President’s Chat

Seattle Opera’s season is now underway after two outstanding new productions. We all enjoyed August’s Porgy and Bess, which featured two winners of our Singers’ Development Awards, Ibidunni Ojikutu and Cheryse McLeod Williams. Most excitingly, Ibi, who was cast in her signature role, “Strawberry Woman,” also covered “Serena,” which was sung by another SOG favorite, Mary Elizabeth Williams. Unfortunately, Mary Elizabeth became ill and Ibi got to perform that major role several times, including live on KING FM— as they say, “A Star Was Born!” Cheryse performed the role of “Annie,” also to acclaim. The next production, Britten’s creepy Turn of the Screw, presented just before Halloween, featured another of SOG’s favorite singers, Marci Stonikas, who performed at a SOG fundraiser to benefit young singers. Other SOG awardees are pursuing successful careers. Among them, Ryan Bede and Ksenia Popova recently sang in local productions and Brett Sprague is performing in Germany. We all enjoyed Anthony Kalil’s Rodolfo in Boheme with Vashon Island Opera. We are so proud of the role SOG has played for many years in enabling young opera singers to pursue their training and early careers— bravissimi, all!

Our Annual Holiday Luncheon

by Ann Milam

We celebrated the holiday season at our annual luncheon on December 7 at the Seattle Tennis Club. Penny Wade, our VP of Special Events, chaired the event. Guests were greeted by Penny, Judi Kalitzki and Sally Buckingham. Paul Brott distributed nametags and Sylvia Young and Laura Van Horn sold raffle tickets for two colorful holiday baskets. Other committee members were Zoe Erickson, Ann Milam, Joan Parker, Christine Szabadi and Maria Van Horn. Our attendees included 73 members, 15 guests and three performers. Penny and President Gayle Charlesworth welcomed our guests and thanked all who had contributed to the luncheon. Our guests from Seattle Opera were Aidan Lang, Allison Rabbitt, Alejandra Boyer and Alex Minami. Aidan thanked the Guild for our long-time support of the Opera and described the new, long awaited Seattle Opera at the Center building, a cause for great celebration! Aidan acknowledged SOG’s generous underwriting of a meeting room in the new building.

Education VP Christine Szabadi introduced our performers: Merideth Marano (soprano), Elizabeth Galafa (mezzo-soprano) and pianist Lisa Bergman. Their program began with the lovely duet “Belle Nuit” from Tales of Hoffman. Elizabeth impressed us with her lively “Habanera” from Carmen, and Merideth sang an outstanding “Sempre Libera” from La Traviata. Among the audience favorites were the “Flower Duet” from Lakme and

Greeters (L to R): Penny Wade, Judi Kalitzki and Sally Buckingham.
Lisa’s delightful “Classical Christmas” rendition of traditional carols performed in the styles of well-known composers, including Chopin and Liszt. The memorable program concluded with the duets “Silver Bells” and “Dona Nobis Pacem.”

Our performers are this year’s recipients of SOG Singers’ Development Awards. We are very proud of our long tradition of SOG support for young singers and opera education. This wonderful performance reminded us of the importance of our fundraising activities to support all aspects of opera study and performance.

Lisa Bergman, Chair of Northwest Opera In Schools, Etcetera (NOISE) thanked SOG for our longtime support of its unique program. Now in its 35th year, NOISE has brought over 3000 live opera programs to Washington state schools, grades K through 6, plus three retirement communities. This year SOG donated $1K to NOISE, for a total of $52K in donations since 1985! In addition to educating children and seniors about opera, NOISE provides valuable singing experiences for young singers, many of whom are still in training. More information about this unique program is available at: http://noiseforkids.org

Next on the agenda was a raffle drawing for a special prize, a two-night stay at Sunny Thompson’s Wellness Deluxe Lodge and Spa in Ashford, near Mt. Rainier. Aidan Lang drew the winning tickets and Penny announced the winners. The lucky recipient of the spa prize was Sylvia Young. Congratulations also to Gale Kessler and Sharon Cooper, who won the raffle baskets.

