

musical
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SPECIAL REPORTS

December 2012

The number '2012' is rendered in a bold, hand-painted style. The '2' is green, the '0' is blue, the '1' is pink, and the '2' is yellow. The numbers are surrounded by numerous small, colorful splatters in shades of green, blue, pink, and yellow, creating a dynamic and artistic effect.

THE YEAR
in the PERFORMING
ARTS INDUSTRY

A Look Back, A Peek Ahead

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Each article in this issue is also found on our website, MusicalAmerica.com, in the [Special Reports](#) section.

Introduction

Whew. What a year. One orchestra emerges from bankruptcy while others struggle to function within outdated models; one hugely expensive *Ring* cycle is declared the disaster of the century, while another far less pricey one triumphs. Music's efficacy as more than just food for the soul is proven by a neuroscientist using pitch and rhythm to help an autistic child speak for the first time. El Sistema spreads like the best of wildfires to turn an entire generation of disadvantaged youngsters into mini virtuosos and confident, up-standing citizens.

Our *Year in the Performing Arts Industry* actually covers about 16 months—from the beginning of the 2011–12 season up through the end of November 2012. Nancy Malitz touches on the major [News Milestones](#) (some of which are mentioned above), while Wynne Delacoma canvases music critics in each of the major markets to discover some [Truly Inspired Ideas](#) your colleagues have come up with. My personal favorite is the St. Louis Symphony's hook-up with the St. Louis Cardinals, complete with Music Director David Robertson and the orchestra prominently displayed in a video on the ball field's huge scoreboard playing *Meet Me in St. Louis*.

Four newsmakers get special attention: [Peter Gelb](#) and [Francesca Zambello](#) from the realm of opera; [Damian Woetzel](#), retired ballet principal turned international dance impresario; and [John Smith](#), head of both the Musicians Union and the Federation of Entertainment Unions in the U.K.

Heidi Waleson has interviewed some of the industry's best and brightest to come up with [A Few Predictions for 2022](#). Among her tea-leaf readers: an orchestra CEO, recordings producer, journalist, conservatory president, opera impresario, and media specialist. Among the constant threads are the emergence of musicians as entrepreneurs and the increase of new and off-beat venues, not to mention the use of the web for everything from streaming music, live or recorded, to virally aimed marketing tactics.

No annual review would be complete without its own best-of-worst-of list, and the [First Annual JJ Opera Awards](#) are evenly split between the serious (James Levine's planned come back as "Most Important News Story") and the no-so-serious (a certain mezzo-soprano as "Egg-on-Her-Face Diva of the Decade.")

We hope you enjoy, and to those of you who responded to our recent survey, keep those cards and letters coming!

Regards,

Susan Elliott
Editor, Special Reports



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in 2012

NEWSMAKER

Damian Woetzel

By Rachel Straus

from ballet superstar to dance impresario



“Since his 2008 retirement, the former City Ballet principal dancer is everywhere. He’s a networking tour de force. He’s even plugged in at the White House.”

Yet the international visibility of Damian Woetzel, whose Americana-style charisma won him accolades for two decades performing with the New York City Ballet, is now spreading into other areas.

Since his 2008 retirement, the former principal dancer has secured myriad prestigious positions: director of the [Aspen Institute Arts Program](#); artistic director of the [Vail International Dance Festival](#); founding director of the Jerome Robbins Foundation’s [New Essential Works](#) (NEW) program; curator/director of the [Studio 5](#) performance series at New York City Center; arts educator in Yo-Yo Ma’s [Silk Road Connect](#) project.

He’s a networking tour de force, serving on the boards of New York City Center, The Clive Barnes Foundation, and The Sphinx organization. He also is on the Kennedy Center Honors and the Knight Foundation’s National Arts advisory committees.

Woetzel is even plugged in at the White House. He was on the President’s 2009 Committee on the Arts and Humanities. In September 2010, he directed the first White House Dance series, presenting well-traveled works by Alvin Ailey, George Balanchine, Paul Taylor, and Twyla Tharp in the East Room. To round out all the pre-1982 choreography, he enlisted break dancers Super Cr3w and had Dayton Tavares perform his solo, “Electricity,” from *Billy Elliot the Musical*.

