



# High Notes

A Periodic Newsletter for Portland Opera Volunteers March 2017

## Aaron Short: Bathtub to Big Stage

Aaron Short started on his career path at the age of three, when he would sit in the bathtub while his mom sang pitches and he mimicked them back. His course from there was straightforward. "I never entertained the idea of doing anything other than music," he says. Fortunately, his chosen road has led him to Portland Opera, where he is in his second season as a Resident Artist.



Aaron's childhood was immersed in the arts; his mother has a BM in music and his father is a high school theatre teacher. He joined the children's chorus in school and attended summer camp at Lyric Opera of Kansas City (his home town) in grades three, four, and five. He also sang in that company's children's chorus, including in productions of *La Bohème*, *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci*, and *The Magic Flute* (covering for one of the genies).

Although Aaron performed in musicals in grade and high school, he chose opera over musical theatre. "I didn't want to do a lot of dance," he acknowledges. I can handle a solid grapevine and a box step, but that's about it." He then went on to earn an undergraduate degree from Wichita State University and an MM from Manhattan School of Music, both in vocal performance. From there, He participated in a number of young artist programs, including Opera

in the Ozarks in Arkansas; Lyric Opera Studio in Weimar, Germany; Wolf Trap Opera; Chautauqua Opera; and Santa Fe Opera.

Aaron is a lyric tenor, suitable for roles such as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Alfredo in *La Traviata*. His dream roles include Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and Sam in *Susannah*. He is eclectic; he enjoys Mozart and also has a fondness for contemporary American works. That versatility is apparent in his roles for Portland Opera this season. He sang solos, duets, trios, and quartets in *Songs of Love and War* (Monteverdi) in February, and he will perform in the Big Night Concert on April 8. Next up is Parpignol in *La Bohème* (the first opera he ever saw as a child) in May, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* in June, and Padre in *Man of La Mancha* in July. You also won't want to miss his recital on April 4 at Portland Art Museum's Whitsell Auditorium (see page 2).

Other than music, Aaron's interests include golf (his dad was a golf coach) and video games – retro as well as new. Last fall, he started a Portland Opera football fantasy league for resident artists, other singers, and friends. He loves living in Portland and is excited to continue his second season with what he considers to be a wonderful company. Another significant recent event is his marriage to Clarissa in November of last year. Now that's something to sing about!

*Aaron does not struggle a lot with stage fright or competition. He senses more of a comradery in these situations, where people wish each other well. "You have to go into singing with the mentality that you're not going to get everything you want," he says. He notes that because there are so many intangibles and such constant rejection, you can't take it to heart. "You have to really, really want to be a singer," he says. "It has to be something you can't live without."*

### Resident Artists Update

Portland Opera is pleased to welcome tenor Aaron Short and baritone Ryan Thorn back for a second year as Resident Artists. Joining them this season are soprano Antonia Tamer from Boston and mezzo-soprano Kate Farrar from New York. (Watch for an in-depth article about each of the newcomers in a future *High Notes* edition.) Many of you may have already seen and heard all four of the Resident Artists perform in Monteverdi's *Songs of Long & War* in February (the debut of Portland Opera's new *Vino e Voce* series at the Hampton Opera Center); at one of the season previews at public libraries in Portland and neighboring communities; or in *A Sondheim Celebration* (along with Susannah Mars) at the Alberta Rose Theatre in March. As you can tell, these talented young artists have been busy since they arrived in January.



All of our Resident Artists will have featured roles in Portland Opera's 2017 productions:

#### Aaron Short

- Big Night Concert
- *La Bohème* – Parpignol
- *Man of La Mancha* – Padre
- *Così fan Tutte* – Farrando

#### Antonia Tamer

- Big Night Concert
- *Man of La Mancha* – Fermina
- *Così fan Tutte* – Fiordiligi

#### Kate Farrar

- Big Night Concert
- *Man of La Mancha* – Antonia
- *Così fan Tutte* – Dorabella

#### Ryan Thorn

- Big Night Concert
- *La Bohème* – Schaunard
- *Man of La Mancha* – Duke/ Dr. Cerasco
- *Così fan Tutte* – Guglielmo

In addition, all will have a recital this year; see the schedule below.

### RESIDENT ARTIST RECITALS

The Resident Artist recitals are about to begin, and you won't want to miss these evenings of beautiful music. Mark your calendars as follows:

- Tuesday, April 4 – Tenor Aaron Short
- Tuesday, May 2 – Mezzo-soprano Kate Farrar
- Tuesday, June 13 – Soprano Antonia Tamer
- Tuesday, August 1 – Baritone Ryan Thorn

On piano will be Nicholas Fox, Portland Opera Chorus Master and Assistant Conductor. All recitals begin at 7 pm at the Portland Art Museum's Whitsell Auditorium, 1219 SW Park Avenue. Admission is free. A suggested donation of \$20 will help us continue offering this annual recital series.

