



*Lexington Opera Society*

## *Prelude...! A Great Beginning & More*

The Lexington Opera Society's signature event on May 26 was a prelude, not only to *It's a Grand Night for Singing* but to a promising year of financial strength and strong community support for opera in Lexington. The event at Singletary Center yielded a profit of approximately \$50,000 — a new “best-ever” fundraiser for LOS.

About 325 people attended and truly felt like celebrities. Entering guests were greeted by Bravo Guild hosts and invited to step through a celebrity star of welcome on their way to a red carpet evening. Oscar statues, Hollywood musical posters, and waving white ostrich feathers in tall vases added to the evening's glamour.

An array of wine tables, staffed by knowledgeable and eager wine connoisseurs, beckoned guests to taste and learn about a variety of excellent wines. Melissa Young, hostess at one such table for Liquor Barn, talked about her trip to Argentina and Chile to purchase wines. “Learning about wine is a life-long learning journey,” she enthused. Liquor Barn also featured an interesting table of Divina olives with one unusual sampling of a pungent citrus olive from Greece. Yet another of the many food tables was laden with shrimp and delicious coconut scallops, showcasing the culinary skills of Annette's Catering.

The atmosphere in the President's Room encouraged guests to bid on a variety of well-displayed, donated silent auction items including Cincinnati Reds and Lexington Legends tickets donated by Stites and Harbison, PLLC; many outstanding summer reads donated by Joseph Beth Booksellers; and a day of lunch and the

rares at the Keeneland Clubhouse. Former Lexington Mayor Pam Miller, the incoming LOS president, encouraged many friends to keep up the bidding.

At 9 p.m. emcee Reed Polk ignited sparks of energy and eagerness across the Recital Hall, and Walter Robertson, a maestro of tongue-twisting auctioneering skills, led the bidding for the live auction. More than \$22,000 was generously bid on 13 items. Ann Marie and Greg Pitts, the parents of six young children, were enjoying a rare night out and won the live auction bid for the Tempur-Pedic mattress and the week in Cancun donated by Anne and Bill Arvin.

Bids were lively for the Wine Connoisseur's Instant Wine Cellar. Michael Sorg of Liquor Barn introduced Fran Kysela, a wine importer and wine master from Virginia, who described the Wine Cellar selections contributed by Liquor Barn which included three unique choices among two dozen vintage selections. Dr. George Privett was the pleased winner. When all the items had found new owners, the crowd settled

back to enjoy the entertainment. First, Dr. Everett McCorvey, UK Opera Theatre's director, expressed pride in the UK opera program and gratitude for the Lexington Opera Society's support. His announcement that UKOT will own and produce the premiere of *Hotel Casablanca* in October brought delighted applause.

Then cast members from *It's A Grand Night for Singing* provided such special numbers as Tedrin Blair Lindsay's sparkling piano rendition of “Moon River.” A soloist in last season's *Messiah*, Sherri Phelps demonstrated her





## LOS Drive Supports Endowed Chair

Since he arrived in Lexington in 1991, Dr. Everett McCorvey has taken the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre to a new level. The program has blossomed, becoming bigger, attracting exceptional students from around the country, and offering increasingly beautiful and sophisticated productions.

The Lexington Opera Society wants to make sure that McCorvey and UK Opera Theatre have the recognition and financial backing they merit, and for that reason the organization is conducting a campaign to create an Endowed Chair for Opera Theatre. McCorvey will be the first professor to occupy the chair, starting this July.

The drive to endow the chair was announced at the recent *It's a Grand Night for Singing!*

To endow the chair costs \$1.5 million, and the Lexington Opera Society has pledged to raise \$750,000. The state will match the LOS pledge through the Research Challenge

Fund, otherwise known as "Bucks for Brains."

The endowment is apportioned as follows: 50 percent supplements Dr. McCorvey's salary, 40 percent helps subsidize UKOT productions, and 10 percent is for discretionary needs such as travel for students performing out of town.

To date, the Lexington Opera Society has raised \$586,000 in checks and pledges from many generous people, including a gift of \$100,000 from Dr. George Privett, a former LOS board member and past president, and his wife, Nawanna. LOS has \$164,000 to go.

The LOS invites opera lovers and all others who appreciate this Center of Excellence at UK to help us cross the finish line. All contributions are tax deductible. Checks should be made out to Lexington Opera Society or University of Kentucky, with Opera Chair Endowment written on the memo line, and mailed to: Lexington Opera Society, P.O. Box 8463, Lexington, KY 40533-8463.

