



LEXINGTON OPERA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER VOL. 12 NO. 1 FALL 2012



## PHENOMENAL

UK one of first universities to produce blockbuster show

It's the most successful entertainment event in history. It's been seen by over 130 million people in more than 145 cities and 27 countries. It's much more than just the longest running musical ever on Broadway. (The 10,000th Broadway performance was February 11, 2012.) It's a phenomenon! It's *Phantom of the Opera*!

Based on the French novel by Gaston Leroux and developed into musical theater by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Phantom* made its Broadway debut in 1986. In 1988 it won the Tony for best musical. Now the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre is bringing it to the Lexington Opera House. This fully staged version of the show, one of the first ever done by a university company, will have 10 performances in early October. All of the magic of a produc-

tion done in a major city will be here, including (we are told) the signature crashing of the giant chandelier. (Incidentally, the chandelier prop, which is required to be the same for all *Phantom* productions, is made by a company in Louisville.)

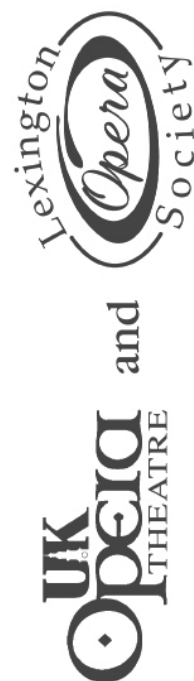
The story of *Phantom of the Opera* strikes a familiar chord in most of us. A mysterious, disfigured musical genius, living in the bowels of the Paris Opera House, becomes consumed with passion for the lovely young soprano singing on its stage. There are attacks, kidnappings, threats of violence, and mistaken identities. All these, woven together with beautiful music and memorable songs, create a totally engaging theater experience.

University productions of *Phantom* were not al-

### Phantom tickets

Oct. 5-7, 11-14,  
 Opera House.  
 Tickets at  
<http://www.lexingtonopera.com>

See Page 3



Sing the Praises of Their Sponsors!

# READY, SET, SEW

## Brigadiers marshal costumes for UKOT productions

Lexington Stage Costumes (LSC) was created in 2004 when the Lexington Opera Society purchased a large stock of costumes from a local costumer. The idea was to provide costumes for UKOT productions and to bring in revenue for LOS by renting the more than 2,500 costumes to local and regional theatrical and opera companies.

Who better to help with repairing and altering the costumes as well as measuring and recording information about each item for entry into the computerized LSC database than some talented members of LOS' Bravo Guild! And so the group of volunteers who continue to devote endless hours to costuming for UKOT came into being. Nameless for years, the group has recently been dubbed the Thimble Brigade by Susan Dudley Wigglesworth, resident costume designer for UKOT.

Wigglesworth, whose creative talents seemingly have no limit, has said of the group, "Ah, my Brigade volunteers! The thimblers have been invaluable from my first show with UK opera. They do laundry, haul costumes to and from the cleaners, help backstage to get all things organized before curtain time. They build costumes from scratch, do detail work as well as emergency repairs, and serve as subtle, kind cheerleaders for our young singers. And The Thimble Brigade is ever on the watch for suitable as well as curious materials. Juliette's ball gown (*Roméo et Juliette*, Fall, 2011), for example, began life as a Brigadier's dining room drapery! The Brigadiers never complain, they only ask, "What's next?" When I feel stuck or discouraged, the Brigadiers always have wisdom and laughter to share."

Perhaps the most exciting creations were the vegetables for *Get Stuffed*, a Schmidt Op-

BRAVO!



L to R: **Peggy van der Gaag, Georgiana Strickland** and **Sonja Mather** wield their thimbles.

era Outreach Program (SOOP) performed for schools across the state in fall, 2010 to introduce students to opera and healthy eating habits.

The singers had to be dressed as vegetables, so imagine the fun of creating broccoli using not only needle and thread, but also pieces of drain pipe. Then there's the carrot costume, happily modeled here by Brigadier Mary Powell.



