



'GRAND NIGHT' RETURNS TO THE STAGE IN JUNE

Production to be held at Lexington Opera House

For Lexington audiences eager to return to the theater, the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre has just the answer. Its annual production of "It's a Grand Night for Singing" is set for June 17, 18, 19, and 20 at the Lexington Opera House.

'GRAND NIGHT'

Tickets: Available through Ticketmaster.com. Also at Central Bank Center Ticket Office on High Street at entrance to Rupp Arena, across from Gate 2; Monday-Friday 12 p.m.-6 p.m. (859-233-3535) Additional fees apply to all phone and internet orders. Tickets available beginning May 28.

only about 80 to 90 minutes with no intermission.

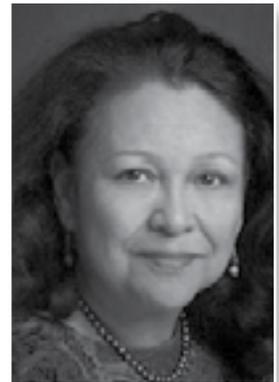
"It will be sort of a 'Grand Night Light,'" said Dr. Everett McCorvey, UKOT director and creator of the event.

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LUGO RETIRES

Beloved professor, former students reflect **Page 2**



MASTER CLASS

Pros share their expertise with students **Page 4**



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Dr. Noemi Lugo

Final Bow

After 29 years at UK, Lugo retires from teaching

Although Dr. Noemi Lugo has been singing since she was 5 years old, she never planned to pursue a career in music. Actually, she long considered going into the field of math or physics.

But life took Lugo on twists and turns, and not only did she embark on a career in music, she did so helping others embark on theirs. Now, the beloved voice professor at the University of Kentucky has decided to retire.

"I love teaching," she said, but added, "I honestly would love to have time to be closer to my two granddaughters – that is a priority."

So, too, is travel. A return to Italy and a first-time trip to Russia are on the agenda. She also plans to walk the Camino De Santiago, the ancient Spanish network of pilgrimages.

Certainly, no one can blame Lugo for choosing to close out a long career that included singing professionally in her native Caracas, Venezuela, serving as an adjunct professor at the University of Utah, and then spending 29 years at the UK School of Music. But she will be missed.

"Dr. Lugo's impressive mark will affect the studies at UK for generations to come," said Dr. Everett McCorvey, director of UK Opera Theatre who joined Lugo on the UK faculty the same year, 1991.

Lugo's hallmark, according to many who have crossed her path, is being a "master" of pedagogy. But she is perhaps best known for her passion for helping students be the best they can be.

"I will forever be grateful to her to have believed in my potential as an artist and teacher," said former doctoral student Marie-France Duclos and senior teacher of voice at Asbury University. (See more of what Duclos and other former students had to say on page 3.)

"Meeting Dr. Lugo 11 years ago changed the course of my life in ways I would have never imagined back then," said André Campelo, former UK doctoral student and now assistant professor of music at DePauw University.

"Just for me what is important is to be sure that I help the student to discover the artistry that they have – who they are," Lugo said about her teaching technique.

Lugo's approach to teaching can be defined as anything but "cookie cutter," she added.

"I'm not using a cookie cutter to make sure everybody is the same. They have to be individualized. Otherwise, they're not artists."

"Every student brings something new to you."

FORMER STUDENTS REFLECT



"I met Dr. Lugo in the vocal pedagogy class in my first year of doctorate in voice performance at the University of Kentucky. I was impressed with Dr. Lugo's knowledge and passion about vocal pedagogy and was inspired to become a more educated voice instructor. Dr. Lugo helped me obtain my first teaching job at Centre College where I developed my passion and joy for teaching. I will forever be grateful to her to have believed in my potential as an artist and teacher."

- Marie-France Duclos
Senior lecturer of voice at Asbury University, section leader at First Presbyterian Church in Lexington



"I was a non-traditional college student in my senior year when Dr. Lugo came to visit the university I attended in Brazil. One of the things that impressed me the most about her was the eagerness to learn everything she could about Brazilian music and culture while she was there. Her principle of lifelong learning inspires all her students to do the same. She is also one of the strongest and most indefatigable, generous persons that I have ever met. After one semester of voice lessons, she went beyond her way to help me move to the USA in order to pursue graduate studies at the University of Kentucky."

- André Campelo
Assistant professor of music at DePauw University



"Dr. Lugo is a master of pedagogy. Her ability to convey adjustments in vocal techniques is phenomenal. I have been blessed being a recipient of her vast knowledge. Seven plus years ago, Dr. Lugo graciously agreed to provide private voice lessons to me, a 70-year-old male that has sung improperly for decades. My quest was to learn proper techniques of singing. The purity of the voice, when done

properly, is so beautiful. Dr. Lugo not only provided me the knowledge of singing but also moral support and encouragement. Surprisingly, with her teaching, even I started having voice recitals! Noemi, thank you for making dreams come true. I treasure your wonderful friendship and looking forward to more lessons post Covid-19."

