



NEWSLETTER

Argo Gherardi, Editor

November, 2007

BOARD ELECTION NOV. 13, 2007

On September 12, the Board of Directors accepted the recommendations of the Nominating Committee as follows:

OFFICERS

President, Ann Haggerty
Vice President, Myrna Fleckles
Recording Secretary, Margaret Boddy
Corresponding Secretary, Nina Gherardi
Treasurer, Norman Tarowsky
Parliamentarian, Gerald Pighini

NEW DIRECTORS

Wendy Dewell
Hannelore Romney
Doug Turner
Connie Zillis
Steve Zillis

DIRECTORS RETURNING FOR 2008 TERM

Corinne Elliott Carter	Mary E. Riley
Dominic A. Donato	Joan Shomler
Susan English	Jack H. Silveira
Jan Eurich	Margaret B. Slemmons
Lea F. Frey	Ginger Stoddard
Argo Gherardi	Alice Swanson
Peggy Heiman	Elliot Swanson
Joy Hulme	Dorothy Tarowsky
Judy Jaeger	Beth Weymer
Olga Nespole	Phyllis Whitney
	Lari Yamaguchi

Serving on the Nominating Committee were Nina Gherardi (Chair), Susan English, Peggy Heiman, Margaret Slemmons and Beth Weymer.

The election of officers and directors will take place at the final Fall lecture at the Montalvo Center on November 13. Please plan to attend and cast your vote.

GALA BENEFIT CONCERT WEST VALLEY COLLEGE THEATER

The West Valley Masterworks Chorale is celebrating the **30th anniversary** of its founding with a Gala Benefit Concert in the West Valley College Theater Sat., Dec. 8, 2007 at 8:00PM. The program will also feature musicians from the College's other ensembles. Proceeds from the evening's festivities will go to the West Valley College Music Scholarship Fund. Our featured guest artists will be New York City Opera soprano, **Eilana Lappalainen**, a former West Valley College student, and San Francisco Opera tenor, **Stephen Guggenheim**, a resident of Saratoga. Both singers will sing from their solo repertoire as well as with West Valley choirs.

Finnish-Canadian soprano **Eilana Lappalainen** is quickly becoming one of the world's most sought after interpreters of Strauss's *Salome*. Since her 1996 role debut in the acclaimed Felsenstein production, which performed for six consecutive years, she has performed the role in major opera houses in Germany, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Japan, Canada and throughout the US.

The July 2002 Opera News review of the Seattle production states: "**Lappalainen's** extraordinary physical lightness and agility, her diverse vocal palette and her grasp of the character's complexity were deeply moving... Her dance of the seven veils is simply the best I've ever seen (including Welitsch, Borkh and Stratas – on film, perhaps the greatest Salome ever.)"

Tenor **Stephen Guggenheim** has been heralded as "a talent to be watched." "His voice is a magnificent instrument, capable of great variety." (*The Herald*) **Mr. Guggenheim's** career has taken him to the stages of the world's greatest opera houses and concert halls.

Tickets to this very special event include Dress Circle (\$100) and Conductor's Circle (\$50), both of which

include a post-concert Artists' Reception. Additional orchestra seating is also available for \$20 (sides) and \$25 (back). Tickets are now on sale through the West Valley College Choral Office.

For more information, please call 408.741.4663 or visit our website, HYPERLINK "<http://www.westvalleychoirs.org>" www.westvalleychoirs.org

LOVE IT OR HATE IT SIT BACK AND ENJOY THE BAY AREA'S CELEBRATION OF THE INIMITABLE MUSIC OF PHILIP GLASS

by Mort Levine

Back in the mid-19th century when opera was really riding high, so were composers. When Verdi or Rossini came to town, the crowds would fill the streets, cheer their hero and sing a favorite melody.

This month in the Bay Area, you may not see a wild throng following Philip Glass around or singing a favorite tune from a Glass opera. Not likely. But the world's most successful and prolific living composer is celebrating his 70th birthday here with a whole series of performances and events.