Many thanks to the organizers and donors for this highly successful and memorable Holiday Luncheon!
Il Trovatore  
by Giuseppe Verdi

Friday, January 4, 2019  
Vivace  
Home of Patrick and Emily Bennett  
6116 NE 190th St.  
Kenmore, WA 98028  
*425.486.5036  
Social: 12:30pm (brunch)  
Meeting: 1:30pm  
Program: 2:00pm  
Contact: Emily Bennett 425.486.5036  
epbennett@msn.com

Saturday, January 5, 2019  
Allegro  
Home of Michael and Gayle Charlesworth  
23914 124th Ave SE  
Kent, WA 98031  
*253.639.1423  
Social: 4:30pm  
Program: 5:30pm  
Contact: Gayle Charlesworth  
253.639.1423, gaylewings@gmail.com

Saturday, January 5, 2019  
Magnolia/Queen Anne**  
Brookdale Queen Anne  
805 4th Ave N.  
Seattle, WA 98109  
*206.284.0055  
Arrival: 6:00pm  
Program: 8:00pm  
Contact: Florence Rose Thompson  
206.915.7829 m, 206.285.6510  
ffrose@comcast.net

Thursday, January 10, 2019  
Amici**  
Skyline (SkyClub Room)  
725 9th Ave (Valet Parking)  
Seattle, WA 98104  
*(206) 407-1700  
Arrival: 10:15am  
Business Meeting: 10:30am  
Program: 11:00am  
Lunch: noon  
Contact: Penny Wade, 206.938.5949  
or Maria Van Horn, 206.354.9132  
mcvho4@yahoo.com

Friday, January 11, 2019  
Parties & Previews**  
Home of Virginia Senear  
725 9th Ave (Valet Parking)  
Seattle, WA 98104  
*(206) 407-1700  
Social: 6:30pm  
Dinner: 7:30pm  
Program: 8:30pm  
Contact: Sandra Boyd, 425.450.0671  
Sfboyd10@gmail.com

Saturday, January 16, 2019  
Allegro  
Home of Maxine and Paul Levy  
30245 25th Ave SW  
Federal Way, WA 98023  
*253.874.6525  
Social: 4:30pm  
Program: 5:30pm  
Contact: Gayle Charlesworth  
253.639.1423, gaylewings@gmail.com

Sunday, January 16, 2019  
Bellini**  
Home of Ernesto Alorda & Jonathan Gerson  
2215 E. Lake Washington Blvd.  
Seattle, WA 98112  
*206.328.2262  
Arrival: 1:00pm (appetizers and beverages)  
Program: 1:30pm  
Dessert: 2:30pm  
Cost: $25 for members and guests  
Contacts: **Sally Buckingham,  
425.293.4510  
Marlene Holbrook 425.218.6230 or  
Suzy Wakefield 425.828.6186

Sunday, February 10, 2019  
Bellini**  
Trilogy at Redmond  
23225 NE Greens Rd, Redmond Ridge,  
Cascade Club  
Redmond, WA 98053  
*425.293.4510  
Arrival: 2:00pm (appetizers and beverages)  
Program: 3:00pm  
Dessert: 4:00pm  
Contact: **Sally Buckingham,  
425.293.4510,  
sally.buckingham21@gmail.com  
or Marlene Holbrook 425.218.6230,  
marlenedarmar@aol.com

Sunday, February 17, 2019  
Mercer Island  
TBA  
Contact: Agi Day  425.590.9211  
agiday@comcast.net

*Host phone numbers are provided for last minute driving directions.  
Please call listed contacts for all other enquiries.  
** RESERVATIONS PLEASE.

