



NEWSLETTER

November 2011

Board and Officers Elected

The persons below have been elected to serve for the term of Feb. 1, 2012 to Jan. 31, 2013.

The Presidents's term will expire Jan. 31, 2014. The election took place at the general membership meeting of Oct. 25, 2011.

Officers

President - Susan English

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Opera Traveler Santa Fe Opera's 55th Season

by Susan English

The Festival Season, held in Santa Fe's beautiful opera house under the New Mexico stars, included five operas: *Faust*, *La Bohème*, *Wozzeck*, *Griselda*, and *The Last Savage*. Included in their Apprentice Singers Program were two of Opera San José's Resident Artists: tenor Michael Dailey and baritone Evan Brummel. Also, many alumni of Merola and former Adler Fellows were featured.

The *New Mexican* noted on July 2, 2011: "The Santa Fe Opera launched into its 55th season Friday night with its first-ever production of Charles Gounod's *Faust*, and it proved so colorful, fun and upbeat that (it) left the audience no choice but to smile. That reaction is not a given with *Faust*, which deals with tragic themes and destructive characters." Judging by the sales of tickets to this production, it was very well received.

Puccini's *La Bohème* was also a popular ticket this season. David Lomeli, a 2008 alumnus of the Merola program was singled out for praise by *Ionarts*: "As heard last night, under a menacing, dark-clouded and lightning-streaked sky, the cast was, with a few exceptions, excellent. David Lomeli's Rodolfo made the biggest splash, in his Santa Fe debut:

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Opera Traveler

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a winner of the 2006 Operalia Competition, the Mexican tenor sang with heroic poise, with seemingly boundless energy and control and is definitely a singer to watch.” Opera San José’s Michael Dailey sang Parpignol.

The *New York Times* reviewed two of this summer’s operas. On August 14, 2011, Tommasini wrote of *The Last Savage*: “The Santa Fe Opera has gambled that in this year of Menotti’s centennial the time has come for a fresh look at (this opera). A colorful, antic-filled and shamelessly campy production, directed by Ned Canty, opened here last month. On Thursday night the audience laughed and cheered Menotti’s inane entertainment.” He goes on to say, “I was glad for the chance to see this curious rarity. The gifted cast, headed by the appealing bass-baritone Daniel Okulitch...was uninhibitedly exuberant. George Manahan led a vibrant account of Menotti’s score, which has moments of rare invention amid much lightweight filler.” Both Michael Dailey and Evan Brummel sang parts in this production.

The second opera to garner attention from the *New York Times* was Alban Berg’s *Wozzeck*. Tommasini (8-14-11) noted, “Still after *The Last Savage* I almost needed to hear Berg’s profound and shattering *Wozzeck*. As the oppressed, delusional Wozzeck – a lowly soldier forced to do menial tasks to scrape out a living for his common-law wife, Marie, and their young son – the excellent baritone Richard Paul Fink gave an anguished and emotionally volatile performance. The entire cast was strong... What a one-two punch of evenings at the opera. Still credit the Santa Fe company with presenting two works side

by side that are polar opposites in everyway imaginable.”

Perhaps the opera receiving the most attention this season was Vivaldi’s *Griselda*, in part due to the reputation of director Peter Sellars. The *St Louis Post* noted on August 2, 2011: “Yes, it’s another Peter Sellars production. This time he took on Antonio Vivaldi’s dramatically problematic *Griselda*, and updated it to reflect his usual themes: The world is a horrible place, people are no damned good, and the Establishment is the root of all evil...I heard a spectacular cast offer some wonderful singing despite the dreary staging.” The *Los Angeles Times* reviewed this opera on August 1, 2011: “...there is tremendous music to be found in Vivaldi’s operas if not cohesive drama. And by putting its trust in a trio of L. A. artists - Sellars, Gronk and Gershon – Santa Fe Opera allowed *Griselda* to bloom, like a wildflower, in the desert.”

