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ON THE COVER

Serbian-Canadian composer Ana Sokolović, photographed by Donat for the 2011-2012 Homage Series of the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ). For the Homage Series, her orchestral, chamber and vocal works were featured at more than 100 concerts across Canada. Sokolović's operas *The Midnight Court* and *Svadba-Wedding* were commissioned by the Queen of Puddings Music Theatre. *Svadba-Wedding* was performed last season by Opera Philadelphia as part of its *Opera in the City* series.

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The magazine of OPERA America — the national service organization for opera, which leads and serves the entire opera community, supporting the creation, presentation and enjoyment of opera

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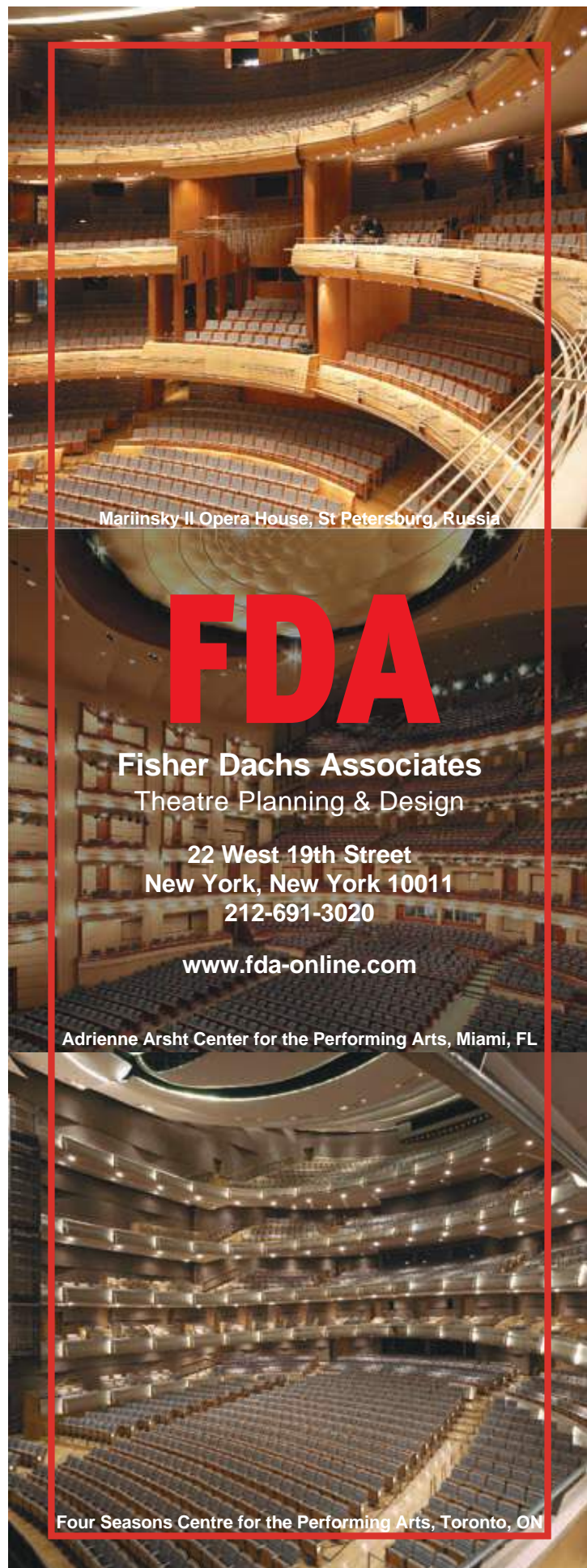
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DIALOGUES OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



We all breathed a sigh of relief when the Metropolitan Opera reached agreements with its unions last month. No American opera company is as complex as the Met, but its actions inform discussion about opera around the world. Let's hope the lessons learned from its negotiations circulate as broadly.

The Marriage of Figaro opens the Met's season this month, followed shortly by the company premiere of John Adams' *The Death of Klinghoffer*. Debate about the merits of the work and the Met's decision to mount it have been heated, a potent reminder of opera's power to reach beyond star-crossed lovers to pressing issues of contemporary life. When *Figaro* premiered in 1786 in Vienna, the play on which it was based was still banned in Paris because of the rebellious servant class it depicted. Verdi's *Nabucco* inspired admiration for more than its music: "Va, pensiero" was a hymn to Italy's collective desire to be free from Austria. Closer to home, American companies have convened forums to discuss the death penalty in anticipation of their productions of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*.

Opera's enormous expressive canvas and its stature within the performing arts command a level of attention that sets the stage for profound civic dialogue. For this issue of our magazine, Timothy O'Leary, general director of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, joined me in discussing how his company emerged as a source of cultural reconciliation in St. Louis following its *Klinghoffer* production (see "Preparing for *Klinghoffer*," page 30). As we go to press, OTSL is again working with local cultural leaders, this time to formulate an artistic response to the tragic violence in Ferguson.

With "Are Women Different?" (page 18) we explore another opportunity for social change: correcting the imbalance of women in composition. Last year, with the support of The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, OPERA America launched a grant program to support works by female composers. We anticipated 25 to 30 applicants; we were thrilled when the tally reached 113. Many applicants were completely unknown to the grant review panelists. Eight women were each awarded \$12,500 to advance a specific work. In phase two, grants of up to \$50,000 will be awarded to OPERA America Professional Company Members to defray costs associated with commissioning an opera by a female composer.

Our staff continues to assess the takeaways of *Opera Conference 2014*, held in San Francisco in June. The field's energy filled the Grand Hyatt to overflowing, with more than 600 representatives from over 200 opera companies, universities and businesses unified by their confidence in opera as a thriving part of the cultural landscape. We were moved by talented young singers, excited by audience building projects supported by the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, inspired by performances of works in process and comforted by news of balanced budgets and increased ticket sales. No one minimized the challenges ahead, but buoyed by San Francisco Opera Board Chairman John A. Gunn, we exhibited the optimism required of all of us who work in this complex field. We are grateful for the exceptional hospitality of SFO General Director David Gockley and the incomparable assistance of the opera's board, staff and volunteers.

When we speak of community engagement, our impulse is to identify ways to act locally. But how can we leverage collective impact nationally? Last month's *US Airways Magazine* illustrated how we can pool resources to increase exposure. Coordinated by OPERA America's talented and determined marketing and communications director, Patricia Kiernan Johnson, 26 OPERA America members each made a relatively modest media buy, but together we made a bold statement to seven million travelers who learned about American opera's variety and vitality. Congratulations, Patricia, and thanks to those who participated.

We at OPERA America send our best wishes for the 2014-2015 season. May it be filled with new works and fueled by your belief in opera and your commitment to enriching the cultural life of your community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc A. Scorca". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

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A NEW WAVE OF TECHNOLOGY

From surtitle systems introduced in the 1990s to HD transmissions of recent years, technology has become seamlessly incorporated into the fabric of the opera experience. Now, a new wave of innovative devices is pushing the boundaries of technology's role on stage, in the audience and behind the scenes. At *Opera Conference 2014*, held in San Francisco in June, several groundbreaking technologies provoked conversations about their potential implications for opera.

At the conference's user experience (UX) session, Alex Coulombe, VR futurist at Fisher Dachs Associates, presented the Rift, virtual reality goggles developed by Oculus VR. Using both design and gaming software, Coulombe has created three-dimensional renderings of theater spaces that can be experienced by wearers of the goggles. When donning the Rift, users "wander" throughout a virtual theater design, gaining a sense of the space's proportions and sight lines. The goal, says Coulombe, is to "give a sense of presence — to make you actually feel like you are in the space." The technology is ideal for stakeholders in theater

construction and renovation who are unschooled in reading two-dimensional architectural renderings. With the Oculus Rift, three-dimensional images are immediately comprehensible.

The UX session also allowed attendees to experience Figaro Systems' newest titling system, MobiTxt, presented by Bryan Hollar, director of systems integration. Wherever a high-density Wi-Fi network is in place, MobiTxt can transmit titles simultaneously in a variety of languages to mobile devices such as tablets, smart phones and Google Glass. Since MobiTxt is an Internet browser-based system, it has the capability to display not only titles but any content desired by an opera company. "The possibilities are endless," says Figaro President and Co-Founder Geoff Web. "You could do additional streams — commentary, director's notes — of varying complexity pitched at audience members with different levels of expertise, from young audience members to regular opera subscribers to musicologists."

MobiTxt is particularly appealing for outdoor or unconventional

venues where back-of-seat and projected titles are not always practical. On Site Opera became the first opera company to use MobiTxt for a public performance when it staged Rameau's *Pygmalion* in June at Madame Tussauds wax museum in New York. In July, Wolf Trap Opera also used MobiTxt for its production of *Carmen* at Wolf Trap National Park in Vienna, VA, encouraging those sitting on the lawn outside the theater to stream titles to their mobile devices.

In a special conference session, John McMahon, executive director

At the push of a button, a venue's acoustics can be tailored to a particular event, whether a rock concert or a classical music performance.

of operations and digital projects at Meyer Sound, presented his company's Constellation acoustic system at San Francisco's Exploratorium, where the technology was recently installed. McMahon describes Constellation as "electronic plaster," an array of microphones and loud speakers distributed throughout a space to alter its acoustics. At the push of a button, a venue's acoustics can be tailored to a particular event, whether a rock concert or a classical music performance. The system can be of particular use to acoustically challenged spaces lacking the richness and bloom of an ideal concert hall.

Constellation also has promising applications as an aid to those with reduced hearing. McMahon reports that Meyer is currently working to create special zones of more highly amplified sound for audience members with hearing impairments, potentially eliminating the need for assisted listening devices. ●

—Nicholas Wise

TEENS TODAY, AUDIENCES TOMORROW

Today's high school students will be tomorrow's adults when opera seasons currently in development take the stage. According to reports from the Center for Public Education and The Wallace Foundation, these future audiences are media-absorbed multi-taskers eager to share digital content, curate their online self-images and create artistic works of their own. Opera companies are tapping into the energy of this important group to cultivate future opera lovers.

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO'S Youth Opera Council, comprising 22 teens from throughout the region who were nominated by their teachers, focuses on exploring the inner workings of a professional opera company. Regular meetings might include guest visits from Lyric's staff or a workshop to plan the Council's own audience development event. Cayenne Harris, director of Lyric Unlimited, Lyric's community engagement initiative, designed the program to empower students with choices and give them tools to advocate for opera among their peers. More than 50 students applied for the 2013-2014 program.

Alejandra Boyer, Lyric Unlimited's manager, guided the Council through the entire opera season. At the initial performance they attended — for some their first time at a professional production — Council members were encouraged to reflect on every aspect of the experience and to share those insights with their families and friends. The culminating Council event of the season was a dressy "Night at the Opera" reception before the opening of Lyric's new production of *The Barber of Seville*, which included a pre-show talk and a chance to mingle with members of the orchestra and chorus.

Lyric has found that teens can be an important bellwether for the field in understanding entertainment preferences, modes of self-expression and learning

styles. For instance, when Harris asked Council members how they researched an opera before attending a performance, she discovered that Wikipedia is their go-to reference. "They are my secret focus group," Harris says. The Council readily offers feedback not only on the program itself, but on all aspects of their experience at Lyric. When production and administrative staff meet with the group it is a two-way street. The Council learns more about the intricacies of opera production and administration, and conversely, the teens are a "resource for the institution," Harris notes. "It is energizing for staff to see the future of opera."

goal in mind, Harris believes that the Council is "in the service of opera, not just Lyric Opera of Chicago."

Lyric is not alone in engaging young opera fans: Over the past three years **UTAH SYMPHONY | UTAH OPERA** has rolled out the red carpet — sometimes literally — for high school groups: Certain performances have Facebook-friendly photo ops on an actual red carpet. **ARIZONA OPERA'S** High School Opera Club program offers discount tickets to final dress rehearsals and other perks for music and theater classes. Clubs mounting their own opera or music-theater productions can also take advantage of visits from production and creative staff.



