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OPERALEX.ORG

WINTER 2017

Figaro: rascal, revolutionary

You'll leave Barber humming

The Barber of Seville - what a wonderful opera this is!

The overture is one of Rossini's best — the kind of melody that you leave the theater humming. The plot is romantic. Opera lovers who know Count Almaviva only as the jaded womanizer of *The*

Marriage of Figaro will find a charming surprise here:

he is a young, eager, romantic lover, pursuing the girl whose beauty and innocence touch his heart and fill his dreams. Supporting characters are funny and eccentric.

But it is of course Figaro who is at the center of everything. Rossini gave him the most irresistible aria in the whole repertoire of comic opera.

Who is this Figaro? He's a jack of all trades, a clever plotter, a man with a sharp intelligence in the service of his own survival, but willing to place it at the service of thwarted young lovers. To really understand Figaro, we must understand his creator, Pierre Caron de

Beaumarchais. Although it seems a bit of a stretch, there are scholars who believe that the name "Figaro" suggests Beaumarchais' "fils Caron" ("Caron Junior"). It could be, but it is in Beaumarchais' life that we find Figaro. The playwright's list of jobs

See Page 5

The Barber of Seville

Where: Singletary
Center for the Arts, UK
campus

When: Feb. 24-25 at 7:30
p.m.; Feb. 25, 26 at 2 p.m.

Tickets: Call 859.259.4929
or visit

www.SCFATickets.com

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Alltech again joined with UKOT for a gift of beautiful holiday music **Page 4**

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Finding his voice

Jud Perry's career took off as a countertenor

In 1999, as an undergraduate with the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre, Jud Perry sang the role of Martin in Aaron Copland's opera, *The Tender Land*. He reprised his performance when UKOT later recorded the opera with the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic Orchestra (Albany Records, TROY482/83).

It seemed Jud was on track for a career singing the standard tenor repertory. However, as he commented last fall, "life showed me that it doesn't always happen the way we think it will!

"My operatic experiences at UK were always great and I enjoyed spending time with Stephen King, Cliff Jackson, Tedrin Lindsay and, of course, Everett McCorvey. My time at UK confirmed for me that I wanted to pursue a career in music."

Vocal health problems forced him to take a break, but Jud soon realized that life without music would be quite uninteresting. He studied conducting at the University of Texas in Austin and, after his voice returned, completed a master's in vocal performance with Stephen King at Rice University in Houston. In 2005, he moved to Wiesbaden, Germany for four years as a lyric tenor at the State Theatre. This led to other jobs throughout Europe and Jud felt pleased with the contacts he'd made in the classical music world.

In 2013 he again had vocal problems, diagnosed as intermittent paralysis of one of his vocal chords. As a child he had sung as an alto in his church choir so, while he was recuperating at home and "bored out of my mind," he opened his score of Handel's *Messiah* and began singing the alto arias. To his surprise, this higher range felt "perfectly natural" and his vocal problems eventually disappeared.

He was encouraged by his voice teacher to consider changing his Fach from tenor to countertenor. The German system classifying singers by the range, weight

and color of their voices into categories called Fächer (literally 'compartments') is used worldwide, particularly in Europe, by music directors to recruit voices suited for specific roles. The countertenor Fach characterizes a male voice with a vocal range equivalent to a female contralto or mezzo-soprano. The increased popularity of Baroque opera in the second half of the 20th century generated renewed interest in male countertenors to sing the roles written for castrati.

His 2014 debut as Tolomeo in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* at the Teatro Regio in Torino, Italy "was my first real paying job as a countertenor," Jud said. But not his last.

"I will sing Eustazio in Händel's *Rinaldo*, and then I cover that title role in Chemnitz. In May I will debut at the Händel Festival in Göttingen, which is one of the three most famous Händel festivals in the world! I truly haven't looked back since my transition to countertenor - it was definitely the right decision."

Jud has also been working "as a Stimmbildner (vocal coach) and musical assistant in several semi-professional choral situations for almost two years." That work helped him develop piano skills and other rehearsal techniques because in Germany the choral conductor leads rehearsals from the piano. "Another highlight of my time in Germany was getting the

opportunity to conduct a fully-staged performance of *Die Zauberflöte* with full orchestra!"

You can watch Jud sing Tolomeo's aria "L'empio, sleale, indegno" at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=v33uKcRc5nQ; and hear two short interviews by Dominique Morales at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vbg8meE39k&t=17s and www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qXuZJbxnS8.



UKOT alum Jud Perry has lived and worked in Germany since 2005.

Mary Powell



Left to right, carolers Jessica Bayne, Matthew Pearce, Michael Pandolfo and Elizabeth Mayhew.

We all enjoy attending UKOT shows and recitals to support the young vocalists in the opera program.

