy Society of Ottawa** has announced that Gilbert & Sullivan's comic opera *The Pirates of Penzance* will be performed June 12, 13 and 14th at Woodroffe United Church. [www.ottawasavoyssociety.org](http://www.ottawasavoyssociety.org)

**Opera Lyra Ottawa's 20th Annual Garden Party** will take place at the Residence of the Ambassador of Italy, Gatineau, QC on June 16, 2015. [www.operalyra.ca](http://www.operalyra.ca)

The **National Arts Centre Orchestra** with soloists Arianna Zukerman, Wallis Giunta, Gordon Gietz, Robert Gleadow and the Ottawa Choral Society, the Cantata Singers of Ottawa and the Ottawa Festival Chorus presents **Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in D minor**. June 19 - 20, 8:00 p.m. NAC Southam Hall. <http://nac-cna.ca>

**Opera Lyra Ottawa** will expand its 2015 -2016 season to include four different shows. The season opens in September with Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. Performances are Sept. 26, 28, 30 and Oct. 3 in Southam Hall starting at 8 p.m.

In October, 2015, Opera Lyra will, with the Toronto company Essential Opera, present a double-bill of one-act operas, *Étiquette* by Monica Pearce and *Regina* by Elisha Denburg. The double-bill will take place Oct. 16, 17 at 8 p.m. and Oct. 18 at 2 p.m. at the Great Canadian Theatre Company.

Also in October, Opera Lyra will present *Operation Superpower*, an outreach anti-bullying performance for young people. There will be six matinees on Oct. 24, 25, and 31 at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. in the Arts Court Theatre.

Opera Lyra Studio of Young Artists will present *L'isola disabitata* by Haydn with the Thirteen Strings Chamber Orchestra. Performances are May 27, 28, and 29, 2016 at 8 p.m. at Dominion Chalmers United Church.

Finally, Opera Lyra will present Beethoven's *Fidelio* in Southam Hall, March 19, 23, and 26, 2016, at 8 p.m. [www.operalyra.ca](http://www.operalyra.ca)

## The Met Live in HD 2015 - 2016

Verdi's *Il Trovatore* - October 3, 2015

Verdi's *Otello* - October 17, 2015

Wagner's *Tannhäuser* - October 31, 2015

Berg's *Lulu* - November 21, 2015

Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*

- January 16, 2016

Puccini's *Turandot* - January 30, 2016

Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*

- March 5, 2016

Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*

- April 2, 2016

Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux*

- April 16, 2016

Strauss's *Elektra* - April 30, 2016

## Saturday Afternoon at the Opera

Verdi's *Ernani*

April 4, 2015 1:00 pm ET

*Levine; Meade, Meli, Domingo, Belosselskiy*

Verdi's *Don Carlo*

April 11, 2015 12:00 pm ET

*Nézet-Séguin; Frittoli, Gubanova, Lee, Keenlyside, Furlanetto, Morris*

Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*

(Performance from Fall 2014)

April 18, 2015 1:00 pm ET

*Conlon; Westbroek, Jovanovich, Very, Kotscherga*

Mascagni's *Cavalleria*

*Rusticana/Leoncavallo's Pagliacci*

April 25, 2015 12:30 pm ET

*Cavalleria Rusticana: Luisi; Westbroek, Álvarez, Lučić  
Pagliacci: Luisi; Racette, Álvarez, Gagnidze, Meachem*

Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*

May 2, 2015 1:00 pm ET

*Levine; Radvanovsky, Stober, Zajick, Beczala, Hvorostovsky*

Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*

May 9, 2015 1:00 pm ET

*Levine; Claire, Blythe, Appleby, Finley, Sherratt*