

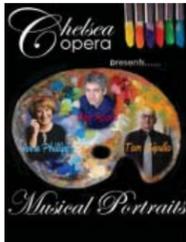


Chelsea Opera presents



More Songs for My Brother: featuring Leonarda Priore, mezzo soprano – to benefit the Nicholas S. Priore New Possibilities Fund
December 6, 2013 at 8:00 pm
Christ and St. Stephen’s Church

Opera Lab – The Sleeping Beauty – a work in progress
by Benjamin Wenzelberg (Act I excerpts with orchestra) with The Bloomingdale School of Music, Lawrence Davis conductor
January 17, 2014 at 7:30 pm
Christ and St. Stephen’s Church



Musical Portraits – songs by composers Anne Phillips, Tom Cipullo and Ben Moore
Featured guest artist Carol Wilson, soprano
March 14, 2014 at 8:00 pm
Christ and St. Stephen’s Church

“... Chelsea Opera offered an inspired beginning to its eighth season!”
“...small scale, high impact...”
“Such musical, expressive and polished performances deserve greater attention from the community.” – [Opera News](#)
“...the enterprising Chelsea Opera...” – [The New York Times](#)



PO Box 277 – Old Chelsea Station
New York, NY 10113-0277

Chelsea Opera Spotlight – Fall 2013

Susan Kantor, contributing writer
Frances Toliver, layout design
Robert J. Saferstein, photographer
Lynne Hayden-Findlay, editor
Leonarda Priore, editor

Chelsea Opera Board of Directors

Leonard Priore, President
Larry Beers, Vice President/Secretary
Lynne Hayden-Findlay, Treasurer
Courtenay Casey
John Geller
Gerald Potter

chelseaopera@aol.com
www.chelseaopera.org

**Chelsea Opera Fall Production
Ballymore, Part One – Winners**



Sheryl Liu Design
SherylLiuDesign@gmail.com

MEET CHELSEA OPERA’S NEWEST BOARD MEMBER



John Geller was born and raised in Portland, Maine. In his senior year, joined the Portland Symphony Orchestra where he played French horn and eventually became principal horn. He received a scholarship to the New England Conservatory in Boston, earning a bachelor of music in French horn performance and did studies towards a master’s in musicology. John was one of the Metropolitan Opera’s initial Met Titles performance “callers” and continues to work at the Met on a freelance basis after formally retiring in 2012.

How did you choose the French horn?
My first choice was violin, but it was not offered so I started on trumpet, but was soon moved to the mellophone—sort of a small French horn that uses a trumpet mouthpiece—and then to French horn. The horn seemed more interesting than the trumpet, and more horns were needed.
As a senior in high school, you were already playing French horn for the Portland Symphony—what was that like?
One reason I got in is because the principal horn was my teacher. I think there might have been one or two other high school students in the orchestra, but it was a very big thrill! I particularly remember playing a big Vaughn Williams cantata for chorus and soloists—the first time that I experienced the feeling of really “playing out.”
You’ve worked for the Met and now you’re working on behalf of CO. What do you find similar—or dissimilar—between the two?
Due to the very high professional standards with which Chelsea Opera operates, in that way it is remarkably similar to the Met! Probably the largest dissimilarity is our lack of a dedicated “house,” which in our case includes no office or production space.
What exactly is a “titles caller”?
In brief, a caller is the person who tells the computer operator exactly when to reveal the title that the audience sees on the screen. As you can imagine, timing must be exact so it takes quite a lot of concentration.
As a titles caller and orchestra member, you’ve seen hundreds of performances. What makes a performance truly wonderful?
When everything—a great work, cast, set, costumes, lighting, orchestra, chorus, conductor (and titles!)—comes together in an inspired way, and I think we achieve this rather consistently at Chelsea Opera!
And, finally, what advice do you have for aspiring musicians?
Assiduously follow your heart and talents, work hard to develop both, and feel wonderful about working in the arts.