But we should also be helping them transform the craft and skill they are learning into the marketable vocation they desire. A good way to do that is by hiring them to entertain.

Talented vocal students are often barely able to scrape together funding for their education plus living expenses, audition costs and the like. Musicians devote so many hours to personal practice and rehearsal in addition to classroom and study work, that their time for traditional jobs, is very limited. That is one reason why paid performance venues are so important.

One open to many students is working as church vocal scholars – paid additions to local choirs. The students receive a fee per rehearsal or service. Michael Rintamaa, Music Director at Central Christian Church, has provided singing jobs for UK students for more than a decade. He values what they add to his choir as well as the relationships that develop. "They bring such talent and ability to our music making, and hopefully they feel like they've gained a community of love and support. It is important real world experience for them, and they bring their expertise to share and inspire us."

They need more than applause

Pay encourages, too

During the recent holiday season, individuals and businesses also hired students to sing Christmas carols at seasonal parties and events. Doctoral candidate Michael Preacely, who participated in the program,

says the singers "are very appreciative of performance opportunities for which we are compensated." Plus, he says, "there is nothing like live music and having singers like those at UK Opera in your home or at your party. The dynamic it creates is second to none."

Singers are available throughout the year. The cost of \$100 per singer covers not only the performance but also program planning, rehearsal time, costuming and travel. To customize a program for your next event, contact Joan Rue at (859) 257-9331. Your family and friends will be impressed and you will make a huge difference in the lives of young young singers,

"One of the best things they can do is not ask them to work for free," OperaLex President Roger Leasor said about encouraging young singers. "Their work is undervalued in the eyes of everyone (including the artist) if they're not paid. Hiring them enhances the singers' belief in their chosen path in the arts and enhances our pride in a community where the arts are truly valued."

Anne Taul

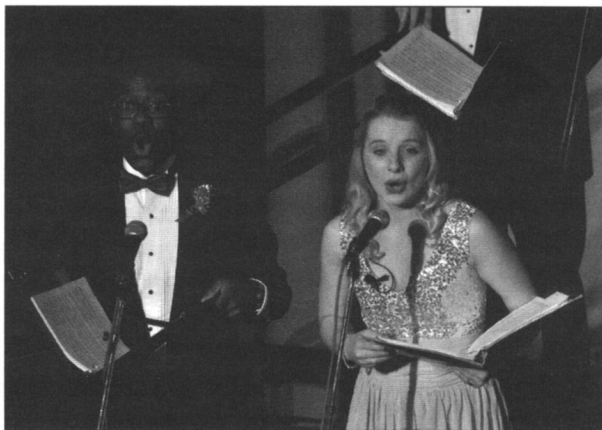


Photos by Tim Webb

UKOT singers filled up The Square with holiday music at the *Alltech Celebration of Song*.

What a gift is music

Annual holiday concert
is Alltech's present to
Kentucky music lovers



Willnard Anderson and Emily Redden joined the joyful chorus at the *Celebration of Song*.

The *Alltech Celebration of Song* celebrated the holidays and its 11th anniversary in grand fashion Sunday, December 11, with a 29-piece orchestra and dozens of UKOT's fine students and teachers lending their talents to this musical gift to Lexington.

Alltech founder and president, Dr. Pearse Lyons, was inspired by the international bank HSBC's Christmas celebration in Curitiba, Brazil and created the *Celebration of Song* as a gift to Lexington and to showcase the Alltech Opera Scholars from UKOT.

The *Alltech Celebration of Song* has been held in Victorian Square (now The Square) since its 2005 debut, but a second performance was added in 2012 to accommodate the holiday tradition's growing popularity, with about 600 people attending each performance. The free public concert's featured performers included Cynthia Lawrence, Gregory Turay, Calesta Day and Miss Kentucky Clark Janell Davis.

WKYT has been a media partner since 2013 and airs the show on the CW Lexington and twice on Christmas Day on WKYT. To relive some of the beautiful holiday music, visit www.celebrationofsong.org/cos.

UK tenor Masango recognized at Met Auditions



UKOT's Thabang Masango, left, advanced along with Courtney Jameson and Jianan Huang.

UK Opera Theatre tenor Thabang Masango was one of the winners in the 2016 Metropolitan Opera Kentucky District Auditions held in Lexington November 12. Local audiences have recently seen Masango perform in UKOT's productions of *Così fan tutte* as Ferrando and in several roles in *Ragtime*.

Also selected by the judges to advance to the regional competition were Indiana University singers mezzo-soprano Courtney Jameson and baritone Jianan Huang.

None of the Kentucky winners was selected to compete in the national competitions in New York City.

The winners of the Encouragement Awards, which include cash awards but not an advance in competition, were Taylor Comstock from the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre (Gail Robinson Encouragement Award) and Jeremiah Marcelle Sanders from Butler University.