Woetzel’s smarts, stamina, and ambition certainly account

for his continued rise. But so do his connections. His late father, Robert K. Woetzel, was a legal scholar who spearheaded the creation of the International Criminal Court. His brother, Jonathan Woetzel, is the director of McKinsey & Company’s office in greater China. Surely that factored into Woetzel’s three-day, invitation-only [U.S.-China Forum on Arts and Culture](#). His co-organizers were his Aspen Institute boss Elliot Gersen, who knew Damian from his City Ballet days, and Orville Schell, Asia Society’s Director of the Center on U.S.-China Relations, whose late father was a City Ballet board chairman.

At the Beijing conference, Woetzel reprised *The Swan*, the hit event of the 2011 Aspen International Dance Festival, which he has directed since 2006. It involved the unlikely pairing of Yo-Yo Ma and Charles “Lil Buck” Riley, a Juke dancer. In Beijing, Lil Buck’s fluid-style of break dancing and Yo-Yo Ma’s potent interpretation of the Saint-Saëns favorite created “[cultural mayhem](#),” Woetzel declared at the 2012 Aspen Ideas Festival. His decision to have an African-American street dancer and the world’s most famous Chinese-American cellist collaborate on a classic ballet score (read, “high art”) is just the kind of mash-up that brings joy to the cockles of arts educators’ and cultural diplomats’ hearts.

Last July, Woetzel received the inaugural Gene Kelly Legacy Award from Kelly’s widow. Like Kelly, Woetzel wants dance to be embraced by a diverse public. Helping him do that is wife Heather Watts, also a former New York City Ballet dancer, who posts his accomplishments on Facebook.

Woetzel’s remarkable ascent is the result of chutzpah, connections, and impresario-like instincts for directing dance programs that make a splash. He may not be getting rich—this is dance, after all—but he certainly seems to be today’s mover and shaker in the dance world.

RACHEL STRAUS

Rachel Straus, [MusicalAmerica.com](#)’s dance critic, teaches dance history at The Juilliard School and is a Scholar in Residence at Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival.

2012 News

Milestones

The Year 2012 saw some game-changing developments in the performing arts industry. We reported all of them in real time on MusicalAmerica.com, but here's a quick review and status update on each.

By Nancy Malitz

1. Streaming music, with 40 percent revenue spike, becomes fastest-growing digital format

A sea-change has occurred in the way a younger generation acquires its music—a steady progression away from the CD mirrored in the death last year of Norio Ohga, the former president and chairman of Sony who spearheaded the company's development of the silver digital disc. BBC News reported that while CDs and vinyl LPs still account for 61 percent of global recording sales, on-demand streaming became the [fastest growing music delivery method](#) in 2012 with a 40 percent jump in revenue.

At issue: In this whirling new world, the familiar old format wars have returned. The battle lines are being drawn among providers of media players with download “stores” for building private libraries (such as iTunes), services offering temporary access to millions of music audio files on demand, either fee-free with ads, or ad-free with a fee (such as Spotify), and a webcast counterpart for live concerts and videos (such as Medici.tv). The digital platforms include mobile

phones, game consoles, laptops and Internet TV. As Denise McGovern, digital sales manager for Universal Music told Musical America, labels today not only consider digital sales a top priority but often issue digital-only recordings. Music streaming service Spotify added 5 million users in the first nine months of 2012, according to [Bloomberg](#).

Current status: Many classical music institutions are cutting innovative distribution deals (Berlin Philharmonic concert streams will be available on Sony's Internet-enabled TVs). Still, it remains to

be seen how musicians will profit from the transition to streaming. Cellist Zoë Keating, who sells downloads and CDs on her web site and through other distributors, says she thinks Spotify is “awesome as a discovery platform” but that its low royalties mean it's no replacement for digital and physical sales: she earned \$281.87 for songs that were played 72,800 times, and [does far better with iTunes and Amazon](#).



At the same time, piracy is rampant, further threatening potential revenue. In London alone, in the first half of 2012, more than 7 million files [were downloaded illegally](#), according to the Digital Music Index produced by the monitoring service Musicmetric. “It is having a significant effect on investment in new music,” Geoff Taylor, chief executive of U.K. music industry body the BPI, told BBC News. “That remains our serious concern.”



Zoë Keating, cellist

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2. El Sistema goes international

As practiced in its pristine Venezuelan form, El Sistema brings [music training to every child](#), starting at age 2. The high regard in which El Sistema is held was reflected in poet-songsmith Leonard Cohen's decision [to give his 2012 Glenn Gould Prize](#) of \$15,000 to the Toronto program modeled on Venezuela's project.

