



NEWSLETTER

Argo Gherardi, Editor

August, 2007

LECTURES AND PREVIEW MOVE TO NEW VENUES

FALL LECTURE SERIES: Our new season opens with *Samson and Delilah* on Tuesday, September 4 at 10 AM. After many enjoyable years at the Los Gatos History Club, the Fall Series will move to the elegant villa at Montalvo Arts Center, 15400 Montalvo Road, Saratoga. We have an exciting lineup of speakers, new ones and returning favorites, for our six San Francisco Opera lectures. The Fall Series also includes presentations by West Bay Opera on September 18 and Opera San José, on September 25. For a complete schedule please see LECTURE SERIES AT VILLA MONTALVO. Singers who have performed at the villa have commented on its excellent acoustics. Though our venue is new, some things remain the same. Guild members are admitted free to all lectures; coffee, a generous donation from Los Gatos Coffee Roasting Company, will be available.

DOWNTOWN PREVIEW: After a long and successful run at the Art Museum, our popular series previewing Opera San José productions will move to the Beethoven Center, located in the Martin Luther King Library, 4th and San Fernando in downtown San José. Parking is available in the adjacent 4th Street garage. The first preview is scheduled for noon, Tuesday, August 28. Artists from the company will sing arias from their season opener, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, followed by a brief lecture by Larry Hancock. Presented in cooperation with Opera San José, noon previews are open to the public and free to all.

LECTURE SERIES AT VILLA MONTALVO

The first lecture in September will preview Saint-Saëns' biblical masterwork, *Samson and Delilah*. The definitive Delilah of our day, mezzo-soprano, Olga Borodina, will bring her compelling portrayal of the temptress to the San Francisco Opera's production of this well-beloved French opera. Timothy Flynn, one of three new lecturers, will be our speaker. He is music program director at Olivet College in Michigan and has a special interest in the music of Saint-Saëns. In addition, Dr. Flynn is an organist and conducts the College Choir and Women's Chorale at Olivet.

Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser* follows on September 11th previewed by Simon Williams, Professor and Chair of the Department of Dramatic Art, UC at Santa Barbara, and one of our Guild's outstanding lecturers for many years. *Tannhäuser* is the first new production of the David Gockley era and will feature the debut performance of German tenor Peter Seiffert in the title role.

September 18th brings West Bay Opera, with singers to perform, and comments by General Director and Chief Conductor José Luis Moskovich on WBO's new season.

Following on September 25th is a 2007-08 Season Preview from Opera San José. General Manager and Production Director Larry Hancock will be the speaker with artists of the Company illustrating his remarks with music from the operas.

A world premiere of the new Philip Glass opera *Appomattox* will be the subject of the Lecture Series on October 2nd with new lecturer, Thomas May. This opera portrays the climactic meeting of the command-

ing Generals of the Civil War, Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant, two proud men who meet in Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia, to conclude a war that had taken over 600,000 American lives and that has become a turning point in the history of the Nation.

Thomas May, our second new lecturer, has authored books and articles on composer Richard Wagner, contemporary composers John Adams, Philip Glass, and other musicians. He is the senior editor for Amazon.com's music web site, and in 2006, participated in the *Tristan und Isolde* symposium sponsored by the Wagner Society of Northern California. In addition, he has written many articles for the San Francisco Opera Programs.

La Rondine, a rarely heard opera of Puccini, will be treated on the October 30th lecture by our third new speaker, Jonathan Khuner. He will inform us about this Italian work which was inspired by Viennese operetta. Soprano Angela Gheorghiu makes her long-awaited San Francisco Opera debut in this elegant and poignant Puccini opera.

Jonathan Khuner, a Bay Area native, has been Artistic and Musical Director for the Berkeley Opera since 1994, Prompter and Assistant Conductor for SF Opera, as well as for the NY Metropolitan. He conducts for the SF Lyric Opera and has conducted productions for the Bay Area Summer Opera Theater Institute.

On November 6th, Verdi's early masterpiece, *Macbeth*, will be discussed by Alexandra Amati-Camperi. This dark tale from Shakespeare shows the Scottish nobleman's over-weening ambition for political power and how this ambition, prodded on by tantalizing prophecy and his manipulative Lady, can bring a tragic ending. Renowned baritone Thomas Hampson returns to San Francisco Opera as the haunted Macbeth.

Alexandra Amati-Camperi, newly on Sabbatical leave in her native Italy, returns to speak to us. She has made a place for herself among our most distinguished speakers from her recent appearances on the Lecture Series. She is Assistant Professor of Musicology and Director of the Music Program at the University of San Francisco. She is the recipient of many awards and a specialist in the Italian *bel canto* tradition.

