



PINE MOUNTAIN
MUSIC FESTIVAL

VOL. 17 NO. 1, SPRING 2010 | 20 YEARS OF GREAT MUSIC

Notes

Festival Founder Looks Back—And Forward!

Laura Jean Deming, who founded Pine Mountain Music Festival in 1991 and remained Artistic Director until retiring in 2001, wrote this article in honor of the Festival's 20th season.



"Ah, music...a magic far greater than anything we teach here at Hogwarts," says Dumbledore, the greatest wizard in Harry Potter's world. We're looking back at 20 years of the Pine Mountain Music Festival, and a passion that began this adventure drives it still. It feels a little like magic.

I loved living in the U.P., and I'm so grateful to have had the chance to make music there with good friends and among good friends. I'm grateful for the deep friendships that developed through the Festival and continue now.

I'm grateful for Joshua Major's vision and energy to continue something I loved so much and for his graciousness toward me every time I've returned. The contributions of artists, leaders, volunteers, donors, and the audience are almost beyond belief, except that we continue to experience it over and over in this special place.

How wonderful it is that children grow up thinking it's normal to have a festival like this in their midst. I know the artists who have been guests of the Festival have been deeply touched by the generous spirit of the communities and by the sheer beauty of the U.P.

I like to remember those blistering nights, crowded into un-air-conditioned auditoriums, when one forgot the discomfort and was transported to another world. I remember the dreaming and excitement of possibilities, the musicians arriving and working hard together and stepping out on stage and touching our hearts and souls. I remember the saints behind phones and desks who had equal passion and skill.

What a gift it is to see this Festival thrive in its maturity. I look forward to celebrating with you this summer. Thank you all!

Let the Celebrating Begin—Vibrant 2010 Season Planned

—Joshua Major, Artistic Director



I am so pleased to be leading such a dynamic organization on the cusp of its third decade. It is a great accomplishment to have been around for 20 years, and I cannot express my admiration enough to those who have contributed to the successful history of PMMF.

Every single person who has volunteered, bought a ticket, performed on our stage, worked in our office or simply cheered us on has contributed to our success. I really believe that for 20 years it has been a group effort and I deeply hope that the next 20 years will be even more exciting. The legacy created by Laura Jean Deming, Christine Seitz, Don Schleicher, Kathy Tompkins and many others is alive and well and their vision lives on.

Which brings us to 2010. This year we offer another exciting season of concerts with a combination of the old and the new, the familiar and the unfamiliar, and old friends and new friends. We welcome eight Resident Opera Artists to the area who will be seen in Verdi's masterpiece, *La Traviata*; a musical revue featuring the music of Jerome Kern and Irving Berlin prepared by Festival favorite

Jerry DePuit; a concert of art song led by returning artist Stephen Sulich; and our opening gala concerts hosted by long-time Festival stalwart, Lucy Thrasher.

We are especially excited to reprise Evan Premo's opera *The Diaries of Adam and Eve*, which had its world premiere with the Festival in 2007. To round out the evening we will present another world premiere, a Premo quintet based on the Anishinaabe creation story (See article on page 2).

Continued on page 5



In the Beginning . . . A Most Creative Evening

—Joshua Major, Artistic Director

Last summer, as I began to think about ways to celebrate our 20th season, it seemed appropriate to involve a musician who has close ties to the U.P. and to the Festival. There was one clear choice – Evan Premo. Evan’s first PMMF experience was as a bass player in our high school Orchestra Fellowship Program ten years ago, and he has made numerous appearances since then, including as a composer. We have been fortunate to watch his growth as a musician over these years.



Evan Premo

play *Adam and Eve* and will be joined by Evan himself for the world premiere of his string quintet, and by the collaboration of Laurel Premo, who will animate a video accompaniment to the string quintet.

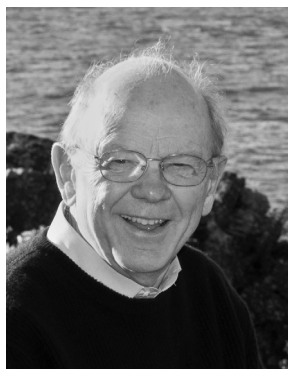
I can think of no better way for PMMF to celebrate its 20th season than with music by Evan, with the Bergonzi Quartet, based on a Native American theme for audiences in the Upper Peninsula.

