

## VIEWPOINT: An Exciting Breakthrough for University Opera by the Opera Props Board

After years of watching UW resources decline for our School of Music and its Opera program, we now have very positive news to report! It's still somewhat preliminary, but the following points are clear:

We have known for the past year that appointing a tenure-track Opera Director will require some outside funding, apparently a reality of the current era here at UW. Happily the School of Music made funding this position a priority, and the Wisconsin Foundation & Alumni Association (WFAA) agreed to help raise the required funds.

For financially strapped UW departments, the possibility of obtaining outside funding to support faculty positions recently improved dramatically when the university received a landmark gift of \$100 million from benefactors John and Tashia Morgridge. These funds are designed to inspire and match donations for new and enhanced professorships, chairs, and distinguished chairs in an effort to recruit and retain a world-class faculty.

But could the School of Music and the WFAA raise sufficient funds to qualify for a Morgridge professorship? Most happily, late in January this news came from the WFAA:

**There is cause for rejoicing! We have confirmed with a donor today that \$500,000 (the minimum required to qualify for 1:1 Morgridge matching funds) will be pledged to secure a professorship for Opera, with his further intention to help bring in further pledges to raise the total to a million dollars of pledged donor funds, hoping to secure a match of the same amount, and thus secure a \$2 million endowed Chair for the Director of**

**Opera. Such a fund will allow the Director of University Opera to have sufficient discretionary funds to use for productions and programming.**

**The idea now is to add in the combined gifts...already earmarked for the Opera directorship and continue to raise the additional funds required to secure the Chair.**

This magnificent donor is Charles Bishop, who has stepped forward to honor the memory of his wife Karen, a former Opera Props Board member whom many of us knew as an active and admired member of Madison's music community. We recall her past work with the UW Opera program, singing in recent productions, and completing her doctoral work here—these were just a few of her many accomplishments during 25 years with her family in the Madison area, where she also was active in private business and in leadership positions with many other local musical groups.

In addition to Charles Bishop's efforts, the WFAA and School of Music are currently endeavoring to raise additional gifts in hopes of increasing the resources available for the Karen K. Bishop Director of Opera position. Three of our Props Board members have already pledged a combined total of \$35,000 in gifts to help increase the fund.

We are thrilled and grateful for this wonderful news. For years, the establishment of a permanently endowed Director of Opera position has seemed a distant hope. The Karen K. Bishop Fund makes this dream a reality at the basic Morgridge funding level. Now the prospect of even further strengthening our fine program seems within reach!

### THE OPERA PROPS BOARD

Tom Akagi  
Charles Anderson  
*Vice President*  
Kristine Bengtson  
*Website Coordinator*  
Ann Campbell

Barbara Furstenberg  
*Recording Secretary*  
Kathy Harker  
Barbara Klotz  
Robert Krainer  
Charles Schoenleber  
*Treasurer*

Dan Shea  
*President*  
Margaret (Peg) Wallace  
*Membership Chair*  
Robert Woodson

### UWOperaProps.org

**Editorial Committee:**  
Charles Anderson  
Kristine Bengtson  
Ann Campbell  
Barb Furstenberg  
Dan Shea

*Opera Props News is published each semester for the members of UW Opera Props.*

## Mozart's Music Unites Comical and Serious Elements in *The Magic Flute*

- *Die Zauberflöte*, opera by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- German libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder with spoken text in English translation by David Ronis
- University Opera production directed by David Ronis
- UW Symphony Orchestra conducted by James Smith



University Opera presents Mozart's beloved masterpiece of fantasy March 13-17, at Music Hall on the UW-Madison campus. The familiar plot centers on Prince Tamino, sent by the Queen of the Night to rescue her daughter, Pamina, from the sorcerer Sarastro. Along the way we meet Tamino's comic sidekick Papageno, the Queen's Three Ladies, Three Spirits who serve as guides, and an assortment of other memorable characters.

Our production starts with the conceit that the opening scene is a set-up: the Queen has targeted Tamino to fulfill the rescue mission and has dispatched the Ladies to do whatever it takes to enlist him. So they dress up as a dragon, scare him until he faints, proclaim victory, and entice him with a picture of the beautiful Pamina. The Queen then sends him off on his quest. Of course, once Tamino arrives at Sarastro's palace, things take on a different perspective. In the course of undergoing various trials in order to "get the girl," Tamino also comes to espouse Sarastro's moral principles and starts on the proverbial road toward an enlightened existence.

