

January Career Updates by Susan English

Opera News has focused on several Merolini this fall. In November their “Diva Issue” listed several former Merola alumni including **Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, and Ailyn Perez.** Another Merola alumna, **Adriana Chuchman,** was featured in a full page picture in their “Women to Watch in 2018-2019”. Ms Chuchman recently performed the role of Mary Hatch in Jake Heggie’s *It’s a Wonderful Life* with the San Francisco Opera. San Francisco Classical Voice (SFCV) noted of her performance, “Adriana Chuchman’s fluttering soprano was well-suited to the role of Mary; with her unaffected, girl-next-door delivery, she beautifully conveyed her character’s admiration for George in their proposal duet.” She will make her debut this season as Euridice in *Orfeo ed Euridice* at the Hamburg State Opera, then return to the Canadian Opera Company as Musetta in *La Bohème*.

Catherine Cook (Merola 1990) and **William Burden** (Merola 1991) joined Ms Chuchman in SFO’s *It’s a Wonderful Life*. Mr. Burden sang George Bailey with SFCV writing, “Tenor William Burden brilliantly captured George Bailey’s progression from dreaming idealist to suicidal cynic.” Mr. Burden created the role of George Bailey for the 2016 world premiere of *It’s a Wonderful Life* at Houston Grand Opera. He recently joined the voice faculty of the Julliard School. Four current Adler Fellows also performed in Heggie’s opera. SFCV reviewed their contribution with, “The quartet of top-ranking Angels First Class (**Sarah Cambridge, Ashley Dixon, Amitai Pati, and Christian Pursell**) performed admirably in mid-air, suspended by wire

harnesses; Heggie wrote some of his best music for them, and the singers blend exquisitely in full-bodied, hymnal harmonies.” Rounding out the contributions of Merolini to this heartwarming opera was **Patrick Summers.** SFCV noted of his performance: “conducted with festive energy by American-opera specialist Patrick Summers, came off like the vivid technicolor transformation in *The Wizard of Oz*.” Mr. Summers is the current Artistic Director and Music Director of Houston Grand Opera.

San Francisco Opera’s *Tosca* featured two Merolini in prominent roles. **Brian Jagde** sang Mario Cavaradossi and was “reprising a role he played here with authority and a thunderously exciting voice in 2012 and 2014.” (SFCV) They went on to note: “Jagde more than held his own, whether he was belting out a torture victim’s defiant “Vittoria!” at the news of a military reversal for Scarpia or caressing his way through “E lucevan le stelle.” The SF Examiner considered his performance with, “Jagde was handsome, both vocally and in appearance, making an alluring pairing with the alluring Giannattasio.” Upcoming engagements include Don Jose at Deutsche Oper and Royal Opera, Covent Garden, as well as role debuts as Enzo Grimaldo in *La Gioconda* at Barcelona’s Gran Teatre del Liceu and Don Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino* at Paris’ Opera Bastille.

Singing Cesare Angelotti in *Tosca* was Merolini, **Hadleigh Adams.** Mr. Adams also recently sang

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Valmont in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* with West Edge Opera's three-opera summer festival at the Craneway Conference Center in Richmond. *Opera News* wrote of his performance, "Baritone Handleigh Adams was an impressive Valmont, singing with dark strength and supple, expressive tone." Later this season he makes his debut with the Nederlandse National ReisOpera as Carl Magnus in Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*, and he returns to Cincinnati Opera as Mercutio in *Romeo et Juliette*.

December's *Opera News* highlighted the careers of two Merolini. In their Sound Bites article on, **Aryeh Nussbaum Choen** they noted, "The Brooklyn-born countertenor is making a mark in Baroque and contemporary music. The article considers his rise to prominence in the opera world and notes, "he'll sing King David in Handel's around the Bay Area with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra." They go on to quote Mr. Nussbaum Choen as, "My mom posted on Facebook: Most Jewish parents want their kids to be a lawyer or a doctor — but I'll take my son being King David any day."