JENN GAUDREAU

Stephanie Smelyanksky, a member of Lyric Opera of Chicago's Youth Opera Council

The power of councils or clubs is that opera companies can reach students directly rather than through their teachers or parents. In the short term, these programs attract audiences by offering rush tickets, behind-the-scenes access and pre-performance events, all in service of a longer-term mission — to establish loyal, lifelong operagoers. When high school seniors in the Youth Opera Council graduate, most will likely go to college in other cities, but Harris hopes that they will connect with other opera companies and remain committed to the art form as they enter adulthood. With this broader

Next year, Arizona Opera will expand on this by implementing a new program called Opera Zoom! in which their staff will connect via Skype with high school clubs across the state and provide insight into costume design and set construction.

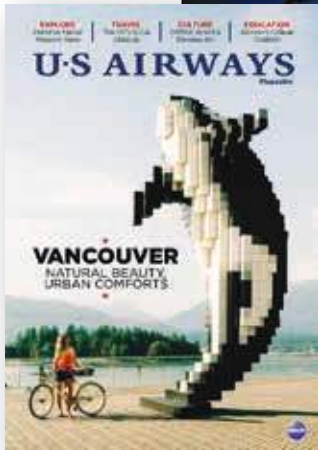
In addition to reaching students with a passionate interest in opera and identifying strong teacher partners who foster the clubs, another factor ensures the continued success of these programs: High school students can drive themselves to the opera. ●

—Leah D. Wilson

Future audiences are media-absorbed multi-taskers eager to share digital content, curate their online self-images and create artistic works of their own.

Celebrate
Opera

ENCORE!



The Future OF Opera

By Callie Young

time-honored art form enjoys a resurgence
new talent — and new audiences — tune in.

Today, opera is flourishing. Regional opera companies across North America are staging high-quality productions ranging from classics like Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* to contemporary works emerging and highly regarded composers and artists. Music conservatories are graduating a generation of singers, composers, and technology designers who embrace opera as a profession. Start-driven, "indie" opera companies are reshaping the genre with provocative subject matter and non-traditional performance spaces, while companies of all sizes are drawing audiences with creative publicity and flexible ticket models. For an art form that dates back more than 400 years, opera today is more robust and relevant than ever before.

While internationally revered opera houses the likes of La Scala, The Met, and the Paris Opera endure, opera companies throughout the U.S. are



now recognized as institutions in their cities and regions. Pittsburgh Opera is celebrating its 75th anniversary; in the Pacific Northwest, Seattle Opera just marked 50 years. And in the Midwest, Lyric Opera of Chicago is looking forward to its 60 year diamond jubilee, while the Cincinnati Opera (the second-oldest opera company in the U.S.) will be presenting its 95th summer festival in 2015.

What makes opera persist as such a compelling art form? At its core, opera is perhaps the most theatrical expression of human emotion through song. The stories that are told in opera are universal and transcend time. Opera depicts essential human emotions — love, anger, jealousy, longing, triumph and tragedy, and cross-cultural connections. "The art form speaks to fundamental human emotions that all people share," says Marc A. Scorcia, president of OPERA America, the national service organization that supports the creation, presentation, and enjoyment of opera.

What's spectacular about opera is the way great music carries the emotion and expands it beyond the words," Scorcia says. "The combination of music and words makes for an intense theatrical experience that speaks across generations and centuries."

Part of what makes opera so enticing as a musical genre is its sheer diversity. Between Mozart's oft-performed *The Magic Flute* and Gershwin's 20th-century classic *Porgy and Bess*, there is a wealth of operas that appeal to aficionados and newbies alike. "Different audiences gravitate toward different parts of the repertoire," Scorcia says. "Audiences have abundant choices to enjoy a niche, if not the entire spectrum, of the opera experience."

An American Institution

Within the vast operatic canon, the American repertoire continues to grow. Since 1900, professional opera companies in North America have produced more than 800 new operatic works, with 359 new



The art form speaks to fundamental human emotions that all people share.

— Marc A. Scorcia, President of OPERA America

works alone produced since 2000. These current compositions tell universal stories, but often with American themes and characters in a contemporary musical and theatrical vocabulary. Opera Theatre of Saint Louis recently premiered *Twenty-Seven*, the tale of American expatriate writer Gertrude Stein, whose home and salon at 27 Rue de Fleurus in Paris welcomed luminaries such as Pablo Picasso and a young Ernest Hemingway. Another production sure to intrigue audiences is Fort Worth Opera's highly anticipated world premiere of *JFK*, a meditation on the life — and final night — of President John F. Kennedy.

There are American-produced shows that speak to cross-cultural connections, too. Billed as a "mariachi opera," *Cruzar la Casa de la Luna* is Arizona Opera's rendition of a Mexican-American immigrant family's life. And at the Santa Fe Opera House, Chinese-born American composer Huang Ruo will see the premiere of his *Dr. Sun Yat-sen*, a historical drama about the overthrow of the Chinese monarchy.

CLOCKWISE
FRONT LEFT:
Justin's Beasts
by Opera
Theatre of Saint
Louis, Opera in
the Outfield at
Washington
Nationals
ballpark, and
The Grand
Duchess of
Gerolstein by
Santa Fe
Opera House

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OPERA TAKES FLIGHT

In an expansive advertorial for its August issue, *US Airways Magazine* showcased the broad scope of the opera industry in the United States with a 35-page section called "The Future of Opera." A nationally coordinated marketing campaign that engaged local opera company brands, this collective ad buy, including OPERA America and 26 of its members, provided international exposure to the seven million travelers who fly US Airways each month. The advertorial can be viewed online at bit.ly/USAirwaysMag.

Inflight magazines typically feature themes such as restaurants, arts and culture, or family activities within a particular city or state. OPERA America, however, was approached by *US Airways Magazine* in April 2014 about the possibility of coordinating

an exclusive opera advertorial, the magazine's first devoted to a single art form. To participate, OPERA America members paid \$3,500 per page — a substantial discount from the magazine's for-profit rates, which run as high as \$20,000 per page.

"The reaction from our member companies immediately confirmed that this was the right opportunity, at the right time, at the right price," says Patricia Kiernan Johnson, OPERA America's director of marketing and communications. "It seemed like the perfect chance to make a show of force of the vitality of opera today." The collective ad buy by OPERA America member companies exceeded \$100,000.

"*US Airways Magazine* was thrilled to celebrate 'The Future of Opera' in our

August issue and share with our seven million readers the resurgence of this unique art form. There are very few live performances that touch the heart, stir the soul and inspire us like the opera," says Steve Mitchem, publisher of *US Airways Magazine*.

"Throughout the pages you'll see countless examples of how cities are using the opera as a rallying point to build pride in the community. Based on enthusiastic reader response and Twitter activity, opera is alive and well. Bravissimo!" ●

The August issue of *US Airways Magazine* features OPERA America and the following 26 members:

- | | |
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| Hawaii Opera Theatre | Theatre |
| JEJ Artists | Utah Symphony Utah Opera |
| Los Angeles Opera | |



ALICE IRENE

OPERA ACROSS ONTARIO

In July and August, the Bicycle Opera Project, comprising seven singers and musicians, biked more than 600 miles across Ontario while hauling instruments, props, costumes and sets to bring contemporary Canadian opera to nontraditional locations. This season, their third, featured 20 performances.

COMPANIES REPORT GROWTH IN TICKET SALES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

ARIZONA OPERA has matched a challenge grant, raising more than \$500,000 to achieve its second consecutive "Million Dollar May." The campaign was supported by 100 percent of the company's board of directors and staff as well as by donors from within the organization's orchestra and chorus.

Reporting a break-even operating performance for fiscal year 2014, **LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO** has now operated in the black for 26 of the past 27 years. Subscription and individual ticket sales saw an eight percent increase over the previous season, boosted by *The Sound of Music*, the top-selling production in Lyric's history. The company will also surpass its annual fundraising goal.

OPERA THEATRE OF SAINT LOUIS wrapped up its season in June with an 8.4 percent growth in subscriptions and attendance, its second year of growth since

2012. First-time subscriber volume doubled over 2013, accounting for 17.7 percent of all subscribers. OTSL also reports growth in its endowment, which has increased 60 percent since 2008.

A surplus for the 2013-2014 season will allow **SEATTLE OPERA** to replenish its operating reserves for future seasons. The company saw significant growth in contributions and ticket sales, both of which exceeded expectations for the year. Contributing to the surplus was the economic impact of Seattle's *Ring* cycle in August 2013. The company also reported that its recent gala tribute to retiring General Director Speight Jenkins raised net proceeds of \$1 million.

TULSA OPERA has announced the formation of the Laven Sowell Foundation, funded by a \$600,000 bequest from the estate of the late Laven Sowell, a longtime Tulsa Opera chorus master and member

of the Tulsa arts community. In recognition of the gift, the company will name its music library in his honor.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded grants of \$750,000 each to **HOUSTON GRAND OPERA** and to **MINNESOTA OPERA** to produce multiple American operatic works over three years. For Houston, the Mellon grant will support the development and production of Carlisle Floyd's *Prince of Players* and Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *It's a Wonderful Life*, as well as three new commissions under HGOco, the company's community collaboration and education initiative. Minnesota's Mellon grant will support the upcoming commissions of *The Manchurian Candidate*, by Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell, *The Shining*, by Paul Moravec and Mark Campbell, and *Dinner at Eight*, by William Bolcom and Mark Campbell. ●

PEOPLE

THE DALLAS OPERA has named **Ian Derrer** artistic administrator and **Nicole Paiement** principal guest conductor. Paiement continues as artistic director of **OPERA PARALLÈLE**.

ANCHORAGE OPERA has hired as executive director **Reed Smith**, who previously served as general director of **TRI-CITIES OPERA**.

TRI-CITIES OPERA has welcomed **Susan Ashbaker** as

general director and **Steven Crawford** as music director.

At **OPERA AMERICA**, **Jane Gullong** has transitioned to the role of senior development adviser and **Amanda Parker** has been promoted to director of development. **Nicholas Wise** has been appointed publications and communications manager, and **Miles Greenberg** has been hired as research manager.

The Kurt Weill Foundation has appointed **Janice L. Mayer** director of programs and promotion.

LONG BEACH OPERA has appointed **Elizabeth Kurila** as director of development.

Sarah Zabinski has joined **THE ATLANTA OPERA** as director of development.

Greg Weber, currently director of production at **SAN FRANCISCO OPERA**, will

assume the post of managing director at **TULSA OPERA** this October.

CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY has selected **Steven Kelley** as chief communications officer. Kelley previously served as marketing director for **HOUSTON GRAND OPERA**. ●

KUDOS

The Wally Russell Foundation has awarded its 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award to **Jules Fisher**, founding principal of **FISHER DACHS ASSOCIATES**, in recognition of his remarkable contributions to the field of lighting design. A nine-time Tony Award winner, Fisher has designed lighting for more than 300 productions over the course of his career.

Sue Elliott, director of education at **SEATTLE OPERA**, is one of 25 arts leaders selected to participate in the 2014 Community Arts Education Leadership Institute. Designed by Partners in Performance, Inc., this seven-month program enables arts educators to advance their skills by engaging with nationally recognized practitioners. ●



BRUCE GULIKAS

JULES FISHER



ALAN ALABASTRO

SUE ELLIOTT

IN MEMORIAM

Lorin Maazel, the first American to conduct the Bayreuth Festival, died on July 13 at age 84. Born in France and raised in the United States, Maazel was a conducting prodigy who would go on to serve as music director and guest conductor for orchestras and opera companies around the world. After leaving the New York Philharmonic in 2009, Maazel and his wife, Dietlinde Turban Maazel, founded The Castleton Festival, an annual opera and classical music festival held at their Virginia farm.

Seymour Barab, the cellist and American composer of opera, died on June 28 at age 93. A champion of new music,

he was a founding member of both the New Music Quartet in Chicago and the Composers String Quartet. As a composer, Barab was best known for his one-act comic operas, such as *Little Red Riding Hood* and *The Toy Shop*, which inspired a love for opera among young audiences.

Carlo Bergonzi died on July 25 at age 90. Originally a baritone, Bergonzi transitioned to tenor repertoire in the early 1950s and became renowned for his interpretation of Verdi's iconic roles and lesser-known works. Over his five decades on the stage, Bergonzi became a fixture of American opera, singing at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Metropolitan



CARLO BERGONZI

Opera and San Francisco Opera, among other companies.

