



NEWSLETTER

MAY 2013

Make your reservation for our annual
Champagne Brunch

Saturday June 8, 2013

La Rinconada Country Club

No-host bar starts at 11:30 am

14595 Clearview Drive, Los Gatos, CA

\$55 for members; \$65 for non-members
(\$25 of each reservation is Tax-deductible)

This memorable event is at Los Gatos' **La Rinconada Country Club**, nestled in one of the most beautiful settings in the Santa Clara Valley, with panoramic views from the foothills to the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The **menu** has been created especially for this event by **La Rinconada's Executive Chef**. Delicacies include: seasonal fruits and berries; freshly baked pastries; crisp spring greens salad; smoked salmon; eggs scrambled and benedict styles; french toast with strawberries, bananas, walnuts and maple syrup; skillet potatoes; bacon; ham; link sausages; coffee; tea and orange juice.

Silent Auction items include: sail on San Francisco Bay; dinner with wine for 12 at Il Fornaio; Plumed Horse tasting for 2; Hakone Gardens private tea ceremony and tour for 8; two nights at Donatello Hotel in San Francisco during America's Cup Weekend; wine and chocolate pairing basket; hand-knit designer shawl; fine art photograph by Suzanne Karlac; haircut and color by Simone - and more!

Raffle offerings include: premium California wines; hand-crafted jewelry; two tickets to West Bay Opera; two tickets to Opera San José; gift certificates for dining at Cin-Cin and Tigelleria; pilates lessons by Midge; manicure by Rebecca; hand-made quilt; massage by Nilou; original water color painting; original oil painting; gift certificates to Summerwinds Nursery and Nordstrom --- and more!

Raffle tickets are \$5 each or five for \$20. Cash, checks and credit cards (\$20 minimum) will be accepted.

Performing after brunch, for your entertainment, will be Opera San José Artists Tori Grayum (mezzo-soprano) and Alexander Boyer (tenor). They will be accompanied by Simona Snitkovskaya.

For more information and reservation form go to www.sjoperaguild.org
or clip form on P. 5

We look forward to seeing you there!

Opera Traveler

A visit inside the brain for tender, powerful dramas

By Mort Levine

Composer Jonathan Berger and Poet Dan O'Brien brought together an innovative work titled *Visitations* for the initial foray into the world of opera at the brand new Bing concert hall on the Stanford campus April 12-13. The world premiere performances of *Theotokia* and the *War Reporter* were done in the round with the audience surrounded by 26 speakers and a dazzling variety of projected imagery to mimic auditory hallucinations.

The live musical forces included the St. Lawrence Quartet augmented by bass, flute, clarinet and percussion all conducted by Christopher Rountree. They were further augmented by electronic pre-recorded soundscapes created at Stanford's Center for Computer Research in Music (which Berger also heads up).

The vocal array came from four voices comprising the all male New York Polyphony plus versatile soprano Heather Buck, who takes three diverse roles in *Theotokia* and a pivotal role in the *War Reporter*.

The first opera is about an institutionalized schizophrenic named Leon who was sung by the quartet's countertenor, Geoffrey Williams. He conjures, over eight scenes, visits from Mother Anne, leader of the Shakers; a Yeti mother who calls to him from her cave in the Himalayas; his biological mother who exclaims; "how could he do this to me?"; the Yeti mother who intones a dirge to dung; and the Shaker mother who imparts secret knowledge. The self-tortured Leon finally has a lucid moment and realizes he alone must deal with his mental illness.

The second one act is likewise an internal dialogue but this time it is based on the true story of a Canadian war photographer, Paul Watson, sung by baritone Christopher Dylan Herbert. The second opera opens with a scene in Mogadishu,

Somalia, where Watson is about to take a picture of the mutilated corpse of an American, Sgt. William Cleveland, whose ghost taunts him with: "if you do this, I will own you forever". He takes the photo.

The second scene is at Columbia University where Watson is being awarded the Pulitzer Prize. He is increasingly distracted re-imagining the violence, the brutality of Cleveland's death. His boss reminds him of another war photographer in Sudan who took a photo of a starving child and a waiting vulture in a nearby tree. That photographer committed suicide later. Watson's response: "The ghosts are getting closer". But still Watson signs up to go back to the war zone.

Watson reflects on the guilt of his own father's wartime years and later goes to find the family of the dead soldier. He is rebuffed by the brother who accuses him of "stirring up the ghosts".