Under the Noteworthy and Now article, the same edition of *Opera News* focused on **Quinn Kelsey** (Merola 2002). Last month he sang Germont in Michael Mayer's new staging of *La traviata* at the Met. "Kelsey heads to Europe for the title role in Zurich's *Rigoletto*, before returning stateside for Dallas Opera's *Falstaff*, in which he sings Ford." In May, he will join **Pene Pati** (Adler 2016-17) in Hawaii Opera Theater's *La Traviata* where Kelsey will sing Germont, and Pati will sing Alfredo.

January's *Opera News* focused on another Merolini in their Noteworthy and Now: **Bryan Hymel**. From his web site: "The Academy of Vocal Arts is proud to announce that alumnus Bryan Hymel joins the opera academy's staff as the Vice President of AVA. Mr. Hymel's duties will include: raising awareness of AVA on a national and international level; helping to identify and solicit

donations to AVA..." According to *Opera News*, Hymel will sing Enee in Dmitri Tcherniakov's new *Troyens* staging at Opera Bastille in January. In March he will sing in *Rigoletto* at the Met, and in April he will sing in *La Bohème* at the Vienna Staatsoper, before he returns to the Met to sing again in *Rigoletto*.

San Francisco Opera's *Arabella* featured Merolini **Scott Quinn** as Count Elmer. He has recently made role and company debuts with Danish National Opera as Fritz in *L'Amico Fritz*, Seattle Opera as Boris in *Kata Kabonova*, and at Arizona Opera as Don Jose in *Carmen*. Later this season he will make his San Diego Opera debut as the Duke of Mantua, and then travel to North Carolina Opera to sing Cavaradossi in *Tosca*.

Cavalleria Rusticana and *Pagliacci* both featured Merolini at this fall's San Francisco Opera. **Laura Krumm** sang Lola in *Cavalleria*. She has sung many roles at SFO since completing her Adler experiences. She sang Siegrune in *Die Walkure*, Javotte in *Manon*, Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, the Second Maidservant in *Elektra*, and a Maid in the world premiere of Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*. Later this season, she will return to SFO as the Kitchen Boy in *Rusalka*. **Amitai Pati** sang Beppe in SFO's *Pagliacci*.

The Merola Program often provides a Spotlight on one of the former Merolini. Recently they featured **Samantha Hankey**. "Praised as "luscious," "amber-toned," and "dazzling" by *Opera News*, mezzo-soprano Samantha Hankey is quickly establishing a name for herself. In the 2018/19 season, Samantha will make her Metropolitan Opera debut as Pantalís in *Mefistofele*, and returns to the Met throughout the year in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Carmen*, *Das Rheingold*, *Götterdämmerung*, and *Rigoletto*. She will also make her debut at Opernhaus Zürich as Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*. Samantha's 2017/18 engagements included debuts as both Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Den Norske Opera) and Siébel in *Faust* (Grand Théâtre de Genève)."

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Each year, our Guild helps to sponsor a Merola singer. In 2013 we sponsored **Zanda Svede**. Her web site considers her connection to Merola with: "Celebrating a long and fruitful relationship with San Francisco Opera since joining its summer Merola Opera Program in 2013, Zanda became an Adler Fellow in Season 2014-15 and remained for three seasons, appearing on the main stage as Flora *La Traviata*, Tisbe *La Cenerentola*, Lena in the world premiere of Marco Tutino's *Two Women*, Alisa Lucia *di Lammermoor*, Rychtarka *Jenufa*, Third Lady *Die Zauberflöte*, Suzuki *Madama Butterfly*, Maddalena *Rigoletto*, Maid *The Makropulos Case*, and Handmaiden/*The Flower* in the world premiere of Bright Sheng's *Dream of the Red Chamber*." Her upcoming schedule notes that she will join the ensemble at Oper Frankfurt this season and make her house debut as Dryade in *Ariadne auf Naxos*; later in the season she sings the title roles of Xerxes and Barrie Kosky's *Carmen*. She travels to Seattle Opera to sing further performances of *Carmen* in Paul Curren's production before the end of the 2018-19 season.



Starting Arts from Jake Lake

Starting Arts has started off its winter/spring session at full-steam ahead. We currently have roughly 30 after-school productions starting rehearsals, and an additional 30 schools started their during-school programs last week.

Most notably, we would like to thank sincerely all those from SJOG that came and saw our Dream Team Studio Production of Sweet Charity.