I contacted Evan with the idea of remounting his exciting first opera, *The Diaries of Adam and Eve*, and of adding a new commission to the evening. Evan, who is never at a loss for ideas, saw the potential for an evening based on creation stories and decided to write a string quintet based on the creation story of the Anishinaabe. What will make this event an even better celebration will be the collaboration of the Bergonzi String Quartet who will



Healthy Festival Plans Boldly for Future

—Peter Van Pelt, Executive Director



In the challenging economy that surrounds us, many arts and culture organizations are having tough sledding. The Festival is fortunate to have finished its 2009 fiscal year in the black. Now we are in fiscal 2010, and our budget is some 20 percent higher than last year, almost entirely because we are trying to restore the breadth and

depth of programming that we had before the recent (and current) economic malaise. We are furthering our mission, and demonstrating faith in our community.

Not only have we planned a strong 2010 season, with an enticing variety of events, but we also have an even bigger event coming up in 2011 – the premiere of *Rockland*, a new opera commissioned by Pine Mountain Music Festival. You can read about this in the article on the next page.

We are proud of the Festival’s accomplishments, and look forward to continuing the work that makes those accomplishments happen. I remember writing some years ago that if we could raise the Festival’s administrative and financial sides to the same high level as its artistic side, we would be sitting pretty. We’re working on that!

Why do we care? Well, people tell me the Festival is important to them personally. They lap it up when the season is taking place, and they think about it the rest of the year. And others tell me they appreciate having the Festival in the community even though they themselves may not attend Festival events – it does so much for the quality of life and the economy and the reputation of our region.

It interests me that classical music – which, after all, is the main focus of the Festival – is thought to be a minority taste. I’m not so sure. Classical music is all around us, as movie or video game sound track, telephone hold music, elevator music, themes for figure skaters at the Olympics, you name it. The genre is actually very widespread and accepted.

A big thank you to our supporters, audiences, artists, volunteers, trustees and staff. Pine Mountain Music Festival is a large and complicated entity with impact far and wide and big and small, and it only works because of so many people being part of it. Thank you.

Festival's First Two Decades Full of Accomplishments

—Peter Van Pelt, Executive Director

As I look back over the first 20 years of Pine Mountain Music Festival, I am struck by the breadth of its history – breadth expressed in types of music, geography served, artists hosted, and the sheer number of events. It is an awesome record, and many people can take pride in it.

When Laura Jean Deming first invited friends to join her in a few chamber music events in Iron Mountain in 1991, her motive was to share good music with a wider circle. Simply put, that is still the Festival's mission. We have produced opera, symphony concerts, chamber music, art song recitals, popular music, jazz, classical guitar and more, and we have done it in some 20 cities and towns in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and northeastern Wisconsin.

And we have built educational programs into the fabric of the Festival. These include the high school level Orchestra Fellowship Program, which later morphed into the college-level Resident Chamber Musician Program; the Resident Opera Artist Program, whereby we give young professional singers coaching and performance opportunities; and OPERAtion Imagination, which takes a small troupe into area schools to introduce the rich context and "machinery" of opera to the audiences of the future.

It would take a small book to describe and properly honor all the wonderful people who have participated in the Festival up till now. "You know who you are!" And so do the audience members for whom the Festival is so important. "I couldn't live without it," said one patron. Well, the Festival has every intention of honoring the past and building a great future.

Unique Karl Haas Benefit Event

On April 22, 2010, at 7:30 PM in the Forest Roberts Theatre at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, the Festival will sponsor an exciting benefit called *Generation to Generation: A Musical Tribute to Karl Haas*. Karl Haas was the voice of classical music for decades on his syndicated radio show, "Adventures in Good Music."

Jeff Haas, son of Karl Haas, has arranged some of his father's favorite classical works for his trio, and then takes the compositions into an improvisational realm. Mendelssohn, Debussy, Beethoven are represented, as well as classic jazz by Gershwin, Irving Berlin and others – a truly unique event!

Tickets \$30 (students/children \$15), available at Arts & Cultural Center Gift Shop at Peter White Library, and at the door. Invite your friends, make it a party!

Festival Preparing Premiere Of New Opera *Rockland*

In 1906, in the copper mining town of Rockland, near Ontonagon in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, there was a strike over wages and working conditions by a group of Finnish miners. There was a confrontation with sheriff's deputies, and gunfire, and two miners were killed.



The incident received much publicity at the time but was then largely lost to history. However, one miner wrote a first-hand account, and that is the basis for a new opera called *Rockland* which the Festival will premiere at the Rozsa Center in Houghton in July 2011 (yes, 2011). The libretto is by Jussi Tapola, a prominent stage director at Finnish National Opera, and the composer is Jukka Linkola, a well-known Finnish composer of operas, musical theater, and other works.

