

Viva Voce


January 2024



Beat the Blahs, p 8
La sonnambula

Pegasus Flash & Fire, p 28

**Eastman Opera Theatre
Winter Double Bill, p 24**



Edition *Viva Voce*,
January 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

The Opera Guild of Rochester, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization with a mission to support opera and opera education in the greater Rochester area. Our addresses are P.O. Box 25613, Rochester, NY 14625; operaguil dofrochester@gmail.com

The Guild presents Bravo Nights (free informal opera programs at the Little Café), free opera lectures at local libraries, trips to productions of local and regional opera companies, including the Glimmerglass Festival, the Haskell Rosenberg Memorial Series of DVD presentations in January, and recitals and concerts.

This newsletter is sent via eMail each month, currently to about 3,000 subscribers. For a free subscription go to our Website and sign up at <https://www.operaguil dofrochester.org/subscribe-to-viva-voce> The deadline for submission of articles and event announcements for the next issue is the 20th of the previous month.

Our Website and Facebook pages serve as a clearinghouse for local and regional opera, concert, and recital information, with links to other music organizations in our area. Please visit us at operaguil dofrochester.org and at [Facebook.com/OperaGuildofRochester](https://www.facebook.com/OperaGuildofRochester)

Some events are now being recorded. Click the YouTube logo to visit us there.



Opera Guild of Rochester,
P.O. Box 25613, Rochester, NY 14625

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This Month

Jan 6	Met Live in HD	<u><i>Nabucco</i></u>
Jan 14	OGR Beat the Blahs	<u><i>La sonnambula</i></u>
Jan 21	OGR Beat the Blahs	<u><i>Peter Grimes</i></u>
Jan 28	OGR Beat the Blahs	<u><i>Prince Igor</i></u>
Jan 18	Memorial Art Gallery	<u>3rd Thurs., Trumpet</u>
Jan 21	Pegasus Early Music	<u>Flash & Fire</u>
Jan 26-Feb 28	Canadian Opera	<u><i>The Cunning Little Vixen</i></u>
Jan 27, 28	Eastman Opera Theater	<u><i>Ariadne, Dido & Aeneas</i></u>
Feb 4	OGR Beat the Blahs	<u><i>The Tales of Hoffman</i></u>

Editor's Corner

You will find directions to the Pittford Community Center on the the Blahs page ([page 8](#)) Hope you can join us there for Bellini's bel canto masterpiece, *La sonnambula*. The opera companies are rather conservative these days, showing mostly well-known and popular titles to attract audiences. But there are so many great operas not being shown, and I can't even remember a regional production of Bellini. Here is the opportunity to see locally a wonderful example from the Golden Century of Italian opera with a superb cast from the Met.

Eastman Opera Theater ([page 24](#)) is, of course, a good choice for operas off the beaten path because of their mission to educate singers in different genres. Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen* ([page 25](#)) is another fine and fascinating work being produced by Canadian Opera and worth the trip for those who may travel there.

News From Your Opera Guild

Welcome to your new Opera Guild! We have undergone a passing of the torch, with old board members retiring and new ones bringing energy and ideas to our organization. Past president Agneta Borgstedt, at 91, is alive and well and bringing opera on DVD to the other residents of her assisted living home near her daughter in the Bronx. Art Axelrod is on medical leave, but you may catch him at a Met Live in HD showing; his article on *Nabucco* appears in this month's issue ([page 14](#)). Helga Strasser is doing well recovering from a broken hip. Peter Dundas and Marcia Elwitt have retired from the board after many years of service, and shall be missed.

In the last year have come Roberts Wesleyan Professor Constance Fee as Artistic Advisor, and Cindy Battisti of Opera Bracelets, event organizer and master of our social media. More recently, our new Secretary is Michael Amorese, a long-time participant in Guild activities, knowledgeable about opera, who travels regularly to regional productions. Jessica Moss, soprano and Rochester voice teacher, is a wonderful source of ideas to attract the younger generations to opera; an intelligent writer, and an organized and diligent worker as well – all in one package!

Happy New Year,

Carol Crocca



Express your passion for opera!

Opera Lover Tote
Great for Live in HD Days
Strong and washable

\$28



Fantastic Opera Lover Holiday Gifts!



Opera Lover Beverage
Tumbler keeps drinks hot or
cold for hours!

\$25

Available exclusively at
www.operabracelets.com
Click to Shop Now



Great Opera-tunities

(For those wishing to explore opera without spending a lot of money)

FREE - Opera Guild Lectures. See September Viva Voce for fall lectures at Fairport Library; February and March Viva Voce for spring lectures at Brighton Library.

\$10 - Opera Guild "Beat the Blahs," opera DVD presentations. Four Sundays in January/February. Includes pre-performance talk & refreshments at intermission.

\$24; UR students \$10 with ID - The Eastman Opera Season (Eastman voice students). Pre-performance talks; see full listing in Viva Voce.

\$25 per (senior) ticket - Metropolitan Opera simulcasts in HD. These performances usually take place on Saturdays at 1 pm. An encore performance, not live, is given on the Wednesday following for \$23. Theaters are at Tinseltown, Eastview, and Webster. See full listing and essays in Viva Voce.

FREE - Opera Guild Bravo Nights at The Little Café. Live accompanied singers perform opera favorites in an informal atmosphere. See Viva Voce for next date.