The final fall lecture occurs November 13th with

a twentieth-century work by Stravinsky, *The Rake's Progress*, in which a reckless young Englishman abandons his true love for a life of shallow pleasures. The poet, W. H. Auden, collaborated with the composer as librettist to create this morality tale about materialism and madness. It is sung in English with English super-titles. Presenting this opera on the Lecture Series will be Richard Taruskin, a speaker who has brought us insight and entertainment, knowledge and understanding of the operatic form for over twenty years. He is Professor of Musicology at UC Berkeley, specializing in the theory of performance, Russian music, fifteenth century music, nationalism in music, and theories of modernism and analysis. He is the author of a six-volume work, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, and many other books, articles and treatises on opera.

Please join Guild members and friends for what promises to be a delightful fall series of lectures, full of information and preparation for opera, new and old.

A SPECTACULAR SUCCESS

On June 3rd, 2007, the Villages Opera Lovers sponsored a concert held in the Cribari Auditorium at the Villages in San José. Over 210 people attended the program and the reception that followed and were treated to a most memorable event.

Jason Detwiler (baritone) and Michele Detwiler (mezzo), and their Opera San José friends, Isaac Hurtado (tenor), Carlos Aguilar (bass), and Giovanna Hutchison (soprano) lit up the stage with marvelous operatic arias from *Carmen*, *Macbeth*, *Tales of Hoffmann*, *Magic Flute*, *La Bohème*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Rigoletto*. They also sang a few well-known Neapolitan songs and some show tunes from *South Pacific* and *Kiss Me Kate*.

The Detwilers spoke eloquently about their experiences as a married couple struggling to become opera singers and about how much Opera San José has meant to them. They spoke from the heart and captured the audience with their humanity, humility, and their appreciation of the support they have received.

The talent, skill, and showmanship of the performers were inspiring and greatly appreciated by the audience with many rounds of applause and standing ovations. Irene Dalis, General Director of Opera San José sat in the back of the auditorium and beamed as they performed.

IT'S THE SUMMER FESTIVAL SEASON AGAIN AND NO BETTER PLACE THAN SANTA FE

by Mort Levine

There are a handful of places in the world where opera lovers must go at least once before they die happy. Santa Fe in mid-summer is one of these.

The unique venue with its slightly quirky programming and atmosphere is a treat for the opera-goer but it is also an institution which trains younger singers through an extensive apprentice program and offers contemporary composers, innovative directors and audiences one of a kind opportunities.

Guild members this summer can still catch a few days of some fantastic opera performances enhanced by the spectacular New Mexico mountain setting. The festival continues its two month season through August 25.

Entering its second half century, Santa Fe Opera is keeping faith with founder John Crosby's vision. It continues to program a premiere, a rarity from the past, one Richard Strauss opera and then two of the "bread and butter" popular offerings which keep the seats filled.

This summer's lineup includes *Tea, a Mirror of the Soul* by Tan Dun, the remarkable Chinese-American composer who penned *The First Emperor*, a recent Metropolitan Opera triumph. The American premiere of *Tea* combines traditional Asian musical forms with Italian lyricism and lush orchestration. It is a doomed love affair between a Chinese princess and a Japanese monk. Haijing Fu and Kelly Kaduce are the lovers. She was featured in the title role of *Madame Mao* which premiered at Santa Fe in 2003.

The rarity this year is a production of *Platée*, a wild comedy by 18th century French composer Jean Philippe Rameau. The story is of a love-mad nymph who resides in a swamp at the base of Mount Olympus, home of Jupiter and Juno. The nymph is sung by a tenor, Jean-Paul Fouchécourt, a leading French character actor-singer Laurent Pelly directs it as an exhilarating romp.

The Richard Strauss opera selected for this season is *Daphne*, also involving capricious and very-human gods and goddesses. Although rarely seen, the opera is one of Strauss' great works brought to the

United States in 1964 by John Crosby, who conducted it. This production is staged by Mark Lamos, who did *The Great Gatsby* at the Met and a number of Broadway shows. A former apprentice Garrett Sorenson is singing Leukippos.

The two familiar operas this season include *Così fan tutte* which will feature a former Opera San José and San Francisco Opera favorite, Dale Travis. The versatile bass-baritone is singing Don Alfonso. Suzanne Mentzer does the comedic Despina.

The other old favorite is *La Bohème*, a new production designed by Paul Curran and conducted by Corrado Rovaris. Jennifer Black and Serena Farnocchia alternate in the Mimi role and Gwynn Hughes Jones and Dimitri Pittas share the Rudolfo. Musetta is being performed by Nicole Cabell, a recent winner of the "Singer of the Year" award in Cardiff, Wales.

