



## NEWSLETTER

February 2010

# From Our New President

## With Great Appreciation to Myrna Fleckles

As Myrna Fleckles completes her term as our President, we applaud her exceptional service to the Guild, our Board, and the operatic arts in our area. Her organizational skills are unparalleled, and her leadership has been thoughtful, respectful and effective.

Myrna stepped in as President when we lost our then-President, Ann Haggerty, and provided a steadying influence during an emotionally difficult transition period. With grace and sureness of purpose she helped us move through the transition of leadership of our organization, and ensured continued pursuit of our mission.

With Myrna as our leader, we provided docents for Opera a la Carte and extended our audience for the San Francisco Opera lectures. Our summer event at Santana Row was a sell out, and our Winter Luncheon at the Plumed Horse was our best to date.

Brava to our gracious and adept director! We are so fortunate that you will continue to be part of the Board to contribute your signature attention to detail and diligence. You have advanced our Guild's influence and respect by your leadership. As your successor, I hope to be able to continue the fine legacy of leadership you have given us. Thank you.

ed. note: New President, Susan English, was elected for the 2010 - 2012 term on Nov. 3, 2009.

## Opera Travelers

By Mort Levine

Buenos Aires' magnificently refurbished  
Teatro Colón will welcome you this Spring.

The rich and varied cultural life which Argentina's vibrant capital city enjoys has been missing its crown jewel for the past four years but that will be remedied this Spring when Teatro Colón (Columbus Theater) returns to host a full schedule of opera, ballet and symphonic concerts. And the celebrations are expected to be unrestrained. The May 26,

2010 grand gala also marks the 200th anniversary of the country's May Revolution which ousted its Spanish colonial rulers.

We recently walked round the legendary opera house which occupies a full city block in central Buenos Aires. Its massive neo classical form resembles a giant Greek temple but the architect who took over the final phase

## Opera Travelers, continued from p. 1

of a 20 year construction gave it some of the most elegant French Belle Epoque decorative detail anywhere. Opening in 1908, it was the second Teatro Colón on the site replacing an opera house built in 1857. *La Traviata* was performed just four years after its Italian premiere.

Teatro Colón has 2,487 seats and room for 1,000 standees. It is second only to Sydney's famed opera house as the largest in the southern hemisphere. Its accoustics are acclaimed as among the finest among the world's opera venues. Its scarlet and gold decor is enhanced by many sculptures, paintings and an astonishing fresco in a cupola above the hall.

The Teatro has hosted all the world's leading lights of opera over the years from Caruso, Callas to Toscanini and Anna Pavlova. But Argentina also produces many talented opera performers, conductors, composers and musicians. Much of that is due to the training obtained at Teatro Colón. One alumnus of the house is San Jose's opera director Daniel Helfgot who staged dozens of operas here and in other parts of this country. When we mentioned to him our visit to the famed opera house, he glowed with pride about his identification with it and how much it meant to him.

Our trip to Buenos Aires this past fall did give us a sampler of the musical life of this most European of South American cities. Our concert going ranged from a standing room only Mozart *Requiem* with a huge number of outstanding voices to a contemporary chamber concert of 20th century Steve Reich percussion pieces.

Travelers heading to South America this year will find all that richness plus the full schedules of operas at this amazing

house. They open with *La Boheme* in May and June, *Don Giovanni* in July, *Manon* in August, *Katya Kabanova* in September, a double bill of Zemlinsky's *A Florentine Tragedy* and Korngold's *Violanta* in October. The year winds up with *Falstaff* in late November and early December. There are from four to six performances of each. Operas are alternated with ballet presentations.

There are two other local opera companies which perform at the venerable Teatro Avenida. The Buenos Aires Lirica opera company gets underway on April 9 with *Fidelio* by Beethoven. It will follow with five performances of *Madama Butterfly* in May and June; *Belisario* by Donizetti in July and *Serse* by Handel in September. It also concludes its year with a *Falstaff* presented just a few days before the Teatro Colón's similar offering in November, not an unknown contretemps in the opera world.

