



NEWSLETTER

Joan Shomler, Editor

May 2017

2017 Spring Lectures by Steve Zilles

Our spring lecture series occurs at the end of May this year. We begin with an overview of the 2017-2018 Opera San José season given by OSJ's General Director, Larry Hancock, at 10am on Friday, May 19. The season includes *Così fan tutte* by Mozart in September, *La Rondine* by Giacomo Puccini in November, *The Flying Dutchman* by Richard Wagner in February and *La Traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi in April. Larry's talks are always informative and enjoyable so come learn more about some old favorites and some, perhaps, lesser known works. And, as is usual, his talk will be followed by a selection of arias by Opera San José's resident artists. This program will be at the Addison-Penzak Jewish Community Center at 14855 Oka Road in Los Gatos and you are invited to stay for the monthly Shabbat Lunch that will immediately follow the program. With a reservation, the price is \$6.00 for JCC and San José Opera Guild members, \$8.50 for non-members and it is \$10.00 at the door without a reservation.

Join us for our second (and only other spring) program on Wednesday, May 31 at 10am for a talk on Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. This talk will be given by Dr. Bruce Lamott. Dr. Lamott is Director of the Philharmonia Chorale (the chorus of the Philharmonia Baroque orchestra) and teaches music history at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. *Don Giovanni*, on the other hand, is the rascally Don Juan who, in the treatment by Mozart and his librettist da Ponte, is always striving for conquests but, in the opera, sees little success other than his "list" of past actions. Despite his reputation, he remains steadfastly above it all, up to the bitter end. Come and get fresh insight into one of Mozart's great operas.

Career Updates by Susan English

A new approach to enlarging opera audiences is a collection of singers called "barihunks." The Daily Mail describes this with, "Opera may bring to mind images of overly hairy, overweight belters, but a new blog shines a light on a new breed of hot, young classical singers. Dubbed barihunks, the blogspot site is dedicated 'to any hunk who sings in the baritone and bass/baritone range.' Their specifications for featured totty include that they must be professional or semi-professional singers, or serious students with 'real potential,' and they accept reader recommendations." A Facebook page for barihunks notes of Adler Fellow, **Edward Nelson**, "American barihunk Edward Nelson made his European debut at the Norwegian National Opera on April 7th in the title role of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*." The posting goes on to note, "Nelson, who just finished his two-year stint at the prestigious Adler Fellow Program under the auspices of the San Francisco Opera, will perform the title role of Hamlet with West Edge Opera in

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Please Join Us May 31st

At the break in the opera lecture we will have refreshments to celebrate the end of the 2016-17 lecture series.

Ambroise Thomas' opera from August 5-19. Fellow barihunk Kenneth Kellogg will appear as the ghost."

More announcements from barihunks: **Andrew Garland** (Merola 2003 & 2004) has had two recitals featuring his repertory, one in Indiana and one in Ohio. Both concerts focused on his two recordings of American songs — "American Portraits" and "American Folk Song Settings." Also noted is **Phillippe Sly's** (Merola 2011) performance in the Dallas Symphony's presentation of Bach's St. Matthew Passion. "Sly was heard as Panthée in Berlioz's epic *Les Troyens* with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg from April 15-17. He'll be joined by another all-star cast featuring Joyce DiDonato as Didon, Marie-Nicole Lemieux as Cassandre and a barihunk quartet with Stéphane Degout as Chorèbe, Jérôme Varnier, Nicolas Courjal as Narbal."

MusicalAmerica.com has made Adler Fellow **Pene Pati** their April Artist of the Month. This online newsletter notes that he will be singing the Duke in this summer's SFO production of *Rigoletto* along with his wife, **Amina Edris**, as the Countess Caprano, and his brother, **Amatai Pati**, as Matteo Borsa. All three are just completing their Adler Fellowship this spring.