2013–2014 SEASON PREVIEW



Oct. 11, 2013 at 7:30 pm
Oct. 12, 2013 at 4:00 pm
St. Peter’s Church in Chelsea



June 13, 2014 at 7:30 pm
June 14, 2014 at 4:00 pm
St. Peter’s Church in Chelsea

MEET SEYMOUR BARAB



Seymour Barab began his career as a church organist when he was just thirteen. Following military service in World War II, he went to Paris on the G.I. Bill where he explored musical composition. In one year, he produced more than two hundred art songs and considers vocal music his favorite means of musical expression. According to Central Opera Service, during the 1988–1989 season, Seymour was the most performed composer of opera in America. His well-known fairy tale opera, Little Red Riding Hood, was the first American opera performed in China in its post-isolationist period, and his Civil War opera Philip Marshall, based on Dostoyevsky’s The Idiot, was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. In a 1998 Kennedy Center ceremony, he was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Opera Association.

How did you begin your musical training? Did you come from a musical family?
I wouldn’t say my family was musical, but we did have an upright piano. When I was seven, I started piano and my aunt was my first teacher, but I eventually took lessons in everything.
Tell me about playing in your high school orchestra.
I began playing the cello because the conductor didn’t have enough cellists. In my junior year I was made principal. In our graduation concert, I played the Lalo Cello Concerto as soloist with the orchestra.
I understand you played in a string quartet while in the Navy?
I enlisted in the Navy soon after Dec. 7, 1941. I had noted my experience as a professional cellist, so was stationed at the Philadelphia Navy Yard and given a marching band instrument (clarinet) to play. My clarinet teacher, Anthony Guiliatti, a recruit like myself, became principal clarinetist of the Philadelphia Orchestra after the war for many years. I got to be pretty good on the clarinet—good enough to play in parades, exhibitions, football and baseball games, even dances. My proficiency as a cellist, however, did not go to waste. Every afternoon, seven days a week, a string quartet played atmospheric music for the officers’ mess. I was the cellist of the string quartet.

What is your favorite opera and why?
Gian Carlo Menotti’s *The Consul* is my favorite because I think it’s the best story. It was the first real opera to play to sold out houses on Broadway. It also won the 1950 Pulitzer Prize for Music and the 1950 New York Drama Critics’ Circle award for Best Musical.
What do you think makes your opera, *La Pizza con Funghi*, so accessible to audiences?
Well, it’s in English—so that makes it accessible—and I think it’s very funny.
Has your compositional style changed over the years?
It has veered more toward musical comedy, which can have spoken dialogue and dancing. In general, those are two things that distinguish musical comedy from opera. My comic opera, *Gods of Mischief*, for example, is a story about young gods who are bored and decide to amuse themselves at the expense of a human couple. It premiered in 2005 at the San Antonio Opera and was directed by a choreographer. I was thrilled.
Finally, what advice would you give an aspiring composer?
Don’t ever give up!



MEET RICHARD WARGO



Richard Wargo, a native of Scranton, PA and a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, is a two-time recipient of the Belin Arts Scholarship. He has received grants from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the NEA and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and served as composer-in-residence at the Skylight Opera Theatre in Milwaukee, where *Ballymore* was premiered in 1999 and recorded for PBS. Richard's *A Chekhov Trilogy* was premiered by Chautauqua Opera in 1993 and has received numerous performances, including productions of the trilogy's third segment, "The Music Shop," by the Juilliard School and by Opera National du Rhin in Colmar (FR). In 2010, the Wexford Festival presented the Irish premiere of *Ballymore, Part One: Winners*. This fall, *Part Two: Losers*, will have its turn at Wexford. During the summer months, Richard serves as artistic director of the Sembrich Opera Museum in Bolton Landing on Lake George, NY.

Who is your favorite composer and which composer would you most like to have dinner with?