The Festival held a press conference on January 27, 2010, to start building public awareness of this major event. We are now raising money for the production. The opera will be sung in English and Finnish, with English surtitles. There will be a substantial orchestra in the pit, about 45 players. You can read more about *Rockland* at www.pmmf.org.

In support of the opera, community artist Mary Wright has launched "The Story Line Project." People are invited to write the story of an ancestor who faced adversity, like the characters in the opera. These stories are transferred to cloth panels for display on "clotheslines." Several schools have already participated in a big way. Later on, a dedicated website will make all these stories available to a wide audience.

Festival staff are excited to be bringing to life this nearly-universal story of people trying to improve their lot in the face of hardship, and a dramatization of the history of the area in which we live. Stay tuned for more news!

Keweenaw Gala and Auction

Please mark your calendar for what will surely be a landmark event in Festival history and a highlight of your social year – a Keweenaw Gala and Auction on September 11, 2010, in Houghton. Stay tuned, and watch www.pmmf.org.

Introducing Our 2010 Resident Opera Artists

—Lucy Thrasher, Program Director



Each year, Joshua Major and Lucy Thrasher (pictured at left) audition young singers for various roles at the Festival. This year we received well over 400 applications, of whom over 200 were auditioned in Ann Arbor and New York. – Ed.

Jessica Rose Cambio: The term “resident opera artist” is most appropriate this season, because these singers are not “young artists” but rather emerging professionals in the field of opera.



This is especially true of Ms. Cambio, our Violetta. *La Traviata* is Violetta’s story, start to finish, and one builds a cast around her. Jessica (who recently sang Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the American

Vocal Academy, with Artistic Director Joshua Major directing) is already blossoming as a singer on the national scene. She was a National Semi-Finalist in the 2009 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and has sung in Italy and St. Petersburg, Russia. She sang a beautiful audition, with a stunning top voice, easy fioratura, playful manner and gorgeous musical details, including fantastic pianissimo dynamics and excellent Italian. This is a singer to watch and we are very lucky she will be with us in the U.P. this summer.



Bernard Holcomb: Bernard is returning for a second summer with PMMF. Bernard’s ringing tenor voice has gotten a full workout this past season with Sarasota Opera! His voice has taken on additional color and “ping” and his musicality and

expression, as always, are forthright, honest and grounded. The role of Alfredo, Violetta’s impetuous lover, will be a great match for Bernard’s energy, enthusiasm and love of singing. Alfredo needs to sweep Violetta off her feet, and Bernard has the voice and manner to do just that.



Cathleen Candia: We heard several wonderful mezzos who would have been perfect for the role of Flora, Violetta’s friend and fellow Parisian glamour girl, but Cathleen Candia from southern California simply captured us in her audition. Maestro

Joe Mechavich was with us the day Ms. Candia sang, and he asked her at the start of her audition, “What will you enchant us with?” and she managed to enchant us with her colorful voice, pitch perfect rendition of “Smanie” from *Così fan tutte*, fantastic acting choices and racy black lace tights!



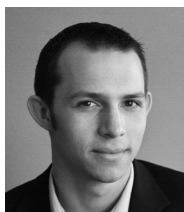
Leah Edmondson Dyer: Our second soprano for the season, performing the role of Annina, Violetta’s maid, doesn’t have many lines to sing in the opera, but is on stage with Violetta constantly and is a crucial actor in the drama. One desires

an open, supportive presence in the actress performing this role, and Leah Dyer was completely “in it” as an actress in the three selections we heard her sing in her audition. She gave one of the most thoughtful and accurate - from the libretto - interpretations of Musetta’s waltz from *La Bohème* that I have ever heard in performance. She then made a complete character and vocal shift for her musical theater selection, and was funny and quirky and absolutely delightful!



Jeffrey Taveras: Jeffrey will be singing the role of Gastone in our production of *Traviata*, but I predict he will be singing the tenor lead role of Alfredo the next time he is cast in this opera! This expressive young singer demonstrated

easy, musical phrasing and great instincts, vocally speaking. He is a smart and polished performer and has an energetic stage presence. He is from Long Island, New York, and is currently studying at Boston University for his master’s degree in vocal performance.



Brian Pettey: Cast as the Marquis, baritone Brian Pettey has a strong, ringing voice that has a very resonant sound. When he sang for us, the room around us rang in an unusual way! He’s a Texan who exudes a friendly, likable

presence on stage and off, and sings with great use of text and expression. (Do you sense a theme here? I guess we like musically expressive singers who take great care with text!)

Continued on next page

Introducing Our 2010 Resident Chamber Musicians



We are pleased to welcome two ensembles to participate in our Resident Chamber Musicians (RCM) program. **"Duo Piacevole,"** an engaging and vibrant violin/cello duo from Lansing, will be joining us and will bring an intimate and varied repertoire with them. Both are graduates of Michigan State, and they have been playing together for the past two years.

