



# GUILD VOICE

## Opera Guild of Southern Arizona



Volume 55, Issue 1      October 2013

*"Opera is credible drama now, and it costs less than going to a football game. What have you got to lose?"~~Lesley Garrett*

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** by Carol Garrard

Last year the Opera Guild of Southern Arizona received a wonderful surprise--the Jack and Lilian Kopely Trust gave us over \$19,000 to use for scholarships and grants for University of Arizona vocal students. We decided to dispense \$12,000 of it during the 2012-13 season, and that meant that a whole series of serendipities happened for students. A bass baritone was able to pay his University of Arizona tuition. A soprano was able to go to New York to sing the role of Adina from *L'elisir d'amore* with the Martina Arroyo Foundation. A baritone participated in an Opera Summer Program, Opera Nova of Costa Rica, singing the role of Peter (the father) in *Hansel & Gretel*. An undergraduate soprano was able to study at the summer festival program in Saarburg Germany--as she said, "Without the grant, I wouldn't have been able to make the trip!" Another student was able to study and sing at SongFest at Colburn School of Music in Los Angeles.

Each of these students has a voice. And to each one of them, that voice said, "Work hard." Each of these students has performed at one of our free previews for the Arizona Opera productions. Perhaps because they sounded so good, anyone in the audience might have thought that such a voice is a gift from divine providence, as if a Stradivarius had been stuck in the singer's throat at birth, and all one had to do was breathe. NO. Opera singing is a very complex art. To describe but one strand of this skein--breathing--requires using literal descriptions of specific anatomy. To breathe as an opera singer does require learning how to release the intercostal muscles--those are the ones that connect the ribs. A singer has to change the shape of the mouth when they open it to sing. The tongue cannot fall back, and the larynx must hang freely.

I could go on for pages, but the point is clear. Singing beautifully requires endless hours of study, practice, and sheer physical work. It also requires money. Everyone reading this message knows full well that our economy has suffered setbacks, and arts organizations have pulled back their support. That is why we gulped, and decided that now was the time to double, and then redouble our scholarship and grant aid to our talented students. We intend to give the same \$12,000 this 2013-14 season, which will yes, wipe out the Kopely grant, but hopefully inspire others to give a little more. These funds are in

addition to the money we disperse at **Quest for the Best**, when the audience votes on the best singers in order to make the awards. Last year we raised over \$8,000 at Quest. Please, PLEASE mark your calendar for **Saturday, March 29th, 2014 at 1:00 PM at the University's Holsclaw Hall**. This unique fundraiser allows the audience to cast ballots for their favorites, and then meet the singers during a lovely hors d'oeuvres reception. Part of the \$50.00 admission is tax deductible, and the Program offers a way to commemorate a loved one by purchasing space in the Quest program book.

Helping launch students in their vocal careers is our primary mission. We also bring the gift of opera freely to the Tucson public through our previews. And this year we have an additional gift for our members--we'll be gathering **on Sunday, January 26, 2014 at 2:00 at Atria Bell Courts for a party**. Those of you who remember the tremendous fun we had in 2011 with our British tea will be happy at this Francophile's delight. Rather than celebrating England's best time of the day, this year we will serve French coffee and pastries. Our theme is the Arizona Opera's production of *La Boèhème*, which we will preview on Thursday January 2, 2014 at our "Say Hello to Opera" series at the Oro Valley Public Library, and our "Brown Bag Opera" Friday January 24, 2014 at Grace St. Paul Episcopal Church. (Note the change in the day of the week at the Oro Valley Library location.)

Opera itself is a total performance. Singing isn't all about intercostal muscles. Singers have to look well and act the role. They to have chemistry, and convince people that they are in love, or driven by other powerful emotions. The business of opera itself is changing. What isn't changing is that it requires wonderful talent, hard work and study, and learning the craft not only in the studio but in front of an audience. The Opera Guild of Southern Arizona provides that platform in its previews, as well as the over \$400,000 we've given to student singers since we began back in 1958.

I think we're the best deal in town. And I've noticed one additional gift that the Guild offers--I've come to believe none of our members ever age. The vitality and engagement of our membership means that we "youthen." Having that level of interest makes for a vibrant life, no matter our chronological age.



## Metropolitan Opera Simulcasts

The Opera Guild has conducted this program for many years and is happy to assist students in their operatic studies.

The simulcasts are in HD (high definition) and are wonderful in that as the action occurs on stage at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, one can see it at the same moment here in Tucson.

The Opera Guild has purchased four tickets for each of the following operas:

<i>Eugene Onegin</i>	October 5
<i>La Bohème</i>	April 5

Dr. Kristin Dauphinais of the University of Arizona will distribute these tickets to deserving voice students.

These dates will not conflict with their respective school schedules. Tickets are \$24 each and give the viewer not only the complete opera, but interviews with the leading singers and conductors, backstage tours and other interesting facts that the New York opera goer will not get even with a \$200+ ticket.

