

OPERA AT RIDERWOOD NOTES & NEWS

for April 22

MASKS REQUIRED

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

Late again? Yes. But we don't intend to make a habit of it, we hope.

WANT SOME (FREE) OPERA?

by Leah Solat

Annapolis Opera's Vocal Competition Finals Concert is coming up May 1st. It's FREE and it's our Maryland version of American Idol! The renowned concert is by eight wonderful artists selected from 38 semi-finalists out of the 263 singers from across the USA. The eight compete for a \$5,000 prize and you can match wits with the judges to vote for your favorite who will receive a \$1,500 check and the Audience Choice Award.

You don't need tickets, parking is plentiful and you're sure to hear stars of the future; some finalists have already sung at the Met or programs like the Washington National Opera's Young Artists. The Finals Concert is Sunday, May 1st at 3 pm in Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, 801 Chase St, Annapolis. More info on finalists and prestigious judges at: <https://annapolisopera.org/event/vocal-competition/> —LeaH Solat

MORE, NOT FREE, BUT HD

by Mina Schwartz

Riderwood opera lovers have other local venues with The Metropolitan Opera's Live in HD broadcasts to select theaters in our area. For the past decade, the Met has streamed live Saturday afternoon performances in High Definition to movie theater patrons around the world. Now scheduled are: "Turandot" May 7, "Lucia di Lammermoor" May 21 and "Hamlet", June 4 with an encore recording of

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NEXT WEEK IN ENCORE

We close April with Mozart's "Cosi Fan Tutti". Despite the diligent work of David Blackman, chairing our Version Selection group, I have yet to resolve my ambiguity about a new DVD they have not had a chance to hear... But it's Mozart, so you can't lose! -Gene

Gene's (Stolen) Encore Notes

Il Trittico

Giacomo Puccini

English Subtitles • 64+65+64 Minutes

Since I have no record of Steve's ideas about Puccini's *Il Trittico* (The Triptych) and inadequate time to learn about and write a sensible set of Notes for this set of three, one act operas, I am once again appropriating others' words.

"*'Recondita armonia di belizze diverse,'* sings Cavaradossi in his first aria in *Tosca*, the old standard English translations of which runs: 'Strange harmony of contrasts, thus deliciously blending.' These words might serve as a description of Puccini's method in *Il Trittico*. Attempts to discover a unifying factor in his highly original scheme of a triptych of one act pieces, created during the years 19 15–18 all seem far-fetched; in fact, Puccini was operating on similar lines to those later used by the creators of portmanteau films – that of maximum effective contrast."

George Hall, who wrote that paragraph in the liner notes, says the First World War was a difficult time for Puccini, then Italy's leading composer. His publisher had died and Puccini was not on good terms with the man's son. His own son, Tonio, was in the army on Italy's northern front, his German mistress Josephine von Stengel had been forced to leave Italy as an enemy alien, his work on *La rondine* with Austrian management earned him widespread condemnation in the Italian and French press. "The word 'traitor' hung unspoken in the air," writes Hall who asserts that an "isolated and melancholy" Puccini turned to composition as both an artistic necessity and a distraction as well.

However, the triptych notion was hardly new. Hall says Puccini had considered a three-part structure. as

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early as 1900 and in 1904-5 became intrigued with the idea of using three distinct, dramatic themes using the works of Maxim Gorky and the same set of singers for all three.

In a 1907 letter, the composer wrote that he could not find all of what he sought in Gorky's work; moreover: "I reconsidered and found the idea impractical... three different things by the same singers would destroy the illusion and damage the representative truth. And so I gave up the idea. Now I am thinking of it again."

Il Tabarro, the first of the three works was completed by the end of 2016; it has its origins in Didier Gold's play *La Houppelande* (The Cloak) first performed in Paris in 1910.

"The opening panel of Puccini's brilliantly conceived triptych... embodies the spirit of verismo with its focus on the dramas of ordinary people. Set on the Seine in Paris, the opera is named after the cloak worn by Michele, an aging bargeman who discovers his wife's infidelity. Their stifling relationship is set against vignettes of working life and the city as Puccini's sophisticated score potently evokes life on the river and the characters' hopes, dreams, passions and tragedy. This intense, visually striking production for the Royal opera draws powerfully on the imagery and atmosphere of pre-war French cinema.

