



SOUNDS OF SUMMER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- ☺ Summer Preview
- ☺ Artists Updates
- ☺ Summer Camp
- ☺ Opera & Wine
- ☺ Summer Singing
- ☺ Celebrate Opera!
- ☺ New Staff Members
- ☺ Upcoming Events
- ☺ Ways You Can Help

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OperaNJ Summer Season Promises to be **HOT!**

Summer is here, heralding Opera New Jersey's fifth Summer Season in celebrating opera! With a great variety to choose from, it'll be tough to pick just one event! From the beautiful yet tragic tale of Verdi's *La traviata*, to the light-hearted and comical telling of Lehár's *The Merry Widow*, and the fabled classic story of Cinderella in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, everyone's bound to find moments of laughter, sadness, compassion, and more.



One of Verdi's greatest operas, the heartbreaking tragedy *La traviata* centers on the beautiful Parisian courtesan Violetta, played by rising star Elizabeth Cabellero, who finds true love

with the young and ardent Alfredo, played by dashing recent La Scala Debutant tenor Michael Fabiano. But when Alfredo's father attempts to save his family from social scandal by parting the lovers, their relationship comes to a tragic end. Conducting will be by Princeton's own Maestro Fernando Raucci with direction by Nashville Opera's John Hoomes.

In Lehár's delightful tale, *The Merry Widow* we find what is often regarded as one of the greatest of all operettas! As the story of Hanna Glawari, played by the dazzling Jennifer Aylmer, unfolds, we



find an outrageously rich and clever widow who is on the hunt for a new husband. The problem? When she remarries, her tiny

country will be left bankrupt. All she must do is "simply" convince a certain gentleman that marrying her will bring him love AND save their country's finances! The production will also rekindle a chemistry begun with last summer's *The Pirates of Penzance* leads, Alison Trainer (then Mabel) as Valencienne and Benjamin Bunsold (then Frederic) as Camille. Conducting will be by Opera New Jersey's Maestro Steven Mosteller and directing by New York City Opera's Marc Verzatt.



We all know and love the classic tale behind Rossini's sublime comedy *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella). Angelina, played by the rising star Leah Wool, has a wicked step-father and step-sisters who

try to prevent her from living happily-ever-after with her prince charming. Luckily for Angelina, her fairy godfather, and Prince Ramiro himself, played by the brilliant Javier Abreu, will not let anything stand in the way of a happy ending. Don't miss this performance of dazzling vocal fireworks wrapped up in a joyous fairy-tale ending, conducted by the esteemed Robert Wood and directed by Opera New Jersey's *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Rigoletto* director Michael Scarola.

Individual tickets and subscriptions are on sale now! Summer Season 2008 tickets are \$59 & \$65. There is also limited Gold Circle seating is also available at \$90. Group discounts are available. For more information or to order tickets, please visit our website at www.Opera-NJ.org/tickets or call McCarter Theatre at 609.258.2787.

Opera New Jersey Artists: Where Are They Now?

Singers from our past tell their stories and share ONJ memories

Opera New Jersey is on the rise as the preeminent opera company in the state. Throughout its existence, Opera New Jersey has prided itself on the ability to foster the development of emerging artists through high-quality opera performances and has thus seen the comings and goings of many talented artists, some at early stages in their now very successful careers. Highlighted here are just a few of the stars who have performed on the Opera New Jersey stage and who are now enjoying blossoming careers in the opera world.



As a new artist, baritone **ANTON BELOV** took part in Opera New Jersey's Young Artist Program and later, in the middle of a blossoming professional career, Belov performed as Ping in *Turandot* with Opera New Jersey in March 2006. Since winning the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in 2002, this Moscow native has expanded his career to reach major opera houses and concert halls across the United States. Belov's recent

operatic performances include the title role in Opera Delaware's *Don Giovanni*, *Masetto* with Boston Baroque, and Malatesta in Opera Providence's *Don Pasquale*. Belov also serves as a specialist in Russian lyric diction and is the author of "Russian Opera Libretti in Word-to-Word Translation" and "IPA Transcription and the Anthology of Russian Arias." Upcoming engagements for the 2007/8 season include the Boston premiere of Oswald Golijov's *Ainadamar* with Opera Boston, Count di Luna in *Il trovatore* with Anchorage Opera, and an artist residency at the State Theatre in New Brunswick.