At issue: El Sistema founder José Antonio Abreu [and Musical



Big Noise/Sistema Scotland



Big Noise, Big Concert, Sistema Scotland

America's Educator of the Year] likes to call Venezuela's legions of young practitioners his musical children. Not even Abreu could have predicted that he would become a global godfather, and perhaps superhero, to kids involved in a swelling roster of programs adapted from El Sistema. Recent additions include a [South Korean orchestra](#) for students 11 to 21 years old who have defected from North Korea and a program created for [disadvantaged children in Scotland](#).

Current status: The worldwide celebrity of El Sistema alum Gustavo Dudamel, music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and [Musical America's 2013 Musician of the Year](#), affords a rallying point to any country or community that might commit to such a program for the benefit of its own youth. Says Sir Simon Rattle, music director of the Berliner Philharmoniker, quoted on the [El Sistema USA web site](#): "If anybody asked me where there is something really important going on for the future of classical music, I would simply have to say here, in Venezuela. . . I have seen the future of music in Venezuela and that is a resurrection."

3. Brussels Philharmonic sheds paper and pencil for Samsung's tablet and stylus

The music industry [in November](#) signaled its readiness to test whether digital hardware and software is a viable replacement for the sheet music that orchestra musicians, composers, conductors, and music librarians rely upon. Under scrutiny is an entire gamut of issues related to the real-time needs of a hundred virtuosos performing at a high level of synchrony.



At issue: [The Brussels Philharmonic](#), founded in 2002 is dedicated to musicians early in their careers, much like the New World Symphony in the U.S. Relatively young and digitally savvy, the players seem ideal for what amounts to a lab test while the world watches. The flexibility of the open-source ["neoScores" software](#),



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installed on the [GALAXY Note 10.1 tablets](#), will test publishers' copyright concerns. And the announcement marks a new volley in the Android-Apple wars—the iPad is popular among pianists and [chamber musicians](#).



Current status: The greater orchestra world will be asking: Can the stylus and tablet beat pencil and paper for rehearsal annotations on the fly? Improve the logistics of page-turning in performance with finger or foot taps? Match century-old traditions of library storage and preservation? Assure toughness of the hardware on tour, glitch-free software in the concert hall? Techie musicians [have a lot of questions](#).

The biggest hurdle may be that 10-inch screen—large by Kindle standards, but a lot smaller than the typical double-page paper spread. A composer in the [Sibelius.com forum](#) parries, “*Gurrelieder* on a handkerchief!” Brussels’s riposte awaits.

4. Medical researchers use music to revive dormant brain pathways

At an [August symposium sponsored by the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival](#), brain researchers, musicians, and music therapists—who don’t normally interact much—revealed breakthroughs and discoveries that left the 200 attendees gobsmacked.

A star of the event (called “[Music, the Brain and Wellness: A Scientific Dialogue](#)”) was Harvard Medical School neuroscientist



Gottfried Schlaug, who presented a video of a mute autistic boy, age five, being guided through a series of pitch and rhythm exercises (called auditory-motor mapping training). After about ten sessions, the boy utter “bubbles” —his first words, ever.



Schlaug is a musician himself and the author of *The Brain of Musicians: A Model for Functional and Structural Adaptation*. He has also co-authored [many tracts](#) such as this one about overlapping brain functions and the use of auditory stimulation techniques to help with tone-deafness, aphasia, and recovery from stroke. In a conference filled with surprises, *Wall Street Journal*’s Stuart Isacoff cited other “[mind-bending](#)” moments.

Current status: While music-related neuroscience is just getting started, music’s effectiveness as a tool to revive or increase the brain’s capacity has long been intuited by musicians and music-lovers. This conference, which organizers say will happen every other year, was a key step in providing the scientific proof of music’s efficacy in healing and learning.

5. Universal Music Acquires EMI in \$1.9B deal, becomes largest music label

Shrinking competition in the recording market ratcheted down again when Universal Music Group succeeded in acquiring [core assets of EMI](#). UMG’s move reduced the number of competing major record labels to three. Only Sony Music and Warner now rival Universal (owned by French media giant Vivendi).



Karajan’s complete Beethoven symphonies on EMI.

At issue: With Universal now controlling some 40 percent of the U.S. market, artists will have fewer big-distribution options in shopping their music. UMG also stands to [gain significant leverage](#) over licensing agreements and

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Gautier Capuçon concertos with Valery Gergiev and Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra.

new platforms. Meanwhile, European regulatory requirements that forced Universal to unload two prominent classical labels—EMI Classics and Virgin Classics—will put those labels into market play.