Italian-American soprano **Licia Albanese** died on August 15 at age 105. Celebrated for her nuanced portrayals of Puccini heroines, Albanese became identified with Cio-Cio San, debuting



LICIA ALBANESE

at the Metropolitan Opera in that role in 1940. She went on to appear at the Met more than 400 times before her final performance, as Mimi, in 1966. Albanese was also closely associated with San Francisco Opera, where she performed for 20 seasons. ●



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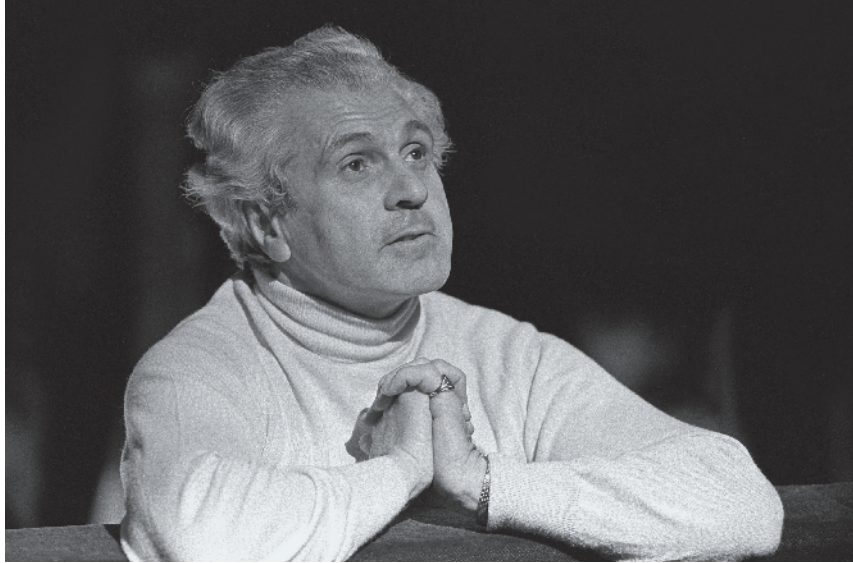
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IN MEMORIAM



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JULIUS RUDEL: A PERSONAL TRIBUTE

Legendary conductor Julius Rudel, who led New York City Opera for 35 years, forging an American repertoire and nurturing the careers of many American singers, died on June 26 at age 93. His son, **ANTHONY RUDEL**, pays tribute to his father, a quiet man at home and a giant to the world.

My friends' fathers taught them how to play ball. My father taught me how to run an opera company.

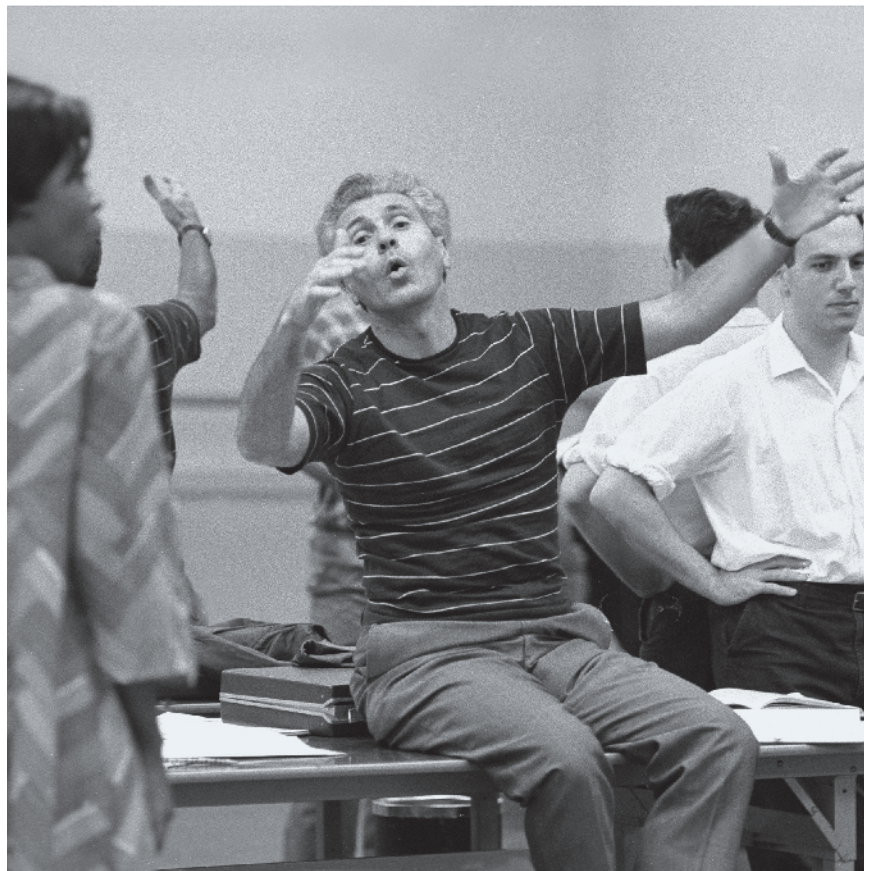
Music was central to our existence. It was the soul food of our home, and because of it, my sisters and I, our children, and my sisters' grandchildren all lead richer lives. This is the personal legacy of our Julius Rudel, but throughout our lives we shared him with thousands of others, for his happiest times were when he was making music, and thus making the world a more beautiful and interesting place.

To list my father's accomplishments would take hundreds of pages; the simple fact that he led more than 4,500 performances in a 70-year conducting career is astounding. His legacy as maestro, stage director, arts administrator, author, friend and adviser is a matter of record. It was written about extensively during his life and beautifully since his death. He was a man of passion — an artist who demanded perfection from his colleagues and something beyond perfection from himself. He believed it was a privilege to spend a lifetime playing the superb blend of sounds called classical music.

My father was a quiet man, which was sometimes misinterpreted as arrogance. But the truth is, at home and at work, he was a man of few words, a consummate musician who expressed himself through the human

connectivity that composers like Mozart, Debussy, Massenet, Puccini, Verdi and Weill put into notes and rests. He will always be remembered for seminal productions of important works, commissions and discoveries that represented high-water marks of opera in America. He sought to create beauty and brought a constant drive for perfection to every performance, no matter what the repertoire. When New York City Opera was still at City Center, he sometimes stepped in to conduct lighter fare. That personal commitment to achieve perfection was no less evident when he conducted Gilbert and Sullivan than when he conducted Mozart.

During the last few years, after he retired from conducting, I spent many evenings with him reminiscing, something he was loath to do. But being an annoying son, I prodded, and thus learned more from and about my father than I would have thought possible. Our talks ranged over every manner of interesting topic, but when we talked about operas, singers, productions, opera houses, acoustics and the state of the art, he was always engaged and interested to stay abreast of what was going on. As you can imagine, the demise of New York City Opera was a frequent topic. Watching what he had built fall apart was painful, not



© BETH BERGMAN

Julius Rudel with Veronica Tyler and David Bamberger in a 1967 rehearsal of *The Magic Flute*.

He will always be remembered for seminal productions of important works, commissions and discoveries that represented high-water marks of opera in America.

only on a personal level, but because of what it meant for opera in New York and for the singers, musicians and stage personnel who had given so much to make the company the beacon it had once been. There were tough conversations about poor leadership and why people who hadn't learned about opera from the ground up failed to manage the art form's complexities.

One night he turned to me and said, "I suppose the advantage of longevity is that you can look back and see what you've done." It was the only time I had ever heard him even begin to acknowledge that he had done something special during his career. He didn't like to look back; he was all about looking ahead to the next production, the next opera to be learned, the next performance.

In the months since his death, our family has found solace in the flood of tributes from friends, colleagues and audience members who were touched by his artistry. The wide range of comments — about what he meant to people and, moreover, to music — has been simply amazing. "Giant" has been the word most frequently used to describe him, both as a man of the theater who knew how to create drama that moved people, and as a quiet man who communicated brilliantly and personally through music.

At the end of Handel's *Samson*, a work my father loved to conduct, Samson's father says to the mourning Israelites, "Come, come; no time for lamentation; no cause for grief." How true, how poignant: Julius Rudel led a long and productive life doing far more than he had dreamed about as a teenager in Vienna, when his world was so altered by Hitler's invasion. He aspired to be a rehearsal pianist; look what he ended up doing.

Our family has lost its patriarch, I have lost my teacher and my best friend, and the music world has lost an important contributor. Though his recordings live on, he will be missed. But there is no doubt that his was a life that should be celebrated, and so we shall, with music, just as he would have wanted. ●



Julius Rudel and Beverly Sills, 1968.

THE JULIUS RUDEL ARCHIVE

Documenting the creation and production of American opera has been a core focus of OPERA America since its inception. As part of its service to the field, OPERA America offers members, scholars and students access to a comprehensive library of print, digital and recorded materials housed at the National Opera Center in New York City.

Upon visiting the Opera Center, where he was featured in the inaugural season of its *Conversations* series, Julius Rudel was deeply impressed by the facility's capacity to provide a home for opera — a sense of community characteristic of New York City Opera under his leadership. Because he was so closely identified with the development of the American opera canon, his family and friends joined together to name OPERA America's research collection the Julius Rudel Archive. OPERA America anticipates the inclusion of Maestro Rudel's extensive score collection, adding a tremendous dimension to the Archive.

At the core of the Rudel Archive is the legacy of the Central Opera Service, a research office operated by the Met, which was discontinued in 1990. With a generous grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, COS files were transferred to OPERA America. The COS records include more than 20,000 files documenting the performances of operas by American companies and universities. OPERA America continues this tradition in digital form with its North American Works Directory and Schedule of Performances.

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- Portland Opera • Michigan Opera Theater • Des Moines Metro Opera
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With the launch of OPERA America's Opera Grants for Female Composers, supported by The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, the opera field has begun to address the absence of women composers in the repertoire. *Wall Street Journal* opera critic **HEIDI WALESON** explores the challenges women face in establishing their rightful role in the modern canon.

Are Women Different?

Opera is mostly about women. Most operas are written by men.

Catherine Clément, the French philosopher and literary critic, addressed the result succinctly in *Opera: The Undoing of Women*: "Opera concerns women. No, there is no feminist version, no, there is no liberation. Quite the contrary: They suffer, they cry, they die." Opera's patriarchal assumptions about women are not restricted to librettos: In her pathbreaking *Feminine Endings*, musicologist Susan McClary examined opera through the lens of feminist critical theory and demonstrated, among other things, how dangerous female characters like Carmen, Lulu and Salome sing a sexualized, incendiary musical language — and are stomped out for the good of society.

So what might the philosophical, textual and musical narratives be for a woman who writes an opera today? Would Butterfly tell Pinkerton to get lost, take her son and open a restaurant? Would Don José join the gypsies for good? It's hard to generalize because we have so few examples. In the last 35 years I have seen about 265 new operas. Only 20 of them were by women.



MICHAEL COOPER

In our liberal era, opera remains a deeply conservative art form. The standard canon includes no women, though in fairness it's hard enough for men to break into it. True, there are several contemporary composers with one or two works performed with some frequency, but the last to truly establish himself in the firmament was probably Benjamin Britten.

Women did write operas in centuries past, and a number of them enjoyed considerable success, but their work was forgotten as history rolled over them. Who has heard the operas of Francesca Caccini (1587-1641), Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729), Isabelle de Charrière (1740-1805) or Julie Candeille (1767-1834), who wrote the libretto and music for *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*, one of the ten most performed dramatic works in Paris in 1793? In *Women Writing Opera*, a study of women opera composers in the 18th century, Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson note a chronic cultural amnesia: "Each generation [of women] lost the knowledge of its predecessors and their achievements, so that women continued to compose in isolation."



Above: Krisztina Szabó as the Pilgrim and Russell Braun as Jaufré in the Canadian Opera Company's production of *L'amour de loin*. Right: Kaija Saariaho.