"The centerpiece... *Suor Angelica* rivals *Madam Butterfly* in emotional impact and demands a similar tour de force performance from its leading soprano. With her dignity, delicacy and conviction, Ermonelda Jaho is duly heart rending in Richard Jones' production for The Royal Opera which introduces a children's hospital into the convent setting. The arrival of Angelica's aristocratic aunt, in the towering and forbidding form of contralto Anna Larson,

interrupts the nuns' daily round of nursing and prayer. Her harrowing confrontation with her niece precipitates the opera's tragic conclusion.

The last of the three operas is; "the cynical and riotous comedy" *Gianni Schicchi* where Hall notes implicit contrast:

"In context, the much loved aria 'O mio babbino caro,' sung imploringly by Schicchi's daughter, provides a rare moment of stillness in Richard Jones's hyperactive production for the Royal Opera. Updated from the 13th Century to the era of Fellini's *La dolce vita*, the action is carried by an ensemble of singers and a razor-sharp central performance from Lucio Gallo as the most resourceful man in Florence. Nor, does Antonio Pappano miss a trick in a score that, for all its momentum and edginess, makes

Not Free, But HD from Page 2

each on the following Wednesday evening. Theater tickets are about \$25 and the broadcast is usually at 1 p.m.

These Met live performances are amazing, presenting the company's best artists by satellite to build opera's audience. With HD cameras, large theater screens, and surround sound you have better seats than any at the Met itself. Moreover during the intermissions, your opera host takes you back stage to interview the opera performers, the conductor, director or producers all while you can see technicians preparing the stage for the next act.

Local cinemas near Riderwood which offer Met Live in HD are: Majestic Stadium 20 in Silver Spring; Regal Laurel Towne Center 12 in Laurel; Regal UA Snowden Square 14 in Columbia; AMC Columbia Mall Cinema; and Cinemark Egyptian 24, Arundel Mills Mall in Hanover. And if you happen to be in DC or Virginia at the time, you will find participating theaters there as well as more information on the Metropolitan Opera's website.

If you have not had this experience yet, I highly recommend you give it a try. (And Gene claims that the best part is having your opera with popcorn!)
—Mina Schwartz

room for a delicious sprinkling of romance.”

I admit, attention *should* be paid to the librettists, Giuseppe Adami and, especially, Giovacchino Forzano if, for no other reason than that there are interesting stories there. That will have to wait for a later edition of these Notes.

The remainder of this article is provided by George Hall, the author of the liner notes.

—Gene

Synopses For *Il Trittico*

IL TABARRO

A barge, Paris.

On his barge Michele is watching the sun set while the stevedores and his young wife Georgetta work. Georgetta offers a glass of wine to Tinka, Talpa and Luigi who work with Michele. Luigi asks a passing entertainer to play a waltz. He dances with Georgetta. A song seller on the quayside offers his latest song. Talpa's wife Frugola arrives, and chats to Georgetta about her life as a rag picker, and her admiration for her cat. Michele returns and the other workers discuss their lives: Tinca loves drink, Luigi is horrified by the life of barge workers, Frugola and Talpa want nothing more than a country cottage and Georgetta yearns for the lively life of the Paris suburb where she was born. Luigi responds to Georgetta's enthusiasm for Paris. When Tinca, Talpa, and Frugola leave, Luigi finds an excuse to remain behind with Georgetta.

Michele returns, and is surprised to find Luigi still there. Luigi tells Michele that he wants to stay on the barge for now, but be put ashore at Rouen. Alone again with Georgetta, Luigi explains that he cannot bear sharing her with Michele any longer. They

arrange a meeting for that night and a possible elopement: Georgetta will light a match as a signal for Luigi to join her.

Michele comes back on deck and tries to talk to Georgetta. He recalls how happy they used to be, and how Georgetta and their baby son would shelter under his cloak. Georgetta declines to show Michele any affection or to talk about their dead child. She goes inside.

