

Bravo!

Lexington Opera Society Newsletter Vol. 2 Issue 3 Spring 2003



“Streetcar” Rolls into Lexington

Many music lovers know André Previn as an orchestral conductor and a prolific composer of popular songs and Academy Award-winning film scores. But an opera composer? Well, think again! On April 12, the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre production of André Previn’s first opera, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, opens at the Downtown Arts Center. The opera premiered in September 1998 at Opera San Francisco under Previn’s orchestral direction. The UKOT production marks its first performance by a university opera program. And that’s not all that’s new: the opera’s four performances (April 12, 19, 22, and 26) will alternate in repertory with Actors’ Guild of Lexington’s production of Tennessee Williams’ play of the same name! Both productions will use the same set in the DAC’s theater, and several actors (for example, the doctor and nurse who appear in the last scene to escort Blanche to the asylum) will appear in both productions in non-singing roles.

How did this unusual AGL/UKOT joint venture, the first repertory presentation of an opera and its original literary source in the Lexington area, come to be? *Streetcar’s* stage director, James W. Rodgers, is a veteran of collaborations between his own UK Department of Theatre and UKOT. Last year they collaborated in a joint production of Stephen Sondheim’s *A Little Night Music*. About the upcoming production of *Streetcar* Rodgers commented, “I love [Tennessee] Williams’ play, and have taught it for many years in my theatre courses at UK. In the music section at Barnes & Noble bookstore last summer, I saw the DVD of the 1998 premiere of Previn’s opera and I thought, Wow! After watching the film, I called Everett McCorvey, the director of UKOT, and said, “Everett, we’ve got another chance.” He explained that when UKOT produced Kirke

Mecham’s opera “Tartuffe” in the Spring of 2001, he and McCorvey agreed that it would have been a great idea if the opera had played in repertory with Rodger’s own production at UK in 1999 of the original 17th Century play by Moliere (in English translation). They resolved to keep a sharp eye out for another opportunity, and quickly contacted AGL’s Artistic Director Kevin Hardesty about arranging the collaboration when *Streetcar* was announced as the “American Classics” choice for AGL’s 2002/2003 season. Rodgers noted that Previn’s background in jazz and pop music prepared him

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Mark Huseth trades Don Giovanni’s sword for a different kind of desire, as Stanley in UKOT’s production of “Streetcar”.

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perfectly to capture the 'local flavor' and rhythms of Tennessee Williams' New Orleans characters and setting for the play. He calls the music "fascinating ... it's amazing how well Previn captured the subtext of the play." The libretto by Philip Littell remains faithful to the drama, as audience members can see for themselves by attending back-to-back performances of both versions.

Soprano Jenny Megitt, who sings the role of Blanche DuBois, impressed Lexington operagoers with her dramatic performance as Anna Maurant in Kurt Weill's *Street Scene* last Fall. She had seen the PBS telecast of *Streetcar* soon after its San Francisco premiere and considered Blanche 'a dream role to sing', but she commented, "I never thought I'd get a chance to sing this role before I turned 30." It is a very demanding role, as Blanche is on stage for all but about 25 minutes of the entire opera. Baritone Mark Huseth sings the role of Stanley Kowalski, an equally challenging characterization dramatically, musically, and physically. Huseth compared Stanley to his last lead role with UKOT, Don Giovanni in Mozart's opera of that name: "Each man is arrogant and self-centered, accustomed to getting his own way (particularly with women), but using different methods – Don Giovanni is an aristocrat skilled at manipulating the lives of people around him, but Stanley is like an animal who acts and reacts on pure instinct. This means that the physical language of interpretation for the two roles is really different. And of course, the two musical styles are also radically distinct."

Blanche's younger sister Stella, married to Stanley, is sung by Melody Wolleat. Jeremy Cady and Chuck Yeager appear as Stanley's friends Mitch and Steve, Christy Pritchard sings the role of the Kowalskis' neighbor Eunice, Jeryl Cunningham is the Flower Woman, and Nathan Munson is the Collector. Because of the small size of the DAC theatre, the production will use the piano score (played by Tedrin Blair Lindsay) instead of the orchestral score.