San Francisco Classical Voice was following West Bay Opera in February noting that the opera company, "made a casting coup" signing San Francisco Opera Adler fellow **Toni Marie Palmertree** to sing the title role in *Suor Angelica* and Giorgetta in *Il tabarro*. "She has a radiant instrument that will captivate people, and she's looking at a major international career," says Moscovich. "She already had a chance to step in to replace Lianna Haroutounian as Cio Cio San in SFO's recent production of *Madama Butterfly*, and SFO just announced her casting as Liu in the *Turandot* that opens the next season. Now she undertakes two roles with West Bay Opera that can easily become signature roles for her." "Another Adler fellow, **Matthew Stump**, is playing the role of Simone,

the politician, in *Gianni Schicchi*. The casts include baritones **Krassen Karagiozov** (former OSJ Resident Artist) and Kiril Havezov."

Also in February, OSJ presented the West Coast premiere of *Silent Night*. The Mercury News review noted: "The cast is outstanding. Soprano **Julie Adams** (current Adler Fellow) is an ardent, radiant Anna, and tenor **Kirk Dougherty** (current OSJ Resident Artist) sings handsomely as the shellshocked Nikolaus. Additional OSJ alumni, **Christopher Bengochea** and **Kirk Eichelberger**, also made "fine contributions" according to Georgia Rowe for the Mercury News.

Epoch Times featured **Nadine Sierra** (Merola 2010, and former Adler) on the cover of their "Arts and Style" section in March. The two page article focused on her development as an opera singer and her casting as Ilia in the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Idomeneo*. Anthony Tommasini reviewed her performance for the New York Times with: "The soprano Nadine Sierra brought her bright, agile voice to the role, singing with expressivity and tenderness." Another Merolini, **Elza van den Heever**, sang the Greek princess, Elettra in the Met's production. Her photograph was featured prominently on the cover of the Arts section of the Times (3/7/17).

The new General Director of the Seattle Opera, Aidan Lang, seems to like what he sees coming out of the San Francisco Opera Center. In their upcoming production of *The Magic Flute* three Merolini are cast. **Jacqueline Piccolino** will sing First Lady, **Nian Wang** will sing Second Lady, and **Adam Lau** will be the Speaker. It will be their Seattle Opera debuts for each of them.

Several summer opera festivals will employ Merolini. The Glimmerglass Festival in Cooperstown, New York will feature **Leah Crocetto** (Merola 2008, Adler 2009-11) as Eleonora in *The Siege of Calais*. Former OSJ Resident Artist, **Talise Trevigne**, will sing Bess in *Porgy and Bess*. Opera Theatre of St Louis is also featuring Merolini in their summer programming. **Renee Rapiet** will sing Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, Matthew Stump

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will sing Publio in Mozart's *Titus La Clemenza Di Tito*, and **Susannah Biller** will sing Fraulein Burstner in *The Trial*.

February offered numerous opportunities to see former bay area artists. The Pacific Symphony's semi-staged production of *Aida* included three Merolini. **Philip Skinner** sang The King, **Mark Delavan** sang Amonastro, and **Renee Tatum** sang the High Priestess. Opera Parallele featured six former Adlers in their production of *Flight* by De Angelis and Dove. The cast included: **Nikki Einfeld** (Adler 2004-2005), **Amina Edris** (Adler 2016-2017), **Catherine Cook** (Adler 1991-1992), **Hadleigh Adams** (Adler 2013-2014), **Renee Rapier** (Adler 2012-2013), and Philip Skinner (Adler 1986-1987).

In March, several alumni of SFO and OSJ were busy locally. Livermore Valley Opera staged *The Marriage of Figaro* and employed **Efrain Solis** (Adler 2014-2015) as Figaro and **Alexander Katsman** (Merola 1999-2000). Leider Alive! created a program of Brahms and Schumann which featured pianist

Ronny Michael Greenberg (Adler 2015-2016) and bass Kirk Eichelberger (OSJ 2001-2003, Merola 2005-2006).