Exciting Opera Tours For 2019

Creative Travel Arrangers is offering two opera tours this year.

New York Metropolitan Opera Tour April 1 thru 7, 2019

Join our annual New York Metropolitan Opera tour and enjoy four memorable opera performances. It's springtime in New York City and it's an exciting place to visit and explore. The operas included on the tour with spectacular casts *Clemenza de Tito*, *Traviata*, *Don Giovanni* and *Tosca*. The tour cost of \$5,600.00 includes air transportation San Francisco/Newark, six nights at the first class hotel across from Lincoln Center and the opera house, orchestra seating for four operas, receptions, fine dining, a Carnegie Hall concert, opera lecture, museum visit and sight-seeing. Don't miss out on this exciting musical adventure.

Santa Fe Opera with host Larry Hancock, General Director of Opera San José July 25 thru July 31, 2019

Enjoy spectacular performances at the world acclaimed Santa Fe Opera. The tour cost of \$3,900.00 includes round trip air transportation San Francisco to Albuquerque, transfers, six nights at the first class hotel, orchestra seating for four operas, *Così fan tutti*, *Thirteenth Child*, *La Bohème* and *Pearl Fishers*. daily breakfasts, a reception, three dinners, opera lectures by Larry Hancock, Santa Fe Chamber music concert, sightseeing, museum pass, and a backstage tour of Santa Fe's spectacular opera house. Join Larry on this wonderful Santa Fe Opera adventure.

For any SJOG member joining one of the tours, Creative Travel Arrangers will be pleased to send the Guild a donation of \$75.00 per person.

February Calendar

by Connie Zilles

February 8, Opera San José General Director's Dinner 6:30pm, includes Symposium 3:30pm on the set of *Moby-Dick* with composer Jake Heggie and Dinner, \$600.00 (\$350 tax deductible). Purchase online or by calling (408) 437-4450. Symposium can be bought separately for \$20.00.

February 9, 10, 14, 17, 22, 24, Opera San José presents *Moby-Dick* by Heggie, California Theatre, 8pm except Sundays at 3pm. Tickets 408-437-4450 or www.operasj.org. Introduction to Opera Talks 1½ hours before the performance.

February 15, & 23, 17 & 24, *I Due Foscari* by Verdi, 8pm except Sundays at 2pm. West Bay Opera, tickets 650-424-9999 or order online www.WBOpera.org. Student, senior, and group discounts.

April 13, 6pm, Merola Opera Spring Gala, "If I We're You" named after their world premiere opera coming this summer, The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco, cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, silent auction, formal dinner, dancing, black tie suggested, \$475, 415 864-3330

April 13, 14, 18, 21, 26, 28, Opera San José presents *Madama Butterfly* by Puccini, California Theatre, 8pm except Sundays at 3pm. Tickets 408-437-4450 or www.operasj.org. Introduction to Opera Talks 1½ hours before the performance.

April 6, 2018, 5:30pm, Opera San José, 35th Anniversary Gala, Dinner of California cuisine with wine pairings, live and silent auctions followed by performances from current and former resident artists and the cast of *Madama Butterfly*. \$200 (\$90.00 tax deductible). For reservations call 408 437-4450.

Met HD Simulcasts, shown at the Century 20 Oakridge, Santana Row 6, and AMC Cupertino.

February 2, 9:55 pm: *Carmen* by Bizet, Encore February, 6, 9

March 2, 9:55am: *La Fille du Regiment* by Donizetti, Encore March 6

March 30, 9:00am: *Die Walkure* by Wagner, Encore April 3

Encores this year are generally at 1pm and 6:30 pm. Please check with theaters concerning times.

**It's Time to Renew
your annual
membership for
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Spring Lectures Venue Change

A reminder that the June 5th and 12th Spring 2019 lectures will be held at the Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos, 16575 Shannon Rd, Los Gatos.