By Pam Miller

## Prelude...! 2007 Gallery



## Tedrin's Recording Corner by Tedrin Lindray

As the weather warms and the days lengthen into summer, I enjoy some lighter operatic fare, and two Italian bel canto works in particular fit the brighter seasons. First, I want to recommend Vincenzo Bellini's gorgeous *La Sonnambula* (*The Sleepwalker*), a romantic melodrama involving a girl who gets herself into trouble, then out of it, because she takes long walks in her sleep. The ravishingly beautiful music constitutes, in my opinion, Bellini's loveliest score, and the recording I recommend, made in 1980, is one of the finest bel canto traversals available. The great Joan Sutherland sings the role of the heroine Amina to perfection; in fact, I consider this not only her best recording but also her ideal role. The pearly,



ethereal quality of her vocal color and musical shading, which sometimes made her seem to sacrifice dramatic conviction for vocal perfection, here serve the confused and innocent character very well, while Sutherland achieves the most exquisite singing. Amina's betrothed, Elvino, is likewise one of Luciano Pavarotti's most marvelous roles, and in fact this may be *his* greatest recording also. Their engagement duet, "Prendi, l'anel ti dono," is a model of bel canto singing by both stars, and Sutherland's husband, conductor Richard Bonyngé, leads the National Philharmonic Orchestra stylishly.

Another of Pavarotti's most celebrated roles is Nemorino, the sweet country bumpkin yearning for the classy Adina's love in *L'Elisir d'amore* (*The Elixir of Love*) by Gaetano Donizetti. He is featured on one of two brilliant recordings of this light comic masterpiece, with Kathleen Battle in scintillating form as his leading lady. James Levine leads the Metropolitan Opera forces on this 1990 recording, which also presents a young Dawn Upshaw in the small role of Giannetta.

An older recording of this opera (1967) is also a sheer delight from start to finish. It stars Nicolai Gedda and Mirella Freni (in the freshest of voice), conducted by Francesco Molinari-Pradelli with the Rome Opera Orchestra and Chorus.

The three recordings above also offer a feast of baritones and basses: Nicolai Ghiarov, John Tomlinson, Leo Nucci, Enzo Dara, Mario Sereni, and Renato Capecchi. Wow!!

### Tedrin's Recommendations

Bellini, *La Sonnambula* (Sutherland, Pavarotti/Bonyngé) - London 417 424-2 (2 CDs)

Donizetti, *L'Elisir d'amore* (Battle, Pavarotti/Levine) - Deutsche Grammophon 429 744-2 (2 CDs)

Donizetti, *L'Elisir d'amore* (Freni, Gedda/Molinari-Pradelli) - EMI 7 69897 2 (2 CDs)

*Opera lovers remember*

*Beverly Sills 1929 - 2007*

Beverly Sills talks about the changing place of opera in contemporary culture in an interview found at the following link on the Metropolitan Opera web site.

<http://www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/news/interviews/sills.aspx>

# Most Successful Grand Night Ever!

With six performances over two weekends, the 2007 edition of *It's A Grand Night For Singing! — A Salute to Hollywood Musicals* enjoyed its most successful run. Ticket sales totaled a record \$115,359, a 15 percent increase over last year's \$100,039. Attendance increased 23 percent to 6,181.

"We presented five performances last year and this year decided to complete the weekend by adding a sixth performance," said Dr. Everett McCorvey, the show's producer. "It was a great move as we added to our attendance by over 1,000 people."

Now that *It's A Grand Night for Singing!* is so firmly a part of the Lexington cultural scene, the 2008 production will not include a subtitle. "We feel that we have been doing the show long enough that we can go with the strength of the title instead of having a subtitle to accompany it," McCorvey noted. "We really feel that we have established a tradition. It's exciting."

Year	Total Attendance	Ticket Sales
2005	4,545	77,019
2006	5,015	100,039
2007	6,181	115,359

## Prelude...! *cont'd from page 1*

versatility with a siren solo of "Your Cheating Heart." Alicia Helm, star of the recent UKOT performance of *Carmen*, soulfully touched the audience with her "Blues in the Night." Christopher Baker with Laura Hatter elicited laughter from the audience with Tom Lehrer's "The Masochism Tango." Jason Mitchell, Rachel Farrar, Janet Corum, Mark Jacus, and Jennifer Parr each added delightful singing that enticed the audience to attend at the coming *It's A Grand Night for Singing*. Thanks to the careful planning of Prelude cashiers, together with the Bravo Guild, winning bidders quickly had their auction purchases. Guests reluctantly began to leave a memorable evening, eager to return next year. This strongly rooted charity event will continue to broaden enthusiasm for opera in our community.