The Metropolitan Opera National Council Audition was just completed. Of the six finalists, three were Merolini. The San Francisco Classical Voice wrote of the finalists, "Winners and champions" included: "**Kirk Van Schoonhoven, Samantha Hankey, and Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen.**" The New York Times (3/20/17) wrote of the final winner, "There were several good singers onstage Sunday afternoon at the Metropolitan Opera's National Council Auditions Grand Finals concert, a venerable tryout for future stars. (Renée Fleming, the event's host, was a winner in 1988, on her third attempt.) But there was only one complete artist. At just 23, Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, a baby-faced countertenor from Brooklyn, already possesses a remarkable gift for intimate communication in a vast hall, combined with a voice of velvety gentleness — surprisingly penetrating given the tenderness of its texture — and a taste for adventure." Bravi to these winning Merolini!

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The following are additional activities of Merola and Adler Alums in the news, sent to us by Heidi Munzinger:

Daniel Montenegro (Adler 2011) made his role debut as Pinkerton in Arizona Opera's *Madama Butterfly* last month: http://tucson.com/entertainment/arts-and-theatre/butterfly-takeaways-boos-cheers-and-nowhere-to-park/article_f9eda0b2-e5ec-11e6-a199-4fd325d86efa.html

Sara Gartland (Adler 2010-11) & **Daveda Karanas** (Adler 2008-09) performed together in Arizona Opera's *Rusalka* last November: <http://operabase.com/diary.cgi?lang=en&code=napx&date=20161111>

Daniel Sumegi (Adler 1993-94) sang Fasolt & Hagen in Opera Australia's recent Ring Cycle & is engaged for three productions in Seattle's upcoming season (*Barber of Seville, Aida*, and Berlioz's rarely performed *Beatrice et Benedict*): http://operabase.com/a/Daniel_Sumegi/3738

Melody Moore (Adler 2006-07) & **Maya Lahyani** (2010-11) together in Seattle's *Katya Kabanova* next month: <https://www.seattleopera.org/on-stage/katya-kabanova/>

Renee Rapier (Adler 2012-13) singing Suzuki in St. Louis & Seattle later this year: <http://operabase.com/listart.cgi?name=Renee+rapier&acts+=Schedule+>

(I'm beginning to suspect a Seattle-SF Opera Center conspiracy ... but all great opera-tunities for Bay Area mavens!)

Susannah Biller (Adler 2010-11) & **Andrew Garland** (Merola 2003-04) in Minnesota Opera's upcoming world premiere of *Dinner at Eight*:

Merola's 60th Summer

In 2017, Merola will mark its 60th anniversary with a Summer Festival Season that will showcase a vibrant new group of Merolini in highly diverse works ranging from old favorites to sparkling gems never before seen in our repertoire. The festival will begin on June 11 with a 60th Anniversary Gala Concert at Herbst Theatre featuring Tracy Dahl ('85), Deborah Voigt ('85), Dolora Zajick ('83), Quinn Kelsey ('02), and other notable Merola alumni. Our first glimpse of the 2017 Merolini in performance will be the Schwabacher Summer Concert. This concert is always a favorite, featuring young artists whose voices don't fit into our opera productions. "We get to explore the voices through lengthy scenes that will challenge the artists," Merola Artistic Director Sheri Greenawald says. "And we get to explore repertoire that is not suitable for young artist training programs because of the sustained difficulty of the pieces—but by doing scenes, we get the flavor without having to eat the whole meal." Of the repertoire for this year's concert, Sheri reveals, "We will hear some *Thaïs*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, and *Cavalleria rusticana*, along with a palate cleanser of Kurt Weil—a bit of the "Ice Cream" sextet from *Street Scene*. There is no thread to tie these scenes together apart from the talent of the Merolini!" The Schwabacher concert will be conducted by Anne Manson and directed by David Lefkowitz. In a new venture for Merola, the second performance of the Schwabacher Summer Concert will take place at the Bing Concert Hall at Stanford.