- Terry Bryant
Owner, Bryant's Rent-All; private voice student



"Over the years, Dr. Lugo has shared with me a love of singing and teaching, the curiosity to analyze and express beautiful

poetry through song, how to choose interesting repertoire for both myself and my students, and how important it is to listen to and attend performances of live music and theater. To be a creative artist of any kind, exposure to all of the arts - opera, recital, chamber music, symphony, dance, literature, and the visual arts - can only deepen our understanding of human nature and make us better artists and teachers. Dr. Lugo taught me this. Thank you, Noemi, for your direction, love, and support all of these years. I wish for you love, art and contentment in your retirement."

- Cacey Nardolillo, instructor of voice at Centre College, director of the Kentucky District of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions



"While at UK, Dr. Lugo was instrumental in influencing my career path. She encouraged me to complete a specialized program called

the Summer Vocology Institute in 2000. Upon completion of this program, Dr. Lugo asked me to lecture for her graduate vocal pedagogy program. This experience solidified my interest to teach vocal pedagogy at the university level. I give my deepest gratitude to Dr. Lugo for her mentorship and I am elated we have remained friends over the years."

- Brian P. Gill, professor of voice/voice pedagogy, Indiana University

Class Acts

Pros help students make real-world connection

Lawrence Brownlee, J’Nai Bridges, Morris Robinson, Karen Slack ... names you can mention in any opera circle around the world and people will know who they are.

They are also a few of the master clinicians who made a virtual stop by the University of Kentucky School of Music this past academic year, treating students to a master class in singing – and more. Their visits were part of the UK Master Class Series offered to student singers who, because of the pandemic, were otherwise unable to meet those who had already achieved success in their careers.

“Since the singers were not meeting in person, I felt it was important to find other ways so they could have a connection to the professional world of singing,” said Dr. Everett McCorvey, UK Opera Theatre director and creator of the series.

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Dr. Everett McCorvey

Funded by the Ann and Ralph Mason Vocal Arts Series, the series was also made available to the public to listen in on. Each class enabled three students to sing for the master clinician, who offered pointers on such things as how to interpret a piece or how to use their bodies to sing better. The critiques were followed by a 30-minute question-and-answer session with the pro.

“The beauty of this is that they are contemporary opera singers – probably between the ages of 35 and 45 – but they have established themselves as internationally regarded singers and are singing all over the world,” McCorvey said. “They are approachable and they are willing to share, in the young person’s language, their expertise on how to sing classical music.”

In addition to being available to students, the Master Class Series was open to the general public. “We have had people from all over the world hear these classes,” McCorvey said

Along with Brownlee, Bridges, Robinson, and Slack, the artists who participated also included Joanna Mongiardo, Jud Perry, Kenneth Overton, Naomi Andre, and Stephen Powell.



UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
OPERA THEATRE

VOCAL
MASTER CLASS
SERIES

Virtual Met auditions a success; offer exposure to opera world

The renowned Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions – recently renamed the Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Lafont Competition – provide a potentially career-making opportunity for young opera singers. This season, despite a global pandemic that caused the auditions to go virtual, was no exception.

The Grand Finals, one of four rounds in the competition, were held in May, representing some of the highest level of competition ever, said Cacey Nardolillo, director of the Kentucky District of the auditions. Five winners were awarded \$20,000 and “invaluable exposure” to the opera world. They were: Duke Kim, Seoul, South Korea; Hyoyoung Kim, Seoul, South Korea; Raven McMillon, Baltimore; Emily Sierra, Chicago; and Emily Treigle, New Orleans.

“I’m so happy the Met decided to continue with the auditions,” Nardolillo said. “The thing that is great about the fact that we’ve been able to hold these auditions this year is that it’s been an opportunity for singers to sing for leaders in the industry even though they can’t be in the room. We’ve all had to be creative.”

This season, the auditions received nearly 1,200 applicants, with just over 600 singers qualifying for the 31 district auditions*, including the Kentucky District. For the first time ever, applicants had to submit a video to be judged for admittance into the district level of competition.

Winners from the district competitions advanced to the regional level. Of the 141 singers in the 10 regional rounds, 23 moved on to the semifinals. There, 10 semifinalists were chosen to compete in the Grand Finals. To ensure safety and access for all involved, all rounds of the auditions took place in a remote, live-streamed format from locations around the world.

The competition has introduced the world to some of the best-known opera stars – Lawrence Brownlee, Renée Fleming, Susan Graham, and Ryan Speedo Green included. Past grand finalists

from the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre include Reginald Smith Jr., Greg Turay, and Blake Denson.