**Mary Powell**

This fall The Brigade meets its biggest challenge yet: more than 200 costumes for UKOT's production of *The Phantom of the Opera*. (See article on page 1.) Drawing upon UKOT's deep bench of vocal talent, each of the major roles has been triple cast. This means three Carlottas (of different sizes) x five costume changes = 15 costumes for just one character!

Although the make up of the group has changed over time, there are a number of stalwarts who faithfully meet at the Victorian Square home of LSC on Thursday afternoons from about 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the weeks prior to a production. If you are interested in working with the costumes, or just want to spend an enjoyable afternoon with other opera lovers, please contact Mary Powell (paleomary@insightbb.com, or 859. 255.6555). Professional sewing skills are not required. If you can wield a needle, you can join the Brigade.

— By Sylvia Davis and Mary Powell

## Tedrin's Recording Corner

# Mozart's teenage opera, Beverly Sills' life

By Tedrin Blair Lindsay, PhD

I have a rather eclectic mix of music to recommend to you this time, so hopefully there will be something for everyone's taste!

First, I have been studying Mozart's early operas just for fun, and many of them contain amazing music. *Lucio Silla*, written when Wolfgang was 15 years old, demonstrates his astonishing understanding of human emotion and how



Dr. Lindsay

to express it in music even then, breathing real feeling and drama into the stuffy, old-fashioned libretto about a Roman emperor. Teldec's 1989 recording of Sir Nicholas Harnoncourt and the Concentus Musicus Wien at the helm of such wonderful singers as Edita Gruberova, Cecilia Bartoli, Dawn Upshaw and Peter Schreier is a superb rendition of the teenage Mozart's heartfelt attempt at a grown-up opera seria. (Teldec 2292-44928-2)

Everybody knows that Beverly Sills was not just my favorite opera singer but also one of my personal heroes. For a deep look at this great American diva's art, career and life, investigate the Deutsche Grammophon DVD documentary *Beverly Sills: Made in America*, released in 2006 (DG DVD B0007999-09). Also, her many complete opera recordings and aria compilations (such as *Bellini and Donizetti Heroines*, Universal UMD 80468) have long been available, but recently Angel EMI has released some of her old LP albums on CD, and they are charming! Check out *Welcome to Vienna* (CDC-7 47524 2) with Julius Rudel conducting the London Philharmonic, *Music of Victor Herbert* (CDC-7 47197 2) with André Kostelanetz and the London Symphony Orchestra, and *Beverly Sills Sings Verdi* (CDC-7 47383 2) with several different conductors and orchestras.

Finally, I had read about a titillating bit of explicit text-painting in the Renaissance motet *Il bianco et dolce cigno* by Jacques Arcadelt, so I purchased

### Dr. Lindsay's Lecture Series

10 a.m. – noon Saturdays at the Schmidt Vocal Arts Center, University of Kentucky.  
Cost: \$20 per class session (Students \$5)

**Saturday, Sept. 29 -- special preview session**  
*The Phantom of the Opera* and the Career of Andrew Lloyd Webber

**Saturday, Oct. 6**  
Falling in Love with Opera: How To Enjoy, Appreciate, and Understand Opera

**Saturday, Oct. 13**  
Unlocking Your Inner Critic: What To Listen For in Opera Singers

**Saturday, Oct. 20**  
Unlocking Your Inner Musicologist: What Makes a Great Opera Composer

**Saturday, Oct. 27**  
Larger Than Life: Opera's Most Colorful Scandals, Shockers, and Triumphs

**Saturday, Nov. 3**  
Does It Matter?: Opera's Relevance in Culture Past and Present

a CD on which it is included, and I love the whole album! It's called *Chansons à Plaisir: Music from the Time of Adrian Le Roy* (Delphian DCD34063). A fresh-voiced soprano, Frances Cooper, and an earthy baritone, Jonathan Hugh-Jones, sing spirited secular Renaissance selections accompanied by a consort of guitars, lutes, recorders, and percussion. This vibrant performance has energy and immediacy, coming across more as strangely familiar folk songs than as artifacts from the dawn of classical music. Highly recommended!