Current status: Sony, Naxos, and Bertelsmann subsidiary BMG all are [said to have potential interest](#) in acquiring EMI Classics, whose vaults hold treasured recordings by the likes of Herbert von Karajan, Maria Callas, and Jacqueline du Pré as well as artists of great currency such as composer Thomas Adès and conductor Simon Rattle. Virgin Classics has a distinguished period performance catalogue and a lively contemporary roster that includes countertenor David Daniels and the brothers Renaud and Gautier Capuçon. The market realignment may not become clear for months as Universal proceeds with consolidation and top bidders emerge for the classical labels. A September memo from EMI's then-chairman Roger Faxon informed the company's employees that the label sell-off might not be concluded until mid-2013.

6. Philadelphia Orchestra emerges from bankruptcy in a season of general retrenchment for American orchestras

Despite [widespread fiscal 2012 deficits](#), endowment raids, pay and benefit cuts for musicians, fewer weeks of work, and the shrinking of orchestral rosters, most cities don't appear willing to



ditch their orchestras, and some, like hard-pressed Detroit, are [on the arts upswing](#).

In emerging from 15 months of Chapter 11 bankruptcy, the

Philadelphia Orchestra must top its usual fund-raising by an extra \$25 million in the next 12 months and by \$45 million over next four years to stay afloat. A daunting prospect, but the incentive seems to be there: New music director Yannick Nézet-Séguin capped his first subscription concerts with his new Philly band by taking it to Carnegie Hall, where the *New York Times* critic James R. Oestreich said the "[great orchestra . . . has seldom sounded greater](#)."

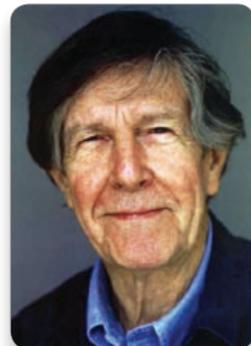
At issue: Months of bad news stories raised [concerns that the trend was self-perpetuating](#), leaving industry leaders anxious to get out good news stories such as [Houston Symphony's five-year plan](#), launched in April 2010, which was still on track in 2012 with record-breaking funding efforts.

Still, it was a very tough year, with [a lockout in Atlanta](#), followed by [a management shakeup](#); a lockout that ended amidst continuing financial [uncertainty in Indianapolis](#); and dark months in both [Minneapolis](#) and [Saint Paul](#), where October lockouts were extended through the end of the year. There were [other stalemates](#) also.

Current status: Although no orchestra was left unscathed by the Great Recession, the worst beatings have been taken in the second and third tiers, where boom-time construction projects and ambitious artistic expansion created new debt atop shaky business models. The [proposed cuts](#) on the table in Minnesota—salaries reduced from \$135,000 to \$89,000 with additional benefit cuts valued at \$30,000—are nearly as draconian as those accepted by Detroit musicians to keep their orchestra afloat. Meanwhile, fiscal 2011 operating deficits were recently reported in many orchestras including Baltimore (\$750,000), Chicago (\$1.3 million), and Pittsburgh (\$3.5 million). Nobody's out of the woods yet.

7. Cage turns 100, Carter dies: The shifting definition of "art" music

The rigorous argument of Elliott Carter's works and natural inclusiveness of John Cage's explorations changed the way we think about and listen to music. Cage, who died in 1992 and whose music enjoyed a yearlong global centennial celebra-



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Elliott Carter, June 2012. Photo: Meredith Heuser/Boosey & Hawkes.

tion in 2012, “wanted to discard inherited structures, open doors to the exterior world, ‘let sounds be just sounds,’” wrote Alex Ross in *The New Yorker*. Carter on the other hand, wrote Ivan Hewett in *the Guardian* upon the composer’s death in November at age 103, had no interest in “sounds of the moment. . . He wanted a modernism beyond fashion, rooted in a new kind of syntax, and to achieve that some European sophistication would be necessary.”

At issue: Cage’s influence was extremely far-reaching, well beyond music into the art, modern dance, and pop realms, and in turn he was influenced by Zen Buddhism, “I Ching,” astronomical charts, the musical possibilities inherent in indeterminacy and in silence itself. Cage would have been amused by [a piece that Allan Kozinn wrote](#) in August upon realizing that he had immersed himself in a subway remix of 4’33.”