A special treat at Santa Fe is the supertitle system which is embedded in the seat in front of you. The digital readout can be controlled individually for brightness or even turned off. It is rapidly becoming the standard at many opera houses around the world. So, can we still call them supertitles?

The other aspects of a Santa Fe trip include a wide range of activities related to the operas themselves such as lectures, tours and recitals, along with special performances by the apprentices. Visitors also can take in the Santa Fe Chamber Music festival which runs concurrently and has many daytime concerts and open rehearsals. The abundance of fine restaurants, unique shops and art galleries also prove tempting diversions during the day. A sprinkling of interesting museums and field trips to nearby national monuments and the Los Alamos National Laboratory and museum will fill out any amount of time you might have.

There is also a very wide range of hotels, B and B's, motels and resorts to choose from. One of note is the 19-units of "casitas", small detached units not far from the central plaza, owned by Neil Rosenshein, a longtime Met opera tenor. Stay there and your next door neighbor just might be on stage that night.

CAREER UPDATES

In the first annual Irene Dalis Vocal Competition, one alumnus of Opera San José's resident artists program received the "Audience Favorite" award. **Scott Bearden** was awarded \$5,000 for this honor. Of the ten finalists for the competition, three were OSJ alumni, **Scott, Adam Flowers** and **Jason Detwiler**. More than 170 singers participated in the competition.

When the San Francisco Opera begins its Opera à la Carte this fall, three of OSJ alumni will be taking on leading roles. OALC is a participatory program in which students take part in rehearsing and performing a reduced, English language version of an opera. Professional singers work with a pianist and the students to enhance understanding of opera, while presenting a mini-version of an opera. This year OALC will present Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. So far, 99 schools in the Bay Area have signed up to be a part of this program. **Adam Flowers, Sandra Rubalcava,** and **Joseph Wright** will be creating opera experiences for hundreds of Bay Area students this fall within this program.

Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* provided opportunities to appreciate several OSJ and Merola alumni. The San Francisco Opera's production presented OSJ alumnus, **Robert McPherson**, as "The Opera Singer." Joshua Kosman with the San Francisco Chronicle wrote, "*Rosenkavalier* bristles with smaller roles, and not one was done with anything less than aplomb on Saturday...**Robert McPherson** brought the first act to a stunned stop with his strikingly beautiful account of the Italian Tenor's aria." Earlier this year, **Robert** made his New York City Opera debut singing Rodrigo in *La Donna del Lago*. He appeared as Iago in Rossini's *Otello* with Opera Orchestra of New York for his debut at Carnegie Hall.

Former Adler Fellow and alumna of the Merola Program, **Catherine Cook**, also was featured in *Der Rosenkavalier*. Joshua Kosman noted that she sang a "delectable" Annina. Catherine has appeared in over thirty productions with the San Francisco Opera, and recently joined the voice faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Alumnus of Merola and OSJ, **Kirk Eichelberger**, is currently singing Dr. Gibbs in *Our Town* at the Leshner Center for the Arts, in Walnut Creek. From there he will travel to perform Monterone in *Rigoletto* with the Opera Company of Philadelphia in October.

OSJ alumnus, **Jonathan Hodel**, will be singing with the Saint Petersburg Opera in June. He will sing Rodolfo in Puccini's *La Bohème* on June 8, 10, and 12. In November **Jonathan** will travel to Reutlingen, Germany, to perform in Verdi's *Requiem*, with the Württembergische Philharmonie.

Merola alumna, **Heidi Melton**, made her San Francisco Opera debut in Willibald Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*. Richard Scheinin noted in the San José Mercury News that she "is ravishing as Diana." The conductor for the opera was fellow Merola alumnus, **Patrick Summers**, who will conduct San Francisco's opening opera, *Samson and Delilah* in the fall. **Heidi's** fall will include her debut with Opera Company of Philadelphia as Gertrude in *Hansel and Gretel*. She will then travel to Bordeaux Opera, where she will sing Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Mary Todd Lincoln in *Appomattox*.

CALENDAR

AUGUST 11-19: FESTIVAL OPERA will present Ned Rorem's *Our Town* at the Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 N. Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. Tickets \$36 to \$100. Information and tickets: 925-943-SHOW or www.festivalopera.com.

AUGUST 18: The MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM will present the Merola Grand Finale at 7:30PM at the War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco. Tickets \$25-\$38. Information: 415-864-3330.

AUGUST 28: SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD'S DOWNTOWN LECTURE/PREVIEW: Larry Hancock will lecture on Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* at noon at the Beethoven Center, MLK Library, Fourth and San Fernando, San José. Artists from Opera San José will sing excerpts from the opera. Free admission. Co-sponsored by Opera San José and the San José Opera Guild. Information: Gerry Pighini 408-275-6199 or MrPio@comcast.net.

