

Newsletter • Bulletin

Winter

2002

Hiver

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

Triumphant Return for Brian Law

The capacity NAC audience on the night of December 18th rose to its feet to acknowledge the extraordinary performance of Handel's *MESSIAH*. While the applause was shared by the Ottawa Choral Society, the NAC Orchestra, the four excellent soloists, three of whom were from Ottawa and had worked with the conductor before, the bulk of the adulation was for the conductor, Brian Law, returning to the podium at the NAC after a ten years' absence.

In the reception arranged by the NCOS in the NAC Salon which followed the performance, Brian Law demonstrated why he is so highly regarded by people in this

region. He took the time to speak to everyone present in spite of the physical demands made on him by the performance.

Also present were three of the soloists, two of whom, Daniel Taylor and Gerald Finley, were former choristers in a choir directed by Brian Law. Both men have gone on to international careers and credit Brian with having a significant influence on their careers.

NCOS President Bobbi Cain welcomed our guests and the large number of people who attended. Money raised from this affair will go to the Brian Law Opera Scholarship presented every two years to an aspiring young singer from the National Capital Region.



From the President . . .

Happy Holiday Greetings to everyone! I wish you all the best for the coming year

What a wonderful evening we had fêting Brian Law at the National Arts Centre after the first performance of **MESSIAH**. Many people joined us – old friends of Brian's, old friends of Gerald Finley and Daniel Taylor, and those who just wanted to express their appreciation of the most enjoyable concert they had just heard. All our guests were very pleased with the evening and we hope that a good time was had by all. And we raised important funds for the Brian Law Opera Scholarship.

During the new year we turn to another important event which is designed to raise funds for all the other things that the Society does – donations to the Young Artists Program of Opera Lyra Ottawa, providing information to our members in our newsletter, support of programs such as Opera Alla Pasta, and tours that we may plan for your enjoyment, to mention just some of our activities. In other parts of this newsletter you will read about our **TRIBUTE TO CANADIAN SINGERS** – artists such as Jon Vickers, Teresa Stratas, Maureen Forrester – these are just some of the ones that will be highlighted with special table settings. This event takes place on January 25 at St. Anthony's Soccer Club with a great Italian dinner, sparkling guest soloists and an intriguing silent auction that you can help us with.

The Society needs your support in this undertaking. Won't you join us!!



ATTENTION!!

ALL NCOS MEMBERS

It is time to RENEW your membership for 2002! The NCOS membership year runs from January to December. Please fill in the enclosed red form and join us for another year of musical activities!

Congratulations

to two National Capital Area Singers.

ALEX FLERIAU-CHATEAU is completing the first year of a two-year contract as House Bass in Regensburg, Bavaria, singing as well in Innsbruck and Vienna. Alex has been assigned major bass rôles in *TOSCA*, *COSI FAN TUTTE*, *THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR*, and *AIDA*.

SHAWNE ELIZABETH has a one-year contract with the Silesian-Moravian State Opera House where she is to sing Rosina in *THE BARBER OF SEVILLE* and to appear in two Czech operas, one of which is *THE TWO WIDOWS* by Karolyna.

Our best wishes for success go out to both of them.

Help

To make our fund-raising dinner a success we need contributions for our silent auction. Items do not have to be related to opera or music necessarily. Anything which you do not need any longer would be welcome. Please call Bobbi Cain at 225-0124 to make a donation.

Opera Alla Pasta — Sunday Afternoon at the Opera

THE RAKE'S PROGRESS

by Igor Stravinsky Libretto by W.H. Auden
Sung in English (with English subtitles) by Barbara Hendriks, Hakan Hagegard, and Brian Asawa
Esa-Pekka Salonen, conductor.

This neo-classical operatic masterpiece has been called the greatest opera of the 20th century.

The video starts at 2.00 P.M. on February 24, 2002 at St. Anthony's Soccer Club Dinner follows.

Reservations required: 225-0124



THE BRIAN LAW RECEPTION



Photos by Pat Adamo

Canada's Opera Superstars

Canada's contribution to the world of opera has been a truly remarkable one! To commemorate this outstanding achievement we are sponsoring a silent auction, dinner and concert on January 25 at St. Anthony's Soccer Club. Please make plans to come and celebrate with us.

Proceeds will be used to insure the continuation of this extraordinary legacy!