This production examines the humanity of the archetypal characters—we see how deeply they are subject to human passions and foibles. They act on their desires, creating antagonism and conflict. By understanding what makes them tick psychologically, we can better understand the forces that drive the opera.

David Ronis comments about his concept for *The Magic Flute*: "When planning the production, I kept seeing Sarastro and his Masonic principles as being related to those of Eastern philosophy. So, in order to create the polarity between the opposing forces of Sarastro and the Queen of the Night, I characterized Sarastro as coming from the East vs. the Queen of the Night, coming from the cultural West. Thus, the Queen and her Ladies wear Victorian bustle dresses, while the basic costume for Sarastro's followers is the shalwar kameez, the traditional garment of South and Central Asia. To complement this, the scenic design combines pan-Asian,

Victorian, and surreal elements with a few contemporary comedic references thrown in. This works nicely, framing the story as well as creating an exotic environment in which the fantasy can take place."

This production of *The Magic Flute* is dedicated to the memories of Karen K. Bishop and Charles Jennings Trieloff II. Dr. Bishop was a beloved UW-Madison alumna who performed in University Opera productions between 2007-2011 (and as the Queen of the Night in dozens of school performances for Opera for the Young; *The Magic Flute* was her favorite opera). Mr. Trieloff was the original set designer for the production.

The large cast includes **Thomas Leighton** and **William Ottow**, who will share alternate performances (Friday and Sunday vs. Saturday and Tuesday) as Tamino, **Nicole Heinen** and **Anna Whiteway** as Pamina, and **Joel Rathmann** and **Brian Schneider** as Papageno. The Queen of the Night will be played by **Sarah Richardson** and alum **Olivia Pogodzinski**, and the role of Sarastro will be taken by alum **Thomas Weis**. The six singers playing the Three Ladies will be **Jessica Kasinski**, **Kirsten Larson**, **Heather Richardson**, and **Susanna Beerheide**, **Tia Cleveland**, and **Sheila Wilhelmi**. Rounding out the cast will be **Alaina Carlson**, **Eileen Peterson**, and **Emily Weaver** as the Three Spirits; **Emi Chen** and **Gaby Klugman** as Papagena; **Nathaniel Greenhill** and **Michael Hoke** as Monostatos; alum **Benjamin Li** as the Speaker; **Mikko Utevsky** as the 2nd Priest; and **Evan Esslinger** and **Fabian Qamar** as the Armored Men.

Assisting **Maestro Smith** will be **Kyle Knox**, assistant conductor; **Seungwha Baek** and **Chan Mi Jean**, musical preparation; and **Dennis Gotkowski**, chorus master.

The physical production will be based on designs by **Charles "Jen" Trieloff II** and realized by **Joseph Varga**, **Greg Silver**, and **Liz Rathke**. Costume design is by **Sydney Krieger**, **Hyewon Park**, and **Sam Fleming**, lighting design by **Rob Stepek**, props design by **Dana Fralick**, and the production stage manager will be **Erin McDermott**. Student staff include **Emi Chen**, costume assistant; **Fabian Qamar**, props assistant; **Emily Hake** and **Melanie Treuhaft**, scenic painters; **Briana Miller**, master electrician; and **Kyle Baldauf**, assistant carpenter.



## Special Vocal Events Coming Up

“Rediscovering Rameau” festival – March 11, 7:00 pm (1315 Chemistry) *Rameau the Theorist*; Chemist Rod Schreiner, music theorist Lee Blasius, and harpsichordist John Chappell Stowe.

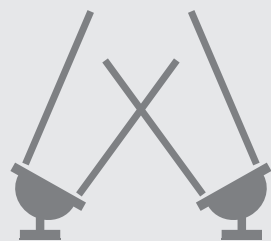
April 17, 6:45 pm lecture, 7:30 pm; April 19, 2:45/3:30 pm (First Unitarian Society Atrium) – *Pygmalion* opera-ballet; Marc Vallon, cond.

April 18, 8:00 pm (Morphy) – **Performing French Baroque Opera**; Marc Vallon, Trevor Stephenson, performers of Madison Bach Musicians.