The Avenida's second company is Juventus Lirica which offers younger singers a chance to perfect their art. Through the year they will offer *Norma*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Così fan Tutte* and *La Cenerentola*.

Buenos Aires is a remarkable climax of a trip to the many wonders of South America. Our preceding junket to Chile and Patagonia's astonishing landscape and wildlife proved a delightful contrast to the urban delights such as museums, architectural gems, fine restaurants and historic sites that shape Argentina's major city. ###

### Telephone No. Corrections

Please correct your current Membership Roster, 2009-2010, as follows:

Ruth K. Brunner (408) 867-9683

Jean Reiner (408) 265-0733

## Career Updates

As the Metropolitan Opera's HD series progresses, the Los Angeles Times calls it "...the most significant development in opera since the supertitle." Last season sold 1.7 Million HD tickets in thirty five countries. This season has been hosted by important opera stars, including Merola alumni **Susan Graham**, **Thomas Hampson**, and **Deborah Voigt**. **Ms Graham** also sang Octavian in the HD performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* this month, and **Mr. Hampson** will sing Giorgio Germont in April for the HD showing of *La Traviata*.

Fellow Merola alumna, **Carol Vaness**, recently visited the South Bay to conduct a Master Class for Opera San José's Resident Artists. **Ms Vaness** is currently a tenured professor of voice at Indiana University.

In November, the Los Angeles Opera presented *Barber of Seville*, featuring Merola alumna **Joyce DiDonato** as Rosina. The Los Angeles Times' Mark Swed raved, "Still it was Joyce DiDonato, in her company debut, who dominated. The American mezzo-soprano has, in the past few years, won over the Rossini crowd in most of the world's opera capitals, and on Sunday she stole a show that was hard to steal." **Ms DiDonato** is currently on a Recital Tour of *Three Centuries of Italian Love Songs*. This Tour begins in Madrid, travels through Barcelona and London, and ends in Brussels. In March, she will sing Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

The San Francisco Opera's final production of the fall season was Verdi's *Otello*. Olivia Stapp, writing for *San Francisco Classical Voice*, noted the contributions of Merola artists. "The supporting roles of Cassio (*Beau Gibson* – Merola alumnus), Emilia (*Renee Tatum* – Adler Fellow) ...Roderigo (*Daniel Montenegro*), and Lodovico (*Eric Halvarson*)

were all skillfully performed. Special kudos to Tatum, who brought to the stage not only her splendid voice but also credible passion."

San Francisco Opera's production of Puccini's *Il Trittico* opened in September with Merola alumna, **Patricia Racette**, starring in all three one-act operas. The *San Francisco Chronicle's* Joshua Kosman noted: "Call it a trifecta, or a hat trick, or a triple whammy. Whatever the terminology, soprano Patricia Racette tackled all three soprano roles...and emerged triumphant." **Ms Racette** traveled to the Metropolitan Opera to reprise all three roles in their production of *Il Trittico*, which was broadcast as a part of the HD series. Steve Smith of the *New York Times* reviewed her performance with, "Patricia Racette, a versatile, dramatically astute performer with a proven knack for Puccini, tackled them all."

Fellow Merola alumna, **Meredith Arwady**, made her San Francisco Opera debut this season as the Abbess in *Suor Angelica* and Zita in *Gianni Schicci* in this production of *Il Trittico*. Later in the fall, she sang Marquise of Berkenfeld in *The Daughter of the Regiment* with the San Francisco Opera. Her recent career highlights include Pasqualita in Adam's *Dr. Atomic* at the Metropolitan Opera and English National Opera, and her European debut with Frankfurt Opera as Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*.

