



High Notes

A Periodic Newsletter for Portland Opera Volunteers December 2016

Volunteers for All Seasons

When Portland Opera's schedule changed to a late spring and summer schedule, we thought there would be a dearth of volunteer opportunities during fall and winter. If you've noticed the many calls for volunteers in your email inbox, however, you see this is not the case. Portland Opera has a variety of opportunities involving different skill sets, including but not limited to ushering, crafts, stuffing envelopes, catering, and greeting. All of these require a friendly smile and interaction with people of different ages. This seems to come naturally to all of you and is greatly appreciated by everyone at Portland Opera.

The annual Portland Opera volunteer lunch will be in the spring at the Hampton Opera Center. This fun event is open to all active volunteers who have completed a shift in the last year. This is a great time to meet and interact with fellow volunteers and to hear beautiful singing performed by the Portland Opera Resident Artists.

Be sure to watch your email for calls for volunteers. Please remember that you only need reply if you are available for the requested volunteer shift. Thank you for your wonderful support of Portland Opera!

In the meantime, **happy holidays**, and see you at the opera!



2017 PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Winter Vino e Voce

Songs of Love and War by Claudio Monteverdi
February 17, 19m, 21, 23 25, Hampton Opera Center

Big Night Concert

April 8, Keller Auditorium

La Boheme by Giacomo Puccini

May 5, 7m, 11, 13, Keller Auditorium

Man of La Mancha by Mitch Leigh

June 9, 11m, 15, 17, Keller Auditorium

Così fan tutte by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

July 14, 16m, 20, 22, 26, 29, Newmark Theatre

The Little Match Girl Passion

The Difficulty of Crossing a Field

David Lang

July 28, 30m & August 3, 5, Newmark Theatre

Resident Artist Recitals for 2017

Join the increasing crowds to get swept away by the beautiful music the Portland Opera Resident Artists present in their intimate vocal recitals. Be sure to mark your calendars for the following dates.

- Tuesday, April 4: Tenor Aaron Short
- Tuesday, May 2: Incoming mezzo-soprano resident artist
- Tuesday, June 13: Incoming soprano resident artist
- Tuesday, August 1: Baritone Ryan Thorn

Nicholas Fox, Portland Opera Chorus Master and Assistant Conductor, is the pianist for these recitals. All recitals begin at 7:00 pm at Whitsell Auditorium, located at 1219 SW Park Avenue. Free admission. A suggested donation of \$20 will help us continue offering this annual recital series.

Welcome, Brita!

We would like to introduce you to Brita Enflo, Portland Opera's new (as of April 2016) Development Associate. Some of you already may have met Brita, since her responsibilities include serving as the staff volunteer liaison, as well as helping with events and working with donors and patrons.



Brita was born in Sweden and moved to the U.S. at the age of two when her father became a math professor at Kent State University. Her family spent summers back in Sweden, and Brita still speaks the language and loves to celebrate Swedish holidays and traditions. Her upbringing also included a strong arts backdrop; her mother was an opera singer and voice teacher and her father a classical pianist. Brita grew up listening to opera and classical music and played the piano for many years. Her sister and six half-siblings work in diverse professions (engineers, actress, United Nations staff), but all are also involved in some way in various types of arts.

Brita majored in art history at Kent State University, with a minor in ancient medieval and Renaissance studies. After graduating, she worked part time at the Akron Art Museum and full time for a for-profit company. She then moved to San Diego and worked as an au pair, but that city didn't suit her. "I decided to try something entirely new and moved to Portland," she says. "I'm so glad I did. Everything fell into place immediately, almost comically."

After her move, Brita enjoyed working for the Washington County Visitors Association. When she learned of the Portland Opera job opening, however, she jumped at the opportunity. "I really want to focus on the non-profit arts world," she says. "I love being part of something important and helping make it available and exciting to the public." She also appreciates the positive and fun atmosphere at Portland Opera. "Everyone works hard and is invested in doing what is best for the organization," she notes. "But there is also an air of playfulness. People genuinely enjoy spending time with their co-workers."

Brita's pastimes include urban and forest hiking, sewing, and traveling. If she had to choose another profession, it would still be opera-related: She would probably pursue costume design. She also uses her spare time and her communication skills to introduce her friends to this art form she loves. "They're blown away by how much fun it is," Brita says. "Many of them are interested now."

In her role as volunteer liaison, Brita has been very impressed by the people who contribute their time and energy to Portland Opera. "Of all the other organizations I've worked with that use volunteers, this program is by far the most robust, with the most enthusiastic volunteers. We never have a problem finding people to help us in so many ways. I hope to continue that reputation."

In addition to classical music, Brita enjoys listening to hard rock and heavy metal. She also likes underground rap music. "It can be lyrical, poignant, political," she says. "It's like reading poetry." One she particularly recommends is Aesop Rock.

Ryan “Carpet Man” Thorn

We are happy to report that Ryan Thorn has returned for a second year as a Portland Opera Resident Artist. You may have experienced the depth and range of Ryan’s singing and acting abilities last season in his roles as the first priest in *The Magic Flute*, the bird seller and Jonas Fogg in *Sweeney Todd*, and the carpet-wearing Taddeo in *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. He topped the season off with a recital at The Old Church in August, centered on the themes of wandering and travel, with songs by Schubert, Faure, Beethoven, Mahler, and Vaughan Williams.