Beaumarchais was arms dealer, spy, romantic

From Page 1

and careers would fill a biography of several volumes. Many of them overlap those that Figaro sings about.

However, we will limit ourselves to his roles as spy, arms dealer, and participant in two revolutions. The dates of his two best works are 1773 (*Barber*) and 1778 (*Marriage*). There was a great deal going on then, and Beaumarchais was in the thick of it all.

Of special interest to Americans, Beaumarchais supplied our revolution with arms and supplies, several years before the French government participated as an official ally. Poor Beaumarchais lost a great deal of money, but he certainly wasn't cured of revolutionary fervor. When *The Marriage of Figaro* was published, he got into trouble over Figaro's bitter speech denouncing aristocrats who were given everything simply because "they had taken the trouble to be born" into the right family. Figaro, more intelligent and more worthy, missed out and never had a chance to rise in the world however hard he worked.

Beaumarchais returned to the spy game, this time against England. In one of the most outrageous and improbable (but true) episodes, he was sent to London to try to persuade another French spy, the Chevalier d'Éon, to return home.

This gentleman was a source of some confusion: was the Chevalier in fact a gentleman — or a lady? His mode of dressing did nothing to clear up the matter. Eventually, a court mandated that he wear women's

garb at all times, since this seemed to the judges to be the correct choice. He is known to have fought at least one duel wearing the voluminous skirts fashionable at the time.

The question was finally answered when the Chevalier died — he was biologically a man. One could wish that Beaumarchais had written a play about him!

Beaumarchais was, needless to say, a revolutionary when 1789 brought in the fall of the Bastille and all that followed. He survived and had years of peaceful living with his

third wife — he had married a series of wealthy women, something that Figaro never managed. It seems appropriate that the creator of such a beloved rascal should have been such a rascal himself!



Dorothy Carter

Happenings 2017

February

The Barber of Seville

Where: Singletary Center

When: Feb, 24, 25 at 7:30 p.m.; Feb. 25, 26 at 2 p.m.

Cost: Ticketed event

March

Alltech Vocal Scholarship Competition

Where: Singletary Center

When: March 5, 2 p.m.

Cost: Free and open to the public

April

Graduate Opera Workshop — Two one-acts by Thomas Pasatieri

Where: Rehearsal Room, Schmidt Vocal Arts Center, UK campus

When: April 27, 28, time TBA

Two one-acts by Thomas Pasatieri

April 27, 28, time TBA

Cost: Free and open to the public

May

Encore!

Where: Keeneland

When: May 13, time TBA

Cost: Ticketed event

June

It's a Grand Night for Singing!

Where: Singletary Center for the Arts, UK campus

When: June 9-18

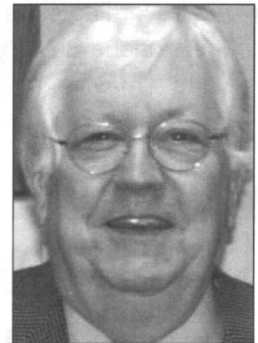
Cost: Ticketed event



An invitation to banish wintertime woes with Encore!

These dank, gray days of Lexington's winter make me want to go away.

Today, I'm going away to the future: Saturday, May 13 to be exact. That evening we'll be going to Keeneland for OperaLex's *Encore* event. Keeneland in May is about the most beautiful place on the planet and I'm sure the sun will be shining as we arrive.



Mr. Leasor

When we arrive we'll enter the world of *Ragtime*. We'll enjoy the reception and the silent auction and then sit down to our four-course dinner (wine-pairings by our friends at Liquor Barn), followed by a live auction and entertainment by the students and faculty of UKOT. Dr. McCorvey is planning for that entertainment to be heavily influenced by the songs of *Ragtime*.

All this is to raise funds for OperaLex to support scholarships and costs of productions of UKOT.

Just thinking about this evening in May has brightened my day in February.

Thumb your nose at winter. Put this on your calendar. You can't actually reserve a table just yet, but to be sure you're not left out contact Laura Newsome at lsnewsome@demovellan.com.

So many tuneful *Barbieri*

By Tedrin Blair Lindsay, PhD

With UK Opera's production of Rossini's comic masterpiece *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (*The Barber of Seville*) coming up, I thought it appropriate to recommend some recordings of this opera. There are dozens of recordings of this popular piece, and they keep on making them – the popular Rossini specialists Joyce DiDonato and Juan Diego Flórez just released a new one, though I haven't heard it yet, so I won't recommend it here. But there are lots and lots of good ones!