In terms of a dinner date, I might select Bela Bartok, since I'm fond of Hungarian cuisine, but in regard to musical influences, I'd have to cite the three B's: Barber, Britten and Bernstein. Each of these favorite composers of mine, with his own unique and individual style, has elevated the art of musical theater in English to great heights. If I could add a fourth, I'd mention Blitzstein, who set the English language melodiously and with a convincing, natural flow—and if I could round off the B's with a fifth, I'd add Jack Beeson to the list. Beeson took iconic American figures such as Lizzie Borden and Amy Semple McPherson and brought them to vivid life on-stage—and could make even the most florid vocal writing sound as natural as the spoken word.

What is your favorite opera and why?

Copland's *The Tender Land*, the American master at his most Mahler-esque, Menotti's *The Consul*, the model composer/librettist at his most heartfelt and passionate, Britten's *Gloriana*, overlooked and under-appreciated, filled with pageantry, lyricism and nobility, Blitzstein's *Juno*, no, not technically an opera, but a grand work just the same, a heartrending retelling of Sean O'Casey's great play, Stephen Paulus' *The Woodlanders*, a beautifully-wrought version of the Thomas Hardy novel, and Robert Ward's *The Crucible*—why this iconic American masterwork isn't a staple at the Met, I can't say!

Which opera, if any, did you used to love but now think is overrated—or vice versa?

We each respond to works of music theater in different ways at various times in our lives. I can recall a sense of excitement at hearing particular passages from works that don't quite hold the same appeal now (for instance, even though I'm still very fond of Menotti's *The Medium*, I found the score to

be much more chilling as a teenager than I do now). Other works that once may have seemed beyond me now have a resonance I hadn't originally appreciated (the lyricism of Britten's *Death in Venice* seemed to escape me on the first hearings). But I'm reluctant to cast judgment on any work of art. Who am I to disparage an operatic work at this point in my musical journey when someone else, at a different point in the trek, may find great joy in that very same work?

What do you think makes your opera, *Winners*, so accessible to audiences?

Credit playwright Brian Friel for creating such endearing characters as Mag and Joe and so dramatically potent a structure. I was seventeen when I first experienced the play in a tournament production (Scranton Central High School's state championship-winning entry) and it resonated with me for years, until, finally, I drummed up the courage to write to Mr. Friel and request his permission to adapt the hillside summer idyll of Mag and Joe for the opera stage.

When you're writing a new opera, how do you decide "the voice" of each character?

This is something that just tends to suggest itself, given the nature of the characters that comprise the cast of the new work. For example, take Douglas Moore's *Ballad of Baby Doe*. Could we imagine Horace Tabor as any other voice type than a baritone; or Baby Doe as anything but a soprano? Sometimes composers can belie expectations; at first blush, we might expect Erika in the opera *Vanessa* to be sung by a lyric soprano, but Barber needs only to spin out a single phrase of "Must the Winter Come So Soon," and we're convinced at how right Barber is in selecting a mezzo-soprano to portray Vanessa's brooding young niece.

When composing, how much do you think about specific singers and their voices?

The notion of tailoring a role for a specific singer has always had appeal to me. But, in reality, my operas usually begin in a solitary composing studio with imaginary voices in my head. Once a work is "on the boards," in rehearsal or in a workshop and I have an opportunity to work with a cast of singers, I find that quite often I begin tailoring the roles for the specific singers that I'm working with.

What advice would you give an aspiring composer?

Just do it—find a way to make whatever creative notions you have happen! It may mean seeking out an idea that requires a cast of three instead of thirty. It may mean enlisting your friends to play in the orchestra. But the most discouraging thing for young composers (or any of us, for that matter) to hear is that it's "not possible." Though, in many ways, the climate for new opera productions is more difficult than ever, what with budget cuts and companies folding. By the same token, there are so many venues. Add to that the additional opportunities that the Internet affords—how about an original opera for YouTube or Facebook? Don't let the word "no" get in the way. Just do it! Speaking of new works and a commitment to composers, I want to close by expressing my deep appreciation to everyone at Chelsea Opera; for the manner in which *Winners* has been so enthusiastically embraced by all and for the care taken in bringing Mag and Joe down from that County Tyrone hilltop, and in offering to the pair a warm welcome on their first trip to the Big City!