SEPTEMBER 4: SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD LECTURE: Timothy Flynn will lecture on Saint-Saëns's *Samson and Delilah* at 10AM at the Montalvo Arts Center, 15400 Montalvo Road, Saratoga. Members, free; non-members, \$10.

Calendar, from page 4

SEPTEMBER 8-SEPTEMBER 23: OPERA SAN JOSÉ will present Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street, San José. Tickets \$66 to \$88. Information: 408-437-4450 or www.operasj.org.

SEPTEMBER 7- SEPTEMBER 28: The SAN FRANCISCO OPERA will present Saint-Saëns' *Samson and Delilah* at the War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco. Tickets \$15 to \$275. Information: 415-864-3330 or www.sfopera.com.

SEPTEMBER 11: SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD LECTURE: Simon Williams will lecture on Wagner's *Tannhäuser* at 10AM at the Montalvo Arts Center, 15400 Montalvo Road, Saratoga. Members, free; non-members, \$10.

SEPTEMBER 18: SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD LECTURE: José Luis Moscovich will give a preview of West Bay Opera's 2007-2008 season at 10AM at the Montalvo Arts Center, 15400 Montalvo Road, Saratoga. Artists from West Bay Opera will sing excerpts from the operas. Members, free; non-members, \$10.

SEPTEMBER 18- OCTOBER 12: The SAN FRANCISCO OPERA will present Wagner's *Tannhäuser* at the War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco. Tickets \$15 to \$275. Information: 415-864-3330 or www.sfopera.com.

SEPTEMBER 25: SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD LECTURE: Larry Hancock will give a preview of Opera San José's 2007-2008 season at 10AM at the Montalvo Arts Center, 15400 Montalvo Road, Saratoga. Artists from Opera San José will sing excerpts from the operas. Members, free; non-members, \$10.

OCTOBER 2: SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD LECTURE: Thomas May will lecture on Glass' *Appomattox* at 10AM at the Montalvo Arts Center, 15400 Montalvo Road, Saratoga. Members, free; non-members, \$10.

OCTOBER 5-OCTOBER 20: The SAN FRANCISCO OPERA will present Glass' *Appomattox* at the War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco. Tickets \$15 to \$275. Information: 415-864-3330 or www.sfopera.com.

OCTOBER 13-NOVEMBER 3: The SAN FRANCISCO OPERA will present Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at the War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco. Tickets \$15 to \$275. Information: 415-864-3330 or www.sfopera.com.

OCTOBER 27 AND NOVEMBER 3: The SAN FRANCISCO OPERA will present *The Magic Flute for Families* at the War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco. Tickets \$10 to \$80. Information: 415-864-3330 or www.sfopera.com

OCTOBER 30: SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD LECTURE: Jonathan Khuner will lecture on Puccini's *La Rondine* at 10AM at the Montalvo Arts Cen-

San José Opera Guild
August, 2007 Issue

Publisher
San José Opera Guild

President
Ann Haggerty

Editor
Argo Gherardi

Publicity
Phyllis Whitney
408 269-2479

Career Updates
Susan English

SJOG Newsletter is published four times a year in
February, May, August, and November by
San José Opera Guild,
P.O. Box 33025,

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
SJOPERAGUILD.ORG

San José Opera Guild
c/o Argo Gherardi
P.O.Box 33025
Los Gatos, CA 95031-3025

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Saratoga, CA
Permit No. 5

Address Service Requested

AN INVITATION TO JOIN

Established in 1947, the San José Opera Guild was formed to promote the appreciation and enjoyment of the operatic arts and to provide both volunteer and financial support to opera.

The Guild incorporated in September 1958 as a non-profit corporation under the laws of California. The original purpose of the Guild has not changed over the years since its founding. Financial support of promising young artists in the community is a high priority for the Guild, which helps sponsor singers each year at Opera San José, and the Merola Opera Program, as well as other opera groups.

Throughout the year, the Guild sponsors lectures and previews at three different venues to coincide with the San Francisco Opera and Opera San José's seasons.

Name _____

Name of Family Member _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Telephone (____) _____ - _____

Email _____

Memberships: Family \$60
 Single \$45
 Organization \$75
 Donation \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Please send check payable to:
San José Opera Guild
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 33025
Los Gatos, CA 95031-33025

San José Opera Guild is a nonprofit organization.
Contributions are fully tax-deductible to the extent provided by the law.
Does your company have a matching grant program?
Visit our website at www.sjoperaguild.org