Ryan hails from Kenosha, Wisconsin. His early music education focused on the violin, which he played from fourth grade through high school. He also liked Irish dancing and listened to a lot of music. His love of singing was triggered when he performed “The Inquisition” by Mel Brookes with a high school friend, discovered how much fun singing was, and started voice lessons and choir. Then in his junior year, he saw *Götterdämmerung* performed at the Chicago Lyric Opera. “It was a mind-blowing experience,” he says. “It was the most amazing thing I had ever seen, and I fell in love with Wagner.” When applying to colleges, he decided to audition for voice rather than violin because he liked practicing voice better. He earned his B.A. at University of Wisconsin-Madison, then a masters of music in voice performance at UCLA.

I give great credit to my public school music program. I wouldn't be here without it.

Ryan had a variety of gigs before coming to Portland, including performing with the Pacific Opera Project in the LA area, Madison Opera, and the LA Opera chorus; teaching voice and violin; singing in church; and performing at summer programs and festivals. Portland is his first resident artists program. Because Portland’s season does not cover the entire year, he still auditions and performs during his off months. (See article on page 4 about the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.)

Asked about his favorite composers, Ryan names Wagner, Tchaikovsky, Adams, and Mozart (“the most transcendent composer ever”). He loves art song and also loves doing comedy, which he says is a great challenge. (His looney take on Taddeo showed he is well up to that challenge!) Outside of music, Ryan’s pastimes include politics, video games, reading, walking, and lifting. He also has a big interest in cooking and once thought of becoming a chef. Ryan feels Portland is a good fit for him, with its diverse offering of beer, food, and coffee. We at Portland Opera feel he is a good fit, too, and look forward to hearing him this season as the baritone soloist in *Songs of Love and War* and the Big Night, Schaunard in *La Boheme*, the Duke and Dr. Carrasco in *Man of La Mancha*, and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*.

Last year, Ryan sang the role of Mamma in Pacific Opera Project’s production of *Viva la mamma!* by Donizetti. Yes, it is a baritone role, and Mamma wears a dress. “I learned that not having to wear pants all the time is wonderful,” Ryan says. “I understand kilts now.”

A Bewitching Experience

Portland Opera To Go hit the road on September 26, 2016, marking its first tour during the fall months since 2004. “Because of our new season structure, it just made sense to move POGO into the fall slot,” said Alexis Hamilton, Manager of Education & Outreach for Portland Opera. “It helps the opera to continue to be there for the community throughout the year and gives the company an opportunity to focus our efforts more fully on the tour. In addition, we were very excited to be able to present families with the opportunity to make the Portland Opera part of their holiday season with performances here at the Hampton in December. We would like to become as much a Christmas tradition for families as *The Nutcracker* or *Zoo Lights*.”

This year’s performance was a delectable treat: An English-language version of Humperdinck’s fairytale opera, *Hansel & Gretel*. At 50 minutes long, this bite-sized opera experience was sure to delight those brand new to opera as well as those who have loved the art form for years—and was a perfect way for those folks to introduce their favorite youngsters to the beauty of opera!



In all this year, POGO performed 76 shows in 59 different venues and served over 11,000 children throughout Oregon and SW Washington.

Metropolitan Opera Audition Winners

Sunday afternoon, October 23, Lincoln Performance Hall reverberated with amazing voices of young opera singers competing in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Northwest Oregon District. The large audience heard 17 singers present two arias each, the first selected by the singer and the second selected by the judges from a set of 5 arias identified by the singer.

Once the singing was completed, the judges conferred and the results announced. Our current resident artist, baritone Ryan Thorn, was one of two singers selected to go on to the regional competition in Seattle on January 8. Congratulations, Ryan! The other winner was soprano Antonia Tamer, who will also go on to the regional competition. Two singers, soprano Saori Erickson and bass Dylan Bunten, received encouragement awards. Ms. Erickson also received the audience favorite.

Helping Resident Artists Feel at Home

A small committee has started a fund to find and store household items for the Portland Opera Resident Artists. These young singers need to furnish apartments for the short time they are here, which is very expensive. We are looking for good, usable items such as kitchen-ware (pots, pans, dishes, utensils, etc.), lamps, side tables, dining sets, sofas, beds, and simple things such as hangers, shower curtains and rings. We will store these items for selection and use by each season’s artists.

One of our incoming artists arriving in January 2017 has expressed the need for a queen-size bed. If you have one to loan or donate, please let us know.

We are excited to provide this type of assistance and hope you feel the same. If you have items to donate or wish to help fund the storage unit, please contact Lee Anne Carter at 503-297-9294 or Marilyn Crilley at 503-841-5106 for details.

Opera New Year's Resolutions

Pagliacci: Attend anger management classes

Count & Countess Almaviva: Get marriage counseling

Carmen: Take a break from dating, focus on me this year

Roméo: Practice weighing all options before making decisions

Hansel & Gretel: Cut back on sugar

Don Giovanni: Settle into a committed relationship

Norina: Cut up credit cards, create and stick to a budget

Cherubino: Improve running speed and long-jump distance

Eisenstein: Learn French

Papageno: Attend week-long silent meditation retreat

Turandot: Try to be kinder to others

Siegmund: Re-evaluate current relationship with sister

Portland Opera's Mission

Portland Opera exists to inspire, challenge and uplift our audiences by creating productions of high artistic quality that celebrate the beauty and breadth of opera.

Join the Conversation!

You can find out more about the subjects in these articles, as well as much more, at:

- Portland Opera website: www.portlandopera.org
- Volunteer information: www.portlandopera.org/volunteer
- Marilyn Crilley (volunteer coordinator): mcrilley@portlandopera.org
- Brita Enflo (staff volunteer liaison): benflo@portlandopera.org

You can also share your thoughts with other opera lovers on our Facebook page:

Facebook.com/PortlandOperaAssociation and follow us on Twitter@PortlandOpera. Join the conversation and share your own posts!

High Notes editors: Marilyn Crilley and Nancy Jerrick