Such a description may raise more than a few objections and some hackles, especially from traditional classical music and opera lovers. Glass, early in his career, broke the mold with his minimalist, austere repetitions which were almost hypnotic for some and considered subversive by others. He even had to create his own ensemble because conventional orchestras couldn't or wouldn't do his pieces. Indeed it found responsive listeners among the young and the devotees of rock and electronic music.

He managed to cross over into the mainstream a few decades ago with music for movies like *Koyaanisqatsi* and even commercials. A raft of orchestral works and several operas brought him ever larger audiences. He also began selling lots of records, being offered a plethora of commissions and proving to be extremely prolific.

Glass also proved inspirational for other talented composers. His influence on John Adams, Steve Reich and their successors is greatly influencing music today.

David Gockley, San Francisco's general director, has worked with Glass for many years from the 1984 *Akhmaten* through to this month's *Appomattox*. He says Glass' music today is far more lyrical and richer in color than in the past. The world premiere

that opened October 5 in San Francisco is a case in point where Glass weaves intricate patterns of hymns, old marching songs and folk tunes into the fabric of the opera.

Music lovers hereabouts will find it difficult to avoid the Glass doings here in our county as well as throughout the Bay Area. Glass and his current librettist, Christopher Hampton, are giving lectures, panel discussions and forums. They began in mid September and continue through October.

Stanford's imposing Lively Arts season was launched with a Philip Glass musical setting of poems by Leonard Cohen called the *Book of Longing*. The Other Minds Festival in SF brought conductor Dennis Russell Davies to perform piano works by Glass. The San Francisco Conservatory BluePrint Festival features Glass' *Facade*. There are choral and chamber works being performed and even a special exhibit at the California Historical Society. It's an astonishing outpouring and a major league tribute.

Our opera travels over the past thirty years have brought my wife and me opportunities to sample much of Glass' output. As we reflect upon it, the range is dazzling. Among the standouts were *the Voyage*, done at NY's Met, *Dracula* in London, *The Photographer* at Santa Cruz' Cabrillo Festival, *1000 Airplanes on the Roof* at Berkeley, and *Satyagraha* at San Francisco (it will be put on at the Met again in April). True, not all were winners. One eminently forgettable work with director Robert Wilson we saw at Brooklyn Academy of Music couldn't even be recalled to memory. Nobody is perfect.

This current homage to a living composer is indeed a rarity. In our opinion, Philip Glass' success is well-deserved. But as we noted, opinions differ.

CAREER UPDATES

Two former Adler Fellows, both alumni of the Merola Opera Program, have won awards. **Karen Slack** won first prize and a check for \$50,000 at the first annual José Iturbi Foundation Competition. **Gerald Thompson** received a Kolozsvar Award from New York City Opera for his performance as Guido in Handel's *Flavio*. Bravi! Another potential award winner is **Rochelle Bard**. She is a current Resident Artist with Opera San José and has been invited to the Semi-Finals of the Seoul International Music Competition in Korea at the end of November.

Three Merola alumni performed in three of last summer's productions at the Santa Fe Opera. **Meredith Arwady** was Gaea, Daphne's mother, in Richard Strauss' *Daphne*. In the first five performances of Puccini's *La Bohème*, **Jennifer Black** was Mimi. *Così Fan Tutte* featured former Adler Fellow, **Dale Travis**, as Don Alfonso.

Although San Francisco's opera season has just begun, opera goers have seen two Merola Alumni in important roles in two operas. **Oren Gradus** sang as The Old Hebrew in Camille Saint-Saens' *Samson and Delilah*. Upcoming engagements for **Oren** include Publio in *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna, and his debut with the Los Angeles Opera as Colline in *La Bohème*. Soprano **Ji Young Yang**, a first year Adler Fellow and participant in the 2006 Merola Opera Program, made her San Francisco Opera debut as the Shepard in *Tannhäuser* and appeared again in *Appomattox* as General Lee's daughter.

