



HARMONIOUS FALL

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- ☛ Celebrate Opera Gala
- ☛ Summer in Review
- ☛ Gala Guest Feature
- ☛ Special Thanks
- ☛ Die Fledermaus
- ☛ Fond Farewell
- ☛ New to OperaNJ
- ☛ Upcoming Events
- ☛ Ways You Can Help

For More Information:

Contact Carrie Houtz,
Development Coordinator
CHoutz@Opera-NJ.org

(609) 799-7700 x106

Or Visit:

www.Opera-NJ.org

OperaNJ Fourth Annual Celebrate Opera Gala

Did you enjoy Summer Season 2008 and can't wait until February's *Die Fledermaus* to attend another Opera New Jersey performance? Well, you are in luck because November 1 marks OperaNJ's **Fourth Annual Celebrate Opera Gala** at its new location of the beautiful Princeton Marriott Forrestal! This special night is about YOU, our sponsors and patrons, as well as great opera!



Last year's Gala guests were thrilled by selections from Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and Verdi's *Rigoletto* and *La traviata* performed by such artists as internationally renowned tenor John Osborn (*The Duke of Mantua*, *Rigoletto*, 2008) and NYC Opera star Elizabeth Caballero (*Violetta*, *La traviata*, 2008). The Gala will follow the same tradition of featuring sensational talent, led this year by world renowned Chilean soprano Verónica

Villarroel as she makes her OperaNJ debut and tenor James Valenti, fresh off of his La Scala debut. They will be joined by soprano Rachelle Gilmore (*Adele*, *Die Fledermaus*, 2009), baritone Eric Dubin (*Dandini*, *La Cenerentola*, 2008), and others.



In addition to these vocal fireworks, the Gala will feature silent and live auctions of operatic events, fine wines, dining and yachting experiences, original artwork by well-known local artists, and exclusive vacation destinations. Individual tickets start at \$250, and all proceeds from the festivities benefit the company's extensive, statewide performance schedule of operas and educational outreach.

Also, there is still time to become a Gala sponsor and to attach your name to the success of this exciting



Marie Matthews with friends Fong and Teddi Wei at OperaNJ's 2007 Gala.

event. This year's Honorary Chair is former Governor **Thomas H. Kean, Sr.** and this year's Patron Committee Chair is **Marie L. Matthews**. By joining them in support of Opera New Jersey's largest fundraiser, you will help in making opera accessible to all. Sponsorships begin at \$500 and include a private champagne reception where you will meet the artists, recognition in the Gala Journal, and other privileges.



Joan Bartl, Bill Hearon, Dede Nini, Sy & Mayor Phyllis Marchard at OperaNJ's 2007 Gala.

Please join us for a night of elegance and incredible music! If you are interested in becoming a Gala sponsor or would like more information, please contact Carrie Houtz, Development Coordinator, at 609.799.7700 or at CHoutz@Opera-NJ.org.

Summer Season '08: One for the Books!

Photos: Jeff Reeder

Although July has just passed, who can forget the excitement of Opera New Jersey's Summer Season? Receiving sparkling reviews in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Star Ledger*, and many other publications, Opera New Jersey has once again raised the bar not only for opera in Princeton but across the state and beyond! The company brought a whirlwind tour of concerts, masterclasses, workshops, and lectures surrounding the productions of *La traviata*, *La Cenerentola*, and *The Merry Widow*.

After 11 sold-out performances in Summer 2007, Opera New Jersey set a new record by **selling out 13 performances** this summer at McCarter's Berlind Theatre. Critics and audience members raved about all three summer productions.

"I came eager to see and hear *La traviata*, expecting a fine production. What I experienced, however, was beyond anything I expected! I was *living* the glowing performance. I carry with me the memories of this remarkable performance and cannot wait to be there at the next opera," said OperaNJ patron Dvorit Samid.

Explorations in Opera Kids' Camp was a tremendous success with 17 campers in attendance from Princeton, Ewing, Morganville, Pennington, and Trenton. During their week of camp, boys and girls from ages 7 to 13 explored the story of *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella) and its many versions from different nationalities. They learned one of the choruses from the opera, as well as a choreographed dance number. Working in teams and ensembles, they learned about theatre etiquette and the jobs in an opera company, played theatre games, studied voice, met Opera New Jersey Studio Artists, and toured the Berlind Theatre. The week culminated in a final performance of their own skits, chorus, and dance number for their parents.