The **"Belden Piano Quartet"** from California, will get their first taste of Lake Superior and the Upper Peninsula this summer. This dynamic ensemble has a repertoire that includes Mozart, Schubert, Brahms, and more. Both of these accomplished groups will bring dynamic and joyful music making to our communities!

2010 ROAS (Cont'd from previous page)



Branden Hood: Branden is a strong-voiced baritone. When he performed the ending of the "Count's Aria," he sang an impressive, robust high G! He is singing the role of the Baron, who is a bit of a hothead in *La Traviata*, and with Branden's physicality and power, we will have no trouble believing that he could hurt someone. Yet he showed a completely different character in his musical theater selection, with beautiful, tender singing.



Alexander Scopino: Our resident bass for the summer comes to us directly from an opera residency with Opera Colorado. Alexander is a true bass, with a resonant deep voice and great acting energy. As the Doctor, he will be a stalwart and sympathetic presence for Violetta in her last hours, and a terrific anchor to the combined vocal ensemble singing.

Stephen Hargreaves, Conductor



Stephen Hargreaves, conductor for *La Traviata*, is both a conductor and a piano and harpsichord soloist. As a conductor, he has appeared with Chicago Opera Theater, Opera Omaha, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and other companies. As soloist, he has appeared many places, from Green Bay to Santa Fe to Macau. This is his debut season with PMMF.

Vibrant 2010 Season

(Cont'd from page 1)

Returning for the 16th year are our friends in the Bergonzi String Quartet. They will be the featured musicians in *The Diaries of Adam and Eve* and will be joined by Evan Premo to present the world premiere of his string quintet. They will also present an exciting evening of their own, featuring the music of Shostakovich, Beethoven and Debussy. Also returning is the graceful piano playing of Ralph Votapek. It will be exciting to welcome him back to help us celebrate our 20th anniversary.

We welcome back Stas Venglevski, with his quartet, to lead us in an evening of Tango, featuring the music of Piazzolla. We continue to bring some of the nation's finest young chamber musicians to the area and will feature them in their own concerts and in the opera orchestra.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of our staff and volunteers. They are the engine that drives this beautiful Festival. However, it is you, our patrons, who must be thanked the most for giving us the support and opportunity to continue our work. It is for you that our passion and commitment regenerates itself year after year. I look forward to seeing you all in the concert hall this summer.

Noted Baritone Joins Production



We are pleased to announce that baritone Eric Greene will be singing the role of Germont in our production of *La Traviata*. He is not one of our Resident Opera Artists, but a guest artist who will join them in the role of

Alfredo's father. He is a dynamic singer and has sung for the San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera and many other regional and international opera companies. His experience and warm voice will be a great addition to our season.

2010 Season Events All events at 7:30 PM, unless otherwise noted.	Dickinson Area	Keweenaw Area	Marquette Area	Other Locations
Keweenaw Kickoff Gala		June 16 (6 PM)		
Chippewa Club Gala	June 17 (5 PM)			
Jerome Kern & Irving Berlin in Revue	June 20 (3 PM)	June 24	June 21	June 22 - Escanaba June 25 - Ironwood
In the Beginning . . .	June 23	June 26	June 25	
Bergonzi String Quartet	June 30	July 2	June 28	
RCM Master Class with Bergonzi		July 3 (3 PM)		
4 th of July Concert		July 4		
A Night of Tango!	July 9	July 7	July 6	
An Evening of Art Song		July 9		
Resident Chamber Musicians	July 14	July 17	July 7	June 30 - Ontonagon July 1 - Ironwood July 5 - Escanaba July 6 - Munising
Ralph Votapek Piano Recital		July 14	July 11	
<i>La Traviata</i>	July 15	July 18 (3 PM)	July 13	

Call the Rozsa Center Box Office (877-746-3999) or visit www.pmmf.org • Ticket brochures will be mailed in April

Introducing Board Members

Several people have joined the Board of Trustees since our last article introducing Board members:

Ellen Bechthold, a resident of Chicago and Florence (WI) is a retired vice president at a major Chicago bank.

Candace Koski Janners is a U.P. native, a Keweenaw resident, a Registered Nurse and an accomplished pianist.

Sigurds Janners was born in Latvia, and grew up near New York City. He is now a physician in Hancock.

Bette Premo, Ph.D., is a scientist and owner of the environmental consulting firm White Water Associates, Inc. in Amasa MI. She plays viola with Keweenaw and Marquette Symphony Orchestras and is part of the White Water family band.