FREE - Friends of Eastman Opera Voice Competition. Look for next year in February 2024 Viva Voce. 8 pm, Kilbourn Hall, Gibbs Street.

FREE - The Lotte Lenya Competition: young multi-talented singer/actors performing both opera and musical theater selections. See Viva Voce for information about the 2024 event.



Please keep in mind that we are a volunteer organization!

You can enjoy the opportunity to meet and work with other opera fans and help sustain the programs you like. Currently we are looking for an assistant treasurer, event helpers, technical back-up and publicity committee volunteers. For information about these jobs or to speak with us about any volunteer interest, write to operaguil dofrochester@gmail.com and the appropriate person will contact you.

Donations

As an *Amici*, your contribution in any amount is greatly appreciated. All donation levels receive an invitation to the Annual Recital; those listed below will be given priority until a date specified on the invitation, and at the *Comprimario* level and above may request extra tickets.

Chorus: \$65 per person, \$95 per couple.

Comprimario: \$100-\$249.

Primo: \$250-\$399.

Diva: \$400-\$549.

Maestro: \$550-\$999.

Impresario: \$1000 or more.

Donate
On Line

You may also mail a check to Opera Guild of Rochester, P.O. Box 25613, Rochester, NY 14625. Please include an email or other address for your tax receipt.

A Note on Tax Receipts from the President:

The IRS does not require a charity to give, or the donor to have, a formal acknowledgment from the charity for donations under \$250.00. Your canceled check or credit card record is sufficient evidence for your donations below this amount if you itemize them. Donations of \$250.00 and above will receive the required acknowledgment from the Opera Guild before January 31st following the end of the calendar tax year. The invitation to the Annual Recital is our way of showing our appreciation to our donors and we sincerely hope to see you there!

Opera Guild of Rochester : Beat the Blahs

“Beat the Blahs” is our way to cope with the winter doldrums and relax after the holidays. Enjoy great opera in the company of other fans, with refreshments at intermission.

Opera Beats the Blahs

Carol Crocca, Instructor

NEW

Reg. No.	Day	Date	Time	Fee
BELLINI'S LA SONNAMBULA (ITALIAN)				
120511-01	Sun	Jan 14	1:00-5:00PM	\$10
BRITTEN'S PETER GRIMES (ENGLISH)				
120511-02	Sun	Jan 21	1:00-5:00PM	\$10
BORODIN'S PRINCE IGOR (RUSSIAN)				
120511-03	Sun	Jan 28	1:00-5:00PM	\$10
JACQUES OFFENBACH'S LES CONTES D'HOFFMAN (FRENCH)				
120511-04	Sun	Feb 4	1:00-5:00PM	\$10
120511-05		All 4 operas		\$40
Ages 18 & up				PCC Rm 107

A series of 4 DVD opera presentations, with cookies and beverages served at intermission. There will be a brief introduction to each opera by a Guild docent. The time for public arrival will be 1:00PM and the ending time will vary based on the length of the program (between 3.5-4.5 hours).

All productions will be shown with subtitles and will include the following:

January 14- Bellini's *La sonnambula* (Italian)

The composer's first mature masterpiece, rich in melodic invention; the story of an engaged woman wrongly accused of shamelessness, whose reputation is restored when her sleepwalking problem is finally revealed.

January 21- Britten's *Peter Grimes* (English)

The fascinating study of a fisherman with a problematic history, situated in an English coastal town, which is itself a main character.

January 28- Borodin's *Prince Igor* (Russian)

Based on a Russian national epic, and full of beautiful melodies, it concerns a campaign against the Palovtsi, in which Prince Igor is captured by the enemy and rescued to general rejoicing.

February 4- Jacques Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffman* (French)

Called "a fantastic opera," this final work of the composer is serious in tone, combining reality and fantasy. It includes many virtuosic and lyrical scenes, such as the aria of the mechanical doll and the famous barcarolle.

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged.

All registration will be through the Pittsford Community Center:

**You may register online at townofpittsford.org/recreation

**By printing the attached form and sending it in by mail

**In person on the day of the event (you may also register for subsequent operas)

Registration is ongoing.

Note: there is a \$5 registration fee for non-residents. You will save money by registering at the same time for all the operas you intend to see.

Our new venue is spacious and convenient:

**Pittsford Community Center,
35 Lincoln Ave., Pittsford, NY,
14534, parking in rear.**

Directions: From Route 31 (coming either from the direction of (1) Pittsford Plaza or from the direction of (2) Main Street) turn either (1) right or (2) left onto Sutherland Street. A few blocks down, at a stop sign, turn left onto Lincoln. The Recreation Center is on your right.

PITTSFORD RECREATION WINTER 2024 REGISTRATION FORM

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

NAME _____ <small>PRIMARY GUARDIAN FIRST AND LAST NAME</small>	NAME _____ <small>SECONDARY GUARDIAN FIRST AND LAST NAME</small>
ADDRESS _____ _____	ADDRESS _____ _____
HOME# _____ WORK# _____	HOME# _____ WORK# _____
EMAIL _____	EMAIL _____
EMERGENCY# _____ CELL# _____	EMERGENCY# _____ CELL# _____

NON-RESIDENT FEE: Participants living outside of the Town of Pittsford and the Pittsford School District are required to pay a \$5.00 per activity registration fee (per individual registrant). No fee is required for free programs. Programs offered are designed for residents of the Town of Pittsford and Pittsford School District. If class size allows, registrations from non-residents who have paid the non-resident fee will be accepted. Participants living outside of the Town of Pittsford and Pittsford School District may register to receive our program brochures by mail by contacting the Recreation Department. There is a \$3.00 fee charged for outside mailing.