Workshops and masterclasses were also a big part of the summer season. OperaNJ was fortunate to host this summer the return of Michael Ching, composer of *Buoso's Ghost*, which OperaNJ performed in 2006 alongside Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*. This time, however, Ching returned to hold a workshop on his newest opera, based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, an *a capella* opera, with OperaNJ Studio Artists. The workshop, free and open to the public, marks just one of the ways Opera New Jersey is furthering new works and the careers of singers and musicians throughout the state. OperaNJ artists find and enjoy the unique combination of new and experienced talent, and take with them many wonderful memories and experiences.

Did you know, during the months of June and July, the OperaNJ staff swells to more than 200 artistic and production personnel, combined to produce the phenomenal productions of July? Summertime in Princeton also allows OperaNJ to take on several interns interested in learning about careers in opera production. This year, OperaNJ took on 15 interns, giving these young people a first-hand look at producing world-class opera.

REVIEWS & COMMENTS



"The caliber and consistency of the musical talent make this season stand well above not only this company's previous ones, but those of its predecessor, Opera Festival of New Jersey." – David Patrick Stearns, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

"Though the story is fairy-tale familiar, La Cenerentola was almost startlingly magical on Saturday in Princeton... classy execution... scintillating cast..." – Bradley Bambarger, *The Star-Ledger*



"It was a great summer, and the performance turned out really well." – Elizabeth Cabellero, soprano (*Violetta*, *La traviata*)



"My first Cenerentola ... was a wonderful experience." – Leah Wool, mezzo-soprano (*Angelina*, *La Cenerentola*)



"I was very excited to hear parts of my new project ... for the first time. I was pleased that the blend of Shakespeare and music made a positive impression on the artists, and I am grateful to OperaNJ for working this into the schedule and hope that we'll be able to do more together next summer." – Michael Ching

"It was great having all the opportunities - being able to sing for artist managers, prepare a mainstage role, sing in preview concerts...It was an invaluable experience." – John Calkins, tenor



Gala Guest Artist Verónica Villarroel: "The Accidental Diva"



Often referred to as "The Accidental Diva," Verónica Villarroel had no original ambition of becoming an opera star. Looking for work to support her family, she auditioned for the opera chorus of the Teatro Municipal in her native Santiago. Without previous vocal training, Ms. Villarroel, immediately impressing everyone, was cast as Musetta, opposite Renata Scotto as Mimì in *La Bohème*. Ms. Scotto recognized the talent in her young co-star and advocated that government officials and private foundations send Ms. Villarroel to the Juilliard School in New York.

Shortly after arriving in New York, Ms. Villarroel won the Pavarotti International Voice Competition. Since then she has added many roles to her repertoire, including Violetta in *La traviata*, Liù in *Turandot*, Micaela in *Carmen*, and many others performed at the Met as well as many other international opera stages. Ms. Villarroel, however, is most remembered for her role as Cio Cio San in *Madama Butterfly* – now her signature role.

On November 1 Ms. Villarroel will adorn the musical landscape of Opera New Jersey's Fourth Annual *Celebrate Opera* Gala – an absolute must for any opera fan!

Special Thanks!



Artists Corey Trahan & Cody Austin with their hosts Barbara Sloan & Randy Harris at a post-performance party

Every year Opera New Jersey is fortunate to have families open their homes to leading artists of the summer season. This generous gift saves the company money and also allows people directly to connect with an OperaNJ star. Thanks to these patrons for hosting 28 Opera New Jersey artists during Summer Season 2008!

Martin Benderski, Michael Curtis & Judith Brodsky, Sarah Davies, Charles & Rachel Gray, Randy Harris & Barbara Sloan, Kay Heidere, Janet Kuenne, Robert & Diane Levine, Michael & Pamela Morandi, Andrew Moravcsik & Anne-Marie Slaughter, Joel & Marie Pitt, Jacqueline Rose, Robert Tannen, Maida Taylor, Robert Teweles & Karen Dandurand, Ted & Laura Todd, and Ross & Lesley Wishnick.

For more information on how to become an OperaNJ host, please contact Carrie Houtz at 609.799.7700 or CHoutz@Opera-NJ.org.

Opera New Jersey to Produce Strauss' Sensational *Die Fledermaus* starring Ruth Ann Swenson!



Coming off a most successful Summer Season in July, Opera New Jersey's next production is sure to dazzle and delight audiences with even more excitement. Opera New Jersey will tour a concert-staged production of Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, starring internationally renowned soprano Ruth Ann Swenson. The production will tour throughout the state beginning Friday, February 13, 2009 at

McCarter Theatre in Princeton, continuing on Friday, February 20, at Community Theatre in Morristown, and concluding with a matinee on Sunday, February 22, at the State Theatre in New Brunswick.