My favorite recording stars Sherrill Milnes in the title role, with the glorious Beverly Sills and Nicolai Gedda as Rosina and Almaviva, respectively. James Levine leads the London Symphony Orchestra in this 1975 traversal. Milnes holds the proceedings together as a great Figaro should do, and Sills sparkles in her character's mischievous coloratura roulades. The Bartolo and Basilio of Renato Capecchi and Ruggero Raimondi are the best ever, and the luxury casting of legendary mezzo soprano Fedora Barbieri in the smaller role of Berta is a bonus.

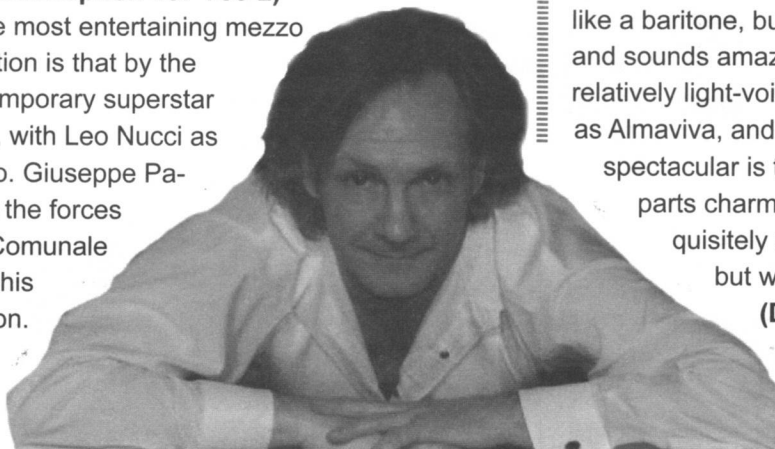
(EMI Classics 7243-5-85523-2)

Many connoisseurs love the 1957 rendition starring Maria Callas in a rare comic turn. She is magnificent in this part, and the masterful Figaro of Tito Gobbi, her frequent baritone partner, balances her star power expertly. Luigi Alva is an ardent, youthful Almaviva, and the Philharmonia Orchestra under the baton of Alceo Galliera accompanies sympathetically. **(Warner Classics 082564340897)**

Alva is the tenor on another recording 15 years later, the 1972 version led by Claudio Abbado with the London Philharmonic. Teresa Berganza shines brilliantly in the original mezzo soprano configuration of the role of Rosina, but Hermann Prey is a rather Teutonic Figaro.

(Deutsche Grammophon 457-733-2)

Probably the most entertaining mezzo soprano rendition is that by the beloved contemporary superstar Cecilia Bartoli, with Leo Nucci as a stellar Figaro. Giuseppe Patané conducts the forces of the Teatro Comunale di Bologna in this 1989 production.



Opera 101

The winter session of Opera 101: :

March 4: Berg and Korngold

March 11: Janacek and Weill.

April 1: Cilea, Giordano, Catalani and Leoni.

April 15: Chabrier, Ravel and Poulenc.

April 22: Barber, Menotti and Pasatieri.

This semester the OperaLex Lecture Series will explore the works of great opera composers a little outside the mainstream. In March, we will investigate Germanic and Slavic composers, and in April we will turn to lesser-known composers from Italy and France, and finally from the United States, just in time to introduce the UKOT graduate chamber opera production (April 27 and 29), a double bill of charming one-acts by Thomas Pasatieri.

Classes are at 10 a.m.-noon in the Gail Robinson Music Library, at the Schmidt Vocal Arts Center on UK's campus, on the corner of Rose Street and Rose Lane. Parking is available directly behind the building.

Each class is \$20 adults, \$5 students, with the proceeds benefiting UK Opera Theatre.

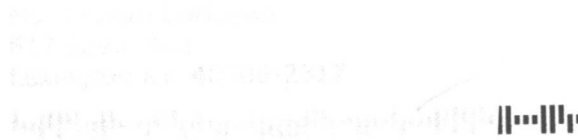
(Decca 425-520-2)

However, after the Milnes/Sills version described above, my second favorite is a controversial choice. I happen to enjoy very much the 1992 recording with Plácido Domingo as Figaro, his first dip back into the baritone repertoire after decades as a dramatic tenor. He does not really sound like a baritone, but his interpretation is full of character and sounds amazing, even if not what you're used to. The relatively light-voiced Frank Lopardo is therefore well cast as Almaviva, and sings it beautifully in any event. Also spectacular is the Rosina of Kathleen Battle, equal parts charming coquette and mischievous vixen, exquisitely sung. This *Barber* is also led by Abbado, but with The Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

(Deutsche Grammophon 28943-57632)

Dr. Tedrin Lindsay

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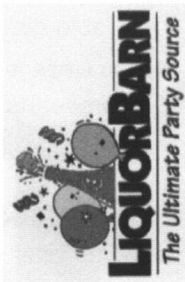
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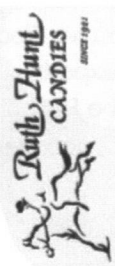
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