We hope that our members who are reading this will also take advantage of these simulcasts and attend these Metropolitan offerings. The schedule can be found in the Directory.



## Arizona Opera Theater Announces New Directors

Ryan Taylor has been named the Company's new Director of Artistic Administration; Mindy Riesenbergs is Director of Marketing and External Affairs; and Lori Fisher is Director of Education.

Taylor is a trained baritone with a decade of performing experience and over 30 roles to his credit. He joins the AZ Opera Company from Wolf Trap Opera Company in Vienna, VA and previously worked as General Director for the Berkshire Opera Company.

A graduate of San Diego State University, Riesenbergs has directed the marketing departments at some of this country's leading cultural institutions, including the San Diego Museum of Art, Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Tex., Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland and, most recently, at Phoenix Art Museum.

Fisher, Director of Education for Arizona Opera, holds a Bachelor of Science degree in vocal performance from Radford University with an emphasis in Music Therapy and a Master's Degree in Education in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Phoenix. Fisher has performed regularly with Utah Opera Chorus for over 10 years, with Park City Singers and in communities all over Utah and the Washington DC Area.

## OGSA Directory Your Source for Opera Events

The 2013-14 OGSA Directory, given to each new member, is a wealth of information on everything opera-related in Southern Arizona. Included in the Opera Calendar are all OGSA previews, Arizona Opera and UA Opera Theater productions, master classes and recitals, and key Arizona Opera League dates. Of course you will also find all you need to know about the Guild -- officers, board and committee members, meeting dates, and how to contribute. The complete schedule of Metropolitan Opera HD Simulcasts and local theater info are on the inside back cover.

Keep the directory handy and refer to it often as you plan your opera season.

**W** Thank you all for renewing your membership. Our much in need voice students are grateful for your caring.

**E** We also thank the following new members. You have joined a wonderful organization and we look forward to meeting you at our various functions. If we have missed anyone who is a new member, please send an email to Cindy Hagerman at [cindy.ogsa@yahoo.com](mailto:cindy.ogsa@yahoo.com) as we would like to welcome you in the next newsletter.

**L** George & Velta Anast Janet & Richard Hardy

**C** Patricia Beck James Kirchoff

**O** Bonnie Bird Susan Mahoney

**M** Donald Bonneau Judith Quarry

**E** Marjorie Taylor Coleman Rita Quin

**N** Raphaela & Robert Consigli Carolie Sherard

**E** Neville & Branka Ford Ian & Ina Shivack

**M** Carolyn Goebel Maria Smith

**B** Nancy & Walter Gunn Virginia Sonett

**E** Ruth & Mike Hannley Judith Tracy

## Notes from the Past

April 1, 2007-

Accompanied by OGSA members Linda Ratcliffe and Carolyn Russo, Arizona's own, Amber Wagner, made it to the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions held in NYC on April 1, 2007 where she sang "Do not utter a word, Anatol" from *Vanessa* by Barber and "Duch, teure Halle" from *Tannhäuser* by Wagner. Amber was one of six chosen as a Grand Finals Winner. The prize included a \$15,000 check, but more important is the exposure she received throughout this experience. She also won a three year contract with the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Center. — *Today*: Amber sang Amelia in *Ballo* at the Met in December 2012 and takes on Aida at Tulsa Opera in February 2013.

## Rule Britannia! *H.M.S. Pinafore* Rules the Waves! By Carol Garrard

The Opera Guild of Southern Arizona begins the 2013-14 season previewing Arizona Opera's production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* at our "Say Hello to Opera" series, Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> at Oro Valley Library 3:00 PM, and again at "Brown Bag" 12:00 noon on Friday, October 11, at Grace St. Paul. *Pinafore* was an enormous hit at its 1878 premiere, and went on for 571 consecutive performances. Gilbert & Sullivan had found the magic touch, which they were to apply to another eight operas over the next eleven years. That magic touch was *jingism*, and that word was added to the language at the very moment Gilbert was churning out the sparkling libretto of *Pinafore*. Set to a popular music hall tune, it goes:

*We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do,  
We've got the ships, we've got the men, and got  
the money too.*

*We've fought the Bear before, and while we're  
Britons true,  
The Russians shall not have Constantinople!*

While no one remembers the librettist of this pub crawl chant, Gilbert & Sullivan perfectly captured the popular mood at a unique moment—1878—the apogee of the British empire.

In February of 1878, Benjamin Disraeli, Prime Minister, sent the British fleet to Istanbul—the former Constantinople—to defend it from possible Russian attack. The Russians had just fought and won the Russo-Turkish war against the Ottoman Turkish empire. Their motivation was to protect the Serbs, fellow Orthodox Christians who had been occupied by the Turks since the defeat of the Serbian king in 1389 at the Battle of Kosovo. Disraeli worried that the victorious Russians might now try to recapture Istanbul, and once again remake it into "Constantinople," capital of Orthodox Christianity. To check Russian expansion, he ordered the enormous British fleet to anchor in the Istanbul harbor. Russia fumed but did nothing. Without the loss of a single man or ship, the British empire had checked the tsarist empire. A wave of British patriotism and military adventurism swept over the population.