Quite a collection of diverse opera offering comprised this 55th season. Next year’s operas will include: Puccini’s *Tosca*, Bizet’s *The Pearl Fishers*, Rossini’s *Maometto II*, Szymanowski’s *King Roger*, and Strauss’ *Arabella*. Will you be traveling to Santa Fe for this 56th Festival next summer? ###

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San José Opera Guild

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Career Updates: Nina Gherardi

Calendar: Connie Zilles

Career Updates

AN UPLIFTING STORY

Mezzo Soprano **Zheng Cao**, (Merola 1994) (Adler 1995) was born during China's cultural revolution. She arrived in San Francisco on December 17, 1988, with two suitcases and \$45 in hand. She was 17 years old. She managed to acquire the formal training which eventually allowed her to sing on America's grandest stages. She sang the role of Ruth in San Francisco Opera's world premier of *The Bonesetter's Daughter*. Cao fell briefly at the end of the first act of that production. Seven months later she was diagnosed with "stage four" lung cancer and given six months to live. She now took on the "role" of fighting for her life during which time she had great support from her family and friends. The woman she describes as diva, mentor and angel, mezzo soprano **Frederica von Stade**, was by her side and remained there for almost two years. David Larson, one of the doctors on her management team, was able, at her request, to save her voice. They eventually fell in love and are now married. There is no cure for her illness, but for now she is in remission. Cao says, "singing has such a different meaning now, knowing that I could have lost it all."

OPERA SAN JOSE

The following former resident artists returned for Opera San José's Living Legends to perform and to share memories of their time as resident artists.

Julie Makerov, soprano (2001-2003), recently performed in Saltzburg where she thrilled audiences as Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* with The Mozarteum Orchestra under the baton of Sir Ivor Bolton. Julie has performed with Seattle Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Sarasota Opera, to name a few. She will

make her debut with Lyric Opera of Chicago this season.

Lori Philips, Soprano (1995-1996), has performed across the world with many opera companies—Seattle Opera, Hawaii Opera Theater, Opera Lyra Ottawa, New York City Opera, and many more. In May, 2010 Lori made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, which was broadcast on Sirius Satellite Radio. Lori was not able to attend the Living Legends event in person because of a prior commitment, but she sent a video which was presented at the Living Legends program.

Michele Detwiler, Mezzo-Soprano (2001-2007), sang in 18 productions ranging from lyric to dramatic repertoire while at OSJ. Michele has sung with Sacramento Opera, West Bay Opera, Trinity Lyric Opera, San Francisco Lyric Opera, and Symphony Silicon Valley. She spoke with great fondness of her time at OSJ and of the many friends she made there.

Jason Detwiler, baritone (2002-2006), will return to OSJ this season to sing Tonio in *Pagliacci*. Jason has performed nationally with Opera Idaho, San Diego Opera, Virginia Opera, and many more.

Cybele Gouverneur, Mezzo-soprano (2007-2009), is currently singing the role of Delila in West Bay Opera's production of *Samson et Delila*. This fall she will return to San Francisco Opera as Mercedes in *Carmen for Families* and will understudy the role of Mercedes for the main stage production. Recent performances include the roles of Schwertleite (*Die Walküre*) and Alisa (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) with San Francisco Opera. ###

Calendar

November 12, 13, 17, 19, 20, 22, 25, 27
Opera San José *La Voix Humaine* by Poulenc
and *Pagliacci* by Leoncavallo, California The-
ater, San Jose, 8pm except Sundays at 3pm,
tickets 408-437-4450 or www.operasj.org

November 5, Metropolitan Opera Simul-
cast in HD, *Siegfried* (new production) by
Richard Wagner, live at CineArts Oakridge
20, 225-7340; Santana Row 6, 554-7010; and
AMC Eastridge Mall 15, 274-2274. Simul-
casts are at 10am and cost \$24.00 for adults,
\$22.00 for seniors. (The encores which occur
later are at 6:30 pm and cost \$22.00 for adults
and \$20.00 for seniors.) The exact starting
time may vary with the opera as occasional-
ly does the price so these should be checked
with the theater.

