

OPERA IN THE
OZARKS
AT INSPIRATION POINT

GOOD NEWS LETTER

Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony
16311 Highway 62 West
Eureka Springs, Arkansas 72632

December 2018

Don Dagenais, Editor

Consultants' Study Still Underway

Opera in the Ozarks Board Approves New Facilities Planning

At the Governing Board's November board meeting, the board heard from the WolfBrown consulting firm about a plan for a potential rebuilding of the Opera in the Ozarks facility.

Much work remains to be done on this project, which will continue through the spring, but we hope to have additional news about this project before the Summer 2019 season of Opera in the Ozarks.

As currently discussed, the proposal would be to create a regional center for music performance and lifelong learning. This center would engage people from across international, national and local regions to experience learning opportunities and live performances in Northwest Arkansas. The signature program of this new facility would remain the eight-week summer Opera in the Ozarks program. Several enhancements to the opera program were also presented.

This center would conduct extensive community outreach to a diverse set of individuals and organizations, partner with other regional arts organizations and academic institutions and become a nationally and internationally recognized center of excellence for music education and related performances.

IPFAC proposes to locate this center on the existing Opera in the Ozarks campus near Eureka Springs with all-new state-of-the-art facilities. These facilities would include an architecturally significant new indoor theater, residential and dining facilities for participants and staff, practice facilities, meeting spaces, administrative offices, maintenance facilities and limited recreational facilities for participants and staff. The scenic shop and costume shops would be incorporated into the complex as well.

These facilities would be integrated into the natural beauty of the current site at Inspiration Point on Rock Candy Mountain. The site would be enhanced with appropriately landscaped walking trails through campus with scenic overlooks and areas for quiet meditation and reflection.

Every opportunity would be taken to maintain the "charm" of Inspiration Point as experienced by our thousands of alumni and guests over the last 69 years while providing improved and

#GIVING TUESDAY Opera in the Ozarks participated in Giving Tuesday, the national day of giving which is held each year on the Tuesday after the Thanksgiving weekend. Thank you to all who contributed. Thanks to your efforts, OIO exceeded its goal of \$10,000 in donations that day. We appreciate your continued support, which is what makes our summer opera season possible.

OIO Announces 2019 Season of Operas

The 2019 season for Opera in the Ozarks will feature an Italian, a German and an American opera. Puccini's classic romance *La Bohème* will be a sure hit, and OIO will undertake its first-ever performances of one of Mozart's early popular comedies, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. For the American opera, OIO will feature Mark Adamo's *Little Women*, which has been one of the most popular American operas of the 21st century since its debut twenty years ago

All three of these should be delightful productions, so keep OIO in mind as you begin to make your summertime plans for 2019.

expanded capabilities. The plan includes a renovation to the historic barn to turn it into a visitor center, open year to visitors.

We express our continued appreciation to Alan Brown and Megan Friel of WolfBrown for their diligent and thorough work to investigate this plan and for bringing many new and interesting ideas to the Opera in the Ozarks Governing Board.

The board approved a resolution supporting the continued work of the WolfBrown consulting firm and the project which may result from these efforts.



OIO's production of *The Barber of Seville* last summer featured much zany comedy, as is typical for this delightful comic opera.



News of Our Alumni

Baritone **Weston Hurt** (OIO 1995) sang the role of Creon in Cherubini's rarely performed *Medea* with Opera Omaha last spring, then assayed the more familiar role of Germont in Verdi's *La Traviata* for Opera San Antonio in February. He sang the same Verdi role in Portland in November,



and takes his portrayal to the Lyric Opera of Chicago next February and March. He is scheduled for the title role in another Verdi specialty, *Rigoletto*, for the New Orleans Opera next April. While in New Orleans he also sings in a concert of Arias for Opus Aria called "Mystique."

Veronique Filloux, a soprano (OIO 2015), was Papagena with the



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From the General Director

Because of you:

♪ We have the opportunity to dream about new facilities and new programs.

♪ We have the chance to enhance our Opera in the Ozarks

program with new ideas and new learning opportunities for both participants and audiences.

♪ We are planning on a season with another OIO premiere: Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, a rollicking comedy with glorious ensemble writing and the lowest notes in opera plus plenty of high notes. We will continue our American opera series with the production of *Little Women*. Based on the beloved novel by Louisa May Alcott, Mark Adamo's opera is charming, musically inviting, and full of high spirits. We will revisit one of the world's most popular operas, *La Bohème*, which has remained in the canon since its opening more than 120 years ago.