Performances of the opera include three Sunday afternoon matinees at 2:00 p.m. (April 12, 19, and 26) and one evening performance (Tuesday, April 22) at 8:00 p.m.

Mary Powell

LOS Goes to the Big Apple to hear Turay!

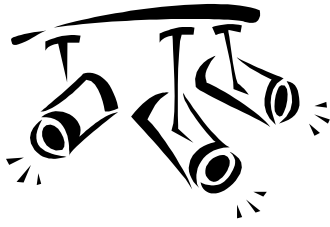
Last December at 5:30 AM on Sat. the 14th, a group of fifteen happy Lexington opera fans met at BlueGrass Airport. After months of planning our dream of attending "OUR OWN" Gregory Turay's (sorry Wisconsin!) performance in "A View From the Bridge" at the Metropolitan Opera was going to come true the following Monday. (Dec.16th). This was one of only five performances of the opera on the 2002-2003 Met schedule.

Shortly after our 1pm arrival at The Belvedere Hotel (just 4 blocks from Times Square and right next to the Theater District!) we hit the sidewalks. The weather was truly nasty - cold and windy, with occasional sleety rain. Did we or the masses of fellow grid-locked pedestrians pushing their way to their favorite stores or shows care? NOT!! We were experiencing The Big Apple, determined to make the most of every minute of our stay with 2 1/2 days to do so!! Only two events were scheduled for all of us as a group: a pre-opera dinner Monday evening, followed by "A View from the Bridge" at the Met.

Monday morning we were thrilled to see Gregory in the NY Times Arts Section cover story with a great photo and a very complimentary article on "A View..." in general and his part in particular.

"A View from the Bridge", based on the Arthur Miller play, was composed by William Bolcom with libretto by Arnold Weinstein and Arthur Miller himself. The opera is really a contemporary Greek drama, full of tension and .."a lot of open, naked emotion right on the surface" (Arthur Miller). It was commissioned by Lyric Opera of Chicago where it premiered in 2000 with Gregory as Rodolpho, whose aria "New York Lights" is one of its most memorable. "...With a range of an octave and a sixth...it is not easy,....it is performed with a melting tenderness by Mr. Turay, who draws the last note almost longer than seems humanly possible. It is eliciting bravos at the Met" (Stephen Holden, NY Times, Dec. 16, 2002). Those bravos were especially lively that night!!

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Spotlight on Jennifer Coleman, Soprano

UK Opera student Jennifer Coleman will soon be seen on the stage of the New York City Opera. Jennifer arrived in Lexington five years ago to enroll in the doctoral program. Her undergraduate degree is from Eastern Oregon University, and she earned a Master's degree from the University of Illinois in Urbana. Influenced by Dr. Everett McCorvey, she enrolled in U.K. and has successfully completed all requirements for the D.M.A. degree except for her dissertation. Her parents, Ardyce and Larry Coleman, have emigrated to Lexington from the Napa Valley while her brother Justin and sister Josie remain in California. Though Justin is hard of hearing, Jennifer says she fortunately sings loudly enough that he can hear her.

At Dr. McCorvey's suggestion she has studied with Gail Robinson for the last two and a half years. She is also a full time vocal teacher while continuing to sing in UK Opera Theatre productions and with the worship team at her church. Most recently at the UK Opera Gala on February 28, she performed Elisabeth's aria, "Dich, theure Halle" from Wagner's *Tannhauser* and with Edward White Jr. as Padre sang "Or

siam soli" as Leonora from Verdi's *La Forza del Destino*.

Jennifer recently signed with Dispeker Management in New York to begin her pursuit of a full time solo vocal career. She has been signed to sing the First Lady in *The Magic Flute* with New York City Opera beginning October 5 and is waiting to hear from several additional recent auditions with opera companies in the U.S. and Europe.