REFUND POLICY: Refunds are available, unless otherwise stated in the program description. All refund requests must be submitted to the Pittsford Recreation Department. If a program is canceled, total amount will be refunded. You may withdraw up to 7 calendar days prior to the start of a program; a refund will be granted with a **\$5 processing fee per person/per program** (certain programs may be nonrefundable or involve a portion of nonrefundable monies.) Within one week of a program's start date, or after a program has begun, only medical refunds will be granted. A doctor's written statement must accompany your request. Refund will be prorated based on the date of your notification to the Recreation Department. Absolutely no refunds will be granted after the program ends.

REGISTRATION TIPS: Programs that do not meet the minimum number of participants are subject to cancellation. Assume you are registered in the program unless the recreation department notifies you. Please remember that some of our programs fill quickly so please register early.

RELEASE: As part of my registration, or as a parent/guardian on behalf of a minor child, I recognize that programs involving physical activity have inherent risks of injury and/or damage and I assume all such risks, as well as the responsibility to be fully aware of the inherent risks associated with any program for which I register, before I begin participation. I also recognize my participation in a program may result in the transfer or transmission of an illness or disease, including but not limited to COVID-19, which could result in serious sickness and/or death. The Town and its employees will not be liable for injury, damage or illness that occurs as a result of such risks and I waive and release the Town and its employees from any such liability. I also grant full permission to the Town to use my name, photograph, videotape or recording for any publicity promotion purposes without obligation or liability.

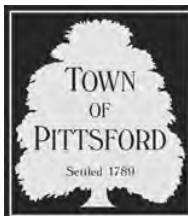
DATE **SIGNATURE REQUIRED:** _____
REGISTRANT (PARENT OR GUARDIAN IF UNDER 18)

Current Medical Conditions, Allergies, or Medications: _____

Special Accommodations? Yes, Please Indicate: _____

Participant Name	Gender	Birthdate				Grade	Program Title	Activity Code				Fee
		MM	DD	YY	YY							

T-Shirt Sizes	YS	YM	YL	YXL
	AS	AM	AL	AXL
			AXL	AXXL



**INCLUDE NON-RESIDENT FEE - \$5.00
(PER PERSON & ACTIVITY IF APPLICABLE)**

Total Amount: \$ _____

Please Make Checks Payable to Town of Pittsford

*Mail-In Forms to to 35 Lincoln Ave., Pittsford NY 14534

(OFFICE USE ONLY)

PAYMENT METHOD: CASH _____ CHECK _____ CARD VS MC DV _____ **RECEIPT #** _____

RESIDENT REGISTRATION BEGINS DECEMBER 4
NON-RESIDENT REGISTRATION BEGINS DECEMBER 11

Notes from Our Third Holiday Concert

Our Holiday Bravo Nights concert on December 14th with Mark Daniels and Amanda Verrone (pictured), accompanied by Rob Goodling, had a record attendance and helped put us all in the holiday spirit. The crowd, however, failed in its duty to finish the delicious cookies, but those left will certainly will be enjoyed by the happy family and friends of the staff.



Third Thursday Concert :

The Trumpet Shall Be Heard on High



Photo by J. Adam Fenster/University of Rochester

Thursday, January 18 | 7:30-8:30 pm

Join us for 17th- and early 18th-century sonatas, dance music, and voluntaries that explore the combination of the “instrument of kings” and the “king of instruments”! Barry Bauguess plays trumpet, and Steven Plank plays Eastman’s stunning Italian Baroque organ.

By [Eastman School of Music](#), [Memorial Art Gallery](#)

Admission to the concert is included with museum admission, which is half-price on Thursday evenings after 5 pm and free to University of Rochester student ID holders.

Seating is limited and is available on a first-come basis.

This concert is made possible by the Rippey Endowed Trust.





Special Events & Appearances

For more information and to buy tickets, go to rossings.org, click on Events, Upcoming Events, and “read more.”



[ROS w/ the RPO : Ode to Joy](#)

Thursday, May 30, 2024

| 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm |

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theater

Join the Chorus

Apply Today | Monday Night Rehearsals | Scholarships Available

The 2023-2024 season includes:

Choral masterworks and modern classics with full orchestra

Tour of France and Switzerland with the chorus in June 2024

Solo and small ensemble opportunities

Annual holiday community concert

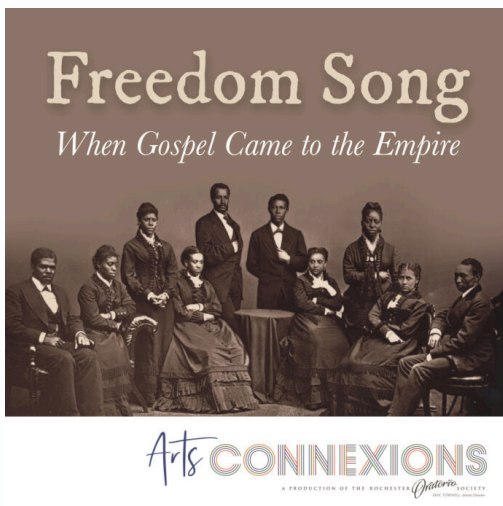
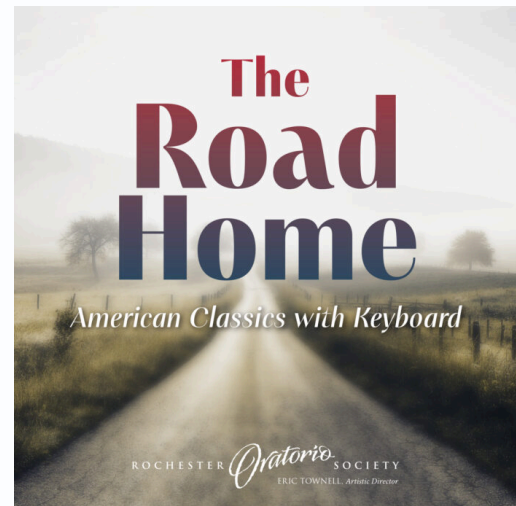
Opportunity to sing with the RPO!

See rossings.org/membership/join-the-chorus

for audition form and more information.

[The Road Home](#)

Friday, March 15, 2024
| 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm |
Asbury First United Methodist Church



[Arts Connexions: Freedom Song: When Gospel Came to the Empire](#)

Saturday, April 27, 2024
| 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm |
Fort Hill Performing Arts Center

[2024 Rochester International Vocal Competition Celebration](#)

Saturday, May 18, 2024
| 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm
First Unitarian Church of Rochester



The Making of a Composer

Art Axelrod

In 1840, when Verdi was 27 years old, he was at the lowest point in his life.

While still a boy, Verdi had left his home in the small hamlet of Le Roncole to study in the nearby town of Busseto in the Duchy of Parma. Here he demonstrated his musical talents and when he turned 18, he moved into the home of Antonio Barezzi, an affluent merchant and patron of the arts who became his patron and champion. Barezzi's influence helped Verdi get started as a musician and composer.

Then Verdi fell in love with and married Barezzi's daughter, Margherita. The couple had two children, a girl, Virginia and a boy, Icilio. In 1839, Verdi, then 26, and his wife and infant son, Icilio, left their home in Busseto and moved to Milan. (Their infant daughter, Virginia, had died the year before.)

While still in Busseto, Verdi had written his first opera, *Oberto, Count of Saint Boniface*, with a libretto by Temistocle Solera, who was also Verdi's fellow supporter of Italian unification. Bartolomeo Merelli, Director of La Scala in Milan, arranged to have *Oberto* produced there, a considerable achievement for a young composer. It was a moderate success, and on the strength of that, Merelli offered Verdi a commission for three additional operas.

Verdi's next attempt, his second opera, was a comedy, *Un giorno di regno*, (usually translated as *King for a Day*), with a libretto by a successful and well-known librettist Felice Romani. But as he worked on that opera, first Icilio, then Margherita died. And then, *Un giorno di regno* was a complete flop – it was booed at its premiere in September of 1840 and further performances were canceled.

Verdi was passionate about three things: his wife and children, opera, and

Italian unification. In 1840, he lost his family, failed at opera (he thought) and unification was still 25 years away. Crushed, the young man decided he would return to Busseto and never compose again.

But Merelli was convinced of Verdi's talent and did what he could to change his mind. He gave Verdi the libretto of *Nabucco*, also written by Solera, and asked him to look at it.

In an account from his later years, Verdi described how he took it back to his rooms and angrily threw it on the floor; it fell open to the page with the *Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves*. Curious, he read it and was immediately transported. In other memoirs he recollected slightly differently. Over many decades, his memory of a painful period in his life was understandably less than acute. But one thing is clear: He was deeply affected by the drama and the metaphoric power of the *Chorus* and of the entire libretto. He, like the librettist, saw the plight of the Hebrew exiles in Babylon as a metaphor for the plight of the Italian people, their own land occupied by foreign powers, and their yearning for freedom and independence.

Inspired, he set to work on the opera and *Nabucco* premiered on March 9, 1842 at La Scala.

In *Verdi With a Vengeance*, scholar William Berger describes the premiere as "one of the great sensations of theatrical history." The audience applauded the opening scene for ten minutes. In Act II, their excitement only increased and the Chorus had to be encored – something hitherto unheard of at La Scala. To this day, the Chorus is encored in most Italian opera houses and in this country it is encored at the Met as well.

Nabucco received only eight more performances that first season because it was presented near its end, but in the following year it was performed 60 times – wildly cheered each time. It was a brilliant success that made Verdi's reputation as a composer, and, equally importantly, gave him the confidence to continue.

In addition to being a highlight of the opera, the *Chorus* became an anthem for the Risorgimento – the movement that culminated in Italian unification and independence. At Verdi's funeral in 1901, the crowds along the procession, estimated at 200,00 people, sang it. To this day, it remains the "second National Anthem" of Italy, (much as *America the Beautiful* is in this country).

