



NEWSLETTER

MAY 2012

Saturday, June 23, 11:30 AM

Where should you be on this date? At The Rinconada Country Club in Los Gatos, of course! Why? You will be dazzled by an exceptional music program given by Opera San José singers Melody King, Alexander Boyer, Evan Brummel and Silas Elash accompanied by Simona Snitkovskaya.

The program will be preceded by a gourmet champagne brunch and a silent auction /raffle guaranteed to excite you. For details please check our website (www.sjoperaguild.org). Reservations: \$55 for members and \$65 for non-members. Invitations will follow. For information, please contact 408-395-2035.

The singers and accompanists will be our guests for the brunch. If anyone would like to sponsor one or more of them, please indicate on your response card. They will be notified of your generous gift. If you are unable to attend, we would be so appreciative of your donation.

This fundraiser is our only means of providing support to Opera San José Outreach Program, San Francisco Opera Guild's Education Program (Opera ala Carte), West Bay Opera, and the Music Program at San José State University. Thank you in advance for your assistance in these efforts.

See you there!

What Is *Poppea*?

It's the abbreviated title of *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*. It is the first opera based on the lives of real people instead of myths. *The Coronation of Poppea* was composed by Claudio Monteverdi in 1642. The opera is based on the life of the Roman emperor Nero and contains tragic, romantic, and comedic scenes, a more realistic portrayal of the characters, and warmer melodies than previously heard.*

The Coronation of Poppea will be presented by the San José State University Opera Workshop and Collegium Musicum on May 12 at 7:30 PM and on May 13 at 2:00 PM in the

SJSU Music Room 150. The opera will be set in film noir style. Soprano Christine Capsuto who won first place in this year's SJOG vocal competition will sing the role of Poppea. Mezzo-Soprano Catherine Williams, second place SJOG vocal competition winner, will sing the role of Nerone. \$15 general, \$10 students, free for SJSU students.

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* Redlich, H. F. Claudio Monteverdi: Life and Work. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Opera Traveler

By Mort Levine

Although we are off in a couple of weeks to see and hear a rarely performed baroque opera in New York, we are reminded that only minutes away opera buffs can catch marvelous performances of the Philharmonia Baroque orchestra, one of the world's best in that peculiar genre. Almost every concert includes vocal music and next season they will be presenting the full Handel opera *Teseo* (*Theseus, the mythical founder of Athens*).

The orchestra led by the innovative Nicholas McGegan, uses the striking new concert hall on the campus of the Menlo-Atherton high school, in addition to repeating the performances at other bay area venues.

Our opera travels this spring will include the Telemann version of *Orpheus* which the economically struggling New York City Opera will perform at the auditorium of the Museum of the Barrio. having lost its long standing home at the New York State theatre in Lincoln Center. Telemann is one of the great composers of the baroque sharing the limelight with the likes of Monteverdi, Vivaldi, and Handel. All of them, inspired by Johann Sebastian Bach and a flock of earlier composers like Scarlatti and Buxtehude, moved opera away from the extremes of ornamentation to an operatic form which ultimately led to the bel canto era operas of the legendary Italian masters like Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini.

A representative sampling of the operatic impulses of the mid-18th century was on view here on April 19 when the Philharmonia Baroque performed *Alexander's Feast*, a two act work in between an opera and an oratorio. Handel composed it for London and is based on a poem by Dryden. The words clearly evoked a wide range of moods in the sing-

ers, but the music (major keys expressing joy, fortitude and determination while minor keys evoke melancholy, dejection and depression) proved so closely linked to the libretto, understanding the words was unnecessary.

The cast included a buttery voiced mezzo, Dominique Labelle, a Metropolitan Opera National competition winner. Other excellent voices included tenor Dann Coakwell and bass-baritone Philip Cutlip.

Incidentally, the baroque musical era, which dominated Europe from about 1600 to 1750, derives from the Portuguese word "barroco" which means irregular shape. It went on to be applied to many other fields including art and architecture. It was not always a positive designation. Rousseau called the music dissonant, confused and unnatural.

Other critics disagreed. Thomas Mace, writing in London in 1676, explained he was "drawn into raptures...by the uncontrollable persuasions of the musick's divine language to quietness, joy, peace and absolute tranquillity."