♪ We have the opportunity to feel like proud parents when we hear of the success of our alumni. Just this week, we learned that six of our recent alumni have been accepted into young artist programs at high quality regional opera houses. Our alumni are winning Metropolitan Opera regional auditions, getting hired by for gigs all over the country, and winning other competitions.

The CEO of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Sue Desmond-Hellmann, says despair and pessimism -- not a lack of education or health care -- are the biggest threats to the world's future, and investing in human capital is one way to overcome those threats. If she is correct, we can end the year knowing we are doing our best to sustain the performance of great music and to help restore optimism and hope to our world. I hope you have the happiest of holidays and that we all start 2019 with a positive outlook.

Mary Preis

A Message From the President

By the time you read this, you will have shared a lovely Thanksgiving with your family and friends and now are looking forward to the beautiful holidays that are ahead.



The facilities at Opera in the Ozarks (OIO) are closed for the long winter, but I'm already dreaming about next summer when OIO will

once again buzz with lots of beautiful musical activity. Now we're all working together to make sure that happens.

As you know, our OIO Annual Fund Drive kicked off November 1 with a goal to raise \$110,000. We were extremely happy to have a wonderful \$50,000 Matching Fund grant from some of our most generous supporters and now, many of you have already responded to that early annual fund mailing.

In fact today, I'm happy to share with you that our treasurer has received well over \$30,000 and that's almost half of the needed

amount to reach our goal! So, if we can count on your help, we are confident that we will reach that magical \$110,000 goal before the December 31st deadline!

If you have not yet mailed in your reply to the annual fund drive, we hope you will consider doing that soon. Please give as generously as you can to help push us over the top. The annual fund drive is one of the main sources of support for OIO and is vital to the success of the program there.

And, here's a special thanks to all of you friends for your generous support on Giving Tuesday. That goal was \$10,000 and you marched right over it. Thank you, thank you, thank you! You are amazing friends of music, the arts and our wonderful training center, Opera in the Ozarks!

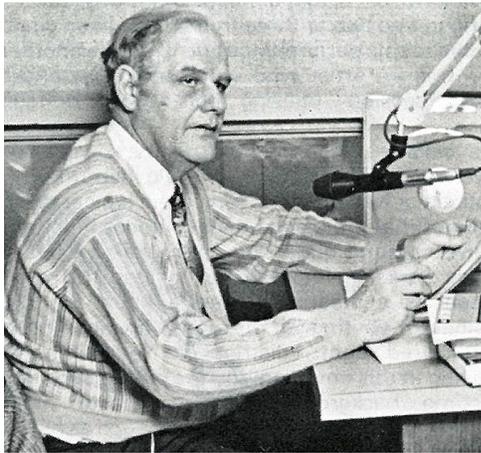
I hope to see many of you at the Point next summer and know we're all going to love every minute there. Thank you again for all of your support, you're just the best!

Carole Langley

Historic Recordings Owned by Late Opera Expert and Collector are Donated to OIO

Opera in the Ozarks has recently received a major gift from the estate of Dr. James E. Seaver of Lawrence, Kansas, in the form of an extraordinary collection of rare and valuable opera recordings and books which Dr. Seaver collected over a period of over 60 years.

Dr. James E. Seaver was a longtime professor at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas, and was one of the nation's premiere opera experts. He was the host of a radio program called *Opera is My Hobby* which was broadcast for 59 consecutive years over the National Public Radio (NPR) affiliate in Lawrence, Kansas and other stations around the country. For years, that program featured Dr. Seaver's discussions of various opera topics and selections from the collection of recordings which has just been donated to OIO.



The late Dr. James E. Seaver, professor at the University of Kansas and renowned opera expert and collector. This photo was taken in the radio studio where he recorded 59 years of "Opera is My Hobby," a radio program dedicated to opera.

The collection features not only LP recordings but also wax cylinders and accompanying equipment from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There are also a

number of CD opera recordings, and a few opera-related books.

In addition to the Seaver collection, OIO has also received a donation of a number of opera videos from the collection of the late Dr. Jack Loudon of Kansas City, Missouri, who was also a premiere opera fan and collector, and a collection of opera books and memorabilia from the estate of Dr. Revis Lewis, another longtime Midwestern opera collector and aficionado.

OIO hopes to establish a listening/viewing room at some time in the future, and these recordings and items will become significant resources for OIO students and visitors.