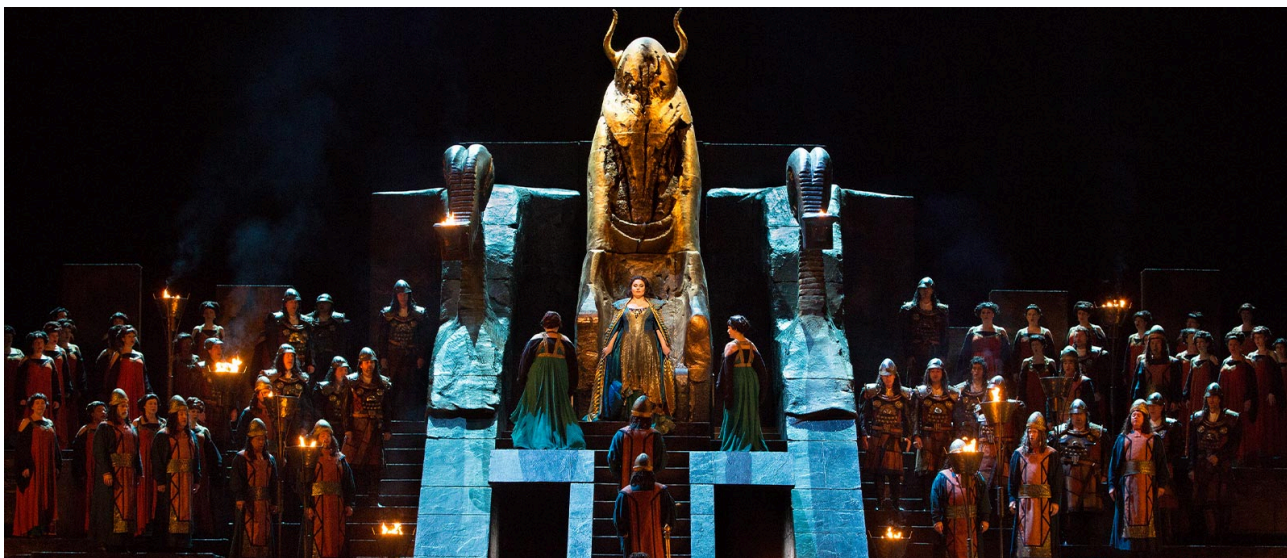
From the time of *Nabucco*, Verdi produced one brilliant success after another. He composed a total of 30 operas, the last being *Falstaff* (his only comedy after the ill-fated *Un giorno di regno*), which premiered in 1893 when Verdi was 80 years old.

Nabucco had yet another significance in Verdi's life. Although he never really recovered from the deaths of Margherita and their two children, he did manage to find love once again. The soprano who sang Abigaille was named Giuseppina Strepponi. Their professional relationship had begun when she sang the lead in Verdi's first opera, *Oberto*. After *Nabucco* their relationship blossomed; by 1846 they had become lovers and eventually married in 1859. The relationship would last for over 50 years, until Giuseppina's death in 1897.

And so, between his tragic year of 1840 and his triumph of 1842, Verdi found his voice. In a 1979 article in the magazine New Republic, the philosopher Isaiah Berlin wrote:

Noble, simple, with a degree of unbroken vitality and vast natural power of creation and organization, Verdi is the voice of a world that is no more. His enormous popularity among the most sophisticated as well as the most ordinary listeners today is due to the fact that he expressed permanent states of consciousness in the most direct terms, as Homer, Shakespeare, Ibsen, and Tolstoy have done... After Verdi this is not heard in music again.

Thanks to the visionary encouragement of Bartolomeo Merelli, that was the voice that Verdi found through the pain of his two years of crisis. For this, let us always be grateful.



The Metropolitan Opera

Live in HD Series

January 27

Carmen

Acclaimed English director Carrie Cracknell brings a vital new production of one of opera's most enduring and powerful works, the classic story moving the action to the modern day and finding issues that could not be more relevant today: gendered violence, abusive labor structures, and the desire to break through societal boundaries. Dazzling young mezzo-soprano Aigul Akhmetshina is Carmen, alongside tenor Piotr Beczala as Carmen's troubled lover Don José, soprano Angel Blue as the loyal Micaëla, and bass-baritone Kyle Ketelsen as the swaggering Escamillo. Daniele Rustioni conducts Bizet's heart-pounding score.

March 9

La Forza del Destino

Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts Verdi's grand tale of ill-fated love, deadly vendettas, and family strife, with stellar soprano Lise Davidsen as the noble Leonora, one of the repertory's most tormented—and thrilling—heroines. Director Mariusz Treliński sets the scene in a contemporary world; the distinguished cast also features tenor Brian Jagde as Leonora's forbidden beloved, Don Alvaro and baritone Igor Golovatenko as her vengeful brother.

March 23

Romeo et Juliette

Radiant soprano Nadine Sierra and tenor sensation Benjamin Bernheim come together as the star-crossed lovers in Gounod's sumptuous Shakespeare adaptation, with Met Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin on the podium to conduct one of the repertoire's most romantic scores. Bartlett Sher's towering staging also features baritone Will Liverman and tenor Frederick Ballentine as the archrivals Mercutio and Tybalt, mezzo-soprano Samantha Hankey as the mischievous pageboy Stéphano, and bass-baritone Alfred Walker as Frère Laurent.

For theater directions, see [metopera.org](https://www.metopera.org), click menu icon in upper left corner, click 'Season', click 'In cinemas', click 'Find theater.'