Now convinced that his wife is unfaithful, Michele broods over who her lover might be. He wonders if there is anything between Luigi and Georgetta, but he's puzzled over Luigi's request to leave the barge at Rouen. Thinking hard on how he could revenge himself, Michele lights his pipe. Luigi takes this for Georgetta's signal and boards the boat. Michele seizes and strangles him.

Georgetta returns and apologizes for her behavior to her husband. She asks if she can shelter under his cloak once more. Michelle pulls open the clock to reveal Luigi's corpse.

Cast for *Il Tabarro*

Michele	Lucio Gallo
Georgetta	Eva-Maria Westbroek
Luigi	Aleksandrs Antonenko
Tinca	Alan Oke
Talpa	Jeremy White
Frugola	Irina Mishura
Song Seller Ji-Lovers	Min Park
	Anna Devin, Robert Anthony Gardiner

SUOR ANGELICA

A convent.

Nuns are talking together after their evening penances. The Monitress and the Mistress of the Novices assign special penances to Sister Lucilla, who laughed in Chapel, and to Sister Osmina, who was hiding two red roses in her habit. Sister Genovieffa sees that the evening

sun has turned the water of the Chapel fountain gold, and the nuns are reminded that a year has passed since the death of sister Bianca Rosa. They discuss what they most miss from their past lives. Sister Angelica denies that she has any desires, but the others agree that this has to be untrue — she secretly longs for news of her noble family.

A sister enters and asks Sister Angelica to help her cure a nun who has been stung by wasps. Sister Angelica who is skillful in making remedies, prepares a cure. Two sisters enter and distribute food. One of them mentions that she has seen a carriage approaching, and Sister Angelica becomes agitated, hoping for a visit from one of her family.

The Abbess enters and informs Sister Angelica that she has a visitor. It is Angelica's aunt, the Princess, who greets her niece coldly. She has come to ask Sister Angelica to sign away her share of her parents' property to her younger sister Anna Viola, who is to be married. The Princess reminds Sister Angelica of the shame she has brought on her family by giving birth to a son outside marriage and command her to repent. Sister Angelica assured her aunt that she is penitent, but begs her for news of the boy. The Princess informs Angelica that her son died of a fever two years ago. Angelica collapses.

The Princess puts a document in front of her niece, then leaves with it signed. Angelica pours out her grief for her dead son. The other nuns assume the visit has fulfilled Sister Angelica's only desire, and that she is blessed and now happy. Angelica has decided to commit suicide. She prepares and takes poison. Immediately she is overcome with guilt at having committed a mortal sin and

prays for salvation. Angelica sees the Virgin Mary and her son as she dies.

Cast for Suor Angelica

Monitress	Elena Zillo
Two Lay Sisters	Melissa Alder, Kate McCarney
Mistress of the Novices	Elizabeth Sikora
Sister Osmina	Eryl Royle
Sister Genovieffa	Anna Devin
Novice	Katy Batho
Sister Angelica	Ermonela Jaho
Sister Dolcina	Elizabeth Key
Nursing Sister	Elizabeth Woollett
Two Alms Sisters	Gillan Webster, Kathleen Wilder
Abbess	Irina Mishura
The Princess	Anna Larson
Nuns	Tamsin Coombs, Kiera Lyness Renata Skarelyte, Amy Catt

GIANNI SCHICCHI

Florence: The house of Buoso Donati

Buoso Donati has died. His attendant family hear a rumor that his fortune has been left to monks. Simone, the eldest, is consulted. If the notary has Donati's will it is hopeless. If the will remains in the room though, there is hope. Rinuccio finds the missing will. He says he will hand it over if his Aunt Zeta will agree to his marriage to Gianni Schicchi's daughter Lauretta. Rinuccio sends Gherardino (son of Gherardo and Nella) to fetch Schicchi and Lauretta. The will is read and the family's worst fears are confirmed: Donati's wealth belongs to the monks.

However, the will could still be altered according to Rinuccio, According to Rinuccio only one man can help — Gianni Schicchi. The family are disgusted. Schicchi is a peasant and his daughter could never be a

Donati. Rinuccio resists: Florence is a richer city for men like Schicchi.