*by Jeannette Clay Lucas*

# Calendar

## September

**Sept. 17** — Bravo Guild Fall Membership Meeting, 6 p.m., Turf Room, Crowne Plaza Hotel

## October

**Oct. 12-13, 19-20**, *Hotel Casablanca*, 7:30 p.m., Opera House

## November

**Nov. 10** — Opera Gala, Owensboro, KY

**Nov. 17** — Metropolitan Opera District Auditions, Memorial Hall

## December

**Dec. 15** — Alltech Holiday Celebration, Victorian Square

Metropolitan Opera HD transmissions  
begin again December 15th!  
For information and the upcoming  
schedule follow the link below.

[www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/broadcast/hd\\_events.aspx](http://www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/broadcast/hd_events.aspx)



Former Lexington mayor, Pam Miller, took over the reins as LOS President on July 1st.

## What's New at UKOT

With *It's a Grand Night for Singing!* behind us, UKOT has set its sights on two exciting new initiatives: *Broadway Bound* and *Hotel Casablanca*.

### ***Broadway Bound***

UKOT seems to have struck a positive public nerve with our new musical theater training initiative for children. *Broadway Bound*, a joint project with Kentucky Classical Theatre Conservatory, just finished its initial two-week run and was a great success with 60 children venturing onto campus to study dance, voice, and theater. Mary Joy Nelson, *BB*'s artistic director (and a UKOT doctoral voice student), assembled a solid, experienced creative team with some of the finest teachers in central Kentucky including Katie Cook, Alberta Labrillazzo, and Jennifer Fitzpatrick. Each week-long workshop culminated in an exciting performance at Memorial Hall.

This kind of work can have a very strong impact on children. One child remarked to her parent that, partly due to her *Broadway Bound* experience, "This was the best year of my life!" THAT is what motivates us to continue, and we have many ideas for an expanded and improved *Broadway Bound* for next year.

### ***A View from Backstage: Hotel Casablanca***

Arranging a multi-city opera premier is a complex endeavor, and production supervisor Marc Schlackman has played a pivotal role in keeping everything on schedule for *Hotel Casablanca*'s upcoming premiers. In August this new comic opera by Thomas Pasatieri opens in San Francisco in the Cowell Theater as part of the San Francisco Opera's summer MEROLA program. In October it opens here in Lexington. In negotiating our partnership with the SFO, both companies decided to share Richard Kagey as director, and UKOT took on the task of designing and building the *Hotel Casablanca* set, which will be used for both premiers. The set has been designed, constructed, deconstructed, and each section painted and labeled. Finally, on July 20 the entire set is to be loaded onto a truck and shipped to San Francisco.

Designer/builder David Steinmetz and Schlackman were to travel to the Bay Area and oversee reconstruction with the 12-man crew provided by the San Francisco Opera. Perhaps the best news is that UKOT will own the set and be able to rent it to other opera companies that choose to include *Hotel Casablanca* in their seasons.

### ***Grantmakers supporting LOS!***

LOS has received a \$7,500 grant from LexArts for the Lexington Opera Outreach Program. Thanks to the writing and organization of Pam Miller, the new LOS president, and the very positive record of the LOOP Program under the leadership of UKOT's Marc Schlackman and Stephen Penn, LexArts has enthusiastically awarded this support for the 2007-08 touring of the *Freedom Trail* program in Kentucky schools. *Freedom Trail*, written by Lexington artists Margo Buchanan and Michael Friedman, interweaves story and song, history and literature as it presents a musical journey of the African-American struggle for freedom and equality in America.

*by Meriah Kruse*  
UKOT Program Coordinator

*You are invited to*

### **Tedrin Blair Lindsay's 45<sup>th</sup> Birthday Recital**

#### **Second Annual Festive/Faculty Recital**

**Wednesday, September 12, 2007**  
**Singletary Center Recital Hall, 7:30 p.m.**

#### **Featuring Special Guest Artists:**

**Catherine Clarke, Soprano**  
**Angelique Clay, Soprano**  
**Jacqueline Roberts, Soprano**  
**Nancy Clauter, Oboe**  
**Peter Simpson, Bassoon**  
**Ryan Moore, Euphonium**  
**and more!**

**I want your presence, not your presents!**

# Lexington Opera Society Lecture Series

(formerly "Opera 101")