For the next newsletter, in conjunction with UKOT's production of *The Marriage of Figaro*, I will compare and contrast several magnificent recordings of Mozart's comic masterpiece.

# Calendar

## OCTOBER

### ■ *Phantom of the Opera*

Lexington Opera House

October 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 7:30 p.m.

October 7, 13, 14, 2 p.m. Ticketed event.

### ■ *Pinocchio*

Schmidt Opera Outreach Program

Joseph-Beth Booksellers

Lexington Green

October 13, 11 a.m. Free.

### ■ Benefit concert, Dr. Tedrin Lindsay

Smith home, 3105 Warrenwood Wynd.

October 28, 4 p.m. \$50. Ticket info TBA.

## NOVEMBER

### ■ Bravo Guild Fall Meeting

Schmidt Vocal Arts Center

University of Kentucky Campus

November 10, 1 p.m.

### ■ Kentucky District Metropolitan Auditions

Memorial Hall, UK Campus

November 17, 10 a.m. Free.

### ■ Master Class

November 18, time and location TBA. Free.

## DECEMBER

### ■ Alltech Celebration of Song

December 9, 6 and 9 p.m.

Downtown Lexington, location TBA. Free.

## MARCH 2013

### ■ *The Marriage of Figaro*

Lexington Opera House

March 1, 2, 3, 7:30 p.m.

March 2, 2 p.m. Ticketed event.

For tickets call:

Opera House: 859.233.3535

BRAVO!

# Briefly ....

## Coriell to tour in *Titanic*

Recent UKOT graduate Taylor Coriell was cast as Kate Murphey/Mme. Aubert in the second national tour of the Broadway musical *Titanic*. Coriell is



UKOT graduate Coriell cast in *Titanic*.

also an understudy for the role of Kate McGowan. The tour will run throughout the fall during this 100th anniversary year of the sinking of the Titanic. The tour kicks off at the Center for Rural Development in Somerset, KY on September 22, so UKOT fans can take a drive and see one of our graduates as she

embarks on her professional career. Go to center-tech.com for schedule and ticket information.

## UK's SCRIBE in Sarasota's *Little Nemo*

Like UK singers, UK technology is making its mark on the world of opera. The Sarasota Youth Opera will use SCRIBE (Self-Contained Rapidly Integratable Background Environment) technology for its world premier of *Little Nemo in Slumberland*. SCRIBE, developed by UK engineers, was first used in the 2011 UKOT production of *Porgy and Bess* as well as in the Atlanta Opera production that same year.

The opera, by Daron Aric Hagen with libretto by J.D. McClatchy, sounds perfectly suited to the technology.

Sarasota Opera describes it this way: *Little Nemo* "is a short 'magic opera' recounting the adventures of a boy over the course of two nights. Family visitors and the neighbor's kid are transformed in his dreams into fantastic characters, all of them involved in Nemo's quest to save Slumberland."

UKOT will perform *Little Nemo* at some point in the next couple of seasons. However, Kentucky opera lovers who want to get a preview can see it in Sarasota on November 10 or 11. For more information, visit [www.sarasotaopera.org](http://www.sarasotaopera.org).

# MET AUDITIONS

## Hear, see tomorrow's stars

The Kentucky District Metropolitan Opera Auditions will take place on Saturday, November 17 beginning at 10 a.m. at Memorial Hall on the University of Kentucky campus. Two of the three judges for the competition have been confirmed: Douglas Ahlstedt, Professor of Voice and Chairperson of the Voice Department at Carnegie Mellon School of Music; and Gayletha Nichols, Director of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

John Greer, vocal coach at the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre, will be the official pianist for the Auditions. During the judges' deliberations, Dr. Tedrin Blair Lindsay will present a program featuring Anthony Clark Evans, a winner of the 2012 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

The Kentucky District Auditions and the master class November 18 by one of the distinguished judges, also at Memorial Hall, are free and open to the public. Please visit [www.kydistrictauditions.org](http://www.kydistrictauditions.org) for the announcement of the third judge and the name of the judge who will conduct the master class and the time of the class.