Steve Soltis, our Treasurer, is a retired township manager, construction project manager and registered land surveyor. He lives in Iron Mountain.

Daniel Truckey is Director/Curator of the Beaumier Upper Peninsula Heritage Center at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, and is the coordinator for the NMU International Performing Arts Series.

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OPERation Imagination Update

—Ann Campbell

As many of you who receive this newsletter know, Pine Mountain Music Festival has an outreach/education arm called OPERation Imagination. It consists of a trio of singers; Gregory Campbell, Charles White and myself; and our “orchestra,” Susan Rokicki, pianist. Last season we were pleased to add two “Young Artists” to our program and were joined by Katie Zutter and Megan Plis, both gifted college freshmen.



OPERation Imagination presents a program of opera scenes (different each year) to school age audiences to introduce them to opera as a musical and art form. We also include some audience participation numbers in each program, and students love to grab a prop or costume piece and join us on whatever

“stage” is provided for the performance. Several weeks after the school performances, we conduct an Opera Workshop with enrolled participants. Those participants get to write, stage, and perform an opera scene. In some years we have performed at 19 schools for nearly 4,000 students and have done three workshops with groups of 15 students. Last year and this season, however, our grant funding and donations declined, and we had to scale back to five schools and one

workshop. We hope to restore those other underserved schools when funding becomes available.

Last year’s programs were well received by students from ages 3 – 18. Yes, that’s age three and NOT grade three. We had a preschool group join us at Barkell Elementary School in Hancock. They sat, entranced, with folded hands and watched the whole performance. When our “Young Artists,” Katie and Megan, presented the Evening Prayer scene from Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, several of those three- and four-year-olds were drafted to wear tinsel halos and serve as the guardian angels in the forest. There wasn’t a dry eye in the house! Opera tells great stories in such a beautiful way that all of us can enjoy and understand them. We love helping to build future opera audiences through this outstanding program.

Paying the Piper

There is a close correlation between Friends donations and the health of the Festival, since Friends donations are the single biggest source of our revenue. Here is a remittance slip you can use to make a donation.

You might like to make a donation *in memory of* a deceased relative or friend or *in honor of* someone living. Just include a note, and please give us the name and address of someone to inform about your gift. Gifts or pledges received by early May will be recognized in the 2010 concert program. **Thank you!**

Support Pine Mountain Music Festival

To: Pine Mountain Music Festival
PO Box 406, Hancock MI 49930

Date _____

Enclosed is my/our donation of \$ _____

Check

VISA or M/C # _____ Exp. Date _____ Signature _____

I/We pledge to pay \$ _____ in _____ equal installments starting _____ (must conclude by 9/30/10).

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Galas to Launch Season

Festival patrons have a special treat to look forward to—two gala benefit events to open our 2010 season.

The featured entertainment at both galas will be the eight Resident Opera Artists, performing with piano accompaniment – a good opportunity to get acquainted with the singers who later will bring us the Jerome Kern-Irving Berlin Revue and the art song concert and will sing in the opera, *La Traviata*. Both events will be hosted by Lucy Thrasher and Joshua Major.

The Keweenaw Kickoff Gala will be near Houghton in a private residence on Portage Canal on June 16 at 6:00 p.m. A full gourmet dinner will be served, and tickets are \$125. It will be an evening to remember!

The second event will be the Chippewa Club Gala in Iron Mountain on June 17 beginning at 5:00 p.m. with a social hour, and will include an elegant dinner. Tickets are \$75.

These opening galas in the past have been described as fun, lively, ebullient, delightful, delicious, charming, exciting – just think of a complimentary adjective, and it applies! We hope to see you there! Tickets available from the Rozsa Center box office, tel. 877-746-3999, starting April 12.

Adopt a Resident Opera Artist or a Resident Chamber Music Ensemble

For several years, we have offered you the opportunity to “adopt” a Resident Opera Artist, one of our young singers. For a shared adoption at \$1,000 or a full adoption at \$3,000, you receive complimentary opera tickets and other benefits. You get to choose your adoptee, and who knows, you may form a long-lasting friendship. See page 4 for introduction to these talented people.

We also offer an opportunity to “adopt” a Resident Chamber Musician ensemble. This year we will have two ensembles with us, as described on page 5.

You may adopt an entire ensemble with a \$2,000 donation. Your benefits include complimentary tickets to a master class and a private reception.

Please call the Festival office at 906-482-1542 or 888-309-7861 to learn more about the benefits that adopters receive. It’s simple! Past adopters have expressed delight at getting to know the artists, and the artists tell us that the new friendships formed in this way are very meaningful for them.



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