In this production, Ms. Swenson will sing the leading role of Rosalinda for the first time in her career, and she will be joined by OperaNJ favorite, tenor Allan Glassman as Eisenstein. Other performers include Rachele Gilmore as Adele, Keith Phares as Dr. Falke, Anthony Laciura as both Dr. Blind and Frosch, and David Ward as Frank, who played the Major General in OperaNJ's 2007 production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. In addition to the cast, Metropolitan Opera broadcast host Ira Siff will make his second appearance at Opera New Jersey to stage-direct the production. In 2007 he stage directed OperaNJ's production of Puccini's *Turandot*.



Combine bubbling champagne with waltzes, mistaken identities, practical jokes, masquerades, and get a performance overflowing with the delightful melodies of Johann Strauss, the Waltz King of Vienna! This production, which features full orchestra, soloists, and chorus, will be sung in English with English surtitles.

Tickets are NOW on sale, and may be ordered through the McCarter Theatre, State Theatre, and Community Theatre Ticket Offices.

McCarter Theatre	Community Theatre	State Theatre
February 13	February 20	February 22
609.258.2787	973.539.8008	732.246.SHOW
www.mccarter.org	www.mayoarts.org	www.statetheatrenj.org

More information is available at www.Opera-NJ.org or by calling 609.799.7700.

Fond Farewell



As Opera New Jersey constantly grows, we welcome new staff members and new supporters alike, but occasionally we must bid *adieu* to some of our dearest friends who leave the Princeton area. Opera New Jersey now sends a fond farewell to Diane Parks. Diane and her husband John moved to San Diego, CA, in June. Though she'll be closer to her family now, she says: "I'll miss the people and other Board members very much. It's been great and so much fun to be part of this organization. It's been a joy watching the company grow as well as watching a growing enthusiasm in the audience."

Diane joined the OperaNJ Board of Directors in September of 2004 and filled the post of Board Secretary since January of 2008. She also played a major role on the Gala Committee from 2005, when she chaired the event, until 2008. Diane is still hoping to stay as involved as she can from the West Coast, and believes that "as the performances of Opera New Jersey get better every year – definitely worth traveling back to see!" On behalf of the Board and staff of Opera New Jersey, many thanks and best wishes go to Diane and John Parks. You will be missed!



New Faces to OperaNJ



Opera New Jersey welcomes our newest staff member - Production Manager LisaMichelle Eigler. LisaMichelle was so impressive as Production Stage Manager for Opera New Jersey's Summer Season 2008 that General Artistic Director Scott Altman immediately hired her as the full-time Production Manager for OperaNJ. A graduate of the California Institute of the Arts' program for Theatrical Training with emphases on Stage Management and Theatrical Production, LisaMichelle is a professional freelance

stage manager. She has worked with such companies as Los Angeles Opera, Opera Pacific, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Opera Boston, and many others. LisaMichelle currently lives in California with her cat Walter. When not working in production, enjoys outdoor activities of skiing, hiking, and camping. She also enjoys watercolor painting, metal working, and crocheting. Welcome, LisaMichelle!

Ways You Can Help

There are many ways you can become involved with the happenings of the Opera New Jersey family. Opportunities for sponsoring an artist like Ruth Ann Swenson are available that ensure your name will be indelibly attached to an Opera New Jersey star. You can also sponsor an education tour to one or many schools throughout the state - giving kids a chance to see how incredible and accessible opera can truly be. Opportunities also include underwriting Opera New Jersey's efforts to transport middle and high school students to watch final dress rehearsals of this year's winter production of *Die Fledermaus*. There are many ways and many different levels at which to support Opera New Jersey's initiatives to provide opera for all. For more information, please contact Carrie Houtz, Development Coordinator, at 609.799.7700 or at CHoutz@Opera-NJ.org or visit our website at www.Opera-NJ.org.



Photo: Jeff Reeder

UPCOMING EVENTS:

October 10
ENCORE Concert
Crestwood Manor, 7 pm

October 18
ENCORE Concert
Stonebridge at Montgomery, 7:30 pm

October 19
ENCORE Concert
Navesink Harbor, 1:30 pm

October 26
ENCORE Concert
Meadow Lakes, 1:30 pm

November 1
Celebrate Opera Gala
Princeton Marriot Forrester, 7 pm

December 12
HolidayFare Concert
Grounds For Sculpture, 7:30 pm

December 14
HolidayFare Concert
Zimmerli Art Museum, 3 pm

Opera
NEW JERSEY

Opera New Jersey
PO Box 3151
Princeton, NJ 08543
www.Opera-NJ.org
609.799.7700

Editor: Carrie Houtz

See you at the opera!