Later while on an assignment in the Arctic, he contacts his friend, Dan, (possibly the librettist) saying he has decided to go back to the war in Afghanistan even though he feels Cleveland's ghost will be waiting for him there. On impulse, he invites Dan (and by implication, the audience) to come along admitting "of course, nobody knows what might happen out there".

The passionate voices and the high tech musical forms heightened the impact of the two dramas. Cutting edge director Rinde Eckert gave the two works a dramatic action that was compelling. Beth Morrison did the scenic projections along with Mark DeChiazza's video work. Bass Craig Phillips and tenor Steven Caldicott Wilson, other members of the New York Polyphony each took on several roles.

The new concert hall has no proscenium or curtain and it becomes a special test for the creative team. That was met admirably. ###

Career Updates

Baritone **Mark Delavan** (Merola 1985) will sing the role of Woton in the 2012-13 Metropolitan Opera's production of Wagner's *Das Rheingold*. Mezzo Soprano **Meredith Arwady** (Merola 2002) will sing the role of Erda. **Delavan** will also sing the role of Woton in *Die Walküre* with soprano **Deborah Voight** (Merola 1985) in the role of Brunhilde. All three Merolini will sing in Wagner's *Siegfried*.

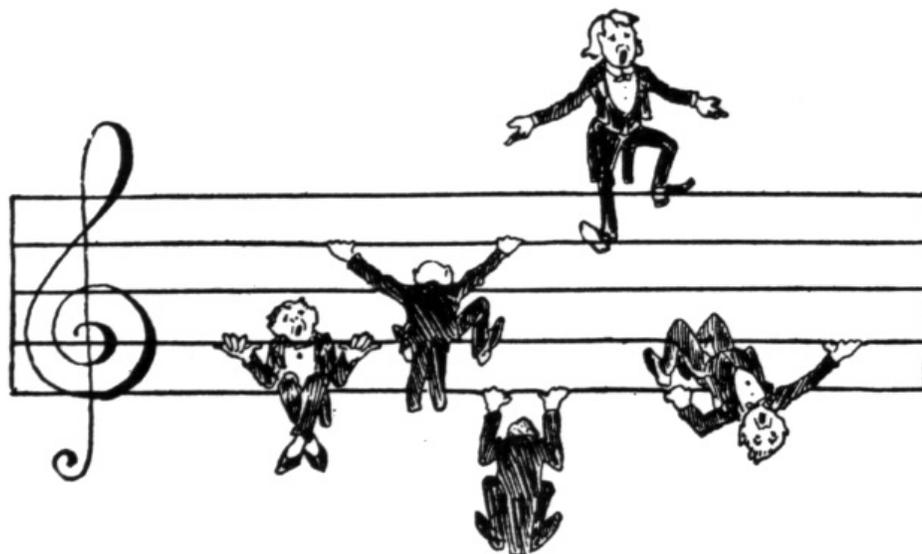
Soprano **Julie Makerov** (OSJ 2001-2003) with just a few moments notice stepped into the lead role of Senta in the *Flying Dutchman* for Los Angeles Opera. Though she knew the score, she had never done a walk through on the Chandler stage. James Conlin, who conducted the performance, took the last minute switch in his stride [and] seemed thrilled with **Makerov's** performance. "She pulled off the performance seamlessly" he commented. She received a cheering standing ovation. (Review by Deborah Vankin)

New York, NY (March 25, 2013) – **Tenor Bryan Hymel** (Merola 2001) has been named the recipient of the eighth annual Beverly Sills Artist Award for young singers at the Metropolitan Opera. **Hymel** made his Met debut earlier this sea-

son, singing the demanding role of Aeneas in a rare revival of Berlioz's epic *Les Troyens*. **Hymel** was a late replacement for a colleague who decided to withdraw the role from his repertory, and **Hymel's** performance—which was also transmitted worldwide as part of the Met's Live in HD series—met with considerable acclaim from both critics and the public. The New Orleans-born tenor will return to the Met in January 2014 to sing the role of Pinkerton in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. In recent seasons, he has sung three major roles with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden: Aeneas in *Les Troyens*, the title role in Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*, and the Prince in the company's first-ever staging of Dvořák's *Rusalka*. This season, he also sings Pinkerton with Pittsburgh Opera and New Orleans Opera, and the Duke of Mantua in Verdi's *Rigoletto* with Lyric Opera Baltimore. .

Former OSJ resident artists soprano **Christina Major** (1997-2000, 2003-2004), tenor **Christopher Bengochea** (2005-2008), and mezzo soprano **Layna Chianakis** (1995-1997) sang in Verdi's *Requiem* during San José Symphony's recent performance at the California Theater.