April 21, 7:30 pm (Music Hall) – **Opera Workshop**, scenes from *Giulio Cesare, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Semiramide, Werther, Pelléas et Mélisande, Don Giovanni*. The singers are: Susanna Beerheide, Alaina Carlson, Tia Cleveland, Antonio DeSouza, Meghan Hilker, Todd Keller, Tyana O’Connor, Fabian Qamar, Alannah Spencer, Gavin Waid, and Emily Weaver. The pianists are: Chan Mi Jean, Haley O’Neil, Ian Tomaz; the scenes will be directed by Mimmi Fulmer and David Ronis.

April 24, 8:00 pm; April 26, 2:30 pm (Overture Hall) – Madison Opera’s *The Barber of Seville*; John DeMain, cond.

May 2, 8:00 pm (Mills) – **Choral Union** with UW Symphony Orchestra, Mendelsshohn’s *Lobgesang*; James Smith, cond.



## The Magic Flute continued

Tickets for *The Magic Flute* are \$22 for the general public, \$18 for senior citizens, and \$10 for UW-Madison students, available via the Campus Arts Ticketing office at (608) 265-ARTS and online at [www.arts.wisc.edu/](http://www.arts.wisc.edu/) (click “box office”). Tickets also may be purchased at the Wisconsin Union Theater Box Office Monday-Friday, 11:30-5:30 and Saturdays, 12:00-5:00, and at the Vilas Hall Box Office, Monday-Friday, 11:30-5:30.

*University Opera is a cultural service of the School of Music at the University of Wisconsin-Madison whose mission is to provide comprehensive operatic training and performance opportunities for our students and operatic programming to the community. For more information, please contact [opera@music.wisc.edu](mailto:opera@music.wisc.edu) or visit [music.wisc.edu](http://music.wisc.edu).*

## Synopsis for The Magic Flute

**Act 1.** Prince Tamino has wandered into a foreign land. After appearing to have fallen into the grips of a monster, he passes out. Three Ladies in the service of the Queen of the Night go off to tell the Queen. When Tamino wakes up, he meets Papageno, a bird catcher. The Ladies return and give Tamino a portrait of Pamina, the Queen’s daughter, who has been abducted by a sorcerer called Sarastro. After Tamino falls in love with the picture of Pamina, the Queen of the Night appears and tells him that he must rescue her. The Ladies present Tamino with a magic flute that will protect him on the journey. They also order Papageno to accompany Tamino to Sarastro’s temple and give him a set of magic bells. Three Spirits arrive to guide the men.

Inside the temple, Pamina is pursued by Monostatos, Sarastro’s servant. His unwelcome sexual advances are interrupted by the arrival of Papageno, who gives Pamina a portrait of Tamino and tells her of their rescue mission. They go off to find Tamino.

At the temple gates, Tamino meets the Speaker, who explains that the picture the Queen has painted of Sarastro is not accurate—he is, in fact, a man of great wisdom and noble character. Happy to learn that Pamina is indeed safe, Tamino charms the local population with his magic flute. When he hears the sound of Papageno’s pipes, he runs off hoping to find Papageno and Pamina. Meanwhile, the two, looking for Tamino as well, are stopped by Monostatos, who threatens to torture them. But Monostatos and his helpers are stopped in their tracks, enchanted by Papageno’s magic bells.

When Sarastro and his followers enter, Pamina admits to trying to escape, explaining that she was fleeing the lascivious advances of Monostatos. Sarastro forgives her, acknowledging that he knows of her love for Tamino. Sarastro punishes Monostatos and instructs the Speaker and the Second Priest to take Tamino and Papageno into the temple.

**Act 2.** Sarastro and his followers decide that, in order to be considered worthy for admission to their order, Tamino and Papageno must be tested. They will first undergo the Trial of Silence. The Queen of the Night’s Ladies arrive and try to dissuade Tamino and Papageno from pursuing their current path. Unsuccessful, the Ladies are driven out by unseen voices.

Monostatos considers making love to the sleeping Pamina, but flees upon hearing the Queen of the Night approach. The Queen wakes Pamina and demands that she kill Sarastro. Shocked by Pamina’s refusal to harm the man she has come to admire, the Queen storms out. Sarastro enters and comforts Pamina.

The Spirits bring food to Tamino and Papageno with a reminder to remain silent. Papageno is glad for the food but still desperate to find a wife. A flirtatious old woman offers him a drink. When she reveals herself to be none other than Papagena, the Second Priest quickly ushers her away. Pamina arrives and becomes despondent when Tamino will not speak to her. On top of this, Sarastro comes to inform the couple that Tamino must leave, but that they will be reunited.