The first full opera production of the summer will be a triple bill Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*, Holst's *Sāvitrī*, and Walton's *The Bear*. "I happen to love one act operas," Sheri says, "probably because my favorite form of the written word is the poem, and the one act opera is more like a poem, rather than a lengthy novel! The three one acts we will do at Merola are all about relationships. In *La serva padrona*, we see the maid, Serpina, working her wiles on the susceptible Uberto,

and ultimately winning him for her husband. In *Sāvitrī*, a wife saves her husband from Death by asking for Life—another sleight of hand, as Serpina in *La serva padrona* tricks Uberto. In the third opera, *The Bear* (based on the Chekov one act play), we find a widow bemoaning her faithless husband who has just passed away. When a 'bear' of a neighbor comes demanding payment of a bill. The two spar verbally, and end up embracing each other over the guns they originally planned to use to kill each other! In a way, I enjoy these three because they all have 'happy endings,' and the message is that LOVE WILL WIN OUT! We travel from the classical *La serva padrona* through to Holst's highly romantic *Sāvitrī* and end with Walton's satire and wit for *The Bear*." This exciting triple bill will be conducted by Christopher Ocasek and directed by Peter Kazaras.

Following the triple bill of rarities, we return to an opera rich in Merola history—*La Cenerentola*. Merola first presented Rossini's enchanting retelling of Cinderella in 1965 at Paul Masson Winery. The production was directed by future San Francisco Opera General Director Lotfi Mansouri and the sets and costumes were designed and built by Nancy Miller, an assistant scenic designer at San Francisco Opera, who remembered having no budget, using "scraps and paint" from the scenic shop, and pulling costumes from whatever was available at the costume shop. Despite the limited budget, it was a happy summer. A few weeks after the 1965 Merola season ended, Nancy Miller married Kurt Herbert Adler.

Merola next presented *La Cenerentola* in 1984 at Villa Montalvo and then in 1997, Merola's 40th anniversary year, with a young mezzo-soprano named Joyce DiDonato as Angelina and Harold Brock as her Don Ramiro. Ten years later, in 2007, *Cenerentola* was a highlight of Merola's 50th anniversary summer with Daniela Mack and Alek Shrader (now married and the parents of a young daughter) as Angelina and Don Ramiro.

"It is simply one of Rossini's most delicious comedies," Sheri says of the opera. "When Dan-

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Annual Champagne Brunch

by Colette Siegel

Our co-chairs Peggy Heiman and Jan Eurich lead the volunteers of the board to do a great job in organizing a great event!

The invitees arrived before eleven, on April 22., at the La Rinconada Country Club and were greeted with a glass of champagne, took a look at the numerous great items offered for the silent auction and the raffle, including an African Safari.

Among our guests were two well known figures of the Bay Area Opera World: Maestra Barbara Day Turner, founder and music director of San José Chamber Orchestra and Larry Hancock, General Director of Opera San José.

After a plentiful brunch, we were privileged to listen to a wonderful program performed by the resident artists of Opera San José. Matthew Hanscom, baritone and Brian James Myer, bass-baritone sang a duet by Bellini from *I Puritani* “Hymn of Liberty,” Sylvia Lee, soprano sang as a mechanical doll, Olympia from the *Tales of Hoffman*, she also sang the role of Papagena from the *Magic Flute* and her counterpart Papageno was performed by Brian James Myer who also sang an aria from *Cenerentola*. Colin Ramsey, bass-baritone gave us a great rendition of an aria from *I vespri siciliani* by Verdi Finally “Avant de quitter ces lieux” from Gounod’s *Faust* was performed by Matthew Hanscom, what a treat! The artists were accompanied by Veronika Agranov-Dafoe.

The brunch ended with the distribution of the different prizes. One of our members Dr. Tony Nespole won the African Safari, bravo! It was a wonderful event!