### 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.*

### Volunteer Appreciation Event

Plans are underway for the annual volunteer appreciation lunch for all active volunteers. If you volunteered during the 2016 season or within the past 12 months, watch for your invitation to this event. This is a great opportunity to meet your fellow volunteers, eat delicious food, have some wine, and hear some beautiful singing provided by our Resident Artists.

### Return of the Big Night!

April 8 sees the return of the Big Night Concert, which showcases well-known and popular opera arias in concert at the Keller Auditorium. We have sent out the call for volunteers for both backstage beverage service and costumed greeters. Be sure to sign up quickly to secure your volunteer spot and a chance to attend a rehearsal or be a part of the Big Night if you are a costumed greeter.

(Note: This season, costumed greeters will be sporting new outfits more appropriate for the warmer months of the opera season.)

#### 2017 PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

##### 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

→ Watch your email for volunteer signups for each of these productions.

### Dear Figaro:

*It seems hard to believe, but it has now been a year since Figaro, Portland Opera's beloved costume shop cat, retired. We caught up with him to see how things are going...*

#### *So how is retirement treating you, Figaro?*

So far, so good. Of course, I miss all my friends and admirers at Portland Opera, but I will always have my memories. And I try to keep myself busy so I don't lose the vim and vigor I am so well known for.



#### *What exactly is it that you do to fill your days and keep in top form?*

It's hard to put my paw on it. I know there is a certain amount of napping involved, but I kind of lose track of time. I stretch a lot. I snack. I gaze out the window. Oh, and I've been catching up with all the TV programs and movies I never had time to watch while I was working. *Downton Abbey* alone took hours and hours. Binge watching comes pretty naturally to me, though; I seem to have a knack for it. And of course, I listen to and watch a lot of opera.

#### *You do realize you're a cat, not a human?*

Well, of course I do. What else would I possibly want to be? This is just a silly question. And by the way, just because I'm a cat doesn't mean I can't be an opera devotee. We cats have extremely good hearing (much better than humans, I might note) and discerning souls. We adore creative sets and extravagant costumes—the more tactile the better. And we certainly appreciate fine-tuned (as it were) performances.

Sorry, but I've got to go now—one of my programs is on. Send everyone my greetings. I'll let you know if I need anything.

---

*The One-Minute, Non-Musical  
La Boheme (for one or More Actors)*

We are bohemian. (pause). La.

We are the poets! We are the painters! We are the unemployed and very poor.

But still, we are bohemian. (pause) La.

Who is that? It is the landlord. Is he bohemian? La? No? Then let us cheat him.

Yes, that would be rather bohemian. La.

I am the landlord. It is time for you bohemians to pay.

Join us in our bohemian celebrations. Landlord, tell us of your womanizing. We are bohemians, and valorize such behavior.

I am a great womanizer.

How impressive. But are you not married?

Ah, but I am.

We are shocked. We are outraged. We are bohemian. (pause) La.

Get out of here you filthy, filthy man. Be gone.

What about rent?

What about your wife? Now be gone.

Is he gone? He is gone. We are so clever.

Yes. Because we are bohemian. (pause) La.

And now, we come to a café. With bohemians everywhere. (pause) La.

Who is she? She is beautiful. Is she bohemian? (pause) La?

She is.

I love you.

I love you.

You are bohemian?

I am. (pause) La.

Let us have a mad, passionate, ill-fated affair.

Yes, let's. It is very bohemian. (pause) La.

And now our affair is over. Because you are sick and I am abandoning you.

And I am dating a very rich man instead.

He is not bohemian.

No, but he is very rich.

And you are still very sick.

I am.

And I still love you.

And I you.

We should get back together. But only until you die.

It would be... bohemian. (pause) La.

We must now get her medicine.

I am dying.

She is dead. But I loved her. And she died a bohemian. (pause) La.

And we gather. As artists. As poets. As thinkers.

As bohemians. La.

With time to mourn.

Because we have no jobs.

We are bohemian.

*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](http://www.portlandopera.org)
- Volunteer information: [www.portlandopera.org/volunteer](http://www.portlandopera.org/volunteer)
- Marilyn Crilley (volunteer coordinator): [mcrilley@portlandopera.org](mailto:mcrilley@portlandopera.org)
- Brita Enflo (staff volunteer liaison): [benflo@portlandopera.org](mailto: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