## Synopsis for The Magic Flute continued

Pamina’s despair deepens and she decides to use the dagger to kill herself. Before she can, though, the Spirits return and convince her that Tamino does indeed love her. Reassured, Pamina goes off to look for Tamino. Papageno is also on the brink of suicide. The Spirits tell him that if he plays his magic bells, Papagena will appear. Appear she does and they enjoy a joyous reunion.

Protected by the magic flute, Pamina and Tamino undergo the Trials of Fire and Water. They emerge unscathed and are hailed by the assembled crowd. Apoplectic over the failure of her plans, the Queen, her Ladies, and Monostatos attempt to invade the temple but are easily defeated and cast out. Joyful now that the Queen no longer poses a threat, Sarastro and his followers celebrate the union of Pamina and Tamino and the triumph of love, courage, and wisdom.

**ALUMNI NOTES:** Soprano Emily Birsan (MM 2010) was the lovely cover girl for February’s issue of the influential magazine *Classical Singer*, with an interview that covered her recent CD with Sir Andrew Davis and the Bergen Philharmonic, and her upcoming performances as *Bizet’s* Leila for the Florida Grand Opera. Emily speaks warmly of her years in Madison, especially of the opportunity at UW to perform three title roles: Thaïs, Alcina, and Maria Stuarda.

Speaking of magazine citations of our graduates, the current March issue of *Opera News* mentions bass-baritone Sam Handley, whose wife Amanda Majeski is interviewed (their careers meshed at the Ryan Center). And Greg Schmidt is in the cast of the Met’s *La donna del lago*, which will be televised in theaters around the world; Greg is singing the role of Bertram while covering Rodrigo.

Our coloratura star Brenda Rae (BM 2004) currently is singing the title role of *Semele* in Seattle, where the reviews—as usual for her—are raves: she is the “lovely and stratospheric soprano” in this production, which is “a feast for eyes, ears.” We can hear her in Madison next September 27, when she comes to Mills Hall to sing Glière’s brilliant concerto showpiece with the University Symphony Orchestra.

## A Dining Idea for Friday, March 13, Opening Night for The Magic Flute

Join us at the University Club for a social hour: cash bar and fellowship 5:00–5:45 pm in the Fireside Room (lower level). Then, from 5:45–7:10 pm we’ll share an Austrian-inspired dinner served plated style in the adjacent Banquet Room.

**Our Program:** Joining us to discuss their reactions to preparing and singing this opera of Mozart, and related issues, will be Anna Whiteway and Will Ottow, who will sing the lead roles of Pamina and Tamino at the Saturday and Tuesday performances.

### The menu, with choice of entrée:

**SALAD: Arugula and Beet Salad** – roasted beets with goat cheese, greens, dried cranberries, and toasted walnuts.

### ENTRÉES – Choose one of the following:

1. **Roasted Trout** – herb-roasted trout, spaetzle, and asparagus with sauce gribiche.

2. **Mushroom Strudel** – wild seasonal mushrooms with sautéed spinach wrapped in a flakey puff pastry.

Both served with an order of **Zeppelins** – potato-cheese dumplings.

**DESSERT: Cinnamon-Apple Strudel** served with **Babcock Vanilla Ice Cream**.

*This meal is \$30 inclusive (there are no additional tip/tax fees). Choice of coffee, tea, milk; or wine and beer from the cash bar.*

Please send your list of dinner partners, with their choices of entrée, and a check for your group (\$30 per person).

Checks should be payable to “UW Opera Props,” and please mail by Monday, March 9 to Ann Campbell, 5002 Sheboygan Avenue, #313, Madison, WI 53705.

**Questions?** Call Ann Campbell at 274-8751. The University Club is located at 803 State Street Mall.

## Help Support the UW Opera Program with a Contribution to Opera Props

I wish to join Opera Props, or renew my membership, for 2014-15 at the following level:

- Individual @ \$25    Household @ \$35    Supporter @ \$75  
 Sustainer @ \$150    Benefactor @ \$500    Producer @ \$2,500    Other @ \$\_\_\_\_\_

OR: I am already a 2014-15 Props member, but wish to make an additional contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ now.

Name & Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your membership check payable to **UW Opera Props**. Props’ fiscal year runs from June 1, 2014, through May 31, 2015. Contributors will be acknowledged in the Opera Props newsletter, unless otherwise requested. Your support of the UW Opera Program is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Mail checks to: **Peg Wallace, 2220 Chamberlain Ave., Madison, WI 53726.**

Mark here to remain anonymous.