The auditions are hosted by the Metropolitan Opera, and each round is organized, produced, and sponsored by a group of volunteers and donors, Nardolillo said. The Kentucky District partners with OperaLex to present the auditions and provide prize money for the winners.

*There are 39 districts in the competition, but some opted out this year.

THE KENTUCKY DISTRICT

Winners

On Nov. 8, 2020, the Kentucky District and OperaLex presented live, online auditions for 19 singers. Winners selected were:

- **Kendra Faith Beasley**, (UKOT alum) Madison, Georgia
- **Hayley Maloney**, Clifford, Pennsylvania
- **Clay Thompson**, (UKOT alum) Lexington
- **Ethan Vincent**, Kansas City, Missouri

District winners each received a \$1,000 prize provided by the Kentucky District.

Encouragement Awards

- **Nikita Silagy Labdon**, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Gail Robinson Encouragement Award
- **Claire Lopatka**, Cincinnati, Sylvia Davis Encouragement Award
- **Wagner Mauricio Pástor**, (Current UKOT student) Quito, Ecuador, Sylvia Davis Encouragement Award
- **Victoria Okafor**, Hyattsville, Maryland, Gail Robinson Encouragement Award
- **Michael Pandolfo**, (UKOT alum) Fort Worth, Texas, Myra Tobin Encouragement Award

Encouragement Award winners each received a \$250 prize provided by the Kentucky District.

'Grand Night'

From Page 1

Still, the excitement abounds.

“This year is really exciting because it will probably be the first big musical event in the city because of COVID. If they want to see it, they have to be there,” he said.

“It’s a Grand Night for Singing” is typically a town-and-gown collaboration, featuring students and members of the community. Being offered for the first time at the Lexington Opera House, instead of on campus at the Singletary Center for the Arts, makes it even more so, McCorvey said.

“We’re thrilled to be at the Opera House and to bring this high-energy, high-impact musical theater experience to the community,” he added.

The annual production features the “great melodies of Broadway,” about 30 songs whittled down from 200 or so that McCorvey and his team start with each year. Students and community members must audition for the roles – in a typical year 35-50 roles, but this year about 25.

“It will be different this year because it’ll be more of a cabaret. ... There will be singing and some dancing, but we’re trying to stay within the COVID protocols and not be too overblown for this year. It’s just to get people out and get them used to going to the theater again,” McCorvey said.

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**SYLVIA DAVIS**

Although a native of Cincinnati, Sylvia Davis grew up in and around Lexington and has spent most of her life in this area. She attended her first opera in 1961 at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome. It was a performance of *Aida*. "I was forever after hooked on opera," she said.

Davis' second opera was at the Bolshoi in Moscow in 1961. The lead singer in *La Traviata* had stainless steel teeth. Some years ago, she saw another *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera with Angela Brown in the lead role.

After completing graduate school in Cincinnati, Davis taught German and humanities at Eastern Kentucky University for about 35 years. Since retirement, she has been involved in volunteer work in Lexington. On one memorable evening, she sat next to former Lexington Mayor Pam Miller at an event at Singletary Center for the Arts. After chatting a bit, Miller asked Davis if she would like to join the board of the (then) Lexington Opera Society. The rest is, as they say, history. She has served as secretary, corresponding secretary, and Bravo Guild president and is currently BravoLex copy editor and a BG representative to the board.

Davis has a daughter, son-in-law, and her brother and his family here in Lexington. Her granddaughter lives in St. Petersburg, Florida, and works in data analytics. Her hobbies are read-

ing, watching movies about World War II, and occasionally needlepointing. She looks forward to being able to travel safely again.

**ED HENRY**

Ed Henry is native Kentuckian born and raised within the state and holding two degrees from the University of Kentucky longer ago than he "cares to admit," a bachelor from arts and sciences in 1976 and a JD from the College of Law in 1979. He has lived in and practiced law in Lexington since his graduation, having his own firm the past 40 years.

The fact that he and his wife Gerri have enjoyed so many UKOT performances over the years must have been the genesis of an invitation two years ago from good friend Bob Brown to join the OperaLex Board of Directors. He accepted easily in order to pay back and to pay ahead for the enjoyment and support of the UKOT, the amazing students, and the "inspirational" Dr. McCorvey.

Henry said he enjoys more hobbies of creative expression "than any sane person should have," yet none of them is musically related. As a youth, the notion of enjoying opera was not in his frame of reference. Life however evolves, including a love of opera. A pre-pandemic milestone birthday was spent in New York City in November 2019, where a Metropolitan Opera performance of *La Bohème* was enjoyed

even more than the Wildcats victory over Michigan State in Madison Square Garden. The pandemic has reminded people, he said, that the arts are not discretionary, or an extra, but are a necessity. Henry cannot wait for all performances to resume, in particular those of the UKOT.