Jan Eurich and Peggy Heiman
Event co-chairs

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dini mentions that Magnifico’s daughters are his spitting image—‘son tutte Papa’—it is not a compliment! There are all sorts of subtle jokes, and many not so subtle. Then the last scene has one of the most wonderful pieces of fireworks in opera: ‘Non piu mesta’, Angelina’s final aria. That’s when you hope the mezzo is being paid by the note!” The 2017 *La Cenerentola* will be conducted by our own Mark Morash (Merola ’87) and directed by Chuck Hudson.

The 60th anniversary celebrations will conclude with what is sure to be a memorable Merola Grand Finale, conducted by Antony Walker and directed by apprentice stage director Victoria Crutchfield.

Schwabacher Summer Concert Makes a Debut at Bing Concert Hall

Thanks to the support of David Hugle and Haggai Niv, Merola will return to the Peninsula in 2017. The second performance of the Schwabacher Summer Concert will take place at the Bing Concert Hall at Stanford University on Sunday, July 9. The concert will be part of Stanford’s Live series. “We are thrilled to have this opportunity to reach out to new audiences,” Merola Executive Director Jean Kellogg says. “It will also be a wonderful training experience for our artists to take a performance on the road.”

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CALENDAR

By Connie Zilles

MAY

May 12, 7:30pm, Friday, and **May 14**, 3pm, Sunday, **San Jose State University Hammer Theatre**, \$7.20/16.21, Felix Mendelssohn's epic *Elijah* with Eugene Brancoveneanu in the the title role and Lisa van der Ploeg as the mezzo soprano soloist. <http://events.ha.sjsu.edu/musicanddance/events/elijah/>

May 13, Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*, Met Opera Simulcasts are shown at Century 20 Oakridge, Santana Row 6, and AMC Cupertino. For more information: metopera.org Tickets are \$24 for adults and \$22 for seniors. Encores at 6:30pm, May 17th.

May 19, 10am, Friday, San José Opera Guild lecture, Larry Hancock with resident OSJ artists will give the overview of Opera San José's 2017-2018 season at the JCC of Silicon Valley. SJOG and JCC Members free. Non-members \$10. Shabbat luncheon to follow. Lunch is \$6.00 for JCC and Guild Members, Non-members pay \$8.50.

May 21, **Opera San José's Hukilau**, Sunday, 4pm-8pm, \$160, half of which is tax-deductible. Napredak Hall, 770 Montague Expressway, San Jose. For more information or to buy tickets call OSJ Box Office at 408-437-4450 or order online at www.operasj.org.

May 26, 28, June 3, 4, *Salome* by Richard Strauss, **West Bay Opera**, 8pm except Sunday at 2pm, tickets 650-424-9999 or order online www.WBOpera.org. Student, senior, and group discounts. Piano Review, May 18, 8pm, at Palo Alto Art Center.

May 31, 10am, Wednesday, San José Opera Guild lecture, Bruce Lamott will speak on Don Giovanni by Mozart at the JCC of Silicon Valley. SJOG and JCC Members free. Non-members \$10.

JUNE

June 18, 3-6pm, Sunday, **La Rusticana d'Orsa** in Los Gatos, Opera San José Event, \$175. A tasting concert at a private winery, includes heavy hors d'oeuvres and a host bar, call OSJ Box Office at (408) 599-3067.

OPERA IN CINEMA

For the 2016-17 season at Camera 3 Cinema, see [Cinema Cinemas](#).