The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs  
by Mason Bates

Sunday, February 10, 2019  
Bellini**  
Trilogy at Redmond  
23225 NE Greens Rd, Redmond Ridge,  
Cascade Club  
Redmond, WA 98053  
*425.293.4510  
Arrival: 2:00pm (appetizers and beverages)  
Program: 3:00pm  
Dessert: 4:00pm  
Contact: **Sally Buckingham,  
425.293.4510,  
sally.buckingham21@gmail.com  
or Marlene Holbrook 425.218.6230,  
marlenedarmar@aol.com

Thursday, February 14, 2019  
Amici**  
Skyline (SkyClub Room)  
725 9th Ave (Valet Parking)  
Seattle, WA 98104  
*(206) 407-1700  
Social: 10:15am  
Business Meeting: 10:30am  
Program: 11:00am  
Lunch: noon  
Contact: Penny Wade, 206.938.5949  
or Maria Van Horn, 206.354.9132  
mcvho4@yahoo.com

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Arrival: 6:00pm  
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Contact: Sandra Boyd, 425.450.0671  
Sfboyd10@gmail.com

Sunday, February 17, 2019  
Mercer Island  
TBA  
Contact: Agi Day  425.590.9211  
agiday@comcast.net

Vivace – No Scheduled Preview  
Members are welcome to attend other  
preview groups.
Our Previews of
Turn of the Screw

By Judi Kalitzki

Just in time for Halloween, Seattle Opera presented a production of Benjamin Britten’s Turn of the Screw, last seen on our stage twenty-five years ago. Our SOG previews of this unusual opera featured Corinna Quilliam (soprano), Tim Janecke (tenor) and Li-Tan Hsu (accompanist). They led us through the complicated plot, a story taken from Henry James’ novella of the same name, and performed arias by several of the characters. The music is difficult but our singers’ performances were very powerful, even moving (and suitably creepy!), so we were well prepared to enjoy this unique opera.
Choices, Choices!

By Christine Szabadi
Vice President of Education

Yesterday was a bit of an opera marathon for me. The whole day was spent at the MONC NW District Auditions, the first round in a long process to find “the one” memorable singer. I then attended Turn of the Screw at Seattle Opera. I heard many, many singers that day. It set me to thinking about personal choices. Most of the singers who auditioned were sopranos and I wondered how the judges were going to choose winners. The voices ranged from light and high, to powerful and rich, from dramatic to lyrical, from operetta to Wagner. An impossible task! Nevertheless, I brought out my pen and made my own critiques on the program. Imagine my surprise when I learned the winners. “Oh Judges,” I thought, “you got it wrong! So and so should have won” When I recovered from this initial shock, I took a step back and began to analyze the situation. I realized that I didn’t know what the judges were looking for. I didn’t know what kind of voice they loved, or what was important to them. Was it just the voice; was it the stage presence, the acting, the personality? I could see their opinions were different from mine. In a competition such as this, singers and audience members can accept the judges’ decisions without compromising their own aesthetic. We can all embrace that. “Vive la Différence!”

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On Saturday September 29, Seattle Opera Guild was fortunate to engage renowned baritone Marco Nistico to give a masterclass for several of our favorite local singers, taking advantage of his brief visit to our area. Mr. Nistico’s career has spanned many years at the Met, NYC Opera and other prestigious opera houses in North America and Europe. Our singers were Lucy Weber, mezzo-soprano; Dierre Lopez, baritone; Ksenia Popova, soprano and Julia Benzinger, mezzo-soprano. Elizabeth Ellis was our piano accompanist. They were all delighted with their experience and told me they had learned a great deal from the master. I was especially fascinated by his teaching and the way he and the students interacted. He knew immediately the area of their presentation he would concentrate on, and managed to bring out the best in their singing. He was particularly painstaking with word pronunciations, drawing on his vast experience with languages. Overall this was a superior event of which the Guild can be proud!

Learning From A Master
By Christine Szabadi

L to R: Dierre Lopez, Lucy Weber, Marco Nistico, Ksenia Popova, Julia Benzinger and Elisabeth Ellis.

Marco Nistico