Her first role with UK Opera Theatre was as Mimi in *La Boheme*. Additionally we have seen her as the mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* as well as in *It's a Grand Night for Singing*. Her next Lexington performance will be excerpts from *Magic Flute* with the Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra on March 16. (see pg 5)

Puccini's Suor Angelica and Mascagni's Santuzza are among Ms. Coleman's favorite roles, but all of us who have been privileged to hear her sing recognize that she loves and brings her best to any role. Bravo to Jennifer on her past and present accomplishments and best wishes to her as her career continues to blossom.

Mary Nell McGary

BRAVO Members only!

Join us for a special Bravo Brunch sponsored by the Lexington Opera Society Board on March 29, 2003 to enjoy a taste of the UK Opera Theatre production of "A Streetcar Named Desire". Chat with Dr. Everett McCorvey and the stage director for "Streetcar", James Rodgers, and meet members of the cast who will present music from the production. Please look for your invitation in the mail or contact Mary Powell (859) 276-4576. You must be a current Bravo member to attend.



***Three Little Pigs - The Opera
Music by Mozart - see December 2002 LOS
Newsletter to find out how to bring this produc-
tion to your child's school!***



2003 LOS Prelude Party

Wine Tasting - Wine Auction - Silent Auction and Entertainment from Grand Night 2003

There is always much anticipation for Spring but this year Kentuckians are especially anxious for the seasons to change – especially after the calamitous mid-February weather events. And so you begin dreaming of warm sunny days, flowers springing up, foals romping in paddocks, and then all of a sudden you're in the Downtown Arts Center, walking through a hallway, stopping to sample enticing wines from around the world. Suddenly a long table with delectable palate pleasers catches your eye. Then yet another table of wine, and another until you come to a dazzling display of items that you can actually bid on in the hopes of taking them home. But wait, everyone is now heading downstairs to a large room and filling the seats in anticipation of hearing selections from Lexington's biggest musical event, "It's A Grand Night for Singing".

Where has your dream led you? You are at the Lexington Opera Society's 2nd Annual Prelude to "It's a Grand Night for Singing". Last year's event was an overwhelming success and one of the highlights of the Lexington social scene and so, naturally, you are already daydreaming about this year's event.

What? You say you missed it last year? Not to worry – you have another chance to join in the festivities – and to help the Lexington Opera Society raise money to support UK Opera.

Mark your calendar for Saturday, May 10th at 7:00 PM and join your fellow wine and song lovers for this year's event, again to be held at the Downtown Arts Center. A special table of cheeses and sausage will be presented by the Liquor Barn in addition to a variety of food served up by one of Lexington's best caterers. The silent auction will once again offer many unique items with something to suit everyone.

The highlight of the event is of course the marvelous entertainment provided by the performers from Grand Night. During the performance door prizes will be drawn and the live auction will commence.

Invitations will be mailed in a few weeks – if you would like to include someone on the invitation list please contact Dr. George Privett at (859) 278-7226. Tickets are \$75 each (\$150 per couple)

If you are interested in donating an item for the silent auction or as a door prize please contact Linde Couch at (859) 221-1183 or Elspeth Johnson at (859) 266-7567.



Scenes from last years Prelude Party



Help Sponsor the 2003 prelude Party!

Business Sponsorship Package Includes the Following

- **8 Admissions to event (\$600)**
- **Acknowledgement on invitations and all publicity if commitment made by March 25th**
- **Acknowledgement on 2 Posters prominently displayed at event**
- **Acknowledgement verbally from stage during event entertainment**
- **4 Tickets to a performance of "It's A Grand Night for Singing" (June 13, 14 or 15)**
- **Acknowledgement in program for "It's A Grand Night for Singing"**

Sponsorship Package Price \$1000

For additional information on sponsorship please contact Dr. George Privett
GWPRIVETT@aol.com Office (859) 278-7226 Fax (859) 276-1540