**Sean Panikkar**, Merola alumnus and Former Adler Fellow, was interviewed for *Opera News*. Brian Kellow noted that Panikkar has become "a tenor-to-watch." Kellow also reported that "Panikkar's voice is sizable and securely placed...he also possesses an appealing lyric quality." **Mr. Panikkar** sang Cassio in the *Otello* that opened the new Winspear Opera House in Dallas, Texas. Anthony Tom-

continued on p. 4

# Career Updates

continued from page 3

masini wrote in the *New York Times*, "The gifted young tenor Sean Panikkar was a stand-out as a hotheaded yet soldierly Cassio."

Merola alumna, **Laura Claycomb**, ended 2009 performing with the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, Italy. She sang Fauré's *Requiem*, known for the famous soprano aria Pie Jesu. **Ms Claycomb** will begin 2010 performing with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra for Orff's *Carmina Burana*.

Merola alumnus, **Hector Vasquez**, will join his wife, **Cynthia Clayton**, former OSJ Resident Artist, to perform in *Tosca* with the Houston Grand Opera at Miller Outdoor Theatre in the Spring. **Mr. Vasquez** will sing Baron Scarpia, and **Ms Clayton** will sing Floria Tosca. In April, **Ms Clayton** will be a soprano soloist for Beethoven's *9th Symphony* with the Reno Philharmonic. In May she will sing Leonora in Verdi's *Il Trovatore* with Intermountain Opera in Montana.

Another former Artist in Residence with OSJ, **Layna Chianakas**, will contribute her talents to Food, Wine and Song to benefit the San José Chamber Orchestra on January 31, 2010. She plans to sing a musical tribute to Julia Child.

**Jason Detwiler**, former OSJ Artist in Residence, continues to have a busy schedule. This month he will be a soloist with the Boise Philharmonic singing *Candide Suite*, then will travel to Opera Idaho to sing Dandini in *La Cenerentola*. In March he will sing as a soloist with Boise Baroque in Mozart's *Requiem*.

Four more OSJ alumni list upcoming performances early this new year. **Scott Bearden** will sing Germont in *La Traviata* with Mercury Opera in Rochester, New York. **Adam Flowers** will sing Rodolfo in Puccini's *La Boheme* with Pacific Repertory Opera in San

Luis Obispo, California this March. **Jesse Merlin** will sing Military Doctor and Zillergut in *The Good Soldier Schweik* with Long Beach Opera. **Jonathan Hodel** will sing Riccardo in Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* with Opera in the Heights in Houston, Texas.

**Nmon Ford**, former OSJ Resident Artist, will sing The Traveler in *Death in Venice* with the Hamburg State Opera in February. In March **Mr. Ford** will sing in recital with the Teatro Delle Muse, in Ancona, Italy and perform the title role in *Don Giovanni* at this same venue. In April, he will perform Escamillo in *Carmen* with the Palm Beach Opera.

OSJ alumna, **Talise Trevigne** will sing Gilda in *Rigoletto* with the Tulsa Opera in February, then in March will be a soloist with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra singing *Carmina Burana*. April will take her to the Dallas Opera where she will sing Pip in the world premiere of Jake Heggie's *Moby Dick*

## Adler Fellows Concert

On Sunday, April 11, at 2:00 p.m. the Adler Fellows from the San Francisco Opera Center will perform at the Bankhead Theater in Livermore, in partnership with the Livermore Valley Opera. Call 925.373.6800 for ticket information. The Bankhead Theater is at the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center, 2400 First Street, Livermore.

According to Sheri Greenawald, Director of the San Francisco Opera Center, "The mission of the Adler Fellowship Program is to select outstanding young singers from around the globe and to nurture their talent through intensive personal training and valuable professional experiences."

The concert is open to the public, and the Guild encourages your attendance as part of our mission to support young singers. ###

# Calendar

FEBRUARY 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 16, 19, 21, Opera San José presents *The Marriage of Figaro* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, California Theatre, San Jose. Call 408 437-4450 or visit [www.operasj.org](http://www.operasj.org).