May 14 & 16 *MacBeth* (Verdi) — Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona (2017)

June 25 & 27 *Madama Butterfly* (Puccini) — Festival Euro Mediterraneo/Teatro Antico Taormina (2016)

July 23 & 25 *Così fan tutte* (Mozart) — Opera National de Paris (2017)

SUMMER MEROLA EVENTS

To order tickets call S.F. Opera Box Office (415) 864-3330 or order online at www.sfopera.com,

June 11, (Sunday) 8pm, 60th Anniversary Gala Concert featuring many Merola alumni and Adlers, Herbst Theatre Veterans Building, \$60.00

July 6, 7:30pm, (Thursday), Schwabacher Summer Concert in San Francisco Conservatory of Music and **July 9**, 2:30pm, (Sunday), Stanford Bing Concert Hall (NEW VENUE) \$45.00/25.00, Wonderful opportunity to experience the Merolini in a venue close to us.

July 20 (Thursday), 7:30pm and **July 22** (Saturday) 2:00pm San Francisco Conservatory of Music, *La Serva Padrona*, *Sāvitrī*, and *The Bear*, triple bill of one-act operas. \$70/\$50.

August 3, 7:30pm Thursday and Saturday **August 5**, 2pm, *La Cenerentola* by Rossini, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, \$70/\$50.

August 19, 7:30pm, Merola Grand Finale, War Memorial Opera House, \$50/\$40/\$25.



2016-2017 SEASON
San José
Chamber Orchestra
 BARBARA DAY TURNER
 Music Director



Alexander Boyer, tenor

Sunday May 21, 2017 7 p.m.
Young Artist Concert
 Anthony Quartuccio, Conductor

Songs of Travel Ralph Vaughan Williams
 Alexander Boyer, tenor, presented in collaboration with
 the Merola Opera Program

Cello Concerto in A Major C.P.E. Bach
 Coleman Itzkoff, cello, winner of the 2016
 Klein Competition

Additional works by Chen Yi, Beethoven, and premiere of
I'll Meet You There by Jason A. Bond, winner of
 Allen Strange Memorial Composition Prize 2017

Tríanon Theatre, San José, 72 N 5th St. San José
 Free parking directly across from the theatre

sjco.org
 408 295-4416

San Jose Chamber Orchestra is presenting their Young Artist Concert on May 21, 2017 at 7pm. This concert will feature Alexander Boyer, former OSJ Resident Artist and former Merolini. This will be the first collaboration presented by SJCO and the Merola Opera Program. More information can be found at Sjco.org.

Webmaster Needed

Our long term Webmaster is going to retire from the job. We have a fabulous web site and need a technically knowledgeable person to continue to run it. Please get in touch with the current Webmaster, Joan Shomler (membership@sjoperaguild.org) if you are interested.

The responsibilities include: monthly updates to the calendar (local events, lectures, news, etc.). If you look at the website (<http://www.sjoperaguild.org>), you will see it is in good condition, so keeping it up to date is what we need.

Thank you for considering this wonderful opportunity to support the San José Opera Guild.

SJOG Newsletter

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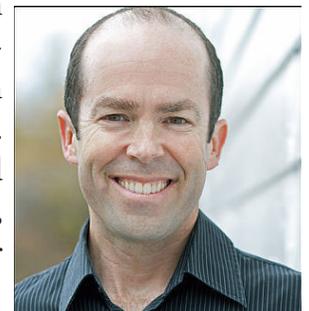
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A Delayed Perk Merola Opera Program by Argo Gherardi

Symphony Silicon Valley presented Mozart's Requiem in D minor in March of this year and featured Vale Rideout as the tenor soloist. Vale was in the Merola class of 2003, and my wife, Nina, and I attended his master classes. We were able to talk with him during breaks and receptions. At the California Theater we had the opportunity to meet him again before he was to go on stage. We reminisced about Vale's Merola days which made for smiles and laughter all around. Then he had to leave for the stage, and we said our warm good-byes. Thank you, Merola and the San José Opera Guild for having sponsored Vale Rideout.



San José Opera Guild
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. The Guild helps sponsor singers each year at Opera San José, the Merola Opera Program, as well as San Jose State Opera Workshop.

Throughout the year, the Guild sponsors lectures and previews to coincide with the San Francisco Opera, West Bay Opera and Opera San José's seasons.

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