Schicchi enters and quickly detects the family's difficulties. A row develops between Schicchi and Zita and Schicchi tries to leave. Loretta intercedes — she will throw herself into the Arno if she can't marry Rinuccio.

Schicchi scrutinizes the will and then sends Lauretta to feed the birds. He asks the family who else might know that Buoso has died. A knock on the door interrupts the interrogation — it's Buoso's doctor. The doctor is delighted, and the family astonished, to hear Buoso (in reality, Schicchi) declaring his recovery. The doctor leaves and Schicchi outlines his plan: the notary can be sent for and Schicchi will himself impersonate Buoso.

The family are overjoyed and each makes a bid for Buoso's property. They each hope for the house, the mule, and the mills at Signa. A bell tolls. Could this mean Buoso's death is known? In the panic the family agree that Schicchi should have the final say about the disposal of Buoso's fortune.

Schicchi is put in disguise and gets into Buoso's deathbed. Before the notary enters, he issues the family a warning. Anyone altering a will suffers the amputation of a hand and exile. The family is determined however, and the notary and witnesses are ushered in. Following some formalities, the family await their reward. Schicchi, however, has made his own plans for Buoso's money and for Lauretta and Rinuccio's future happiness...

Cast for Gianni Schicchi

Buoso Donati	Peter Curtis
Simone	Gwynne Howell
Zita	Elena Zillo
Rinuccio	Francesco Demuro

Betto di Signa
Marco
La Ciesca
Gherardo
Nella
Gherardino
Gianni Schicci
Lauretta
Maestro Spinelloccio
Ser Amantio di Nicolao
Pinellno
Guccio

Jeremy White
Robert Poultron
Marie McLaughlin
Alan Oke
Lisa Anne Robinson
Filippo Turkheimer
Lucio Gallo
Ekaterina Siurina
Henry Waddington
Enrico Fissore
Daniel Grice
John Molloy

THREE THANK YOUs

Every week I greatly appreciate the work that Leah, Mary Ann and Judith do to assemble and distribute these N&N editions to you **AND** those who contribute to the actual costs of operating Encore Opera such as printing and addressing these copies **AND** to Luanne and David Knutson for housing our Schwartz Collection until less annoying arrangements are completed. And, this week I had room to say so!!!
-Gene

Opera at Riderwood

Opera At Riderwood is a resident group presenting recorded operas weekly as *Encore Opera* and live operatic concerts as *Purple Lady Productions*. *Notes & News* is published every week to inform the opera community at Riderwood and is distributed without charge to the cubbies of residents without email.

Residents are invited to join and work with O@R members who wear many hats and fill many shoes: Mike Beard, David Blackman, Paula Cook, Joe Davidson, Judith Dighe, Trudy Downs, Betty Dunkins, Irwin Goldstein, Maxine Goldstein, Sallie Holder, David Knutson, Luanne Knutson, Sally Koenig, Joan Kugler, Gene Martin, Sally Porter, Leah Solat, Mary Ann Stroker, John Szabo, and Millie Trimble, among others.

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Production Notes

for IL TRITTICO

Production Studio Opus Arte

Each Opera approximately 60 minutes run times

BackStage Feature 10 minutes

Introductions by Conductor Pappano, 5, 4, and 2 minutes

Recorded September 2011

Royal Opera House

Conductor Sir Antonio Pappano, KBE

Director Richard Jones

Liner Notes George Hall

IL TRITTICO

Program for April 22

Backstage Feature

Introduction to Il Tabarro

Il Tabarro

Introduction to Suor Angelica

Supor Angelica

Introduction to Gianni Schicchi

Gianni Schicchi

April 29 *Così fan tutti* Mozart

COMING IN MAY

May 6 *Semele* Handel

May 13 *Rigoletto* Verdi

May 20 *Pirates of Penzance* Sullivan

May 27 *La Traviata* Verdi

All performances at 1:00 PM

Encore Theater, LSC

FRIDAY, 1:00 PM • ENCORE THEATER

OPERA NOTES FOR