Emma Albani



Tracy Dahl



Leopold Simoneau



Judith Forst



Ben Heppner



Daniel Taylor



Lois Marshall



George London



Michael Schade



Pauline Donalda



Louis & Gino Quillies



Richard Margison

A Tribute to Canadian Singers

Friday, January 25
St. Anthony's Soccer Club
Auction 6:30 Dinner 7:00

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT
PASCAL BEAUDIN, soprano
PIERRE FIDENSE, baritone
MIRIAM KHAYAL, soprano

TICKETS: \$40.00 per person
Reservations by January 22:
Call 225-0124.



Teresa Strafas



Maureen Forrester



Edward Johnson



Jon Vickers



Gerald Finley



Joanne Kolomyjec



Donna Brown



Isabelle Bayraktarian

NABUCCO & SALOME

by Murray Kirk

MONTREAL'S *Nabucco* FEATURED REAL OPERA STAR

In a tribute to Verdi, L'Opéra de Montréal revived its production of the master's third opera, the one which brought it in overwhelming success.

There were four great successes in O's staging. Susan Neves was absolutely outstanding in her portrayal of Abigaille in every way – singing a very demanding role and playing the villainess most convincingly. The chorus under the direction of the excellent young conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin sang better than I've ever heard them sing before. The Orchestre Métropolitain was equally excellent under the direction of Christian Bader. The sets and costumes were familiar to those who saw the original production some years ago but were still quite effective.

Nichelle Sutton as Fenena and Stefan Skafarowsky as Zaccaria were both good, perhaps overshadowed by the brilliance of Susan Neves as Abigaille.

Gaëtan Laperrière as Nabucco was as usual – good but not very expressive voice and painfully wooden on stage. His menacing attitude towards Fenena in Act I seems at odds with his high regard for her in the rest of the action.

The least said about Louis Langehele as Ismaele the better. His singing and acting abilities seem to have left him.

As usual, the stage director tried to insert some personal touches in the action. One of the least successful was the kind of blind man's buff played before the usurping queen with prisoners including Zaccaria.

All in all this was an enjoyable evening of opera certainly worth a trip to Montreal if only to hear Susan Neves in a world-class interpretation of her rôle.

OLO'S *SALOME* – A GREAT SUCCESS

I must confess that it was with a good deal of skepticism that I greeted the news that OLO was going to do *SALOME*.

The first thing the producers did right was to get a singer who looked the part and who could actually do the famous Dance of the Seven Veils. To say that Hilana Lappalainen sang better than she danced is not a great criticism, but I do think more than one part of the dance was repetitious and didn't live up to the glorious music pouring out of the orchestra pit. My only criticism of Miss Lappalainen's acting is that there was too much of it – too much fawning with the head, too much movement in general. Her singing of the main rôle was as good as you'd find anywhere.

The other principals were equally well chosen. As Herod, Gerald Winter, in excellent voice, was suitably lecherous and cowardly. Judith First gave an unforgettable portrayal of Herodias. Perhaps not so successful was Ronnie Johansen as Jochanan, but his powerful voice made up for some unevenness of tone.

The supporting cast was all very good especially Steven Harrison as Narraboth and Anna Kruse as Herodias' Page.

Sets and costumes provided by The Opera Company of Philadelphia were first rate.

As far the staging I was puzzled by a number of things. Why was Herod barefooted? After he stepped on Narraboth's blood shouldn't someone have helped him to clean his foot? Why were all the Seven Veils white in colour? To show that Salome was a nice, pure girl at heart? Why wasn't she killed by crushing her under the shields as is done in any other production and as has been prophesied by Jochanan? But these are small matters in comparison with the overall merits of the performance.

The augmented NAC Orchestra played marvellously under the direction of Edouardo Müller. Productions like this one are sure to guarantee capacity audiences for opera productions in the National Capital.

Anyone interested in how Oscar Wilde's play was adapted for the libretto need only get hold of DG 43-870-2 which has the complete Wilde text with the opera libretto in bold letters. This is an excellent performance with Cheryl Studer, Lesnie Rysanek and Bryn Terfel with the Orchester der Deutschen Oper Berlin under Giuseppe Sinopoli.