Of his Opera New Jersey experience in 2007, Belov notes that "Opera New Jersey provided me with invaluable opportunities as a young artist. It gave me an opportunity to prepare complete roles with top-notch conductors and stage directors. Being

a part of OperaNJ's summer program also allowed me to participate in masterclasses with such stars as Ben Heppner and James Morris. In addition, I have developed lasting relationships with



singers of my own level and stage of career. It is safe to say that being part of OperaNJ was a very important building block of my career."

French soprano **MANON STRAUSS EVRARD**

performed as Juliette is Opera New Jersey's 2007 production of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*. She is acclaimed as one of the



most promising young artists of her day, making her operatic debut as Violetta in *La traviata* at the Prague State Opera in 2006. Before performing with OperaNJ, Ms. Evrard made her Asian debut as Juliette with Hong Kong Opera in 2007. A native of Nancy, France, Ms. Strauss Evrard is a Great Promise Award recipient and Regional Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions of 2006. She opened the 2007/8 season as Musetta in Puccini's *La Bohème* at the Den Norske Opera in Oslo.

Ms. Strauss Evrard praises her time with Opera New Jersey last summer as "one of the greatest I have had so far. Biking to rehearsal through this unique campus, enjoying the perfect weather, arriving with everything being so well rounded and organized were just a few of the pleasant aspects. The staff was great, the atmosphere awesome, and the environment was so welcoming. It was, for me, the most enjoyable experience. I have amazing memories of my summer 2007 in Princeton."



Bass-Baritone **MATTHEW CURRAN**, native Princetonian, performed in the Opera New Jersey Young Artist Program and also as Frere Lament in *Romeo et Juliette* in 2007, Don Alfonso in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* in 2006, and Dottore Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro* in 2005. He earned his Master of Music from Indiana University and apprenticed with Central City

Opera and the Seattle Opera Young Artists Program. Curran has appeared as Don Magnifico in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and has performed with Seattle Symphony as King Balthazar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and as Zaretsky and the Captain in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. He is currently in Switzerland on a year's contract with the Zurich Opera Studio.

Of his Opera New Jersey experience, Curran said, "I have been very happy to be associated with [Opera New Jersey] as it grows. Of course, being from Princeton, I have a special place in my heart for this company. Beyond that, though, it has been a fantastic place to expand my repertoire and try out new roles in a supportive and still very professional environment. There is great energy and it is a fantastic opportunity to work with singers of great potential either on the verge of or already launching careers. I look forward to singing with Opera New Jersey again in the future."

Kids' Camp Begins Soon!

Just as summer is heating up, Opera New Jersey is offering **Explorations in Opera 2008: A Day Camp for Kids** from ages 5 through 14. This Camp tops Opera New Jersey's continuing commitment to opera and



musical education throughout the state. The Camp runs from July 7 through July 11 at McCarter Theatre in Princeton, daily from 9:00am to 4:00pm. Under the leadership of Opera New Jersey's Director of Education and professional opera singers, students will learn about the production and performance of opera through theatre games and improvisation. They will also watch a full orchestra final dress rehearsal of this summer's production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola*.

"The Opera Camp is the one camp that our son has fallen in love with and has been looking forward to," said the parent of a previous camper.

Camp is \$400, and parents are also invited to attend as participants at half price. More information and registration forms are available on Opera New Jersey's website at www.Opera-NJ.org or by calling 609.799.7700.

Fine Wine - Fine Opera: A Perfect Pairing

Crossing Vineyards and Winery in Washington Crossing, PA will celebrate its fifth "Summer Under the Stars" series this summer in the Bucks County countryside. The series will feature 10 outdoor concerts at the winery's 200-year-old estate at 1853 Wrightstown Road. On June 20, Opera New Jersey will perform various musical selections in the beautiful atmosphere of the winery as part of this series.

Haldeman Auto Dealerships has partnered with Crossing Vineyards for this summer series for what Lawrence Lexus General Manager Brian Bennett notes that "brings top-notch entertainment to the community in such a beautiful setting."



In addition to the music, the Crossing Vineyards offers concert-goers its award-winning wines by the bottle or glass, cheese, and picnic suppers prepared by popular New Hope caterer Jamie Hollander.

Performances are held rain or shine, and guests are asked to bring lawn chairs. Seating is provided for those purchasing picnic suppers. Tickets and picnics may be ordered in advance by calling 215.493.6500 x19, or may be purchased on-line at www.crossingvineyards.com.