One might have expected that isolation and amnesia to have changed over the past century as educational opportunities, easier travel and, crucially, recording have made it more possible for women's compositions to be heard. But works by women remain exceptions in the opera world, so few that their scattered appearances are easy to tally up. The Metropolitan Opera has presented one opera by a woman in its entire history: Ethel Smyth's *Der Wald*, which received two performances in

1903. In later decades, Thea Musgrave's operas (*Harriet*, *The Woman Called Moses*, *Mary Queen of Scots*) had a home at Virginia Opera, and Libby Larsen's operas (*Mrs. Dalloway*, *Frankenstein*) were performed at a number of Midwestern opera companies. Prizes do help: Jennifer Higdon, a powerhouse in the world of orchestral composition, won the Pulitzer Prize in 2010; a week later, she was in discussions about writing her first opera. Her *Cold Mountain* hit the trifecta: It is being co-produced

by Opera Philadelphia, Minnesota Opera and The Santa Fe Opera, where it will have its premiere next year.

None of the older operas by women I have heard leaps out as having themes or language that seems particularly "feminine." Given the risk-averse nature of American opera companies, which, when they do present new work, look for accessible stories told in nonthreatening musical language, preferably familiar from books or films, it is unlikely that even when women are offered



MAARIT KYTOHARJU

commissions by major houses that they will dare to break any new ground. By comparison, consider how composers like Joan Tower, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich and Shulamit Ran broke down barriers in the orchestral world: Their music out-machoed that of the boys.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 22)



CLYNE



DIBUCCI



KAMINSKY



KUSTER



LEBARON



MAN



SILVER



WOOLF

THE TOULMIN GRANTEES: ON WOMEN

Last year OPERA America launched Opera Grants for Female Composers, an initiative supported by The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. Eight composers were each awarded \$12,500 to support the development of a new opera. A second round of Toulmin grants, to be awarded this December, will give as much as \$50,000 to Professional Company Members to support the commissioning of works by female composers.

The establishment of a gender-specific program has raised questions of identity and opportunity for women in the opera field. In conversations with *Opera America Magazine*, the consensus among Toulmin grantees is that, with regard to musical choices, gender has no bearing; professional composition is gender-blind. “I grab everything at my disposal from all my years of study that best serves my needs,” says **Michelle DiBucci**, whose grant will support the creation of *Charlotte Salomon: Der Tod und die Malerin (Death and the Painter)*, a ballet-opera based on the artwork of the acclaimed German-Jewish artist.

“I am a woman, so I don’t feel I need to try to be feminine,” says **Fang “Mandy” Man**, whose grant supports *Golden Lily*, an opera in three acts based on the classic Chinese novel *Jin Ping Mei*. “For this opera I do need to emphasize female characters, but I am more concerned about story and structure,” she says. The opera focuses on the novel’s female protagonist, Golden Lily (Jinlian), who is one of the most infamous femme fatales in Chinese literature.

When it comes to protagonists and thematic choices, gender neutrality blurs: The works of Toulmin grantees skew toward totemic women who reveal empowered narratives. “Any composer of any depth, male or female, is going to be able to show the full range of human emotions,” says **Sheila Silver**.

She acknowledges, however, that most of her work is about women: “That’s where I feel comfortable. My voice is a woman’s voice.” Silver, whose opera is based on Khaled Hosseini’s novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, was drawn to the story by the strength of Muslim wives and daughters whose bonds prevail over oppression.

Anne LeBaron has “mixed feelings” about correlating gender with thematic material: “Women don’t have an exclusive insight into women characters, but women composers are more likely to write about women as subjects, just as women writers might. I’ve certainly been drawn to strong female characters.” But, she notes that *Psyche & Delia*, her eighth opera and the one for which she was awarded her Toulmin grant, does not have any female characters. The opera charts the historical ramifications set into motion by Albert Hofmann’s discovery of LSD in 1943.

In an “Opinionator” column in *The New York Times* last year, **Kristin Kuster**, whose opera *Old Presque Isle* illuminates a haunted lighthouse, wrote that earlier in her career she avoided gender distinctions and declined to participate in women-only competitions or concerts. This attitude, she observed, was derived from the previous generation of female composers: “They believed that talking about our gender in relation to our work would perpetuate the distinction between male and female composers, and therefore pave right over all the ground we had gained,” she wrote. Now she says she has reversed course: “Owning my gender as part of my identity as a composer is something that is new to me in the last few years.”

Anna Clyne, whose *As Sudden Shut* weaves music, poetry and animation, was lured to her subject not by any particular affinity for Emily Dickinson,

but through her admiration for the Quay Brothers, stop-motion animators who introduced her to Dickinson’s poetry. She eschews any specific relationship to gender in her choice of material, or even of form: “I see myself as a composer. I am inspired by collaboration. I don’t think of music in categories.” But, she says, “I am very aware of the generation of women before us who made it easier for us not to think about gender.”

Writing an opera and getting it produced are, of course, decidedly different hurdles. Grant recipients see the Toulmin imprimatur as helping to close the gender gap in production as well as in creation. **Laura Kaminsky**, whose opera *As One* explores the redemptive journey of a transgender individual, notes, “Women are not part of the decision-making structure in opera, they are not encouraged to take on these big projects.” She hopes the Toulmin grants will “give more women a voice at the table.”

“Opera is such a collaborative endeavor,” says **Luna Pearl Woolf**, whose grant will support *THE PILLAR*, an opera that explores the Bernard Madoff swindle, but with specific narrative attention to his wife, Ruth. “To be able to be the composer in that incredible circle of commissioners, librettists and maybe even the original author is a heavenly but tricky dance of wanting your own way while reacting to a wider circle of stakeholders. It could be that we as a society are slow to see women as able to juggle that delicate balance.”

“Women’s works are not performed as often as they should be,” says Anne LeBaron. “Part of that is that we suffer from the lack of a network and of people empowered to help us and make opportunities. I don’t think it’s always conscious. It’s a microcosm. It’s the way the world is.” ●

— Matthew Sigman

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Working outside the mainstream may give women the freedom to explore without worrying about whether “feminine” equals “weak” or “less important.”



TOP: THE PUBLIC THEATER. BOTTOM: JULIUS AHN

Top: The Public Theater's production of *Fun Home* by Lisa Kron and Jeanine Tesori (bottom).

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19)

Indeed, women composers (like most professional women) tend to dislike being labeled “women,” and for good reason: If you are going to succeed in what is essentially a male world, any intimation that what you create is not up to the patriarchy's standards is tantamount to being labeled second-rate. And there's the problem of what those gender-based adjectives connote in music. Does “masculine” mean harder, driving, thrusting, percussive and “feminine” mean lush, lyrical and sweet? Plenty of male and female composers incorporate all of those characteristics. One of the thorniest, craziest new operas I've heard recently is by the German-based South Korean composer Unsuk Chin. Her ferocious, jittery *Alice in Wonderland*, with its outrageous vocal swoops and leaps and layered, twittering, percussive orchestration, reminds you that she studied with Ligeti.

The situation is improving: On a percentage basis, I have heard more operas by women in the last several years than I did in previous decades. Quite a few of them have been chamber-scale, some in alternative spaces. Working outside the mainstream, as so many young composers are now doing, is a good way to find one's voice and may give women the freedom to explore without worrying about whether “feminine” equals “weak” or “less important.” Indeed, two recent operas unapologetically explored the inner lives of groups of women with breathtaking acuity and emotional intelligence. Ana Sokolović's *Svadba-Wedding*, presented by Opera Philadelphia's Opera in the City series, is an a cappella piece for six women's voices. Built on tight folk harmonies and piled-up syllables, it is a celebration of female community, as five young women prepare a sixth for her wedding the next day. In Lina Lapelytė's *Have a Good Day!*,

presented by the PROTOTYPE Festival, ten female cashiers in a Lithuanian version of Walmart, accompanied by the murmur of barcode scanners and retail noise, sing their musings aloud in virtuoso solos and overlapping minimalist textures that wittily and poignantly evoke the swirl of everyday life — banality transformed into art. I can't imagine a man having written either of them.

One of the most powerful pieces of music-theater I saw last season, though not technically an opera, was Jeanine Tesori and Lisa Kron's *Fun Home*, presented at The Public Theater. Based on cartoonist Alison Bechdel's graphic memoir, the work is unlike so many contemporary operas that simply illustrate existing texts; instead, *Fun Home* finds a way for music to create deeper levels of this story. Alison looks back at her childhood and particularly the intersection of two pivotal moments: when she came out as a lesbian and when her father, a deeply closeted gay man, killed himself by walking in front of a truck. Daringly, three Alisons occupy the stage — the child, the college student, the adult. Tesori's music is hilarious, ecstatic and exquisitely painful, fearless in its depiction of the unfiltered, naked emotion of adult Alison trying to come to terms with the father who was so like her, but refused to see her.

The Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho stands apart. Her four operas exude a powerful, sensual femininity, and though only one has an actual story, she is heard in the big houses: *L'amour de loin* was premiered at the Salzburg Festival in 2000, made the rounds of a number of major opera houses and is scheduled for a new production in a future season at the Met. When I saw it at The Santa Fe Opera in 2002, I was enthralled; I had never heard anything like it before. It unfurls like a seductive, undulating ribbon, ethereal and enveloping. It seems to move at a constant pace, but you always sense its rhythmic pulse. Dreamy yet avant-garde, it makes you live the longings of a 12th-century troubadour in love with a woman he has never seen and of the pilgrim who carries their messages across the sea. Saariaho's subsequent works, *Adriana Mater*,

about rape and motherhood, *La passion de Simone*, a meditation on the life and death of the French philosopher Simone Weil, and *Émilie*, about an 18th-century philosopher, mathematician and scientist facing death in childbirth, are deep explorations of what it means to be a woman who thinks and feels.

“Saariaho has given voice in her music to female desire, mystical longing, motherhood, and intellectual aspirations,” Susan McClary writes. “[She] goes far beyond simply marking her subject material as woman-oriented; she has also developed a musical vocabulary designed to simulate a very different quality of desire by means of what I call smoldering intensities: a dense fabric of low drones and spectral harmonies, extended trills and static ostinatos disrupted occasionally by violent eruptions or rushes of passion.”

If the smoldering intensities of female desire can be a hit in major houses, perhaps the opportunities for women composers are really changing. Missy Mazzoli, whose *Song from the Uproar: The Lives and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt* is about a young woman’s liberation through her discovery of religious and erotic ecstasy, is now working on an operatic version of Lars von Trier’s *Breaking the Waves*. The film has been viewed as intensely misogynistic, with its story of an innocent young woman whose sordid sexual exploits, undertaken to save the life of her injured husband, lead to her death.

Mazzoli disputes the misogyny label: “Beth is a very complex, deep character. Misogyny comes out when women are portrayed as shallow, shopping-obsessed, empty people. And in this story, a woman has all the power, all the agency. She moves things along, enacts change. All the men have left is raising their voices and other small, petty ways of showing power.” The opera will be heard: It is a commission from Opera Philadelphia, where Mazzoli is composer in residence, and Beth Morrison Projects.

Quite a few of the best new operas that I’ve seen in the last several years have been produced under the aegis of Beth Morrison, whose maverick New York production company is firmly committed to promoting the work of women. As women move into positions of authority in the opera world — painfully slow and overdue as that process is — they may feel freer to bring women composers with them. Francesca Zambello’s commissions of Rachel Portman and Jeanine Tesori (admittedly for “family operas,” on which women are presumably the experts) at Washington National Opera represent a step in that direction.

Today’s composers embrace all manner of styles. Regardless of gender, they can claim Elliott Carter or Philip Glass or Laurie Anderson or Indian ragas or rock and roll or rap as influences. As the old prohibitions fall away, exploring the essence of femaleness in art music

becomes ever more possible. Paola Prestini, the composer of *Oceanic Verses*, says, “I don’t want to be defined only by being a woman, but I also want to be able to celebrate the ‘feminine qualities’ that others perceive in my music. When I choose an opera subject, I don’t think first of the subject of femininity; however, I do believe we cannot separate ourselves from our experiences as women. The specific identity of gender, the inequalities we experience, the experiences of motherhood, our relationship to our bodies are all deep issues that inform our life choices and perspectives which, of course, color our music.”