April 20

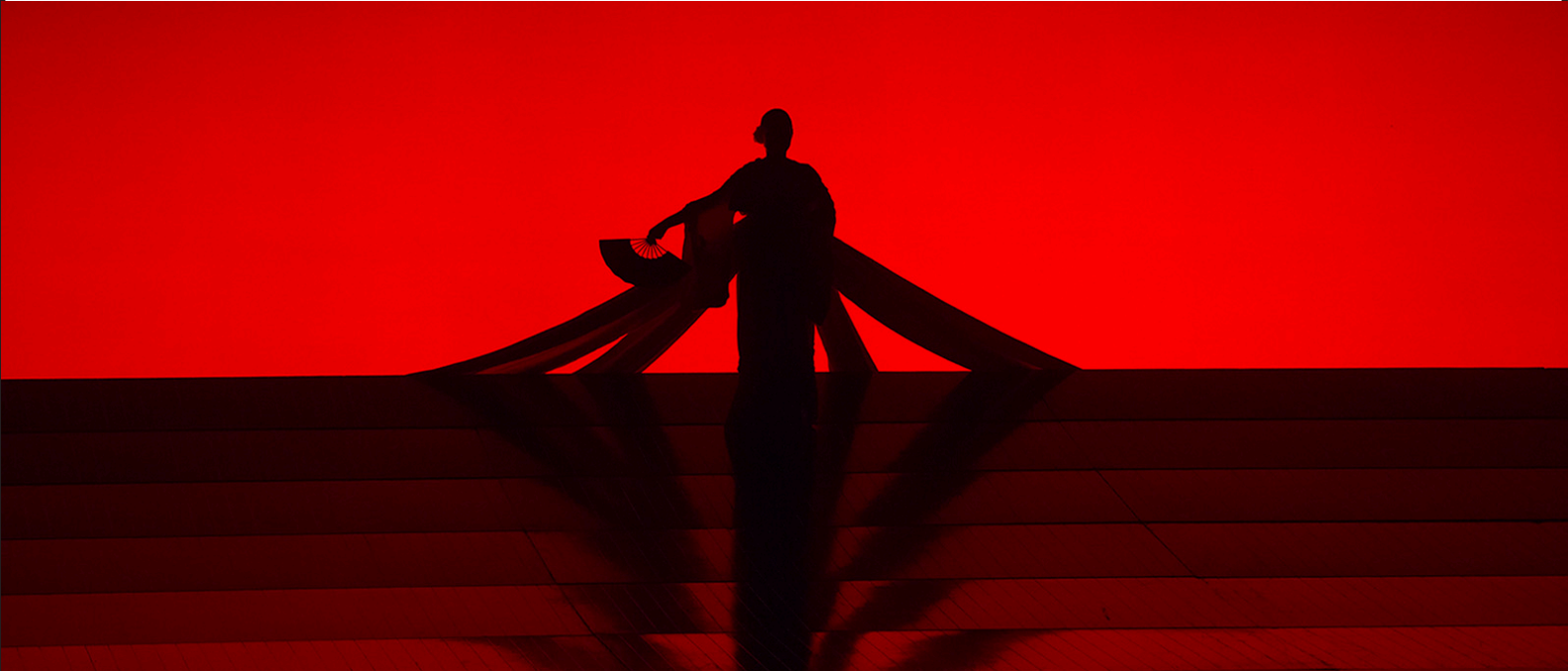
La Rondine

In Puccini's bittersweet love story, soprano Angel Blue stars as the French courtesan Magda, opposite tenor Jonathan Tetelman as Ruggero, an idealistic young man who offers her an alternative to her life of excess. Maestro Speranza Scappucci conducts Nicolas Joël's Art Deco–inspired staging, which transports audiences from the heart of Parisian nightlife to a dreamy vision of the French Riviera.

May 11

Madama Butterfly

Extraordinary soprano Asmik Grigorian tackles the demanding role of Cio-Cio-San, the loyal geisha at the heart of Puccini's devastating tragedy. Tenor Jonathan Tetelman stars as the callous American naval officer Pinkerton, whose betrayal destroys her. Mezzo-soprano Elizabeth DeShong reprises the role of the steadfast maid Suzuki, and baritone Lucas Meachem is the American consul Sharpless. Acclaimed maestro Xian Zhang takes the podium to conduct Anthony Minghella's vivid production.



“La Mogador”: Was She Georges Bizet’s Carmen?

Carol Crocca

Celeste Venard, “La Mogador”:

Moderation is no part of my nature. I feel with a passion that devours me...I have always been capricious and proud. No one, among women whose tendency it is to say “yes,” derives more pleasure than I do from saying “no.” So the men to whom I have given the most are those who asked the least of me.

From the Memoires of Celeste Venard, “La Mogador,” as quoted in Opera Offstage by Milton Brener, Walker & Co., NY, 1996.

Celeste Venard received the epithet “La Mogador” because her dance-hall employer, noting that she had to fight off the many men who wanted to dance with her, compared her to the Moroccan city then under attack by French forces. She had risen from the slums of Paris and had been that dance hall girl, an equestrienne, a librettist and translator, an actress, novelist, theater director and singer, as well as a most successful femme fatale.

When Georges Bizet was 27 he met the 41-year-old Celeste on a train to the French village where she had purchased an estate next to his home. She insisted that their relationship was platonic, a claim not entirely convincing since Bizet preferred to visit her when she was home alone.

There are aspects of (opera) Carmen's personality that are more similar to Celeste's than to the character in Merimee's novel on which the opera is based. Was she the model for Bizet's Carmen? He married four years before he composed the opera, and he never said.