Tedrin Blair Lindsay, Instructor

Location: Niles Gallery, UK Campus

## Schedule for Fall 2007

September 8	In Depth with Verdi's <i>Macbeth</i> (1847)
September 15	In Depth with Wagner's <i>Lobengrin</i> (1850)
September 22	In Depth with Barber's <i>Vanessa</i> (1958)
September 29	In Depth with Ponchielli's <i>La Gioconda</i> (1876)
October 6	In Depth with Poulenc's <i>Les Dialogues des Carmélites</i> (1957)
October 13	No class (opening weekend of <i>Hotel Casablanca</i> )
October 20	The Artistry of Joan Sutherland
October 27	The Artistry of Birgit Nilsson
November 3	No class this Saturday
November 10	The Artistry of Renata Tebaldi

## Tedrin's Commentary on the Fall 2007 Class Topics

I think one of Verdi's most overlooked operas is his marvelous *Macbeth*. It is a lot rawer, both in tone and technique, than his much later Shakespearean masterpieces *Otello* and *Falstaff*, and it is about as Scottish as spaghetti, but the energy, the passion, the bloodthirstiness — well, let's just say it was worth "double double" Verdi's toil and trouble! *Macbeth* also contains one of opera's most celebrated mad scenes for Lady Macbeth, transliterated word for word from Shakespeare's famous sleepwalking scene for the guilt-ridden murderess. And the witches' chorus is a hoot!

Next, we continue our one-per-year study of Richard Wagner's music dramas with perhaps his most beautiful opera, *Lobengrin*. The Prelude alone will ravish you senseless, although the infamous "Wedding March" will surely jolt you back to reality soon enough. The title role is Wagner's most lyrically conceived music for a heldentenor, and this work also features his silliest heroine and most convincing

villainess — not to mention the magical swan! This is German Romantic opera at its most lush and swooning.

My favorite American opera has always been Samuel Barber's *Vanessa*, composed to a libretto written for him by Gian Carlo Menotti. This was the only libretto Menotti ever wrote for someone other than himself to set to music, and that story alone is worth coming to this class to hear. But, oh, what music! If any opera can be described as a rare hothouse orchid, it is *Vanessa*. The Metropolitan Opera, which commissioned the work, certainly got its money's worth, and that, too, is an amazing story! Come hear this gorgeous work that inspired me to become an American opera specialist.

One of the grandest of all grand operas is Amilcare Ponchielli's single masterpiece *La Gioconda*, which features the famous ballet "Dance of the Hours." It is also one of the few operas in the standard repertoire that offers major roles for all six general

*cont'd on next page*

BRAVO!

*Opera 101 commentary cont'd  
from previous page*

voice types: soprano, mezzo soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, and bass. In its own more epic way, it is just as emotionally overwrought as *Vanessa*, and the score contains many familiar and beloved arias. This is one of the art form's most revered "chestnuts," and all erudite opera connoisseurs should know its charms intimately!

Next, we will explore another of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most important operas, *Les Dialogues des Carmélites*, Francis Poulenc's powerful drama about the martyrdom of a convent of Carmelite nuns during the French Revolution. Several penetrating character studies distinguish this somber, brooding work, and the nuns' death at the guillotine is one of the most unforgettable finales in all opera.

After a week off, allowing your instructor to fulfill his opening weekend responsibilities with UK Opera Theatre's *Hotel Casablanca* by Thomas Pasatieri, we will change from studying operas to studying opera singers. Three of the most legendary sopranos of the so-called "Golden Age" — Joan Sutherland, Birgit Nilsson, and Renata Tebaldi will occupy our attention and adulation. Note that there will be no class session on Nov. 3 to accommodate the American Spiritual Ensemble's fall tour. Also, be sure to reserve the afternoon of Saturday, Nov. 17, to attend the annual Metropolitan Opera District Auditions at Memorial Hall on the UK campus.

See you in class!

(Opera 101 is held at 10 a.m. in The Niles Gallery, Lucille Little Fine Arts Library, on the UK campus at 160 Patterson Drive.)

The cost is \$25 per class or \$175 for the series of eight classes, a savings of \$25. Students pay \$5 per class.

For reservations call  
(859) 257-9331 or email [opera@uky.edu](mailto:opera@uky.edu).)

*"I know that my voice has entered into the hearts of many people and has caused beautiful reactions. Some, hearing me sing, have become more religious; some who were ill felt joy; friends, while in hospital, played my tapes whenever they felt ill; they all said that my voice gave them the strength needed to stand the pain. Therefore, how can I not be thankful for this great gift?"*

Renata Tebaldi

## Grand Night



Photos by Tim Collins



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