"The Magic Flute" – Scenes from Mozart

On March 16, 2003, singers from the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre join the Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra in a program of scenes from "The Magic Flute", the delightful opera by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. CKYO conductor Bill Briggs notes with pride that it is the oldest independent youth orchestra (governed by its members) in the USA (founded in 1947), and the second oldest arts institution (after Lexington Childrens' Theatre) in the Lexington area. In March 2002, CKYO and UKOT joined forces for the first time, presenting a short program of scenes from Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*. This collaboration was so enjoyable for musicians, singers, and audience alike that Briggs and UKOT director Everett McCorvey decided to mount another co-production.

Briggs had already decided to open his March 2003 concert with the Overture from "the Magic Flute", to feature the orchestra's unusually strong violin section, when McCorvey suggested, "Let's do the whole opera instead!" Mozart wrote "Flute" in 1791 at the invitation of his friend (and fellow Masonic lodge member) Emanuel Johann Schikaneder, and its first performance at the fashionable Theatre an der Wein came only two months before the composer's untimely death in December of

that year at the age of 39. Schikaneder had originally requested music to accompany the script for a puppet show based on an Oriental fairy tale about a wicked sorcerer who steals away the daughter of the Queen of the Night, only to see her rescued by a handsome Prince with magical gifts. The first act had been completed when word came of a popular new show, "Kaspar the Bassoonist", at a rival Viennese theatre; it was based on the same fairy tale and the hero wielded a magic bassoon against the sorcerer. Not to be outdone, Schikaneder quickly revised his story line into an opera libretto that morphs from light frothy comedy to solemn Masonic rituals, all ennobled by Mozart's mysterious, ethereal music. "The Magic Flute" has surprised and charmed audiences for more than 200 years with its delightful combination of hilarious comedy and deeply spiritual dialogues. In the first half of the program, trumpeter Caleb Hudson, who appeared last year on the National Public Radio showcase for young musicians, "From the Top", stars in the first movement (the famous 'Funeral March') of Symphony No. 5 by Gustav Mahler. Violinist Sheila Bowles is the soloist in the first movement of the Violin Concerto by Bruch. Commenting on his

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Become a part of the BRAVO Committee

Opera is flourishing in Kentucky and the University of Kentucky Opera program is recognized as one of the best in the country. How fortunate we are to be involved with these aspiring singers and this outstanding program! **Lexington Opera Society** invites you to consider becoming a part of the **BRAVO Committee**. The contributions that you make are tax deductible, and your membership in the **BRAVO Committee** brings you glimpses of the magical world of opera from backstage as well as from the "Grand Circle". We plan educational events, group tours to the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and offer many ways in which you can become involved in opera on the grass roots level. As a **BRAVO** member you also receive a discount (buy one ticket at full price and a second at half price) on single performance ticket purchases for UK Opera productions such as "Street Scene" and the "Opera Gala", and reduced ticket prices for **BRAVO** events where you will have the opportunity to share your enthusiasm with others also drawn to opera. We hope you will join us in promoting this wonderful art form and become an active member.

Membership Application

Lexington Opera Society
BRAVO Committee

Mail to:

Lexington Opera Society
P.O. Box 11982
Lexington, KY 40579-1982

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Circle category:

Bravo Committee Membership	\$15.00 single, \$30.00 family
Opera Buff	\$25.00-\$50.00
Duet	\$51.00-\$100.00
Aria	\$101.00-\$500.00
Overture	\$501.00-\$1000.00
Figaro	\$1000.00 +

Would you like to receive the BRAVO Newsletter via e-mail?

If so please paste your mailing label below and fill in your email address and mail to Newsletter Editor, LOS, P.O. Box 11982 Lexington, KY 40579-1982

Mailing label here

E-mail address:

You may also e-mail the above information to twogiants@earthlink.net
Be sure to include information as it appears on your mailing label.

Trip to NY cont'd....