MEET GARRY IANCO



Violinist **Garry Ianco** has served as first violin/concertmaster of the Chelsea Opera Chamber Orchestra since 2008 and orchestra contractor for Chelsea Opera since 2008. He recently announced that this October's productions would be his last for a few years as he heads out across the country as the concertmaster for The Phantom of the Opera tour. Mr. Ianco otherwise leads a varied international career, from studio recordings with jazz musicians like Jacam Manricks to an appearance on TV's "30 Rock". As an orchestral musician, Mr. Ianco performs with the Santo Domingo Festival Orchestra, the Munich Symphony, and many NY area ensembles. Past chamber music collaborations include such artists as Fred Zlotkin, Nina Beilina, Adonis Gonzalez, Alex Markov, and Riccardo Cobo. Mr. Ianco has played in the Broadway pits of *Evita* and *Phantom of the Opera*. Additionally, he has been on the faculty of New Jersey City University.

When did you start playing the violin and why?

I started to play at the age of 7 at public school #4 in Belleville NJ. One day the whole school was called down to an assembly. The woman who played the violin in the demonstration performed a piece we were singing in our general music class, "The Ghost of John". The lightbulb went off when I realized we can have all of the emotion and meaning in the music without the words. I was hooked!

Who is your favorite composer to play?

Most performing musicians will say, "whatever I am playing", but I do listen to and play a lot of music. Sometimes I feel like a human iPod! I enjoy playing Bach and Paganini, as they really cover the basics of what violinists can do technically and musically. Lately, I have found myself listening to (and playing!) a lot of Mark O'Conner. He inspires me because the music he plays runs the gamut of styles – classical, rock, jazz, blues, bluegrass – the guy does it all!

What will you miss the most about playing with the Chelsea Opera Chamber Orchestra?

CO has been an unparalleled experience in my musical life. I have been really able to hone my skills as a concertmaster and contractor here. Both jobs are very stressful but the experience has taught me a lot about who I am as a person and musician. I will also miss working intimately with important composers like Tom Cipullo, and Matthew Harris. To be able to ask a composer what he/she wants and to satisfy their desire is something most artists don't get to experience. Also, I feel very strongly that CO has been/will be at the forefront of what is now called "Chamber Opera". It was something that grew out of economical constraints but has enriched the art form by making it more accessible to cash-strapped patrons (and producers). It has been wonderful to see the vision of Leonarda Priore and Lynne Hayden-Findlay grow and blossom through my years with CO.

What do you hope to do once the tour is finished?

I have lived within a 20-mile radius of NYC my whole life. Landing this job will enable me to experience life and culture in many different places. I have been yearning to get away from NYC for a while. Even though I have experience performing internationally in ensembles like the Santo Domingo Festival Orchestra and the Munich Symphony, my time away was really never enough to make a huge artistic impact in my life. The Phantom tour will have both long and short stops in major cities and I hope to use that time to perform in many styles and make musical connections that I otherwise could not in NYC.



"Dearest Friend..."

Chelsea Opera presented the Manhattan premiere of *A Distant Love: Songs of John and Abigail Adams* by Gary S. Fagin and Terry Quinn with Victoria Tralongo as Abigail Adams and Peter Kendall Clark as John Adams on June 14th & 15th. Married for only ten years, John Adams left for Philadelphia in 1774 leaving Abigail and their three children in Braintree, MA. He later served as a commissioner to Great Britain, France and the Netherlands. Meanwhile, Abigail raised her children and kept the farm going and in doing so, survived a war, small pox and her husband's absence. Their incredible correspondence sustained them both and was a testament to their love for each other and their mutual determination to see the birth of an independent nation. Those letters were the opera's inspiration.



CELEBRATING SEASON TEN!