Yes, women are different. And, though they are 50 percent of the population, their point of view has only just barely begun to be heard in the opera house. If opera is to have a future beyond the male-dominated canon, the arrival of these voices is an essential development. And even if their women suffer, cry and die, they will do it differently. “I love the tropes in opera,” says Missy Mazzoli. “Everyone falls in love, everyone dies. It is inherently dramatic. But when Isabelle dies in *Song from the Uproar* it is not a heartbreaking ‘Mimi moment,’ because she doesn’t fear death. It’s in a major key.” ●

Heidi Waleson is the opera critic for The Wall Street Journal. She is also a regular contributor to Symphony, Opera News and Early Music, among other publications.

As the old prohibitions fall away, exploring the essence of femaleness in art music becomes ever more possible.

Below: A scene from Bayerische Staatsoper’s 2007 production of Unsuk Chin’s (left) *Alice in Wonderland*.



LEFT: KIM MOON-JUNG RIGHT: BAYERISCHE STAATSOOPER

EMERGING ARTISTS

ACT ONE

For singers en route from conservatory to career, young artists programs at professional opera companies are an essential first step to a life on stage. Rigorous coaching and performance opportunities are just part of what it takes to shape a student into a star. **FRED COHN** reports.

Let's face it — when you finish your graduate work, you really aren't prepared to step onto the stage of the Met," says David Hamilton, general director of Fargo-Moorhead Opera in North Dakota, which recently completed the first season of its young artists program. "You need the onstage experience and the time to achieve vocal maturity." Unlike instrumentalists, who are closer to being ready for a professional career, vocalists require an enormous range of skills — musical, linguistic and dramatic — that require stage time beyond the classroom.

Young artists programs for emerging singers have become an enduring feature of the American operatic landscape. They can be found at top-tier houses like Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, the Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera, as well as leading summer festivals and regional companies. Their alumni include many of the most prominent figures on the world's stages, from Patricia Racette to Matthew Polenzani to Joyce DiDonato.

Each program reflects the culture of its company; some last ten weeks, some an entire season. Summer festivals may use their apprentices as choristers or

even give them a shot at principal roles. At The Glimmerglass Festival this past summer, the three leading roles of Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy* were cast from the young artists program. More often, companies select young artists for comprimario roles, such as Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Marullo in *Rigoletto* or Moralès in *Carmen*.

"I was really nervous when I was cast as Moralès," says baritone Matthew Worth, a veteran of the young artists program at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. "I brought the scene to [my teacher] Marlena Malas, and she said, 'Matthew, this is a great step, but it's a baby step. If you're nervous now, wait until you have something *important* to do.' For me, the stage time mattered; it built my conditioning."

Not all singers are suited to the kinds of roles that companies offer their young artists. Angela Meade, now one of the most successful sopranos of her generation, never made it into a young artists program. "I was at my dad's house last summer going through some old things," she says, "and I found a bunch of rejection letters." According to Meade's teacher, Bill Schuman, heavier dramatic voices, which need a long legato to make

their effect, don't often lend themselves to the opportunities YAPs present. William Florescu, general director of Milwaukee's Florentine Opera Company, concurs: "Some singers would be over-voiced for what these programs do," he says. "A young Wagnerian will not be a perfect Barbarina."

Likewise, for newly established programs not associated with brand-name companies, it can be hard to attract the best candidates. "Now that we are established, the majority of young artists come from teachers, other singers and word of mouth," says Maria Zouves, executive director of the Savannah VOICE Festival, "but once upon a time it was *Classical Singer* and YAP Tracker." YAP Tracker, the online database founded by mezzo-soprano Julie Baron in 2005, is the go-to guide for young artist auditions. According to Fargo-Moorhead's David Hamilton, YAP Tracker was also his company's exclusive channel for promoting his program. "There was some word of mouth," he says, "but we had no budget for advertising."

While it's not always possible for programs to find their ideal singers, and vice versa, young artists programs have engendered their share of star-is-born

Young artists Christian Bowers as Clyde Griffiths (center) and Daniel T. Curran as Gilbert Griffiths (upper right) in The Glimmerglass Festival's 2014 production of Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy*.

KARLI CADEL / THE GLIMMERGLASS FESTIVAL



Young artists programs by their very nature can offer singers the kind of personalized training they may not have received in conservatory, shoring up their strengths while working on weaknesses.



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Shelley Jackson and Andrew Shore in The Santa Fe Opera's *Don Pasquale*.



PALM BEACH OPERA

Rolando Sanz in Palm Beach Opera's *Norma*.



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Nathan Van Arsdale in Savannah VOICE Festival's *Don Giovanni*.

moments. At The Santa Fe Opera this summer, two apprentices filled in for principals: Shelley Jackson as Norina in *Don Pasquale* and Joseph Dennis in the title role of *Dr. Sun Yat-sen*. Amanda Majeski got her first shot at the Countess during her tenure at Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center when she went on for Anne Schwanewilms. "It was the most nervous I'd ever been, but ironically it was one of the best performances I've ever done, and one of the best times I've had on stage," she says. "My fight-or-flight response really kicked

in." The assignment brought on an inevitable comedown when Schwanewilms returned to the cast — and Majeski stepped back into the role of First Peasant Girl.

Overnight success does not come without considerable effort. Santa Fe uses apprentices to cover most principal roles. David Holloway, director of Santa Fe's apprentice program, and Robert Tweten, head of its music staff, audition every singer and, using a spreadsheet, configure cover roles and send out assignments well in advance. Once assignments are made — as early as October

for the following summer season — the apprentices are expected to get coaching on their own and arrive "off-book." Their training continues during the rehearsal period, when they work with coaching staff just as the principal artists do. Huang Ruo's *Dr. Sun Yat-sen* presented a special challenge because it was in Mandarin, but Joseph Dennis showed up well-prepared. It helped that J.Q. Whitcomb, a Santa Fe-based jazz musician who had been Huang Ruo's roommate at Oberlin and who had lived in China, made tapes for all the performers of their roles. In addition, Santa Fe knew early in the rehearsal process that the scheduled tenor was ailing, which allowed Dennis to rehearse throughout the entire process. Shelley Jackson, on the other hand, had three days' notice.

Such rigorous training is not just for opera emergencies. At the Fargo-Moorhead Opera, Eric McEnaney, director of its young artists program, is assisted by multiple vocal coaches and directors who offer instruction in everything from stage combat to makeup. General Director David Hamilton also steps in, providing coaching sessions in a classroom setting. For the Savannah VOICE Festival, 22 faculty members provide coaching across various levels.

Young artists programs by their very nature can offer singers the kind of personalized training they may not have received in conservatory, shoring up their strengths while working on weaknesses. "Everybody comes in at a different stage in their career development," says Greg Carpenter, general director of Opera Colorado. "You have to evaluate what they can do so you can adequately guide them through the program." Singers get private coaching sessions and masterclasses with Opera Colorado artistic adviser Ari Peltó, classes in movement and language, and even a monologue class taught by the company's director of education, Cherity Koepke. "Just taking away the singing is useful," Koepke says. "I tell them to take what they've learned and translate it into arias."

“If you’re an instrumentalist, by the time you leave school, you’re close to ready,” says Dan Novak, director of Chicago’s Ryan Opera Center. “But vocalists require an enormous range of skills in order to be successful.” The singers in the Ryan Center’s yearlong program arrive in May and spend the summer in an intensive curriculum of classes and coaching: voice lessons, acting classes and movement sessions along with masterclasses. Training continues during the opera season itself, scheduled around the singers’ rehearsal and performance obligations. The Ryan Center recently enlisted Chicago’s Second City troupe to provide the singers with training in stand-up comedy to give them the confidence to think on their feet.

Savannah VOICE Festival, founded by Zouves and her husband, baritone Sherrill Milnes, offers a layered curriculum, including a teen program, a pay-to-sing intensive, a young artists program and professionals in performance. “We get singers who are at critical points in their careers, who may be stuck, or in transition or need a 10,000 mile checkup,” says Zouves. “We take them at whatever time they need us to whatever place they want to go.”

Some young singers thrive on the opportunity to work and learn alongside pros. “In Palm Beach, I stood on stage next to Ruth Ann Swenson, one of my idols,” says tenor Rolando Sanz, a former young artist with Palm Beach Opera and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. “You see how people like that work in a professional environment and you absorb it.” Sanz would pick the brains of established singers (“How do I get a manager? What should I be doing with my time?”). Now that he has embarked on his own successful career, he enjoys answering the same questions.

Occasionally, the up-close-and-personal view of the industry can act as a deterrent to pursuing a further career. “I say to them, ‘This is a rigorous profession,’” says Santa Fe’s Holloway. “Unless you want to prepare yourself the way it takes to prepare yourself, this isn’t for you.”



JEFF ZMANIA

The 2013–2014 Florentine Opera Studio Artists, sponsored by Glen and Claire Hackmann: (left to right) Pablo Siqueiros, Julie Tabash, Aaron Short, Erin Gonzalez.



LEFT: KARLI CADEL. RIGHT: ANGELA PETERSON

Lime Kiln (left), home to young artists at The Glimmerglass Festival, and the Kate and Don Wilson Casa di Opera (right) at Milwaukee’s Florentine Opera Company.

EAT, SLEEP, SING

Nurturing the career trajectories of emerging vocalists is the prime objective of young artists programs, but the care and feeding of singers is an essential component in ensuring their physical and financial wellness. YAPs often provide free or low-cost housing to resident singers, with homes or apartment buildings provided by generous donors. Florentine Opera benefactors Kate and Don Wilson generously supported the renovations for Casa di Opera, where resident artists are housed. At The Glimmerglass Festival, young artists reside at Lime Kiln, a property donated to the festival, and are also placed in leased homes.

CHORUS AUDITIONS

SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA

Spoletto Festival USA will hold auditions in accordance with the terms established by the Gershwin Estate, for experienced, classically trained African-American singers who seek positions in the opera's choral ensemble for the 2015 season production of *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*SM.

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April 27, 2015

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*Auditions by invitation only.
Audition application deadline
Friday, September 12.*



SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA
May 22–June 7, 2015
Charleston, South Carolina

KARLI CADEL / THE GLIMMERGLASS FESTIVAL



Cynthia Cook as Sondra Finchley and Christian Bowers as Clyde Griffiths in *The Glimmerglass Festival's 2014 production of An American Tragedy*.

Companies cultivate familial relationships with their former young artists, inviting the most gifted ones to come back and perform as their careers develop.

Indeed, many singers who proceed swimmingly through young artists programs fail to sustain a career. Kate Mangiamelli, a former Glimmerglass young artist, notes that many of her colleagues have since left the profession. Her own career trajectory is instructive. After Glimmerglass and San Francisco Opera's Merola program, she switched fach from mezzo to soprano. She continued getting work, but by 2010 her career had been hit hard by the recession. In 2013 she joined the Metropolitan Opera chorus — a job offering a livable salary and steady employment. "If you'd told me when I was at Glimmerglass that I'd be in the Met chorus ten years later, I would have laughed in your face — it would have felt like a failure," Mangiamelli says. "Now I see it as the best decision of my life."

In the best-case scenarios, these programs can serve as true launching

pads. It helps when companies cultivate familial relationships with their former young artists, inviting the most gifted ones to come back and perform as their careers develop. Lyric Opera's recent *La Clemenza di Tito* was cast almost entirely with past and present Ryan Center singers; to drive the point home, the company invited Joyce DiDonato, the production's star and the only non-Ryan soloist onstage, to become an honorary Ryan alumna. As a member of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis' Gerding Young Artist Program in 2010 and 2011, soprano Corinne Winters formed essential bonds there with Music Director Stephen Lord and Artistic Director James Robinson and was asked back in 2011 to fill in for a pregnant Kelly Kaduce in *Pelléas et Mélisande*. She has since sung Micaëla (2012) and Vendulka in Smetana's *The Kiss* (2013) with OTSL and has taken on principal roles with Santa Fe and Michigan Opera Theatre. "You can be talented, you can be well-prepared," says Winters, "but you need that foot in the door." ●

Fred Cohn is a frequent contributor to *Opera News* as well as its research associate. He is also consulting editor at Chamber Music.