We waited for Gregory at a rear Met exit to give him another enthusiastic round of applause and to get his autograph. He was very pleased to see us. On the ride back to LaGuardia the next morning we agreed that "a swell time" was had by all and that we want to do this again. So - stay tuned!!

UK Opera Theatre doctoral graduate Jennifer Coleman has just been engaged by the New York City Opera for the part of the First Lady in their October 2003 production of *The Magic Flute!* Let us know if you are interested in joining us for another trip to the Big Apple! E-mail: lindecouch@alltel.net (please put "NYC Opera Trip" in the subject line) or leave message with name & telephone number at (859) 221-1183. Please get your name in early. Our December trip required more than two months of planning/coordinating.

Note: Round-trip airfare out of Lexington, 3 nights at The Belvedere (double occupancy), round-trip transportation to LaGuardia and one group round-trip to the Met cost us about \$490 each. Meals and tickets to opera & shows were extra.

Linde Couch

Michael Turay is The Music Man!

Michael Turay, as Professor Harold Hill, will march into Bardstown this summer in Meredith Wilson's "The Music Man" in what promises to be one of the most delightful revivals of this classic Broadway musical to come to Kentucky. The show will run from July 9th through August 21st on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays at 8:30 PM in the J. Dan Talbott Amphitheater at My Old Kentucky Home. For ticket information and directions go to www.stephenfoster.com. If you are interested in forming a group to attend one of the performances contact the editor at twogiants@earthlink.net.

Spring 2003



Please take note.....

UK Opera Theatre Office Wish List

UK Opera Theatre has begun moving into new quarters across the street from the Singletary Center in the Koinonia House. Due to budget constraints the Department is seeking donations of the following items:

- Mirrors for Movement studio
- Ballet Bars
- Picture Frames
- Photos for wall
- Posters for walls
- Refrigerator
- Xerox Copier
- 50 stackable chairs
- Chair holder
- 10 music stands
- Music stand holder
- Office Furniture
- Book Shelves
- 2 Sofas
- Therapeutic Balls
- Floor Exercise Mats
- Sprung Floor
- Blinds
- Stereo System
- Stereo Cabinet

According to Dr. McCorvey, the immediate areas of need are a Xerox machine, mirrors for the walls and a sprung floor so performers can dance in the movement studio. The movement studio is concrete and in order to dance on it, it is necessary to put down a layer of padding and cover the floor with wood. Contact Cora Hughes or Everett McCorvey at UK Opera (859) 257-9331 or opera@uky.edu

BRAVO!!

***Liquor Barn is once again a season
sponsor of the
Lexington Opera Society.***

Magic Flute cont'd

young performers' response to the challenges of playing Mozart's music, Briggs noted "It's hard for young players - the older ones like it better than the younger ones, because although it's not so difficult technically, Mozart requires careful interpretation. It's wonderful for

these students to have the opportunity to play such great Classical music, because in their classrooms they have more contact with Baroque or modern music." The orchestra will include 60-65 players for the March 16 performance.

Mary Powell

Opera Calendar

UK OPERA THEATRE

All tickets may be ordered by phone (257-4929) or go to Singletary Center Ticket Office on the corner of Rose Street and Euclid Avenue. Hours are 12 noon to 5 pm Mon. - TR; 12 noon to 6 pm FR.

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, (The Opera) Andre Previn; Philip Littell, libretto
Lexington Downtown Arts Center April 12th, 19th, 26th: 2 PM- April 22nd: 8 PM

GRAND NIGHT FOR SINGING, "GRAND NIGHT SALUTES THE BROADWAY LOVE SONG", June 13, 14 at 8 PM and June 15 matinee at 2 PM, at the Singletary Center for the Arts.

Lexington Opera Society

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Mission Statement of the Lexington Opera Society

The mission of the Lexington Opera Society is to enhance the general public's awareness and appreciation of opera in Central Kentucky and throughout the Commonwealth primarily through support of the opera program at the University of Kentucky and the continuation of its educational and public programs.