— By Louise Shouse

## Elementary opera on the road

The tell-the-truth message of *Pinocchio* will reach almost 50,000 Kentucky children operatically this fall through the Schmidt Opera Outreach Program. SOOP reaches students in grades K through 5 using familiar stories set to operatic scores. Under booking coordinator Courtney Turay fall 2012 will be the biggest season so far, with about 100 bookings in 31 counties. Ashley Jackson sings the title role with Manuel Castillo as both Gepetto and the Cat, Caleb Ashby doubling as Wolf and Dr. Dulcamara, Dannica Burson as Old Blue Lady and Olympia, and Martha Green as accompanist.

SOOP provides a teacher's guide and performances are followed by a question and answer session.

There will also be a free public performance October 13 at 11 a.m. at Joseph-Beth Booksellers in Lexington, and the Bravo Guild will be entertained by *Pinocchio* at its fall meeting. (See the calendar on page six.)

# PHANTOM

## From Page 1

lowed until recently, but UKOT stayed in touch with the licensing company. "If there's something major happening in our business, I want our program to be a part of it," explained UKOT director Everett McCorvey. When *Phantom* was released for university performances, UKOT applied for rights and was chosen over many



Dr. McCorvey

other applicants thanks to its rank as a top 20 collegiate opera company and strong reputation as a training ground for young singers.

Musical theater, like *Phantom*, differs from opera in three major ways. First, while everything in opera is sung, musical theater includes spoken dialogue. Also, the subject matter has a somewhat lighter tone than classic opera. And, finally, the required singing tends to be a bit less rigorous. Still, *Phantom* is one of the most operatic musicals out there, with dramatic action and powerful music.

The singers are very excited. "It's very liberating for a singer who likes to sing a little freer. Classical music can be a little bit constraining at times, but this music allows you to be much more expressive," said Michael Preacely, who plays the Phantom in four of the performances. Auditions were opened to the entire university, so there will be some faces new to UKOT fans on stage. Three casts and two orchestras will appear during the 10 performances.

"The audience will see all the excitement of a New York production, but also the incredible talents of our awesome singers bringing this to life," McCorvey said. There will be a few special and unique things in the UKOT production. McCorvey was reluctant to reveal any of the "secrets" which will be seen on stage. He encourages everyone to come at least three times to catch them all.

It's your opportunity to experience the full drama and excitement of this worldwide phenomenon in a quality production right here in Lexington.

--Anne Taul

# HERE, THERE, EVERYWHERE!

## A globe-trotting summer for UK singers

Where in the world were University of Kentucky opera students last summer?

Try three continents, seven countries, at least 16 states, and the District of Columbia.

From Rome to Moscow, New York to Brevard, and even Lexington, students performed in classics like *Don Giovanni*, *La Bohème* and *Die Zauberflöte*, and modern works including *Little Women*, *Porgy and Bess*, and *Bye, Bye Birdie*. They participated in a musical tribute to Julia Child and opera at a jazz club. They taught, they learned, they sang, danced, and studied everything from wig making to the financial aspects of a singing career.

Some examples: Dannica Burson started in Novafeltria, Italy, at La Musica Lirica where she sang the title role in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. "I stayed there for five weeks, enjoying the language, culture, and food (which was amazing!)" Then it was on to the Midwest Institute of Opera at Illinois State University where she covered Donna Anna in the fully staged version of *Don Giovanni* and sang the concert version. "The entire program was ten days from arrival to closing night, meaning the show went up in seven days!"

Matt Turner returned to La Musica Lirica for the second summer, this time "to perform both Colline in Puccini's *La Bohème* and Don Basilio in Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. ... I coached both roles with legendary conductor Maestro Joseph Rescigno."