**BONNIE MAYS**

Bonnie Shearer Mays graduated from the University of Kentucky School of Music in 1970 with a bachelor's of music education, followed by a master of arts in education in 1972. She taught elementary music in Fayette County for four years. A native of Winchester, she currently resides in Lexington. She has participated in the music program at Calvary Baptist Church since her college days, serving as director of several choirs and singing in the Sanctuary Choir.

Currently, Mays is the CEO of United Real Estate with offices in Louisville, Lexington, Elizabethtown, Mt. Sterling, and Morehead. In 2008, she was voted one of the top 25 Most Influential Women in Real Estate in the U.S., honored as the Realtor of the Year locally, the Broker of the Year nationally, and the Woman Business Owner of the Year for Lexington. Most recently, Mays was recognized as one of the Top 100 People in Real Estate for 2021.

She is married to Lawrence Williams and together they have four children and eight grandchildren.

Tedrin's Recording Corner #41

By Tedrin Blair Lindsay, PhD

If from my last column I seem obsessed with Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, believe me when I say that is a mere sidebar to my utter absorption with his colossal four-opera epic *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, which I've been listening to continuously at home, in my car, or both for over six months. Commonly known as *The Ring Cycle*, comprised of the long one-act opera *Das Rheingold (The Rhine Gold)* and the three much longer three-act operas *Die Walküre (The Valkyrie)*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung (Twilight of the Gods)*, it is generally considered one of the pinnacle artistic achievements in human history, and all 15-plus hours and 34 characters of it thoroughly fascinate me. Wagner's use of dozens of small musical gestures called "leitmotifs" to signify themes, objects, characters, activities, and so forth combine in continuously changing guises to lend variety and unity simultaneously to the sprawling structure of his free treatment of legends from Germanic mythology, all in music of sublime beauty and dramatic power.

For years, I was perfectly content with my *Ring* recording by James Levine and the Metropolitan Opera, released on Deutsche Gramophon between 1988 and 1991, a glorious rendition which I saw in the theater and have long treasured on CD. It features the greatest Wagnerians of that era – James Morris, Hildegard Behrens, Christa Ludwig, Jessye Norman, Gary Lakes, Siegfried Jerusalem, Cheryl Studer, Reiner Goldberg, Heinz Zednik, Ekkehard Wlaschiha, Birgitta Svendén, Kurt Moll, and even Kathleen Battle, to name just a few. The DVD boxed set of that same Met production, with largely the same cast, supplemented my CD recordings with the visual splendor of Otto Schenk's superb traditional approach to the staging fulfilled by the Met's incredible technology.

However, last summer I yearned to hear a different interpretation of these works, so I found an economy-priced boxed set of the first complete *Ring* recording (by Decca, from 1958 to 1964) conducted by Sir Georg Solti with the Vienna Philharmonic, still considered unsurpassed by most critics (myself not included), complete with a two-disc audio guide introduction by acclaimed musicologist Deryck Cooke. Like the Met's version 30 years later, the *Solti Ring* features the starriest cast imaginable for its day, with the likes of a much younger Christa Ludwig, Kirsten Flagstad, Birgit Nilsson, Hans Hotter, Régine Crespin, George London, James King, Wolfgang Windgassen, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and even Joan Sutherland. It too is a resplendent rendition of the *Ring*, offering masterful perspec-



tives all its own.

Now with an alternative audio recording of the *Ring*, how could I be satisfied with just one video set? So, I acquired another legendary *Ring*, Patrice Chéreau's centenary production for Bayreuth, originally released in 1980. This one is also visually and aurally stunning, with a somewhat more modernistic take in the scenic design, and conducted by Pierre Boulez with such singers as Donald McIntyre, Gwyneth Jones, Peter Hofmann, Manfred Jung, Jeannine Altmeyer, Hanna Schwarz, Matti Salminen, and Heinz Zednik.

For the moment, I can live with the variety available from two complete audio *Rings* and two complete video *Rings*, but if anyone is wondering what I would like for any upcoming gift-giving occasions, there are a number of other *Ring* traversals out there that I would love to add to my collection!

(Met: <i>Das Rheingold</i>)	Deutsche Gramophon 427 607-2
<i>Die Walküre</i>	Deutsche Gramophon 423 389-2
<i>Siegfried</i>	Deutsche Gramophon 429 407-2
<i>Götterdämmerung</i>	Deutsche Gramophon 429 385-2)

(Met DVD set: Deutsche Gramophon 073 043-9); (Solti: Decca 478 8370); (Bayreuth DVD set: Philips 44007 04079)



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