From the lips of Carmen herself (Prosper Merrimee's novel of 1845), a pithy comment on her relationship with Don Jose: "Chien et loup ne font pas longtemps bon ménage." ("Dog and wolf do not long live happily together.")

Meanwhile, back at the theater in Paris, Adolph de Leuven, a director of the Opera-Comique, was aghast at the proposal to stage *Carmen*:

Carmen! Merimee's *Carmen*? Isn't she killed by her lover? And that background of thieves, gypsies and cigar makers! At the Opera-Comique, a family theater! The theater where marriages are arranged! Every night five or six boxes are taken for that purpose. You will frighten off our audience. It's impossible. (Brener, *ibid.*)

Georges Bizet, who had 14 unfinished operas and 4 that never reached the stage, had his own opinion, and answered the music critics thus:

"They [the critics] make out that I am obscure, complicated, tedious...Well, this time I have written a work that is all clarity and vivacity, full of colour and melody."

Quoted in The New Penguin Opera Guide, Holden, ed., Penguin Books, London, 2001

Evidently, Clestine Galli-Marie, who originated the role, did not lack such color and vivacity. An early reviewer described her thus: "To see her, rocking her hips like a filly on a stud farm in Cordova: what realism, but what scandal!"

Quoted in A History of Opera, Abbate and Parker, Norton & Co., NY, 2012

Although the critics were not kind at the premiere, Bizet's peers felt differently. Not only Strauss, but Wagner, Brahms, Gounod, Debussy, Grieg, Puccini, Tchaikovsky and Saint-Saens all praised the opera. Tchaikovsky predicted that it would soon be the most popular opera in the repertory. Richard Strauss advised: "If you want to learn how to orchestrate, don't study Wagner's scores, study the score of *Carmen*. What wonderful economy, and how every note and every rest is in its proper place."

Quoted in Holden, *ibid*.

Unfortunately, its worth was first recognized only with its production in Vienna, three months after its premiere in Paris. By that time Bizet was dead at the age of 36 after suffering two heart attacks. He did not live long enough to enjoy his vindication, or to experience the satisfaction and rewards of composing one of opera's enduring successes. The enormous subsequent popularity of *Carmen* encouraged the revival of other of his operas such as *The Pearl Fishers* and *The Fair Maid of Perth*, and ensured his place in both opera history and popular culture.



Mezzo-soprano Aigul Akhmetshina in the Met's new *Carmen*.

Online Opera Education for Young and Old

The Metropolitan Opera has many resources for both adults and students. If you haven't explored them already, go to the main menu at metopera.org and click on 'discover.' This leads to another menu of all kinds of educational features from podcasts and articles to more formal educational materials for students.

San Francisco Opera has a great education site for youngsters with materials that can be used in the home as well as by educators. <https://www.sfopera.com/learn>

Los Angeles Opera has programs for both adults and children at laopera.org/community

Utah Opera at <https://utahopera.org/education/students/> also has good student materials.

From Arizona Opera, at <https://azopera.org/education-community/opera-home-virtual-learning-tools>, videos for middle school and older students with introductions to four operas. Although produced for Arizona Opera presentations, they are suitable as general references.

Many opera companies have such sites; you can search "virtual opera education" for more.



OPERA CLOAK OF THE NEW MATERIAL.



Bravo Nights

Bravo Nights are performances at The Little Café of opera and musical theater selections by talented local singers in an informal setting. They are appreciated by both seasoned opera fans and newcomers who wish to learn about the art form.

Bravo Nights take place at The Little Café, which is located in the Little Theatre at 240 East Avenue. Refreshments may be purchased there.

- Please note new times -

Monday, 2/12/24, 7:00 PM

Monday, 4/22/24, 7:00 PM



THE FALL SEASON



Eastman Opera Theater Season

Winter Double Bill*

Ariadne auf Naxos: Prologue (1912)

Music by Richard Strauss
Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal

Dido and Aeneas (1689)

Music by Henry Purcell
Libretto by Nahum Tate adapted by
Benjamin Britten and Imogen Holst

804 Annex

January 27 at 7:30 p.m.

January 28 at 2:00 p.m.

February 1, 2, 3 at 7:30 p.m.

February 4 at 2:00 p.m.

FRIENDS OF
Eastman Opera

FEO Voice Competition

February 16 at 7:30 p.m.
Kilbourn Hall

Dialogues des Carmélites (1957)*

Music and Libretto by Francis Poulenc
April 4, 5, 6 at 7:30 p.m.
April 7 at 2:00 p.m.
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre

*Tickets sold through the Eastman Theatre Box Office
433 East Main Street, Rochester, NY
585-274-3000

**Pre-performance talks will take place one hour before each performance.
Please check the ESM website for additional information.**



THE FALL SEASON



**CANADIAN
OPERA
COMPANY**

Canadian Opera Season

All except *Aportia Chryptych* at The Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts.

Go to the home page at coc.ca and click on 'next season' to access video clips, specific dates, and more production info.



When a forest gamekeeper traps a fox and attempts to domesticate her, their encounter leads to a poignant reflection on the natural cycle of life and death, as well as our relationship with the planet. This family-friendly opera invites audiences to reflect on the advancing toll of climate change and the importance of cultivating a harmonious interrelationship with the natural world.