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KEN HOWARD

Brian Mulligan as Leon Klinghoffer and Nancy Maultsby as Marilyn Klinghoffer in the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis production of *The Death of Klinghoffer*.

PREPARING FOR **KLINGHOFFER**

Opera has never been immune from controversy: Verdi, Mozart, Strauss, Mussorgsky and Britten mined biblical and historical conflicts, often shaping them into allegories of contemporary politics. In our own era, Robert Ward, Carlisle Floyd and Jake Heggie have tackled, respectively, demagoguery, corruption and the death penalty. John Adams, winner of the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for *On the Transmigration of Souls*, an oratorio in memory of the victims of the September 11th terrorist attacks, has frequently turned to profound global events as inspiration for his operas, including *Nixon in China* (1987) and *Doctor Atomic* (2005).

But few works in the modern operatic repertoire have inspired as much controversy as *The Death of Klinghoffer*, in which Adams and librettist Alice Goodman explore the 1985 hijacking of the cruise ship *Achille Lauro* by the Palestinian Liberation Front and the brutal murder of Leon Klinghoffer, an innocent, wheelchair-bound Jewish-American businessman. Though *The Death of Klinghoffer* has been increasingly presented by European and American opera companies, the upcoming Metropolitan Opera production has reignited protests from local and national leaders of the Jewish community.

OPERA America President/CEO **MARC A. SCORCA** spoke with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis General Director **TIMOTHY F. O'LEARY** about OTSL's groundbreaking 2011 production of *The Death of Klinghoffer*, hailed by *The New York Times* as "insightful and humane," and how OTSL anticipated community concerns by embracing a strategy of interfaith dialogue.

MAS: Was the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis decision to produce *The Death of Klinghoffer* in 2011 made purely for artistic reasons, or did you set out to perform an opera that would be the basis of a larger community dialogue?

TFO: The decision to produce *Klinghoffer* was initially made because it is a great work, a powerful work. I had attended the concert version at Brooklyn Academy

of Music in 2003. It was an audience full of post-September 11th New Yorkers, and they responded with great emotion to a work about extremism, terrorism and an act of murdering a single innocent person. It was one of the most moving experiences I'd ever had in a theater. The identification of the audience with the character of Marilyn Klinghoffer was so strong, especially in the opera's final moments when she sings of how she has

memorized her husband's face, which she will never see again. It was only years later when we began considering the work for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis that I came to realize how controversial it had been when it was first produced in 1991.

MAS: When did you bring *Klinghoffer* to the table for consideration? What was the reaction of your creative team?

TFO: It was actually the first meeting

that Jim Robinson and I had just after he had been appointed artistic director and I was coming in as general director. We were thinking about future seasons, and it was natural for us to consider *The Death of Klinghoffer*. Opera Theatre had recently had an important success with *Nixon in China*. Ours was the first production of *Nixon* in twenty years, and that would again be the case with *Klinghoffer*. After that meeting, I went about doing the needed research and learned about its controversial history.

MAS: Had you already committed to producing it?

TFO: Not yet. Once I realized how much concern we might face, I began thinking about how it might nevertheless be a positive experience for our community. I believe it is our job not only to create beauty but to build community, and I thought that we could produce the work in a way that our whole community would be proud of. I also hoped it could foster needed dialogue. This was around the time when religious intolerance was becoming disturbingly pronounced in America. The September 11th commemoration started becoming increasingly politicized and polarizing. It seemed to me that there was a real need for talking about our common humanity across religious differences.

MAS: Did the research make you hesitate, or did it affirm your desire to do the work?

TFO: It made me stop and think. I needed to be convinced in my bones that the opera was what I believed it was — a work of insight and beauty about the common humanity of ordinary people, a work that condemns violence and extremism and especially condemns the murder of an innocent civilian. That is how I'd experienced it as an audience member, so it was important for me to go back and read everything that had been written about the opera. I watched the Penny Woolcock film version multiple times and spent many hours with the libretto. I needed to feel certain it was a work I could stand behind.

MAS: When did you engage your board in the conversation?

TFO: We involved the board to a much greater degree than we normally would in this selection. Charles MacKay, my predecessor as general director, gave me a great piece of advice. He said, "Why don't you put together an ad hoc committee of the board to do the same kind of research you have done?"

Knowing that the Jewish community had been particularly sensitive about the opera, we made sure the committee, about ten or twelve people, had a balance of Jewish and non-Jewish members. We gave them a stack of articles, some of which were famously opposed to the opera, and we asked them to spend time with the CD, the DVD of the film version and the libretto. When they'd reviewed the material, we met to discuss whether this was a good project for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

MAS: Was there a lively discussion? What was the outcome of that process?

TFO: There really wasn't a lot of debate. Everyone agreed it was a good project for us, but the committee wisely advised that we do it later than we had initially planned. We had penciled it into the 2010 season, and they suggested that we wait at least another year to give me more time as Opera Theatre's new general director to get to know the community before embarking on something that could be so challenging.

MAS: By virtue of this ad hoc committee, you had already initiated a community conversation. Was this conversation part of the decision-making process that led you to approve presenting the opera?

TFO: We knew that if the opera was going to have a different life this time, it had to be preceded by community dialogue so that our intentions were clear.

If you really believe in the role of the arts in human life, that the arts are a force for connection and understanding, that

the arts bring out the best in all of us, *The Death of Klinghoffer* seems an important opportunity to address an issue that affects Americans deeply, in this case the issue of terrorism.

MAS: How long did you wait before extending the conversation to a wider array of community leaders?

TFO: We began a year and a half before we did the production. One of the first calls was to the director of the Holocaust Museum in St. Louis, with whom we had just collaborated on *Brundibár*, the children's opera that was originally performed by captives in the Theresienstadt concentration camp. She introduced me to the executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council in St. Louis, Batya Abramson-Goldstein. Batya first took a deep breath, then agreed to get involved. Through her long work with the St. Louis Interfaith Partnership, she brought deep experience and a network of people across faiths with interest in the kind of community dialogue that we were hoping to engender. In particular, the recently formed Michael and Barbara Newmark Institute for Human Relations at the Jewish Community Relations Council was looking for projects like this that could bring people together in a constructive and respectful dialogue.

As our project began, we were met with a lot of enthusiasm, in part, I believe because the situation of intolerance in America seemed to be worsening. Terry Jones, the pastor in Florida, was infamously threatening to burn the



KEN HOWARD

A scene from the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis production of *The Death of Klinghoffer*.



An interfaith symposium held at The Ethical Society of St. Louis, featuring (left to right) Batya Abramson-Goldstein of the Jewish Community Relations Council, David Greenhaw of Eden Theological Seminary, Dr. Ghazala Hayat of the Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis, Timothy F. O'Leary of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and Dr. Gerald Early of Washington University.

Quran. People were feeling an urgent need to rise above that hatred in our own country. Here was an artistic work that could actually play a truly needed role in the civic life of our own community.

Batya invited me to the Council's annual luncheon that year, where it happened that their community service award was being given to Ghazala Hayat, a doctor who was the previous chair of the Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis and had worked on a number of Jewish-Muslim interfaith activities. She gave a beautiful speech: She said that although we in St. Louis cannot ourselves solve the problems in the Middle East, we can do something in our community. We can get to know one another. We can create the opportunity for peace and understanding here. Dr. Hayat became one of the original committee members for the Interfaith Steering Committee we put together to help Opera Theatre plan its community activities surrounding *The Death of Klinghoffer*.

MAS: What were the mechanics of that committee?

TFO: The committee included about ten people, in addition to Opera Theatre staff, and it met three times over the course of a year. The committee was intentionally created with equal representation of Jewish, Muslim and Christian community leaders, including some clergy. It was a committee of committed, intelligent, thoughtful people. We played excerpts of the film. We gave them the same stack of reading material given to our board committee. We explained our interest in the opera. Nevertheless, even

with the experience of all of those people in the room, this was a daunting task.

MAS: Daunting? Why?

TFO: Because of the very high degree of emotion that surrounds anything that addresses the conflicts in the Middle East, especially the Palestinian and Israeli conflict. That is not the subject of *The Death of Klinghoffer*, but it is the backdrop.

MAS: What was the response of this steering committee? What else did they do?

TFO: We brought them back together and asked, "What should we plan in St. Louis that can lead to constructive dialogue?" And they became our planning committee for a whole series of events in town. We presented a symposium featuring members of that committee, which was moderated by a prominent scholar in town, Dr. Gerald Early, director of the Center for the Humanities at Washington University.

We put together a post-performance discussion led by alumni of a teen dialogue group, sponsored by the Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis and the Jewish Community Relations Council. The group is called "JAM," which stands for "Jews and Muslims." The *St. Louis Jewish Light* newspaper, the Jewish Community Center and the Jewish Community Relations Council inaugurated a discussion series called "Can We Talk?," at which I was a panelist. More events were spawned as a result.

MAS: Opera companies often convene conversations, but these are frequently attended only by devoted subscribers and donors. Did your pre-production activities reach communities you had never had contact with before?

TFO: Yes. The key to doing so was the partnerships. Nearly a thousand people came to these events. There were people who attended who wouldn't have otherwise shown interest in the opera. The story became the topic of a front-page article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. The whole series of projects became the subject of an hour-long television show produced by our PBS affiliate. As the *Post-Dispatch* put it, the projects had led to "an outbreak of interfaith understanding and civility."

MAS: Even if you were having these conversations, were there complaints about your doing *Klinghoffer*? Were there protests?

TFO: I think it's accurate to say that all of the negative letters and e-mails I received came before the production. I don't think I received a single complaint from somebody who actually attended the opera. The strongest opposition came in the form of an op-ed in the *St. Louis Jewish Light* written by the regional director of the Anti-Defamation League in St. Louis that opposed the content of the opera. Even this was part of a dialogue, though, because it ran alongside an op-ed that I wrote describing Opera Theatre's reasons for producing the opera.

In general, the people who wrote letters of complaint did not attend the opera. And I certainly respected their point of view and decision not to attend. People's beliefs about these kinds of issues are deeply held. And I learned a great deal during the course of the process about exactly why emotions run so high surrounding these issues.

MAS: Were there any protests at performances?

TFO: There were no protests. One thing we took care to do was to respond personally to anyone who sent a letter or an e-mail expressing concern that we were performing *Klinghoffer*. In each case, I wanted to make a human connection and let the person know that I understood why they were concerned and where they were coming from, but I hoped that they would attend the performance and gain an understanding of how we interpreted the opera. Usually I wrote back, but sometimes I picked up the phone and called the person.



KEITH IAN POLAKOFF

Productions of *The Death of Klinghoffer* by English National Opera (left) and Long Beach Opera (right).

MAS: Not every general manager is in a position to respond personally to everyone who voices an opinion. Do you think the size of your community and stature of your company made it easier than it might be in a larger city?

TFO: St. Louis is often called “a big small town.” There are only so many degrees of separation between any of us. We produce a festival season of four operas each year and have nine or ten months in between, which gives us the luxury of time for planning this kind of activity. So there were definitely natural attributes of the community of St. Louis and of the structure of Opera Theatre, which has a history of producing work that is both of high quality and forward-looking relevance.

MAS: The theater community touches on incendiary topics all the time, and yet controversy rarely arises. People go or don’t go. But an opera company does a challenging work and it evokes conflict in the community. Why is opera different?

TFO: I’ve given a lot of thought to whether *The Death of Klinghoffer* would be as controversial if it were not an opera. Much of its strength as a work of art is, of course, the incredible score that John Adams and Alice Goodman created, which draws on opera’s ability to affect our emotions through visceral connection. There is a “bigness” to opera that raises the emotional impact of a work, whatever its topic. I remember feeling that way when I attended *Dead Man Walking*. At the pivotal moment — the execution — the music stops. The emotional impact of that silence is overwhelming precisely because it has interrupted an evening of such powerful music and theater. I also think that opera companies are often perceived

as being representative of a certain kind of establishment. We are seen as a civic asset, as a cultural organization with a special responsibility to our community. It’s our job to do art that is resonant and that challenges the audience, but it’s also our job to do so responsibly and thoughtfully.

By raising the temperature of civic engagement, the arts provide some of the last places on earth where people of very different political persuasions sit right next to one another — experiencing the same strong emotions for the same reasons at the same time, and bonding over that experience.