OIO wishes to thank Robert Seaver, Dr. Seaver's son, for arranging this donation, and to

Governing Board members Don Dagenais, Ed Henson and Steve Shogren for their help in relocating the collection from Lawrence, Kansas to OIO in Eureka Springs.



*The surprise hit of the Opera in the Ozarks 2018 season was the American opera **The Ballad of Baby Doe** (pictured at right). This opera, by composer Douglas Moore, tells the story of the famous Horace Tabor, a silver baron of 19th century Colorado, and his attractive young wife Baby Doe, who sticks with him through riches and poverty.*

*Next summer will feature another American work, **Little Women**, by Mark Adamo. Adamo's opera, of course, is based on the famous Louisa May Alcott novel, and tells in music the adventures and growing up of the four March sisters of a struggling Massachusetts family whose father is off fighting in the Civil War.*



News of Our Alumni

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Central City Opera last summer and was the soprano soloist in Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Apollo Chorus in Chicago last May. She won first prize in the Saltworks Opera Competition in Cape Charles, Virginia in October and next appears in Handel's opera *Radamisto* with Opera Lafayette.

In 2018 Mexican tenor **Edgar Ernesto Ramirez** (OIO 2006) sang with the Bellas Artes Theatre



Mexico City in the Verdi *Requiem*, then performed Rodolfo with the Pacific Northwest Opera, before undertaking soloing in Handel's *Messiah* with Choral Works of Collingwood, Ontario. In January he will be in Kitchener, Ontario with the Waterloo Symphony performing Don Jose in Bizet's *Carmen*.

Soprano **Chelsea Basler** (OIO 2007) was in the cast of the Grammy® nominated opera

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News of Our Alumni

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recording of *Cold Mountain* (Santa Fe Opera) in 2017. In March she portrayed Lucy Brown in Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera* with the Boston Lyric Opera, and in April she sang the title role in *Susannah* for the Nashville Opera. In November she was the soprano soloist for the Omaha Symphony in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. This year she also sang recitals with the Gardner Museum and the New School of



Music in Cambridge. She is scheduled for the title role of Violetta in Verdi's *La Traviata* for the Gulfshore Opera next March. In May she returns to the Boston Lyric Opera for Moira in *The Handmaid's Tale* by composer Poul Ruders.

Tenor **Nathan Granner** (OIO 1993) performed as Dr. Morel in Stewart Copeland's (of the band The Police) world premiere opera *The Invention of Morel* at Chicago Opera Theater and at the Long Beach Opera. He was Triquet in *Eugene Onegin* and Ubaldo in the United States premiere of

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Opera in the Ozarks Annual Fund for 2018 is Underway

The Opera in the Ozarks annual fund drive is now underway. This is the crucial time of year when OIO raises much of the money it needs in order to operate for the next year. As you all know, our income from singer fees and ticket purchases hardly begins to cover our expenses at OIO, so we rely on grants and your contributions to make up the balance each year. This is where you come in, and this is what makes our operations possible.

Think of what it would be like if Opera in the Ozarks didn't have your support. Frankly, it would be out of business, and the many young singers whom we help train each year would not have the opportunity to pursue their dreams of careers in music.

The annual fund drive goal this year is \$110,000. Fortunately, as we publish this newsletter, OIO has raised over \$70,000 of that amount, including a generous contribution of \$50,000 from our wonderful Challenge Grantors (assuming we can match the amount) who are profiled in the next article.

We need you to join in the final push to raise that additional \$40,000 to help us reach the goal. Please be as generous as your means permit. You can be comfortable in the knowledge that each dollar will be spent carefully, wisely, and well for a great cause.

Meet Our \$50,000 Challenge Grant Contributors!

Once again, a group of very generous people have graciously offered a Challenge Grant of \$50,000 if we can raise an additional \$50,000 before December 31st. Now we want you to meet these special friends.