Heating Up the Summer

Of course our operas are the main events of the summer, but Opera New Jersey also offers many other concerts and educational events — many free — and all family-friendly and open to the community. Be sure to check out the line-up of these other great events this summer. For more information about dates, times, and tickets, please visit our website (www.Opera-NJ.org) or contact Patricia Kiernan Johnson, Marketing Manager at 609.799.7700 x104.

♦ **Summer Preview, June 19:** As a "teaser" for the summer operas, join us at the Princeton Public Library at 7pm for an evening that will preview *La traviata*, *La Cenerentola*, and *The Merry Widow*. Hear some of the famous arias and meet the artists! *A FREE event.*

♦ **Masterclasses, June & July:** A group of up to nine singers perform arias of their choice for their peers and a presenter. That presenter then gives constructive feedback and insight into what the singer does well in addition to suggesting improvements that could be made. It is a "safe" learning environment for singers and a great chance for you, as an audience member, to catch a "behind-the-scenes" glimpse at how these singers prepare for performance. *A FREE event.*

♦ **Musical Theatre, June 27 & 28:** Summer artists will present selected favorites from some of the most familiar musicals we all know and love in the atmosphere of Palmer Square. A great event for kids! *A FREE event.*

♦ **Opera Scenes Concerts, July 21 & 22:** Join us in July in McCarter's Berlioz Theatre for a concert of scenes from a variety of operas, both beloved and rare, performed by rising stars of the Summer Season. On one night hear "Tutti e due" featuring famous choruses and duets and on the next hear "Off the Beaten Path" featuring great opera rarities. Tickets (\$15) are available by calling McCarter Theatre's Ticket Office at 609.258.2787.

♦ **Pre-Curtain Lectures:** Learn the history behind the music you'll enjoy on the stage. Why was *La traviata* so controversial in its day? What are the differences between Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and the Grimm Brothers' version of the Cinderella story? What was Lehár's inspiration for *The Merry Widow*? Opera New Jersey's directors and staff will offer insight into these historical questions in order to shed light on why these operas are some of the greatest of their times. *A FREE event held 1 hour before each opening night and all matinee performances.*

Celebrate Opera Gala: Save the Date!

Join us for our Fourth Annual Celebrate Opera Gala on **Saturday, November 1** at the Princeton Marriott Forrester. Guests who have attended an Opera New Jersey Gala rave that it is the spectacular celebration combines all the traditional elements of a gala — silent and live auction, cocktails, great food and wine—with riveting opera performances in an elegant yet and fun-filled atmosphere. Mark your calendars now! Individual tickets begin at \$250 per person and include the auction, live opera entertainment, cocktails, dinner, and wine. Invitations will be mailed in September. If you would like to be among the first to receive an invitation, please contact Carrie at Opera New Jersey at (609) 799-7700 x106 or at CHoutz@Opera-NJ.org.



New Faces to OperaNJ



Opera New Jersey welcomes new Finance and Office Administrator **Gary Hefner**. Gary has worked in finance for IBM, Real Possibilites, and All Saints' Church. He hails from Kansas City and holds an MBA from the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Before moving to New Jersey, Gary spent time in Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Gary also currently works part time for Applied Engineering & Technology. When not in the office, he enjoys time on the golf course and lives in Princeton with wife Carolyn. They have two children: a daughter in California and a son in Ewing.

Ways You Can Help

There are many ways you can become involved with the happenings of the Opera New Jersey family. Why not sponsor an artist for the summer or become a Gala sponsor? Sponsoring an artist for the summer or the winter production ensures that your name will be indelibly attached to an Opera New Jersey star, stage director, designer, or even an entire production. As a Gala sponsor, you'll help create one of our finest nights of the year, and you'll receive benefits such as meeting the artists and other specialized privileges. There are many ways and many different levels to support Opera New Jersey. All donations are tax deductible and may include exclusive benefits such as ticket priority, beverage coupons, dress rehearsal passes, backstage tours, invitations to private cast parties and soirees, and much more. Contact the office for a sponsorship brochure to find out what benefits come with your gift.



See you at the opera!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

June 4, 5, 6, 7, & 12

Masterclasses

Princeton University

Woolworth Hall

FREE

June 19

Summer Season Preview Concert

Princeton Public Library

FREE

June 20

Crossing Vineyards Concert

Crossing Vineyards,
Wash. Crossing, PA

\$10/person

June 27 & 28

Musical Theatre Concert

Palmer Square, Princeton

FREE

July 7-11

Kids' Camp

McCarter Theatre

July 21 & 22

Musical Theatre Concerts

July 24 & 25

Masterclasses

TBD

FREE

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