November 16, Met HD Encore, *Don
Giovanni* by Mozart, 6:30 pm. See Nov. 5 for
more information.

November 19, Metropolitan Opera Simul-
cast in HD, *Satyagraha* by Philip Glass, live
at CineArts Oakridge 20, 225-7340; Santana
Row 6, 554-7010; and AMC Eastridge Mall
15, 274-2274. See Nov. 5 for more informa-
tion.

December 3, Metropolitan Opera Simul-
cast in HD, *Rodelinda* by George Handel, live
at CineArts Oakridge 20, 225-7340; Santana
Row 6, 554-7010; and AMC Eastridge Mall
15, 274-2274. See Nov. 5 for more informa-
tion.

December 7, Met HD Encore, *Satyagraha* by
Glass, 6:30pm. See Nov. 5 for more information,

December 10, Metropolitan Opera Si-
mulcast in HD, *Faust* by Charles Gou-
nod (new production), live at CineArts
Oakridge 20, 225-7340; Santana Row 6,

554-7010; and AMC Eastridge Mall 15,
274-2274. See Nov. 5 for more information.

January 4, Met HD Encore, *Rodelinda* by
Handel, 6:30 pm. See Nov. 5 for more infor-
mation

January 11, Met HD Encore, *Faust* by
Gounod, 6:30 pm. See Nov. 5 for more infor-
mation

January 21, Metropolitan Opera Simulcast
in HD, *The Enchanted Island* (new produc-
tion), live at CineArts Oakridge 20, 225-7340;
Santana Row 6, 554-7010; and AMC East-
ridge Mall 15, 274-2274. See Nov. 5 and Feb.
8 for more information.

January 31, 2012 Opera San José *La Tra-
viata* Preview by Verdi at the Dr. MLK Jr. Li-
brary: Fourth & San Fernando Streets 12:00
PM - 1:00 PM

February 8, Metropolitan Opera Encore in
HD, *The Enchanted Island*, at Santana Row
6, 6:30pm. Your opera guild is considering
having a dinner prior to this very interesting
sounding performance. Please let Susan Eng-
lish suenglish@yahoo.com know if you think
you would be interested. This is not a reserva-
tion, we are trying to gauge interest. What is
this new opera about? This is the description
on the Met HD website.

In one extraordinary new work, lovers of
Baroque opera have it all: the world's best
singers, glorious music of the Baroque mas-
ters, and a story drawn from Shakespeare.
In *The Enchanted Island*, the lovers from
Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
are shipwrecked on his other-worldly island
of *The Tempest*. Inspired by the musical pas-
tiches and masques of the 18th century, the
work showcases arias and ensembles by Han-

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New Members, Address Changes Tel. No. Changes

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Calendar

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del, Vivaldi, Rameau, and others, and a new libretto devised and written by Jeremy Sams. Eminent conductor William Christie leads an all-star cast with David Daniels (Prospero) and Joyce DiDonato (Sycorax) as the formidable foes, Plácido Domingo as Neptune, Danielle de Niese as Ariel, and Luca Pisaroni as Caliban. Lisette Oropesa and Anthony Roth Costanzo play Miranda and Ferdinand. The dazzling production is directed and designed by Phelim McDermott and Julian Crouch (*Satagraha* and the Met's 125 anniversary gala). Approx. running time: 3hrs, 35min. ###

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AN INVITATION TO JOIN

Established in 1947, the San José Opera Guild was formed to promote the appreciation and enjoyment of the operatic arts and to provide both volunteer and financial support to opera.

The Guild incorporated in September 1958 as a non-profit corporation under the laws of California. The original purpose of the Guild has not changed over the years since its founding. Financial support of promising young artists in the community is a high priority for the Guild, which helps sponsor singers each year at Opera San José, and the Merola Opera Program, as well as other opera groups.

Throughout the year, the Guild sponsors lectures and previews at three different venues to coincide with the San Francisco Opera and Opera San José's seasons.

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Membership Individual	\$45
Levels: Under 30	\$30
Family	\$60
Organization	\$75
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Total	\$ _____

Make check payable to SJOG
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