No matter how you think about baroque music and opera, it is impossible not to admire its great practitioners of today like Susan Graham, Renee Fleming, David Daniels and yes, Nicholas McGegan.

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Career Updates

Soprano **Talise Travigne** sang the solo from Mahler's *Symphony #4* on March 4th at Le Petit Trianon. A former member of Opera San José's Resident Artist Program, the singer is recognized for the "sheer beauty of her voice" and "exquisite stage presence."

Former OSJ resident artists **Daniel Cilli, Christina Major, and Carlos Aguilar** performed in West Bay Opera's splendid new production of *Don Giovanni*. According to Georgia Rowe from *San Francisco Classical Voice*, "the singers inhabited their roles with considerable dramatic verve and a focus on tonal beauty. Christina Major's Donna Anna took top honors. The soprano commanded attention in Act 1's vivid "Fuggi, crudele, fuggi," and continued to sing with urgency, assurance, and bright, refulgent tone throughout the evening. In the title role, baritone **Daniel Cilli** missed a bit of the Don's requisite swagger, but his singing was robust; alternately callous and gallant, he sounded especially suave in the ravishing "Serenade."

Richard Scheinin praises the recent "uplifting performance of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* presented by Symphony Silicon Valley and Chorale. He further praises "four first rate soloists, bass baritone **Kirk Eichelberger** was staunchly sonorous piping his syllables like a wind instrument, soprano **Christina Major** was floodingly expressive, tenor **Christopher Bengochea** sounded bold and vigorous, and honey-voiced mezzo soprano **Layna Chianakis**, all former stars from Opera San José."

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Bios

Christine Capsuto

Catherine Williams

Originally from Ventura, CA, soprano **Christine Capsuto**, who took first prize in SJOG's Vocal Competition, is a full-time Vocal Performance major at San José State University where she studies under Layna Chianakis. She is honored to be the first in her family to have the opportunity to obtain her degree and knows her Bachelor's of Music will be utilized in many ways to come – from teaching, to performing, and hopefully someday running her own company! Originally, Christine wanted to study medicine to become a surgeon but was bribed to choreograph a musical in her last year of high school where she fell in love with the stage. Although she began music as some may say "late in the game," Christine was always surrounded by music in her home, from jazz to blues to gospel, and feels confident she is now on the right path. Before she attended SJSU, Christine gained intensive training in dance, acting, and voice at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in both Los Angeles and New York, and spent many years as a gymnast. Christine works at Disneyland on her time off from school as Princess Jasmine in the *Aladdin: A Musical Spectacular!* show at Disneyland California Adventure, has toured with several performance groups, originated a few roles, and has acquired numerous credits working in the Los Angeles and recently San Jose area. She also loves teaching music and just prior to her admission at SJSU ran an after school music and dance program through the Boys & Girls Club that allowed underprivileged families a free-of-charge music education for their children.

Calendar

APRIL 21,22,26,28,29, MAY 1, 4, 6, 8 PM except Sundays at 3 PM, Opera San José presents *Faust* by Charles Gounod, California Theatre, San Jose. Call 408 437-4450 or visit www.operasj.org.

MAY 2 Metropolitan Opera Encore in HD, *La Traviata*, by Verdi, 6:30 PM Oakridge 20, 225-7340; Santana Row 6, 554-7010; and Cupertino 16, 408 871-2262.

MAY 7 Met HD *Ring Cycle Encores* and *Wagner's Dream* begins.

May 7 *Wagner's Dream* A revealing documentary about the making of this ring cycle.

May 9 Das Rheingold

May 14 Die Walküre

May 16 Siegfried

May 19 Götterdämmerung

Shown at Oakridge 20, 225-7340; Santana Row 6, 554-7010; and Cupertino 16, 408 871-2262. 6:30 PM

MAY 12th, 7:30 PM and May 13th Sat 2 PM, *The Coronation of Poppea* by Claudio Monteverdi, San José State University, Music Room 150, \$15 general public, \$10 students, Call 408 924-4654 for advance ticket sales or purchase at the door.

MAY 17th, 8 PM, Free *Aida* Opera Preview with piano from West Bay Opera, at Avenidas, 450 Bryant Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301.