MAS: Opera does not typically present stories about ordinary people in extraordinary situations.

TFO: I think that’s part of why an opera about an event as horrific as the murder of Leon Klinghoffer stirs such an emotional reaction, especially among people who have not seen or heard it. In popular stereotypes, opera characters are caricatures of extreme emotion. The iconic image of the bellowing woman with horns is a cartoon image of what opera is, and if that’s your only image of the art form and you haven’t experienced an operatic treatment of a contemporary story that deals with a human being subjected to inhuman violence, it’s going to be hard to imagine a piece as excellent and powerful and insightful as *The Death of Klinghoffer*.

John Adams won the Pulitzer Prize for *On the Transmigration of Souls*, which is about the September 11th attacks. It is a

great piece of music about the enormity of a global event. *The Death of Klinghoffer* is about the murder of a single innocent person, but it puts the historic problem of inhumanity and violence in terms that become deeply emotional for the audience. Often art can help us understand large phenomena through specific stories, and I think that’s the power of *The Death of Klinghoffer*.

MAS: Did your experience with *Klinghoffer* influence the way you approached your production of *Champion*, which also explores the tragic experience of a real person?

TFO: Yes. Based on the great experience with the steering committee approach to relationship-building in our community, we created what we called an “engagement and inclusion task force” the year before we produced *Champion*, which deals with a gay African-American athlete in the 1960s. We wanted to make sure again that we were inspiring the right kind of conversations about this work. The task force included several leaders from the LGBT community as well as leaders from the African-American community. The fact that we had those leaders at the same table with Terence Blanchard, the composer, allowed them to learn firsthand what the work was going to be and why he had decided to tell that story.

MAS: It sounds like you at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis believe that opera should tackle issues with contemporary resonance and that it is not sufficient for opera to simply live in the realm of nostalgic entertainment.

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Timothy F. O'Leary, general director of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

TFO: It's our job to present the public with artistic works, some that delight and entertain, but also some that challenge us and push us out of our comfort zones so that we have the opportunity to reflect on who we are and what it means to be human. And by raising the temperature of civic engagement, the arts provide some of the last places on earth where people of very different political persuasions sit right next to one another — experiencing the same strong emotions for the same reasons at the same time, and bonding over that experience.

In June 2011 the interfaith community was exploring appropriate commemorations for the upcoming tenth anniversary of September 11th. This time, Batya Abramson-Goldstein reached out to me. After the *Klinghoffer* experience, she invited us to help *them* organize a musical event. I said yes immediately, and we continue to be deeply involved in that annual commemoration. Once you've developed strong ties with people in your community, those relationships can continue for years to come, and you find new opportunities to utilize those connections for future projects in ways that you could have never predicted when you did the first project.

We are currently working with several of our colleagues from the *Klinghoffer* project on how we can help our community heal from the tragic violence now occurring in Ferguson.

MAS: Does the entire *Klinghoffer* experience continue to influence your artistic decision-making?

TFO: I think our responsibility is to do what resonates and what challenges. I would not say it's our responsibility to do anything that unnecessarily provokes. I think that's an important judgment that we have to make all the time — the difference between producing art that is important versus agitprop. There are organizations that should do those kinds of works, but that's not what I think a cultural organization that represents a whole community is supposed to do. We have to make sure that we're doing things that we believe in for the right reasons, and that we communicate with our community about why we're doing them. ●



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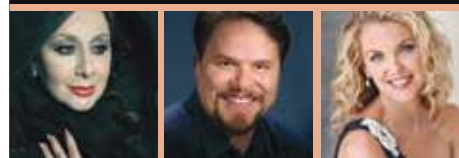
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Opening weekend of the 2015 Savannah Music Festival, Friday evening, March 20, and Sunday matinée, March 22, 2015, at the historic Lucas Theatre for the Arts in downtown Savannah, Georgia.

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PATRICIA K. JOHNSON

OPERA CONFERENCE 2014: AUDIENCES REIMAGINED

More than 600 individuals representing over 200 organizations attended *Opera Conference 2014: Audiences Reimagined* in San Francisco from June 20-23, setting an all-time OPERA America conference attendance record. Hosted by **SAN FRANCISCO OPERA**, this year's conference raised several salient questions about engaging audiences: How can the field respond to the ever-shifting demographic of operagoers? How can a company build interest in opera from the ground up rather than trying to mold audiences to its own predetermined agendas? How can opera, both new and old, speak to the pressing needs and interests of communities?

The conference's Opening Session set the stage for answering some of these questions and demonstrated the power of collaboration in spurring new works and imagining new audiences. Frederica von Stade and composer Jake Heggie spoke with OPERA America President/CEO Marc A. Scorca about their particularly fruitful singer-composer relationship, and von Stade sang an aria Heggie wrote for her in *Dead Man Walking*. Another collaboration also garnered applause: Heggie announced that **THE DALLAS OPERA** and **SAN DIEGO OPERA** would be co-producing his forthcoming opera *Great Scott*, with a libretto by Terence McNally, about



CLAUDINE GOSSETT / DREW A. HIZER PHOTOGRAPHY

Top: Alan Brown delivers a General Session talk titled "Achieving Civic Impact." Above: Peggy Kriha Dye, artistic director of Opera Columbus, and bass-baritone Eric Owens, a newly elected member of OPERA America's Board of Directors, at the Host Company Reception.

a diva who performs an obscure bel canto opera in her football-obsessed hometown. The session closed with a medley from *Les Misérables* sung by the Young Musicians Choral Orchestra, on whose board von Stade serves, which displayed the artistry achievable by music programs for teens.

Alan Brown, principal of the arts consulting firm WolfBrown, delivered a General Session talk titled "Achieving Civic Impact," which encouraged conference attendees to pursue artistic vibrancy while deepening the community impact of the operas they present. Brown challenged attendees to

be responsive to whatever circumstances they face in their cities or towns and, at one point, asked them how their companies would remain relevant if faced with a catastrophic event — such as a fire at their primary venue. Attendees' solutions included bussing opera singers to the suburbs, performing in karaoke bars, collaborating with social justice organizations on new commissions and pooling resources with fellow performing arts organizations. "So here's a pack of matches, folks," Brown joked, urging attendees to ignite flexible thinking in their approaches to civic engagement.

A new initiative at this year's conference was a General Session examining user experience (UX), a term used to describe the ways consumers interact with products and services. The session featured several ten-minute presentations on a range of topics — from health care innovations to digital learning interfaces — that, while not ostensibly related to the performing arts, could inspire potential applications for the opera field (see page 8). For example, Paul Chasan of the San Francisco Planning Department spoke on "parklets" — pockets of green space reclaimed from the urban landscape — and provoked discussion on how art can be incorporated, quite literally, into the fabric of a community and how opera can partake in this sort of placemaking.

The conference concluded with a panel discussion titled "Leadership Begins at the Top," moderated by Marc A. Scorca, which featured three prominent opera board leaders: John A. Gunn, chairman of **SAN FRANCISCO OPERA**; Carol F. Henry, chairman of **LOS ANGELES OPERA**'s Executive Committee; and Kenneth G. Pigott, president of **LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO**. A prominent theme of discussion was how companies can balance the risk of new artistic ventures with financial realities. Carol F. Henry stressed the importance of cultivating a tightly knit, highly supportive board that is proactive in fundraising, citing the way Los Angeles Opera's board has championed new operas: "We have board members who really help us all absorb the risk by leading the charge for fundraising for things that look risky."

OPERA America's own board was enriched by the election of new officers and members. At its Annual Business Meeting, held during the conference, the Board of Directors elected Susan F.

Morris (trustee, **THE SANTA FE OPERA**) as vice-chairman and William Florescu (general director, **FLORENTINE OPERA COMPANY**) as secretary. Elected to three-year terms on the Board were Emilie Roy Corey, trustee of the National Guild for Community Arts Education; Larry Desrochers, general director and CEO of **MANITOBA OPERA**; Robert Ellis, board member of **SAN FRANCISCO OPERA** and **OPERA PARALLÈLE**; Perryn Leech, managing director of **HOUSTON GRAND OPERA**; Zizi Mueller, president of **BOOSEY & HAWKES**; Eric Owens, bass-baritone; and Jill Steinberg, board chair of **VISIONINTOART** and trustee of Original Music Workshop. ● — Nicholas Wise

To watch the conference sessions visit OPERA America's YouTube channel at youtube.com/OPERAAmerica. Resources from Opera Conference 2014 are available at operaamerica.org/Conference.



JERRY PLACKEN / MEYER SOUND

James Buckhouse, Product Innovation and Growth at Twitter, delivers a talk at the General Session on user experience (UX).



PATRICIA K. JOHNSON

EMERGING OPERA LEADERS GATHER IN NEW YORK

OPERA America's Leadership Intensive identifies promising professionals in the field of opera administration and provides them with opportunities to bolster their leadership capacity and advance their careers. After beginning their program at *Opera Conference 2014* in June, this year's participants gathered from August 18-22 at the National Opera Center in New York City for a weeklong workshop covering topics such as communication, season planning, financial management, meeting facilitation and developing new works.

Standing (left to right): Bradley Vernatter, Christopher Wybenga, Todd Calvin, Joseph Peacock, Benjamin Makino, David Krohn, Joanna Verano, Thomas Rhodes, Brittany Duncan, Ana Ablamonova, Gerald Philippe. Seated (left to right): Sean Waugh, Barbara Lynne Jamison, Ashley Magnus.

HOUSE PASSES BILL TO MAKE IRA ROLLOVER PERMANENT

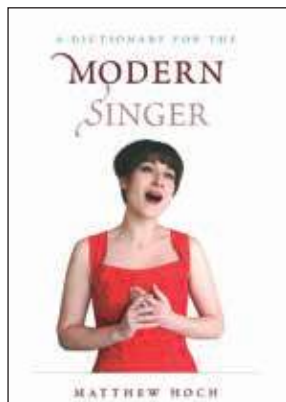
On July 17, the House of Representatives passed the America Gives More Act (H.R. 4719) to reinstate and make permanent the Individual Retirement Account (IRA) charitable rollover, a provision allowing those 70½ and older to make up to \$100,000 in tax-free charitable contributions from their IRA accounts. The legislation also extends the annual deadline for contributions from December 31 to April

15, allowing individuals to claim donations on the previous year's tax returns.

OPERA America thanks its many members who signed on to letters from Independent Sector urging Congress to reinstate the rollover. "This is a major victory for nonprofits, which are buoyed by the generosity of so many retired Americans," says OPERA America President/CEO Marc A. Scorca. "OPERA

America's members have demonstrated the power of a coordinated effort in affecting Congress, and I call upon them to maintain the momentum and propel this crucial legislation to fruition." OPERA America continues to work with other national arts service organizations and Independent Sector to explore strategies for advancing this legislation in the Senate. ● — Brandon Gryde

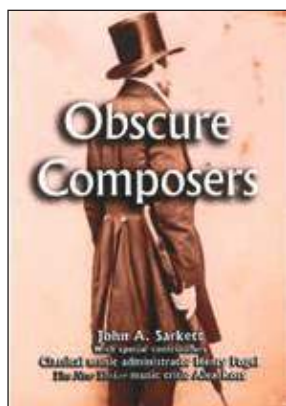
PUBLICATIONS



A DICTIONARY FOR THE MODERN SINGER

Matthew Hoch
Rowman & Littlefield

A guide for vocal students and teachers, this work introduces terms that have influenced modern singing styles, covering topics such as vocal pedagogy, voice science and health, styles, genres, performers, and diction. Also included are an extensive bibliography and appendices on stage fright, tips for practicing, repertoire selection, audio technology and non-classical styles.

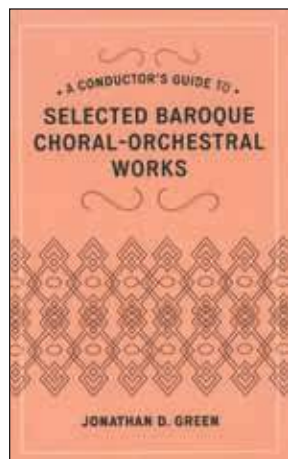


OBSCURE COMPOSERS

John A. Sarkett

The author presents profiles of more than 75 obscure composers, those rarely or never heard, from the medieval to modern eras and suggests playlists for those seeking to shake up their listening habits and explore musical rarities. A

reprinted essay by *The New Yorker* music critic Alex Ross chronicles his own discovery of composers who have fallen into obscurity.