OPERA LYRA OTTAWA GUILD

Opera Insights

LA BOHÈME

March 25

"Definitely the Opera"

NABUCCO – Jan 11

BUCCIA OPERA – Feb

USING OUR STRENGTH
March 11

All presentations are at the National Library at 200 P.M.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON AT THE OPERA

TENACO-METROPOLITAN OPERA RADIO BROADCAST SEASON 2002 SCHEDULE



<u>January 5</u>	Richard Strauss	Die Frau ohne Schatten 12:30
<u>January 12</u>	Giuseppe Verdi	Don Carlo 1:00
<u>January 19</u>	Giuseppe Puccini	Tosca 1:30
<u>January 26</u>	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Idomeneo 1:00
<u>February 2</u>	Giuseppe Puccini	Il Barbiere di Siviglia 1:30
<u>February 9</u>	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Le Nozze di Figaro 1:30
<u>February 16</u>	Giuseppe Puccini	La Bohème 1:30
<u>February 23</u>	Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky	Eugene Onegin 1:30
<u>March 2</u>	Sergei Prokofiev	War and Peace 12:30
<u>March 9</u>	Giuseppe Verdi	Rigoletto 1:00
<u>March 16</u>	Erik Satie Francis Poulenc Maurice Ravel	Parade - Les Mamelles de Tirésias L'Enfant et les Sortilèges 1:30
<u>March 23</u>	Giuseppe Verdi	Luisa Miller 1:30
<u>March 30</u>	Giuseppe Puccini	Madama Butterfly 1:30
<u>April 6</u>	Giuseppe Verdi	La traviata 1:30
<u>April 13</u>	Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari	Sly 1:30
<u>April 20</u>	Alban Berg	Lulu 1:30

AN OPERA-GOER'S DIARY by Donald Metcalfe

It's unlikely to be able to attend four operas in two days but the programming at the COC last September-October allowed this privilege.

On October 2 I attended the combination of Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Puccini's *Il Tabarro*, rather than the usual CAV-PAG pairing.

In keeping with conductor and music director Richard Bradshaw's approach to offering us mainly Eastern European singers whom we would rarely hear, the cast of *IL TABARRO* had Valim Zoplechov as Luigi, Yur Neechayev as Michele, and Esster Sunegi as Giorgetta.

I prefer to see *IL TABARRO* as part of the complete *IL TURCO* and I've been lucky enough to attend two at the Met, both with one soprano singing all the major rôles - Teresa Stratas and Renata Scotto.

I had no complaint with any of the singers in this opera, and Valim Zoplechov returned as Turiddu in *CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA*, with Alina Gurnina as Santuzza.

The production (the US one for me) did not quite match the one by Zeffirelli which I saw at the Met where I have attended performances going back to 1970. The first Turiddu I heard on stage was Plácido Domingo. The following night I attended another double bill, Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* and Schoenberg's *Erwartung*. Richard Bradshaw took over as conductor from Bernhard Kontarsky, the conductor in the previous evening.

The Duke was Peter Fried and Judith was sung by Sara Fulginiti. Both were in good voice.

These two opera productions were so popular that they were taken to the Edinburgh Festival with a different cast two years ago. The woman in *ERWARTUNG* was Nina Warren.

This is the 7th time I've heard *ERWARTUNG*. The first was in Montreal with Franz Paul Decker and Margarete Schack on February 12, 1975. I had just returned from Europe via Virabel, took the bus to Montreal, heard the opera and then continued by bus to Ottawa.

Opera Within Reach

OTTAWA

National Arts Centre

DAWN UPSHAW Jan 12

HEIDI GRANT MURPHY Jan 16 & 17

EWA PODLES Feb 6 & 8

Information: 947-7000 www.nac-cna.ca

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MONTREAL

L'Opéra de Montréal

LA TRAVIATA by Verdi
Feb 9, 11, 14, 16, 20 & 23

TOSCA by Puccini
March 9, 11, 14, 16, 20 & 23

THÉRÈSE RAQUIN by Picker
April 24, 27, 29 & May 2

L'ELISIR D'AMORE by Donizetti
June 1, 3, 6, 8 & 12

Information: 1-514-985-2258

www.operademontreal.com

TORONTO

Canadian Opera Company

SALOME by Strauss
Jan 18, 23, 27, 31 Feb 2 & 5

IL VIAGGIO A REIMS by Rossini
Jan 22, 24, 26, 30 Feb 1 & 3

BORIS GODUNOV by Mussorgsky
April 5, 9, 11, 14, 17 & 20

JULIUS CAESAR IN EGYPT by Handel
April 6, 10, 12, 16, 18 & 21

Information: 1-800-250-4653 www.coc.ca