One 1994 Merolini sponsored by our Guild has exciting news to report about his career. **Sean Panakkar** is currently the cover for Tybalt at the Metropolitan Opera's *Romeo and Juliet*. Beginning on January 29, 2008, **Sean** will sing Edmondo in the Met's production of *Manon Lescaut*. Performance dates include: 1/29, 2/1, 2/5, 2/9, 2/12, 2/16, 2/20, and 2/23, 2008.

Kirk Eichelberger, alumnus of both Merola and OSJ, continues to be busy. He has just completed singing Monterone in *Rigoletto* for The Opera Com-

pany of Philadelphia. In November **Kirk** will sing Louis in *A View From the Bridge*, with the Washington National Opera, at the Kennedy Center Opera House, DC. In January, **Kirk** will be the cover for Warrior in *Macbeth* at The Metropolitan Opera, then will sing as a soloist in Verdi's *Requiem* with the Oakland East Bay Symphony at the Paramount Theatre in Oakland (1/29/08).

2003 Merola alumnus, **Vale Rideout** highlights his 2007-2008 season on his website. He has sung Frank in the world premiere of *Elmer Gantry* with Nashville Opera. The Minnesota Opera cast **Vale** as Atis, in Reinhard Keiser's *Croesus*. He will be featured as a soloist in Britten's *War Requiem* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in January, 2008.

Laura Claycomb, 1989 and 1990 Merola alumna, will be performing in Texas in November. She will sing Marie in Donizetti's, *La Fille du Régiment*, with the Houston Grand Opera on November 3, 6, and 9, 2007. Also in November **Laura** will present in Dallas, Texas a recital and a master class for the National Association of Teachers of Singing Convention at the Southern Methodist University campus. In January, she will travel to London to perform as a soloist with the London Symphony Orchestra in Mahler's *Fourth Symphony*.

OSJ alumna, **Barbara Divis**, just completed singing Mimi in *La Bohème* with Opera Idaho. In this production she was joined by other OSJ alumni, **Adam Flowers**, **David Cox**, and **Jason Detwiler**. OSJ's **David Rohrbaugh** conducted. Early next year, **Barbara** will travel to Opera Santa Barbara to sing Nedda in *Pagliacci*.

December will send OSJ alumna **Christina Major** to Arizona where she will be a soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Tucson Symphony. In January she is scheduled to sing at the American Heart Association's Benefit, "Sing for Heart!" at the Hippodrome Theatre in Waco, Texas. Later that month, **Christina** will return to the Tucson Symphony to sing as a soloist in their Masterworks Series - Mozart's *Exultate Jubilate*, and Strauss' *Voices of Spring*.

Having won the LA Weekly Theater Award for Best Musical of 2006, *The Beastly Bombing* has moved to an Off Broadway run, still featuring OSJ's alumnus **Jesse Merlin** as the President of the United States. In October the musical was part of the New York Musical Theatre Festival.

OSJ alumni **Jason** and **Michele Detwiler** have moved to Boise, Idaho where they have worked with

university professors and local singers to create a non-profit organization, The Idaho CoOPERative. Their purpose is to provide opera experiences to the public, and create monthly workshops to foster up-and-coming talent. In addition to joining the OSJ alumni in Opera Idaho's *La Bohème*, **Jason** appeared in Rimrock Opera's *La Fanciulla del West*, where he worked with another OSJ alumnus, **Doug Nagel**.

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 6: SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD'S DOWNTOWN LECTURE/PREVIEW. Larry Hancock will lecture on Massenet's *Werther* at noon at the Beethoven Center, MLK Library, Fourth and San Fernando, San José. Artists from Opera San José will sing excerpts from the opera. Free admission. Co-sponsored by Opera San José and the San José Opera Guild. Information: Gerry Pighini 408-275-6199 or HYPERLINK "mailto:MrPio@msn.com"MrPio@msn.com.

NOVEMBER 6: SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD LECTURE. Cori Ellison will lecture on Verdi's *Macbeth* at 10AM at the Montalvo Arts Center, 15400 Montalvo Road, Saratoga. Members, free; non-members, \$10.

NOVEMBER 7- NOVEMBER 29: The SAN FRANCISCO OPERA will present Puccini's *La Rondine* at the War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco. Tickets \$15 to \$275. Information: 415-864-3330 or HYPERLINK "http://www.sfopera.com" www.sfopera.com.

