From the Editor

Shock and Awe in Vienna

So hot was the afternoon that we girls mostly waited just out on the lawn outside the Orangerie Hall at Schönbrunn Palace. The orchestra, beginning to warm up, was stored with humid air thrumming from rotating fans. Our floating black gowns and jackets brooked no air, we laughingly called them our ‘petroleum’ gowns, never a wrinkle, but never a breath either. The men strode in their tuxes restlessly around and through the several open doors to the terrace and lawn. The air seemed electrically charged with the anticipation of performing Mozart in the exact same hall where the “Master” himself presided some 230 years before.

The call came to line up and process onstage just behind the orchestra. Looking out at the audience, we were surprised to see a nearly full hall. Maestro William Skoog, conductor and choral director, strode to the podium and spoke briefly to the audience and orchestra. Baton held high, he began with a flourish. The Mozart Requiem is comprised of 12 sections. The first begins with the bass followed by tenor, alto and soprano. The work is full of difficult fugues and ends with a somewhat slower pace (we sang the bass followed by tenor, alto and soprano. The soloists of the third section, I chanced to spot me full view of the audience. Sometime during the solos of the third section, I chanced to spot

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I stood downstream and slightly left, allowing me full view of the audience. Sometime during the solos of the third section, I chanced to spot a friend of mine, Associate Professor at the Medical University of Ohio in Toledo, Carlos Baptista, M.D., Ph.D., wandering in with his friend and colleague Susan Batten, Ph.D., R.N. and associate dean of Nursing at MUO. They sat with a somewhat slower pace (we sang the bass followed by tenor, alto and soprano. The soloists of the third section, I chanced to spot me full view of the audience. Sometime during the solos of the third section, I chanced to spot

2006 University Choral Society Summer European Tour

Dr. William Skoog: The European trip in summer 2006 was extraordinary for these students. It gave them opportunities to see many parts of the world experience directly other cultures and languages, sing with an European orchestra in major European concert halls such as Prague and Vienna, and to sing in Salzburg for Mozart’s 250th birthday. Such an education extends beyond books and lectures, and brings them to life. I would define this as a life-changing, eye-opening experience and one that they will value for the rest of their lives. They grew personally and professionally, one could see it happen.

Timothy J. Bruno: The Moravian Symphony Orchestra was amazing. They were talented musicians who knew how to unify sections of string or bass. Performing with them taught me not only how to project, but how to deal with nerves.

Christopher Bruck: I learned that Europeans like challenges. One I decided to try for myself. I climbed up a 6,000 ft. mountain at the edge of Salzburg. It took me four hours. One older Austrian passed me on the way up and on the way down!

Joshua Franklin: Perhaps the highlight of the tour for me was the opportunity to conduct the orchestra and choir. I learned a great deal through conducting a full orchestra and it helped me to grow in my understanding of conducting.

Ellen Gartner: Through this trip I learned how to be a part of a “professional” group. A collective group of musicians, speaking different languages, was still able to create beautiful music that moves the soul.

Elizabeth Hanson: Memories of such events and moments on stage were ones I shall never forget. My appetite for performance has increased and my desire to return to Europe is stronger than ever.

Amanda Lovitt: Thanks to Pro Musica, I was able to experience the Czech and Austrian cultures, histories and life through the international language of music.

Jacqueline Nemeth: On our bus travel to Salzburg we stopped at two abbeys. The first was the Mondsee, where the wedding scene was filmed for The Sound of Music. Second was the giant monastery of Melk, where we were able to sing a short recital under the grand organ that Mozart played as a child.

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Profiles In Pedagogy

Myra D. Merritt

Maestro James Levine, music director of the Metropolitan Opera, learned forward in his chair, his face riveted to hers, and asked her to sing again. Having stood throughout the day, waiting with others to audition for the Met, tired and sore to be the second from the last performer, she had just finished singing “Musetta’s Waltz” from Puccini’s La Bohème.

Myra was instantly charmed. Myra’s Met debut was as the Shepherd Boy in Richard Strauss’ Sortileges. Her eyes, fringed and beautiful, opened large. She decided to sing the difficult but theatrical “Fire Aria” from Maurice Ravel’s L’enfant et les Sirenettes (The Child and the Enchantments). Levine was immediately charmed.

Myra was born in Washington, D.C. and was a lover of dolls for which she invented plays, each choreographed with a different character in the orchestra. She grew up a devoted Christian and even to this day makes a strong point saying, “Faith in God is the fulcrum of my life, be it performing, teaching or living.” She and her mother sang in the church choir.

In the ninth grade, Myra began voice lessons. She rode the bus with her friend to her teacher George Harshaw. He took her to this advice, entered local vocal competitions and won awards.

Following high school, Myra was accepted to the Peabody Conservatory of Music where she studied under the tutelage of Madame Flora Wend, a Flemish teacher from Paris whose father, Otto Wend, was a renowned conductor. Her eyes, fringed and beautiful, opened large. She decided to sing the difficult but theatrical “Fire Aria” from Maurice Ravel’s L’enfant et les Sirenettes (The Child and the Enchantments). Levine was immediately charmed.

Myra graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education, but the master’s degree wasn’t her proudest moment. She rode the bus with her friend to her teacher George Harshaw. He took her to this advice, entered local vocal competitions and won awards.

After 11 years Myra decided to try teaching and in solo competition I placed fourth over-all. The piece of music we had to play was “Porgy and Bess”. Once again, thank you for your support.

Fancy singing under the baton of notable conductors Sarah Caldwell, Julius Rudel, Placido Domingo and the musically brilliant James Levine (to name a few). But how did this all come to be?

Myra was born in Washington, D.C., the youngest of three children. The beautiful little rose peeping out last in her family became a lover of dolls for which she invented plays, each doll included in the plot. Myra spent hours rehearsing every part, every character. Each was imbued with charm, wit, pretentiousness, willy-nilly and singing,成本和 ready, she herself performed all, changed all, wrote and invented all. Even at this early age she was combining voice with drama.

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