Drs. Glenn and Lorie Bear live in Houston, Texas, both are geophysicists working in research at ExxonMobil Oil company. Lorie and Glenn believe strongly in the arts. They enjoy supporting the Houston Symphony, Opera in the Ozarks and really love singing in their church choir and the Woodlands Chorale. They have one son in college and an older son who just finished his Masters. Last year the Bears attended the performances at Opera in the Ozarks during Federation Days



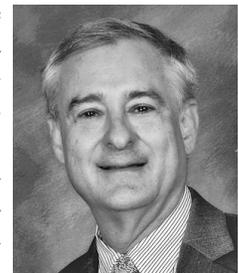
and enjoyed seeing the fruits of their many generous gifts. We are delighted to welcome them back as Challenge Grantors

Alice Conway lives in St. Louis, Missouri and works as an attorney for the Bayer Company, where she is Assistant General Counsel. Alice enjoys the travel

required by her work, but especially enjoys visiting with family and friends. Some of her greatest joys are St. Louis museums and musical events where she is often seen at the Opera Theater, Repertory Theater and the St. Louis Symphony. Alice is a valued member of our Opera in the Ozarks Governing Board and we appreciate her continuing and long-standing support.



Don Dagenais is an attorney in Kansas City, Missouri and a longtime opera fan who served for 24 years on the board of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City (including a stint as President) and was also a board member and president of the coast-to-coast opera volunteer organization, Opera Volunteers International (OVI). He has been honored to be invited as a speaker at Federation Days and to the 2017



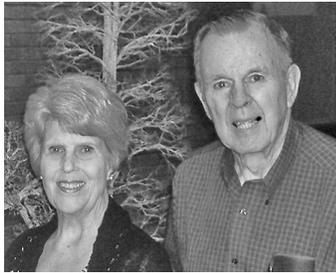
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Challenge Grant Contributors

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NFMC national conference in Tulsa. He has been a member of the IPFAC Governing Board since 2006.

Duane and Carole Langley live in St. Louis, Missouri and enjoy the many wonderful fine arts events there, but nothing is more exciting to them, than working to help benefit the excellent educational programs and opera productions at Opera in the Ozarks at Inspiration Point!



The Langleys have quite a few trophies and awards from years of underwriting opera productions and nights of opera, but they find that going to Inspiration Point to attend live performances there is the greatest “award” of all.

The Langleys believe each opera season is important, but even more important is to continue to preserve the exceptional program at IPFAC for the hundreds of talented young musicians who will come to study and perform there in the future. They truly believe music is vital to our lives and is equally

important to the vitality of our country. They cherish getting to play even their “small part” in the success of Opera in the Ozarks.

Dr. Carolann Martin

served for 23 years as a Professor of Music at Pittsburg State University. She was also the Musical Director and Conductor of the South-



east Kansas Symphony Orchestra and conducted orchestras in many of our states as well as in the United Kingdom and South America.

Among her many honors, Carolann was the first woman winner of the National Adult Conducting Competition in 1980. After her retirement she worked for years on the faculty of Missouri Southern State University and taught both college and Suzuki string students. Early in her musical career, Carolann was a student at Inspiration Point, and is now an Emeritus Member of the Governing Board.

Maria Putter is a charming lady from Austin, Texas who spreads the word about Opera in the Ozarks everywhere she goes. Maria grew up in the Netherlands and learned to love music there. After moving to the

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News of Our Alumni

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Donizetti's *Pia de Tolomei* with the Spoleto Festival USA. He also sang *Curly* in *Oklahoma!* with the Ash Lawn Opera, and Edgardo in the Pacific Opera Project's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He portrayed the Magician in Menotti's *The Consul* with the Long Beach Opera. Granner was also featured in the climactic scene of the award-winning independent



film *Counter-Clockwise* directed by George Moïse. In 2019, Granner plays back-to-back Rodolfo in *La bohème* at the West Bay Opera and Opera Santa Barbara, and will be Jacopo in Giuseppe Verdi's early opera *I Due Foscari* with the West Bay Opera.

Opera in the Rock, an opera company in Little Rock, presented two one-act comic operas in English in November, Igor Stravinsky's *Mavra* and Liam Wade's *Part of the Act*. The productions

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Jewels from the OIO Archives

We intend to feature in this newsletter, from time to time, photographs from the OIO Archives which are now housed at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, in the University of Arkansas Special Collections Department.



This photograph is from MC 1949, Box 34, Folder 29, and is Image 2066 in the Archives. The caption in the photo says that it is Professor Henry Hobart with five students.

If you can identify any of the other students or have any other information, we would love to hear from you! Please contact Janet Parsch at (479) 442-3817 (home number), or at jparsch@uark.edu. Thanks!



News of Our Alumni

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featured three recent OIO singers, **Joylyn Rushing, Chris Turner** and **Maxwell Owen**.