NOVEMBER 13: SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD LECTURE. Richard Taruskin will lecture on Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at 10AM at the Montalvo Arts Center, 15400 Montalvo Road, Saratoga. Members, free; non-members, \$10.

NOVEMBER 14-DECEMBER 2: The SAN FRANCISCO OPERA will present Verdi's *Macbeth* at the War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco. Tickets \$15 to \$275. Information: 415-864-3330 or HYPERLINK "http://www.sfopera.com" www.sfopera.com.

NOVEMBER 17-DECEMBER 2: OPERA SAN JOSÉ will present Massenet's *Werther* at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street, San José. Tickets \$66 to \$88. Information: 408-437-4450 or HYPERLINK "http://www.operasj.org" www.operasj.org.

NOVEMBER 23-DECEMBER 9: The SAN FRANCISCO OPERA will present Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at the War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco. Tickets \$15 to \$275. Information: 415-864-3330 or HYPERLINK "http://www.sfopera.com" www.sfopera.com.

DECEMBER 1- DECEMBER 8: The SAN FRANCISCO OPERA will present Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* at the War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco. Tickets \$15 to \$275. Information: 415-864-3330 or HYPERLINK "http://www.sfopera.com" www.sfopera.com.

JANUARY 13: SAN JOSE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Barbara Day Turner will conduct *Saints and Sinners*, an evening of music by composer Craig Bohmler. Soloists will be mezzo-soprano Layna Chianakas and baritone Robert Orth. Sunday, 7 PM at Le Petit Trianon, 72 N 5th Street, San José. Tickets \$30-\$45. Information at www.sjco.org or 408-295-4416.

JANUARY 29: SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD'S DOWNTOWN LECTURE/PREVIEW. Larry Hancock will lecture on Verdi's *Rigoletto* at noon at the Beethoven Center, MLK Library, Fourth and San Fernando, San José. Artists from Opera San José will sing excerpts from the opera. Free admission. Co-sponsored by Opera San José and the San José Opera Guild. Information: Gerry Pighini 408-275-6199 or HYPERLINK "mailto:MrPio@msn.com"MrPio@msn.com.

Membership Update

**Additions and changes to
membership roster after August 14, 2007:**

New Members

Dermant, Kathryn & André

(408) 354-0462

110 Wood Road N102, Los Gatos, CA 95030
adseale@aol.com

Hernandez, Rose M.

(408) 776-8973

90 Park Drive, Morgan Hill, CA 95037
busylady20056@yahoo.com

King, Kitty

(408) 356-8806

17177 Crescent Drive, Los Gatos, CA 95030
kitkinglg@aol.com

Kronfeld, Lili & Paul

(650) 967-4932

1160 Buckingham Drive, Los Altos, CA 94024
lilikron@comcast.net

Moorhatch, Ruth & Bobby

(408) 227-9842

5822 Cadiz Drive, San Jose, CA 95123-3805
ruthbobby@sbcglobal.net

Oborn, Christina

(408) 279-3129

509 Hull Avenue, San Jose, CA 95125
coborn@earthlink.net

Plechaty, Esther & Michael

(408) 867-4722

20369 Thelma Avenue, Saratoga, CA 95070
mplechaty@earthlink.net

Yao, Marina

20488 Stevens Creek Blvd #1316 Cupertino, CA 95014

Address Changes

Fleckles, Myrna & David

(408) 266-4659

email address - mdfleckles@comcast.net

Laden, BunnyGould, Glen

(408) 395-0158

home address - P.O. Box 307, Saratoga, CA 95071

LeMansec, Hervé

Palmtag, Jack

(408) 293-6629

street number - 1203

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Happy Holidays

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Career Updates

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SJOG Newsletter is published
four times a year in
February, May, August, and No-
vember by
San José Opera Guild,
P.O. Box 33025,
Los Gatos, CA 95031-3025.

San José Opera Guild
c/o Argo Gherardi
P.O.Box 33025
Los Gatos, CA 95031-3025

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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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