A CONDUCTOR'S GUIDE TO SELECTED BAROQUE AND CHORAL-ORCHESTRAL WORKS

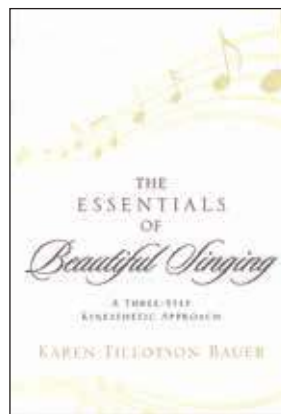
Jonathan D. Green
Rowman & Littlefield

Addressing works from Monteverdi through Bach's contemporaries, this reference volume aids conductors in selecting repertoire appropriate to their needs and to the abilities of their ensembles. For each work, the author provides text sources, duration, performing forces, available editions, locations of manuscripts, notes, performance issues, an evaluation of solo roles and difficulty, and a selected discography and bibliography.

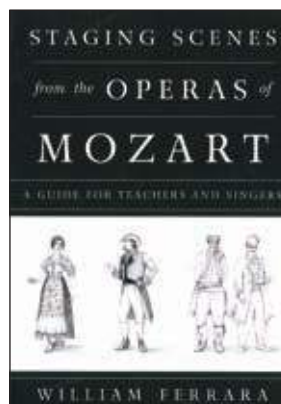
THE ESSENTIALS OF BEAUTIFUL SINGING

Karen Tillotson Bauer
Scarecrow Press

Research has revealed much about the operatic voice, but this valuable information does not necessarily translate into fine singing. Through her three-step kinesthetic approach, the author bridges this gap by reframing the



complexities of voice science with terminology that speaks directly to a singer's experience of producing sound.



STAGING SCENES FROM THE OPERAS OF MOZART: A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND SINGERS

William Ferrara
Rowman & Littlefield

A resource for directors and student performers, this work provides guidance on staging four of Mozart's most popular operas, including concrete suggestions for blocking, characterization and costuming. The author, a professor and opera director himself, surveys basic concepts of opera acting and offers step-by-step instruction for the rehearsal process.



NARRATIVES OF IDENTITY IN ALBAN BERG'S LULU

Silvio J. dos Santos
University of Rochester Press

Exploring the crossroads between autobiographical narrative and musical composition, this book investigates Berg's transformation of Frank Wedekind's *Erdgeist* and *Die Büchse der Pandora* – the plays used in the formation of the libretto for *Lulu* – according to notions of gender identity, social customs and the aesthetics of modernity in the Vienna of the 1920s and 1930s.

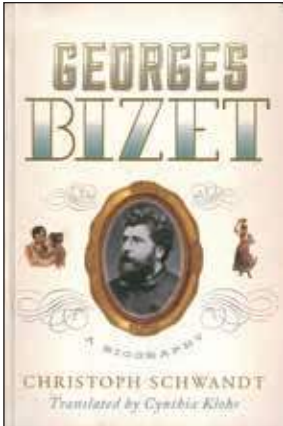


MURDER AT THE FRANKFURT OPERA

Pamela Cramer

The author, a chorus member with *Opera in the Heights*, seeks to demystify the world of opera through her new series of mystery novels.

The first in her series – a classic “whodunit” involving an American singer at the Frankfurt Opera – offers readers not only a murder mystery adventure but also a behind-the-scenes look at the life of an opera singer.



**GEORGES BIZET:
A BIOGRAPHY**

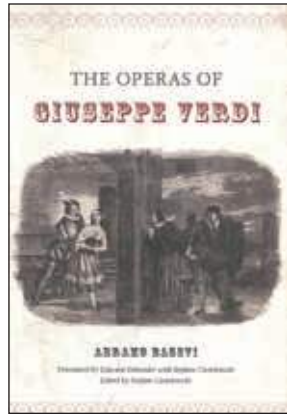
Christoph Schwandt
Scarecrow Press

This definitive work on Georges Bizet’s life, first published in 1991, has been revised and augmented, drawing on significant research gathered for a 2011 German edition – now translated into English by Cynthia Kloth. This masterful biography rewrites the historical record concerning Bizet’s achievements and restores his contributions to the world of music.

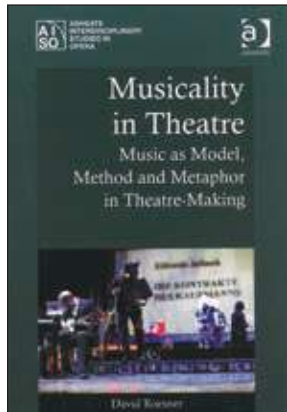
**THE OPERAS OF
GIUSEPPE VERDI**

Abramo Basevi
Translated by Edward Schneider with Stefano Castelveccchi (ed.)
University of Chicago Press

Abramo Basevi published his study of Verdi’s operas in 1859, at the height of the composer’s career. The first in-depth, systematic examination of Verdi’s operas, it covered the twenty works produced from 1842 to 1857. The present volume



includes the first complete English translation of Basevi’s work as well as critical analysis and commentary.



**MUSICALITY IN
THEATRE**

David Roesner
Ashgate

Subtitled “Music as Model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre-Making,” this work proposes a revised view of the complicated relationship between music and theater in the modern and postmodern periods. The author examines ways in which those who experimented with, advanced and revolutionized theater often used musicality in directing processes and performances. ●

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CROSSWORD

BY DAVID J. KAHN

ACROSS

- 1 Words to a boxer
- 6 Son of Telamon
- 10 Barker
- 14 Be overly theatrical
- 15 Pull up stakes, informally
- 16 Its closing duet is "O terra, addio"
- 17 Historic Virginia town since the Civil War
- 19 Letter-shaped fastener
- 20 Reverend ___ in *Elmer Gantry*
- 21 Vatican government
- 23 Strauss' ___ *Heldenleben*
- 24 Kind of warrior
- 27 Nosebag nibble
- 28 Plant problem
- 30 Suffix with humor
- 31 Deal maker
- 34 Unacceptable
- 36 Setting of 16-Across
- 37 Half of sechzehn
- 40 Cager who starred in *Kazaam*
- 42 Like many blog comments, briefly
- 43 Tumult
- 45 Far from diplomatic
- 47 It may be tall or short
- 48 Call from the field
- 49 Celerity
- 53 Stat for Miguel Cabrera
- 54 Slangy turndown
- 56 Normal
- 57 King in a Reinhard Keiser opera
- 60 Rattle of a sort
- 62 Home of the Latvian National Opera
- 63 Factory where 17-Across, 10-Down, 11-/29-Down and 39-/26-Down were created?
- 66 Venezuela is in it
- 67 Building block
- 68 *Die Fledermaus* maid
- 69 Phnom _____
- 70 Every month has one
- 71 Ja and da

DOWN

- 1 Naval engineer
- 2 Debilitate
- 3 Survival technique
- 4 Historic school near Slough
- 5 Souvenir
- 6 "The signature of civilizations," per Beverly Sills
- 7 Black shade
- 8 Honolulu Airport exchange
- 9 Love letters?
- 10 Nonviolent political protest, in India
- 11 Brainiac
- 12 Together, in music
- 13 Missing the boat
- 18 Do-do link
- 22 Idle
- 25 It precedes one
- 26 Singles player
- 29 1959 movie based on a Nevil Shute novel
- 32 Drilling type: Abbr.

- 33 *The First Emperor* composer Dun
- 35 Fashion designer Ford
- 36 Copying
- 37 Part of a Latin trio
- 38 Jam component
- 39 #1 on a table
- 41 Schönberg's *Moses und ___*
- 44 Apple thrower of myth
- 46 Shrink (from)
- 48 Used weasel words
- 50 They're usually in trunks
- 51 Have a crack at
- 52 Gets the word out?
- 55 Early times, for short
- 57 Cut short
- 58 Ready enough
- 59 Hybrid fruit
- 61 Used cars
- 64 Gray
- 65 Call in a calamity

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Solutions to the Fall and Summer puzzles can be found on page 45.

David J. Kahn is a nationally known crossword puzzle maker and opera aficionado whose puzzles have appeared in *The New York Times*. He is the author of *The Metropolitan Opera: Crosswords for Opera Lovers*.

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We gratefully acknowledge all board members, staff and volunteers of San Francisco Opera for their time and assistance in planning *Opera Conference 2014*. OPERA America also thanks the following sponsors for their generous support of the conference:



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MY FIRST OPERA

FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO



STEPHEN VOSS

Even before I experienced my first opera my passion for music and theater had already been kindled. As the daughter of a Broadway actress, Jean Sincere, I was weaned in the wings. When I was five we spent the summer in Kansas City, where she was appearing in the Starlight Theatre productions of *Oklahoma!* and *The Music Man*. I sang in the children's choruses for both. When I wasn't on stage I would sit at the stage manager's console watching everything he did. My passion for music and theater as a means of expression started then, as did my conviction to become a director. After that summer, I went home and put on my own plays in the basement.

By comparison, my first exposure to "real" opera came relatively late: I was seven. We were in London and my father, who started life as an actor and went on to a career at TWA, took me to see *Madama Butterfly* at the Royal Opera House. I can't really remember any details of the performance except the incredible volume of sound, the magnificent colors and that we were definitely sitting high up in the amphitheater. It was not a transformative experience, but it was a profound childhood sense memory, no less so than the sound of my paternal grandfather's accordion or my maternal grandmother's piano, which still sits in my living room.

It was not until my second introduction to opera that my life was changed. Then 18 years old and living in Frankfurt, I saw a production of *Jenůfa* with June Card. I clearly remember being transformed by the music and the

powerful theatrical experience, certainly more potent than the naturalism of American theater at the time. Such "aha" opera moments would occur again and again in those formative years: Patrice Chéreau's *Ring at Bayreuth*, *War and Peace* at the Bolshoi, and the many productions for which I was fortunate to assist Nathaniel Merrill and Jean-Pierre Ponnelle in America and Europe.

But the legacy of those first experiences in London and Frankfurt remain with me every time I create a new production, whether a premiere or a classic from the standard repertoire. I am constantly aware that each time I stage *Butterfly* there is someone in the audience who has seen it a thousand times sitting next to someone who is seeing it for the first time, adults as well as children, and I am responsible to all. Narrative — storytelling and character — must speak to everyone equally and profoundly.

At **Washington National Opera** and at **The Glimmerglass Festival**, we work hard to attract young audiences through educational programs, through our choice of content, as well as through family-friendly advertising and pricing. In Washington, Jeanine Tesori's *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me*, a children's opera that we premiered, easily sold out all holiday performances. This year we are

presenting Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince* and we hope it will be similarly well-received.

At both companies we have also worked hard to build our own children's choruses. Education programs and community engagement are certainly essential to building audiences in the long term, but the immediacy of being onstage, standing in the wings, meeting performers and even just hanging over the pit is the surest way to cultivate a child's love of opera. Jackson, my stepson, is possibly the most well-versed five-year-old working in opera today. He has sat through so many rehearsals and learned so many backstage terms that he could call the cues. He built the set model we use in our Glimmerglass production of *Ariadne in Naxos* and squeals every time he sees it on stage.

To get children up close to opera is to get them involved, to get them involved is to cultivate a lifelong passion — perhaps even a professional commitment to the art form. Should Jackson decide to direct, his premiere production is yet another first opera I eagerly await. ●

Francesca Zambello is artistic director of Washington National Opera and artistic and general director of The Glimmerglass Festival.



SCOTT SUCHMAN

Henry Wagner as the Angel and Solomon Howard as the Lion in *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me*, with music by Jeanine Tesori and libretto by J.D. McClatchy, based on the book by Jeanette Winterson.

Photo credits: (left to right) Peter Crane, Benjamin Heller, Atisha Paulson, Dorian Sijec Petek, Jill Steinberg, and Noah Stern Weber.

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