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The Merola Opera Program

by Connie Zilles

The Merola Opera Program is a summer training program for young singers who may become stars. Many graduates of the Merola program have gone on to international careers including Anna Netrebko, Patricia Racette, Dolora Zajick and Thomas Hampson. This program, unlike some others, allows supporters to watch the training as it proceeds.

More than nine hundred young artists from around the world apply, and 23 singers, one stage director, and five apprentice vocal coaches are chosen to participate. One of these singers is partially supported by a grant from the San José Opera Guild. This twelve week program operates in close artistic collaboration with San Francisco Opera but is financially separate. The intensive training includes both master classes and public performances. Public performances include the Schwabacher Concert (which is free at its outdoor venue), the Grand Finale and two operas each summer. This summer the operas are: *The Rape of Lucretia* by Britten and *Le nozze di Figaro* by Mozart.

The supporters of Merola, i.e. its members, can participate at a number of contribution levels, and with each increasing level come additional benefits, typically invitations to events during the training. A membership of \$75 includes two tickets to the “Merola Auditions for the General Director (of the San Francisco Opera)” during

To Serve or Not to Serve

That Is the Question

If a current San José Opera Guild member is interested in serving on the San José Opera Guild Board of Directors or in volunteering for a committee, please contact Phyllis Whitney (pwinsj@yahoo.com) or Connie Zilles (connie@zilles.org) for more information. ###

which each singer performs one or two arias. It is the first chance to see and hear the new talent. A membership of \$250 adds an invitation (for two) to “A Day at Merola” which is a view of a typical day’s activities in which the singers participate. Last year, the Day’s program included several singing master classes, an acting master class, a run through of one of the operas, a French master class, the staging of the second opera, and an Italian diction master class. This membership level also includes a second master class and other invitations.

Supporting the Merolini (as they are known) allows you to see and hear the artists, meet them at events, watch them perform in master classes, attend the Merola operas and finally watch the Merola Grand Finale which occurs in August. There you can cheer on your favorites and be impressed with their development over this short period of time. Maybe your favorite will be chosen as an Adler Fellow and stay on to participate in San Francisco Opera productions in the following year.

For more information: <http://merolaopera.com/aboutmerola> ###

FUTURE EVENTS

MAY 4, Irene Dalis Vocal Competition, 8-10pm

MAY 28, SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD’S SUMMER LECTURE, Timothy Flynn discusses Offenbach’s Tales of Hoffmann.

JUNE 11, SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD’S SUMMER LECTURE, Lynne Morrow discusses Adamo’s Gospel of Mary Magdalene.

Time: 10am, Saratoga Foothill Club, Saratoga, Admission \$10. ###

Additions to our Membership Roster

Gladney, Helga 408-867-3933
20044 Glen Brai Drive
Saratoga, CA 95070
helga_gladney@yahoo.com

Horiguchi, Rita 408-340-5008
608 Vasona Avenue
Los Gatos, CA 95032
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Jaffe, Leonard 408-354-0431
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leonardjaffe9006@comcast.net

Leuthold, Mette 408-866-1939
18522 Ravenwood Drive
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dmleuthold@att.net

McIvor, Bob 408-448-8089
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San Jose, CA 95125-4655
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Neves, H. Andrea
Barton, Evans 650-357-6971
185 Tobin Clark Drive
Hillsborough, CA 94010
andrea.neves@comcast.net
barton.evans@comcast.net

Yamaguchi, Lari 408-454-8860
1938 Johnston Avenue
San Jose, CA 95125
lsyamaguchi@gmail.com

Reservation for Brunch at La Rinconada

Please make _____ Brunch reservations at \$55.00 for Guild members (\$25 tax deductible)

_____ Brunch reservations at \$65.00 for non-members (\$25 tax deductible)

\$ _____ I can not attend but wish to make a donation Total \$ _____ Checks should be made payable to: SJOG

Name _____ Phone # _____

_____ Guests Names _____

Credit Card Information

MC or Visa # _____ exp. date _____

Authorized Signature _____

For more information 1-408-243-2404 or 1-408-354-2771

RSVP by May 27, 2013

Please mail payment information to: SJOG, PO Box 33025, Los Gatos, CA 95031-3025

San José Opera Guild
c/o Argo Gherardi
P.O. Box 33025
Los Gatos, CA 85031-3025

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.

Name _____

Name of Family Member _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

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Email _____

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

Please send check payable to:
San José Opera Guild
c/o Membership
P.O.Box 33025
Los Gatos, CA 96031-3025

San José Opera Guild is a non-profit 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