Rebecca Farley "sang the role of Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* in Italy with Opera Orvieto followed by a choral tour through England, Wales, and Ireland." But her travels gave way to an obligation back home. "The rest of the summer is being spent learning Christine in *Phantom*!"

Joining Farley at Orvieto were Clay Thompson, Evan Johnson, and Savanna Sokolnicki, who sang Donna Elvira in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and shared this slice of life: "A typical day begins with a delicious cup of coffee and a *cornetto* picked up on the way down the hill to Italian class. ... After Italian, it's

BRAVO!



**Ronald Wilbur** as Officer in Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with the Janiec Opera Co. at Brevard Music Center in Brevard, N.C..

time for a brisk walk back up the hill for rehearsals.... A well deserved break at 1:30 for *riposo* allows time for a terrific Italian lunch (often including *prosciutto e melone*) .... The afternoon resumes with rehearsals at 4 and continues till 8." Also in Italy was Laura Salyer, who studied and sang at Operafestival di Roma.

UKOT voices were also heard in Germany. Markel Reed and Reginald Smith Jr. studied at Lyric Opera Studio in Weimar. As Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Reed began his first aria as he was lowered to the stage from 60 feet in the air. Kellee Knox was in Berlin with a Fulbright "Discover Germany" award, and Natalie Tyson-Malthaup was at the International Performing Arts Institute in Kiefersfelden.

UKOT students made their mark on this side of the Atlantic, too. At Seagle Music Colony in Schroon

See Page 5



**Laura Salyer**, fifth from left, singing in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* at Operafestival di Roma.

## Wigs, jazz clubs, a chocolate cake sweetened the summer

### From Page 4

Lake, NY, Jacob Waid "spent the summer learning how to have successful auditions, figuring out the financial and business side of singing, and learning how an opera theatre truly runs: from sweeping the stage and wig making to light design." Oh, and he sang, too, "in the chorus of *Kiss Me Kate*, *Don Giovanni*, and covering Sweeney in *Sweeney Todd*. I was also proud to portray the leading baritone role in Mark Adamo's *Little Women*."

At Brevard Music Center in North Carolina, Nicholas Davis and Ronald Wilbur joined students from around the country and the world. Wilbur appreciated "having the opportunity to perform, network, and research" at the world-renowned summer institute.

Back home in Lexington, Evan Pulliam sang the title role in the Rep's production of *Bye, Bye Birdie*. Other UKOT students in the cast were Isaac Jones, Wesley Hammond, Lisa Braswell, and Bri Carnahan.

Several students, including Luther Lewis Jr., Michael Precely, La'Shelle Allen, Lisa Clark, Mark El-

iot Golson II, Karmesha Peake, Tai-Kristin Smedley, Jondra Harmon, Sarah Klopfenstein and Ellen Graham, performed with the Cincinnati Opera in *Porgy and Bess* (joined by Professor Everett McCorvey and graduate Keith Dean), *I Pagliacci*, and/or *La Traviata*.

Klopfenstein described that opportunity and others in Cincinnati. "To share the stage with so many international names in singing is always a treat and a learning experience. I also participated in a concert of opera scenes at the Blue Wisp Jazz Club in Cincinnati. The concert was organized by Ellen Graham and brings opera to a different audience. This year's Blue Wisp concert was sold out!"

Graham joined Vital Opera, a young company bridging the intersection between life and musical drama, to collaborate with Sur La Table in New York on *An Edible and Musical Birthday Celebration for Julia Child*. "I performed 'Bon

Appétit' by Lee Hoiby, which is a musical setting of an episode of *The French Chef* in which Julia Child bakes a chocolate cake. Since the concert took place in the demonstration kitchen at Sur La Table, I actually made the cake as I was singing about it, resulting in an actual chocolate cake."

A more complete list of the students' summer activities with additional commentaries in their own words is available at [www.lexingtonopera.com](http://www.lexingtonopera.com).



**Ellen Graham** as Julia Child at Sur La Table in New York.