MAY 19th, 3-6PM, Irene Dalis Vocal Competition, tickets \$50-\$100, Call 408 437-4450 or visit www.operasj.org.

MAY 25, 27, JUNE 2,3, West Bay Opera presents *Aida* by Giuseppe Verdi, Lucie Stern Theatre, Palo Alto, 650 424-9999 or visit www.wbopera, student, senior and group discounts available.

MAY 29, 10 AM, San José Opera Guild Summer Lecture, *Nixon in China* by John Adams will be discussed by Stephen Hinton, Saratoga Foothill Club, Admission \$10.

JUNE 1, San Jose Woman's Club, Luncheon and Program, "The Rising Stars of Opera San Jose". starring soprano Jouvanca Jean-Baptiste, mezzo-soprano Bethany Coffland, tenor Michael Dailey, baritone Krassen Karagiozov. 11:30 Hospitality Luncheon 12 Noon, Program 1 PM, \$35 per person (\$20 is tax deductible). Purchase tickets at sjwomansclub.org or mail checks to 75 South 11th Street, San Jose, CA 95112.

JUNE 5, 10 AM, San José Opera Guild Summer Lecture, *Atilla* by Giuseppe Verdi will be discussed by Alexandra Amati-Camperi, Saratoga Foothill Club, Admission \$10.

JUNE 13 Metropolitan Opera Encore in HD, *Anna Bolena* by Donizetti, 6:30 PM Oakridge 20, 225-7340; Santana Row 6, 554-7010; and Cupertino 16, 408 871-2262

JUNE 20 Metropolitan Opera Encore in HD, *Le Comte Ory* by Rossini, 6:30 PM Oakridge 20, 225-7340; Santana Row 6, 554-7010; and Cupertino 16, 408 871-2262

JUNE 23rd, SAVE THIS DATE; SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD CONCERT AND BRUNCH at La Rinconada in Los Gatos! Join us for wonderful music and fabulous food! See article in Newsletter for more information.

Continued on P. 5

JUNE 27 Metropolitan Opera Encore in HD, *Don Giovanni* by Mozart, 6:30 PM. Oakridge 20, 225-7340; Santana Row 6, 554-7010; and Cupertino 16, 408 871-2262

The Following are all San Francisco Merola Performances. Tickets available at S.F. Opera Box Office 415 864-3330 or at www.sfopera.com.

JULY 5: Schwabacher Summer Concert, War Memorial Veterans Building, Herbst Theatre, 7:30 PM

JULY 7, Free Schwabacher Summer Concert, Yerba Buena Gardens, 2 PM

JULY 19, 8 PM, JULY 21 at 2 PM: *Postcard from Morocco* by Dominik Argento, Cowell Theater at Fort Mason Center.

AUGUST 2, 8 PM, AUGUST 4 at 2 PM: *La Finta Giardiniera* by Mozart, Cowell Theater at Fort Mason Center.

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REMINDER

This is the last issue for those who have not renewed their membership for 2012. Members receive a mailed copy only by request. For membership renewal please use the form on the back page of this newsletter. --Ed.

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This summer, Christine will return to her “royal duties” at Disneyland for a short while and continue studying with Layna Chianakas in preparation for her senior recital in the Fall (date TBD). Following her graduation at the end of the year, Christine will immediately begin learning her new roles as “Clorinda” in Townsend Opera Company’s 2013 production of Rossini’s *Cenerentola*, then work with Utah Festival Opera Company during the summer (roles TBD) and make her way back to Townsend Opera Company in 2014 as Musetta in Puccini’s *La Bohème*! She is thrilled to begin her ride as an aspiring professional opera singer!

Second place winner in the SJOG Vocal Competition was Catherine Williams, 23, from Patterson, Calif. She studied voice at Modesto Junior College with Dr. Sharon Llewellynn and earned her Associates degree in Music. She is now a senior at San José State University. She has studied with Professor Layna Chianakas for two years. In the fall, she will give her senior recital. Also, this April she won the San José Women’s Club Vocal Competition. As the winner, she is planning a recital in the fall for the San José Women’s Club.

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San José Opera Guild
c/o Argo Gherardi
P.O. Box 33025
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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 it's 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.

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Memberships: Family \$60
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