Thomas Potter, a baritone (OIO 1984) and professor of vocal music at the University



of Central Florida, sang Crespel in *The Tales of Hoffman* for the Orlando Opera in October and performs for Valdosta State University in Bizet's *Carmen* in January. He is also a soloist for a *Messiah* in Nevada in December, then returns there in April to solo in Rossini's *Stabat Mater*.

Bass baritone **Andrew Allen Hiers** (OIO 2010) was selected for the prestigious Merola Program of the San Francisco Opera where he sang Don Magnifico in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and Bardolfo in Salieri's *Falstaff*. He has also participated in the young artists' program at Opera Colorado.

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Abduction From the Seraglio: Mozart in Love

In 1781 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, then in his mid-20s, was living in Vienna and had fallen in love with the young Constanze Weber, one of several daughters in a family to which he had grown very close.

He was waiting impatiently for the consent of Constanze's father to his marriage when he received a commission for a German singspiel on the subject of *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.

A *singspiel* was the Germanic form of music theater at the time. It differed from the more formal art form of opera, which was almost always composed in the language of the country which originated the art form, Italy. Thus, the music theater works which Mozart produced for true opera productions were written in Italian, such as his three great later masterpieces, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*.

Those all lay in the future, however. For the moment, he was requested to write a traditional Germanic form of music theater piece, a *singspiel*.

The primary difference related to the fact that in *singspiel*, as in later Viennese and French operettas and in 20th century Broadway musicals, the dialogue portions of the piece were spoken, not sung. The musical numbers were interspersed between the spoken dialogue. In addition, story lines of *singspiels* were generally not as dramatic, confrontational

and violent as true operas sometimes were. This was a more light-hearted form of entertainment, not that it lacked serious edges.

Mozart took up his new commission with zeal. He relished the opportunity to write a work set in Turkey, and to incorporate some "Turkish" music into the score. At this time,

Turkish plots were popular in European theaters. Turkish forces had threatened to overtake Europe during the siege of Vienna in 1683, less than a hundred years before. Although by Mozart's time the continent felt relatively safe from Turkish invasion, there were still dangerous Turkish pirates lurking in the Mediterranean which made parts of the sea unsafe for travel.

Mozart saw another possibility in this project. It would enable him to express the passions of his love of Constanze and the frustrations of the delay caused by her father before his love for Constanze could be brought to fruition. It is a delicious coincidence that the leading lady in the *singspiel* shares the same name, Konstanze, as Mozart's intended, although with a different spelling.

In the opera we hear from Belmonte, the high-voiced tenor, "Konstanze...Oh, how eager and how fervent is my beating throbbing heart." Konstanze, for her part, sings "With my lover I was happy, grief and pain were then unknown...."

We agonize in lockstep with the two lovers as they pine and sigh to each other for



a distraction. At one point, Konstanze tells us "My eyes are blind with weeping, grief remains, forever mine." Later we hear that, for each of them, only death would be an acceptable alternative to a blissful reunion.

In the opera, many obstacles stand in the

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Abduction From the Seraglio

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way of these two lovers. We find that the ever watchful and jealous keeper of the harem, the bass Osmin, believes that women should be the slaves of men. (How do you think that position will ring with today's audiences, keenly aware of the #MeToo movement and all of its implications?)

The autocratic Pasha Selim has the power to order death by indescribable agonies, of which he sings with relish. Both of these brutish men have salacious designs on the beautiful Konstanze, and do not hesitate for a minute to assert these designs under the threat of duress.

The plot of the *singspiel* embodies a seemingly insurmountable clash between the cultural differences of the East and West as perceived at the time. The supposed barbarism of the ancient and uncivilized Turkish culture is placed in sharp contrast to the graceful and enlightened attitudes of the far more "civilized" Europeans.

Challenge Grant Contributors

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United States years ago, she enjoyed attending symphony concerts and other musical performances with her mother-in-law. Maria has underwritten many opera productions and evenings of opera for Opera in the Ozarks. She attended performances at Opera in the Ozarks for many summers and enjoyed the great music and made many great friends.



She is a loyal and generous supporter of Opera in the Ozarks and has served as a Challenge Grant-or for each of the last ten years, which we deeply appreciate.

The focal point of the plot is the effort of Belmonte and a few friendly collaborators to "abduct" Konstanze from the harem of Pasha Selim and free her to return with Belmonte to their home country so that they can be united. The work contains many comic elements as the supposedly superior Europeans supposedly outwit the bumbling Turkish captors, although at the *denouement* the tables are sharply turned: The Europeans are captured but then graciously freed by the supposedly "barbaric" Pasha who decides to be kinder than Belmonte's father, who, the Pasha finds out, was once an enemy of his and who treated him roughly many years ago.