FEBRUARY 19, 21, 27 and 28, West Bay Opera presents *Der Freischütz* by Carl Maria von Weber, Lucie Stern Theatre, Palo Alto, 650 424-9999 or visit [www.wbopera.org](http://www.wbopera.org)

FEBRUARY 21, 5:30 p.m., Schwabacher Recital, featuring Eleazar Rodriguez, tenor; Michael Sumuel, baritone; and Mark Morash, piano. Temple Emanu-El, 2 Lake St. San Francisco. Single tickets, \$25. Order at 415 864-3330

MARCH 27 Metropolitan Opera Simulcast in HD, *Hamlet* by Ambroise Thomas, live at CineArts Oakridge 20, 225-7340; Santana Row 6, 554-7010; and AMC Eastridge Mall 15, 274-2274. Simulcasts are at 10am and cost \$24.00 for adults, \$22.00 for seniors. (The encores which occur later are at 6:30 pm and cost \$22.00 for adults and \$20.00 for seniors).

MARCH 28, 5:30 p.m., Schwabacher Recital, featuring Allen Perriello, piano; Susannah Biller, soprano; Austin Kness, baritone. See 2/21 for details.

APRIL 11, 2:00 p.m., Bankhead Theater, Livermore Performing Arts Center, 2400 First Street, Livermore, Adler Fellows concert. Call 925 373-6800 for price and ticket information.

APRIL 14, 6:30 pm, Metropolitan Opera Encore of *Hamlet* by Ambroise Thomas, see March 27th for additional information.

APRIL 18, 5:30 p.m., Schwabacher Recital, featuring Leah Crocetto, soprano; Mark Morash, piano. See 2/21 for details.

APRIL 24, 25, 29, MAY 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, Opera

San José presents *La Rondine* (The Swallow), a company premiere, by Giacomo Puccini. California Theatre, San Jose. Call 408 437-4450 or visit [www.operasj.org](http://www.operasj.org).

APRIL 25, 12:30 p.m., SJOG Vocal Awards Competition, room 150, Music Building, San Jose State University. Free of charge. Reception to follow. Open to the public. Call 266-4659 for more information

MAY 1, Metropolitan Opera Simulcast in HD, *Armida* by Gioachino Rossini, live at CineArts Oakridge 20 225-7340; Santana Row 6, 554-7010; and AMC Eastridge Mall 15, 274-2274. Simulcasts are at 10AM and cost \$24.00 for adults, \$22.00 for seniors. (The encores which occur later are at 6:30 PM and cost \$22.00) for adults and \$20.00 for seniors).

MAY 19, Metropolitan Opera Encore in HD, *Armida* by Gioachino Rossini at 6:30 pm. See May 1 for more information.

MAY 21, 23, 29, and 30, West Bay Opera presents *La Traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi, Lucie Stern Theatre, Palo Alto, 650 424-9999 or visit [www.wbopera.org](http://www.wbopera.org). ###

## SJOG Vocal Awards Competition

Every other year the Guild, in cooperation with the Music Department at San Jose State University, provides a competition for up to three awards, judged by professional judges. 2010 is, once again, an awards year. The competition, directed by Professor Layna Chianakas, will be on Sunday, April 25, at 12:30 p.m., in room 150 of the Music Building at San Jose State. A reception, with refreshments provided by the SJOG Board of Directors, will follow the competition. Please plan to attend this exciting event, and bring your friends for a delightful Sunday afternoon experience. ###

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

Return 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Individual	\$45
Levels: Under 30	\$30
Family	\$60
Organization	\$75
Donation	\$ _____
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

Make check payable to SJOG  
Mail this form and check to:  
Membership Chairman  
San José Opera Guild  
P.O. Box 33025  
Los Gatos, CA 95031-33025

The San José Opera Guild is a nonprofit 501(C)(3) organization.  
Contributions are deductible to the extent provided by law.  
Does your company have a matching grant program?  
Visit our website at [www.sjoperaguild.org](http://www.sjoperaguild.org)