Nothing better captures this attitude than Ralph Rackstraw, Able Seaman, justifying his love for the captain's daughter Josephine. Though he is "*humble, poor and lowly born,*" he dares to raise his eyes "*in manhood's glorious pride to rise,*" because "*I am an Englishman!—Behold me!*"

**Boatswain:** *He is an Englishman! For he himself hath said it,  
And it's greatly to his credit, that he is an Englishman!  
For he might have been a Russian, A French, or Turk, or  
Prussian!*

*Or perhaps Italian!*

**Chorus:** *But in spite of all temptations, to belong to other  
nations,*

*He remains an Englishman, he remains an Englishman!*

The countries in "*He is an Englishman!*" have not been picked at random. "Russia" is a direct swipe at the

possibility of a Russian advance to Istanbul; France and Prussia are named because they had fought a Franco-Prussian war in 1870 which defeated Emperor Napoleon III of France, and led to the unification of what would become modern Germany. That same year, 1870, Italy succeeded in taking over the last of the Papal states and the city of Rome and became a unified country under King Victor Emanuel of Piedmont. The mention of "*a Turk*" alludes to the Ottoman Turks, whose caliphs still ruled the Balkans and most of the middle East. (Modern Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Israel are carved out of what had been provinces in the Ottoman empire.)

The triumphant pride of "*He is an Englishman!*" brings down the curtain on *Pinafore*, but during the Edwardian period, (1901-11) the company tacked on an addition: "*Rule Britannia!*"

The concentrated projection of the British empire is a British warship manned by such jolly Jack Tars as Ralph Rackstraw. (The stereotype of the British tar is celebrated at other points in the libretto as possessing "*a soaring soul*" whose "*energetic fist should be ready to resist, a Dictatorial word.*") The nautical theme of *Pinafore* appealed to Gilbert, whose father had been a naval surgeon. Indeed, the stage set of *H.M.S. Pinafore* was based on the quarter-deck of Lord Nelson's famous flagship, H.M.S. *Victory*. Nelson died on the quarter-deck of *Victory* in 1804 when he defeated the French fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar. That victory is celebrated in Trafalgar Square with its immense column of Nelson with his statue on the top at the center of the immense fountain. The *Victory* itself is still in drydock at Portsmouth, and it is still manned by officers and men of the British navy. Gilbert visited Portsmouth six weeks before *Pinafore* was due to open, and made careful sketches of its quarterdeck. He took great care to ensure that every detail of the set was true. It was a source of great pride to him when he was complimented by Naval officers on the accuracy of his set.

The sun however, has set on the British empire, and the United States has attempted to become its successor. In the winter of 1879 Gilbert & Sullivan premiered *Pinafore* in America. One impresario recommended that they change its name to the *USS Pinafore*, hoist the Stars and Stripes instead of the Union Jack, and anchor the ship off Jersey Beach rather than Portsmouth, England. Rather than say "NO" outright, Gilbert submitted the following new version of "*He is an Englishman!*"

*He is American! Though he himself has said it,  
'Tis not much to his credit, That he is American.*

*For he might have been a Dutchman, An Irish, Scotch, or Such  
man,*

*Or perhaps an Englishman! But in spite of hanky-panky,  
He remains a true born Yankee! A cute American!*

Needless to say, the American producer withdrew his suggestion in confusion.





PO Box 64327  
Tucson AZ 85728-4327

RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

**The Guild Voice**

*Published by the Opera Guild  
of Southern Arizona.*

*Submit material to  
Cindy Hagerman, Editor,  
cindy.ogsa@yahoo.com or  
PO Box 64327  
Tucson AZ 85728-4327*

**OPERA GUILD WEBSITE**  
*http://www.azogsa.org*

**MEMBERSHIP FORM** (pass this on to a friend!!)

Please PRINT CLEARLY all information

Mail this form with your check (made payable to OGSA) or your credit card information to:

**Patrick Schifano, 37647 S. Spoon Dr, Tucson, AZ 85739**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt #: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP LEVELS—please check one**

Student \$5 \_\_\_ Individual \$30 \_\_\_ Individual Donor \$40-\$74 \_\_\_

Family \$50 \_\_\_ Family Donor \$60-\$74 \_\_\_ Benefactor \$\$75 or more \_\_\_

**CONTRIBUTIONS** are also welcome and go directly to student scholarships and awards.

**Contribution Levels—please check one:**

- Copper \$50       Silver \$100       Platinum \$500
- Bronze \$75       Gold \$250       Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Info: please check one:  Visa     MasterCard     American Express

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expires: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Month    Year

3 digit code (Amex 4 digits)

You will receive your credit card receipt in the mail.

**TOTAL AMOUNT PAID (membership & contribution): \$ \_\_\_\_\_**