Thus, is it really Christian Europeans or the Turkish Muslims who come out looking better in the end? We are left to consider this for ourselves.

Although the work contains some serious moments it all ends happily and nobody dies.

Musically, *Abduction* contains many heart-rendering tunes expressing the love of Belmonte and Konstanze, and of course features the "Turkish" elements that had intrigued Mozart when he accepted the commission.

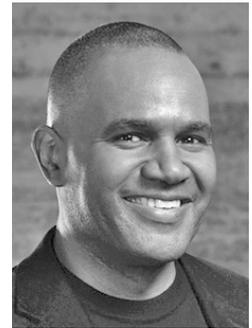
This work is also notable in Mozart's *oeuvre* as being the one attempt he made at composition in the traditional Germanic *singspiel* form (that is, until his second-to-final work, the sharply contrasting *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*)). In all of his other works he wrote his music to Italian librettos, as was the tradition at the time, with the dialogue portions (recitative) set to music.

Abduction was first performed in June of 1782. It was not until the following August that Mozart was finally wed to Constanze. One wonders if perhaps the charms of *Abduction*, with its celebration of longing love with all of the spontaneity of youth and hope, had a role in convincing Constanze's father to give his consent to the marriage. No matter the answer, *Abduction* certainly stands as one of the great musical tributes to young love, stated in graceful and expressive music as fresh as the fallen snow. Young love is a never-ending story that everyone experiences, and perhaps it is for this reason that *Abduction from the Seraglio* remains one of Mozart's most popular and enduring works, and the undoubted high point of the entire Germanic *singspiel* tradition.

News of Our Alumni

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Last season Opera Rara sponsored a performance of Michael Nyman's opera *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, based

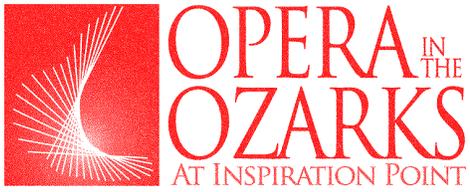


upon a true story of a psychiatric patient, at Krakow, Poland. Starring as Doctor Sacks, the psychiatrist, was tenor **Stanley Jackson** (OIO 1986), who, according to a reviewer, sang the role "with a clear, light forward-placed timbre."

Katherine Polit (OIO 2008) sang in An Evening of Opera with Opera Naples in April then performed arias and



duets for the Virginia Opera in June. She was the soprano soloist in Mozart's *Exsultate Jubilate* with The Helena Symphony earlier this month.



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GOOD NEWS LETTER

Enrico Caruso in *La Bohème*

The great Italian tenor Enrico Caruso, whose career spanned from the 1890s to 1920, was a contemporary of Giacomo Puccini, the composer of *La Bohème*, which will be featured at Inspiration Point next summer. Caruso was famed for singing in Puccini's operas and even created some of the roles at the operas' premieres.

Caruso was also an inveterate practical joker. The fourth and final act of *La Bohème* was one of his favorites for pranks. This is the act where the heroine Mimi tragically dies. On one occasion Caruso, singing the role of her lover Rodolfo, knelt before the prostrate Mimi and, holding a toy mouse, squeaked it in her ear throughout her great death scene. On another, Caruso once removed two casters from Mimi's bed before the act began, so that when she took a breath the bed would rock back and forth.



Caruso's caricature of himself.

His most memorable antic, however, was anything but a joke. An amazing professional, Caruso was famed for knowing not only his own role, but also the roles of all of the other singers in the cast, and even though he was a tenor he could also sing in all other male ranges. Once the bass singing Colline, Andreas de Segurola, lost his voice just before singing his great aria in that act. Turning from the audience, the wild-eyed singer grabbed Caruso by the lapels and whispered, "Enrico, save me!"

The bass turned around and mouthed the words of the aria while Caruso, the tenor, hiding behind him, sang the aria beautifully in a full, round bass voice. Nobody in the audience was the wiser until after the performance was over, when the singers revealed what had happened.

OPERA IN THE OZARKS at INSPIRATION POINT MEMBERSHIP FORM

My tax deductible membership and/or contribution of \$_____ is enclosed.

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 1203 Whispering Pines
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Your membership or gift is important to IPFAC Thank you so much!