Mozart's dark, twisted masterpiece is presented as you've never seen it before in this breathtaking production from Danish director Kaspar Holten. The show features spectacular set designs combined with ingenious video projections, plunging audiences into an Escher-like web of rotating rooms, revolving with the rhythms of *Don Giovanni's* infernal drama.





The aging Pasquale refuses to let his love-struck nephew Ernesto marry, and decides to get married himself. The only snag is that the woman he's chosen as his bride-to-be, the fiery Norina, is secretly his nephew's beloved, which sets up a riotous clash between generations.

Never before seen on the COC stage and seldom performed anywhere in the world, *Medea* is an exquisite rarity, featuring one of the most challenging roles in opera history.

As the culmination of our season, world-renowned soprano Sondra Radvanovsky will tackle the role, reuniting with director Sir David McVicar for this brand-new production.

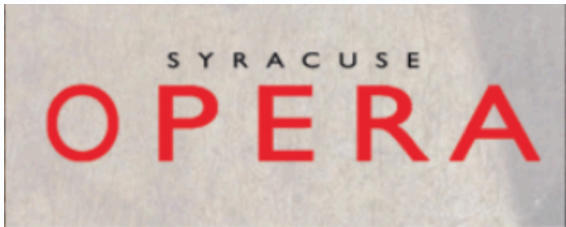


World Premiere

Nova Scotian contralto Portia White was the first Black Canadian concert performer to achieve international fame in the mid- 20th century, touring North America and performing in Europe while being hailed as the best classical voice of her generation. Yet despite such artistic accomplishments, her story has been erased from Canadians' collective memory.



Canadian Opera Company Theater,
227 Front St. E., Toronto



Here is the unfortunate news from Syracuse Opera:

“After a beautiful year of fulfilling and powerful operatic experiences, it is with deep disappointment that we **announce the cancellation of the remainder of Syracuse Opera’s 2023-2024 Season**. While our recent productions have been artistically excellent and impactful, like many opera companies across the country, ticket sales have been considerably lower than projected, and we do not have the financial ability to continue the season. Consequently, we will be unable to produce the remaining operas: **ALL IS CALM, THE FANTASTICKS, and THE BARBER OF SEVILLE.**”

For further information, and instructions to ticket holders, see syracuseopera.org



Tri-Cities Opera has announced the postponement of *All Is Calm* to the 24-25 season. Ticket holders will be contacted by the box office for options.

In its stead, there will be a program of Holiday Carols in the community. [See their website.](#)



The
FANTASTICKS
TOM JONES &
HARVEY SCHMIDT
Feb 9 & 11, 2024



THE
Barber
of Seville
GIOACHINO ROSSINI
Apr 21, 2024



May 23, 2024





2023-24 Season

Echoes of the Renaissance

Thursday February 15, 2024 7:30 pm

Memorial Art Gallery Fountain Court, 500 University Avenue, Rochester

The use of double choirs—two (or more) ensembles of instruments or voices trading musical material antiphonally—was popular in northern Italy in the late 1500s and early 1600s. Complementing these rich sounds of the late Renaissance will be sonatas for strings and basso continuo by composers who then ushered in a new era, the Baroque.

On the series of Third Thursday Concerts with Eastman’s Italian Baroque Organ

Free with Gallery admission Limited seating!

Concerto Grosso!

Friday April 12, 2024 7:30 pm

Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word,
597 East Avenue, Rochester

Saturday April 13, 2024 4:00 pm

St. Paul’s Lutheran Church,
21 Clara Barton St., Dansville



All series concerts are Sundays at 4:00pm,
Downtown United Presbyterian Church,
121 N. Fitzhugh Street, Rochester.

Free pre-concert talks at 3:15pm.

[Flash and Fire](#)

January 21, 2024@ 4 pm ET

Nina Stern, recorder, and friends explore the virtuosic Italian style of the 17th century. Music by Castello, Frescobaldi, Corelli, and more.





Humours of Whisky

March 17, 2024 @ 4 pm ET

Baroque meets traditional! Historical fiddling from the British Isles, and music of O'Carolan, Purcell, and Geminiani. Back by popular demand, the Berwick Fiddle Consort and friends.



Music for Kings

April 28, 2024 @ 4 pm ET

The exquisite Royal Consorts of William Lawes for pairs of theorbos, violins, and violas da gamba, plus songs and music from the English 17th century courts.

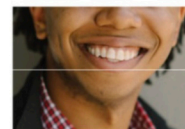
Kurt Weill

THE KURT WEILL FOUNDATION FOR MUSIC

Lotte Lenya

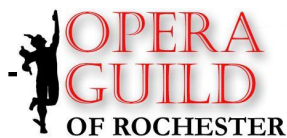
THE LENYA COMPETITION

A program of The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music



Date of the final round of this year's competition at Rochester, NY:

May 4, 2024



Glimmerglass Opera Tour

Tuesday, July 30, 2023 Matinee at 1 pm.

Gounod's Romeo et Juliette

Presented in French with projected English text



Lunch at the beautiful refurbished Glimmerglass Pavilion.

Our trip to Glimmerglass was an enjoyable one: the weather was good, the bus trip uneventful, *Romeo and Juliette* with beautiful music and an interesting production, and a relaxing dinner at the Brewster Inn, Cazenovia. We have a group that attends year after year and new participants as well.

If you have never gone on this trip, consider it for next year, when the presentation will be the *Pirates of Penzance* by Gilbert and Sullivan, on July 30, 2024.





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