The **June 5, 2019** lecture brings us Bruce Lamott who will be speaking on *Orlando* by George Frideric Handel

The following week, **June 12, 2019**, we will have Derek Katz talking to us on *Rusalka* by Antonin Dvorak

Save the date: June 10, 11:30: SJOG Champagne Brunch, Saratoga Country Club

Merola, Adler, OSJ Alumni Updates

by Heidi Munzinger

Ciao, Opera Mavens. Wondering where some of your favorite former Merolini, Adler Fellows, and Opera San José Resident Artists are now? Here's our Top 20 list of places to go and singers to see in the Western U.S. (plus 1 in Canada*) for the remainder of the 2018-19 season!

Leah Crocetto (Adler 2010-11) as Leonora and **Adam Lau** (Merola 2011) as Ferrando in *Il trovatore* at Seattle Opera, Jan 12-2

Sara Gartland (Adler 2010-11) as Violetta and Daniel Montenegro (Adler 2011) as Alfredo in *La traviata* at Arizona Opera (Phoenix & Tucson), Jan 25-Feb 3

Elizabeth Baldwin (Merola 2012) as Eva Crowley in *An American Dream* at Anchorage Opera, Feb 8-10

Efrain Solis (Adler 2014-15) as El Payador in *Maria de Buenos Aires* at Opera Southwest (Albuquerque), Feb 17-24

Julie Adams (Adler 2015-16) and **Andrew Bidlack** (Adler 2008-09) in *Silent Night* at Arizona Opera (Phoenix & Tucson), Mar 1-10

Janai Brugger (Merola 2010) as Servilia and **James Creswell** (Merola 2000) as Publius in *La clemenza di Tito* at Los Angeles Opera, Mar 2-24

Kristin Clayton (Adler 1994-95) as Beatrice (plus Frederika von Stade as Maddie) in *Three Decembers* at San Diego Opera, Mar 8-10

Andrew Stenson (Merola 2012) as Tamino and **Joo Won Kang** (Adler 2012-13) as Papageno in *The Magic Flute* at Utah Opera (Salt Lake City), Mar 9-17

Sean Anderson (Merola 2002) as Telramund in *Lohengrin* at Opera Southwest (Albuquerque), Mar 31-Apr 7

Daniela Mack (Adler 2008-09) as Dora-bella in *Così fan tutte* at Lyric Opera Kansas City, Mar 16-24

Nikki Einfeld (Adler 2004-05) as Gilda in *Rigoletto* at Calgary Opera*, Apr 6-12

Cecilia Violetta Lopez (OSJ 2012-14) as Marguerite and **David Pittsinger** (Merola 1986) as *Faust* at Opera Omaha, Apr 12-14

Melody Moore (Adler 2006-07) as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* at Houston Grand Opera, Apr 20-May 5

Colin Ramsey (OSJ 2016-17) as Reverend John Hale in *The Crucible* at Opera Santa Barbara, Apr 26-28

Quinn Kelsey (Merola 2002) as Ford, **Alex Mansoori** (Merola 2009) as Bardolfo, and **Mark Delavan** (Adler 1986-87) as *Falstaff* at Dallas Opera, Apr 26-May 4

Sean Panikkar (Adler 2005-06) as Nadir in *The Pearl Fishers* at Lyric Opera Kansas City, Apr 27-May 5

Elizabeth Caballero (Adler 2003) as Mimi and **Susannah Biller** (Adler 2010-11) as Musetta in *La bohème* at Austin Opera (TX), Apr 27-May 5

Thomas Hampson (Merola 1980) as Lorenzo da Ponte in *The Phoenix* (World Premiere) at Houston Grand Opera, Apr 26-May 10

Ryan Kuster (Adler 2011-12) as Figaro in *The Marriage of Figaro* at Opera Colorado (Denver), May 4-12

Daniel Sumegi (Adler 1993-94) as Zuniga and Zanda Švēde (Adler 2015-16) as Carmen at Seattle Opera, May 5-18

And last but certainly not least: **Pene Pati** (Adler 2016-17) as Alfredo and **Quinn Kelsey** (Merola 2002) as Germont in *La traviata* at Hawaii Opera Theater (Honolulu), May 17-21

Enjoy!

Heidi Munzinger

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www.operabobb.com

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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. The Guild sponsors singers each year at Opera San José, the Merola Opera Program, San Jose State Opera Workshop and supports Starting Arts.

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

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