Meanwhile Carter remained mentally sharp into his 103rd year. When Alisa Weilerstein visited him in July to play and discuss his [cello concerto](#), which she recently recorded, the composer followed along with the score and a magnifying glass, interrupting her in merry exchanges. ([see video](#))



Current status: Carter still has a world premiere in the offing—a 12-minute orchestral work, *Instances*, [in February 2013](#) with Ludovic Morlot and the Seattle Symphony.

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8. Metropolitan Opera completes Lepage Ring cycle

Robert Lepage’s concept for the *Ring* cycle, involving a [45-ton computer-driven shape-shifter](#) that came to be called “the machine,” signaled General Manager Peter Gelb’s determination that the Met be at the forefront in tapping the latest technology for opera production, [as he had done for opera in cinematic HD](#).

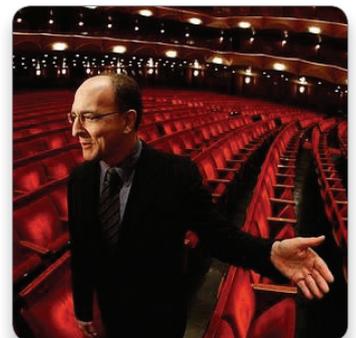


Lepage at the European premiere of Cirque du Soleil’s *Totem* in Amsterdam, October 2010/ Courtesy Wikipedia.



Photo: Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera 2011.

At issue: Although Gelb generally gets credit for helping the Met take risks for art’s sake, the new *Ring*’s alleged \$16 million price tag was an issue from the start. [Gelb took it on the chin](#) when criticisms were leveled at Lepage for failing to engage Richard Wagner’s aesthetic at its most profound. And the machine, in its 1.0 version, [crashed and groaned](#) to acute Met embarrassment. The French Canadian’s staging also missed opportunities to conjure up beloved Wagner fancies that any self-respecting 21st-century machine should be capable of (Alberich as a frog, Brünnhilde’s horse, the end of the world).



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Current status: Ten years from now, Lepage's *Ring Cycle* may be remembered not so much for what it isn't, as for what it foretold. The idea of a computer-driven, morphing central apparatus that utilizes the latest integrated digital technologies, and can be employed in a variety of productions, makes sense for a lot of opera companies. Not at \$16 million, of course. But DVD players, which once cost \$1,000, will be selling this holiday season for \$24.95.

9. Musicians' federation asks Europe to standardize musical instrument policies

While U.S. legislation passed in February created uniform carry-on baggage rules for musical instruments on airplanes, the [inconsistency of international regulations](#) prompted a summer campaign by musicians seeking similar policy regulations across Europe.

At issue: The [uncertainty can be nerve-wracking](#). Even armed with assurances that an instrument can be stored in the overhead bin, or in the case of cellists that a paid-for second seat will be provided, there's no real guarantee all will go smoothly. If a large aircraft is



replaced by a smaller one, or if a flight attendant simply has a different interpretation of policy, a musician can be left in the lurch. The alternative is often stowing an instrument in the hold, where it can be damaged. Cellist Paul Katz [related a harrowing tale](#) in August about having to stow his 1669 Andrea Guarneri.

replaced by a smaller one, or if a flight attendant simply has a different interpretation of policy, a musician can be left in the lurch. The alternative is often



Current status: Though international musicians amassed 41,000 names on their petition for revised musical instrument regulations, the response they received from European transport commissioner Siim Kallas in July 2012 stopped short of promised action. Meanwhile, a customs contretemps in Frankfurt sparked a global outcry: In August 2012 Belgium-based violinist [Yuzuko](#)

[Horigome](#) had her \$1.2 million [1741 Guarnerius confiscated](#) in a routine transfer through Frankfurt Airport, where customs officials demanded nearly \$500,000 in duty and fines because she could not provide documentation of her 1986 purchase. She eventually got her fiddle back, but it took a month and anxiety among flying musicians remains sky high.

10. Web-born plagiarism charges become a brushfire

A Grammy Award-winning composer and MacArthur Fellow was accused by respected musicians of borrowing huge chunks of material they recognized as belonging to a mutual musician friend. [Before the matter could be clarified](#), the incident had taken on an Internet life of its own, with alarming accusations of habitual plagiarism and creative impotence piling on.

At issue: The brouhaha started in February at a concert by the Oregon Symphony, one of many orchestras that had commissioned a nine-minute Golijov overture called [Siderius](#) to honor longtime music industry professional Henry Fogel. *Siderius* had been making the rounds for five months, but on this occasion it was recognized by sharp ears as substantially the same as [Barbeich](#), a piece for accordion and ensemble by Michael Ward-Bergeman.

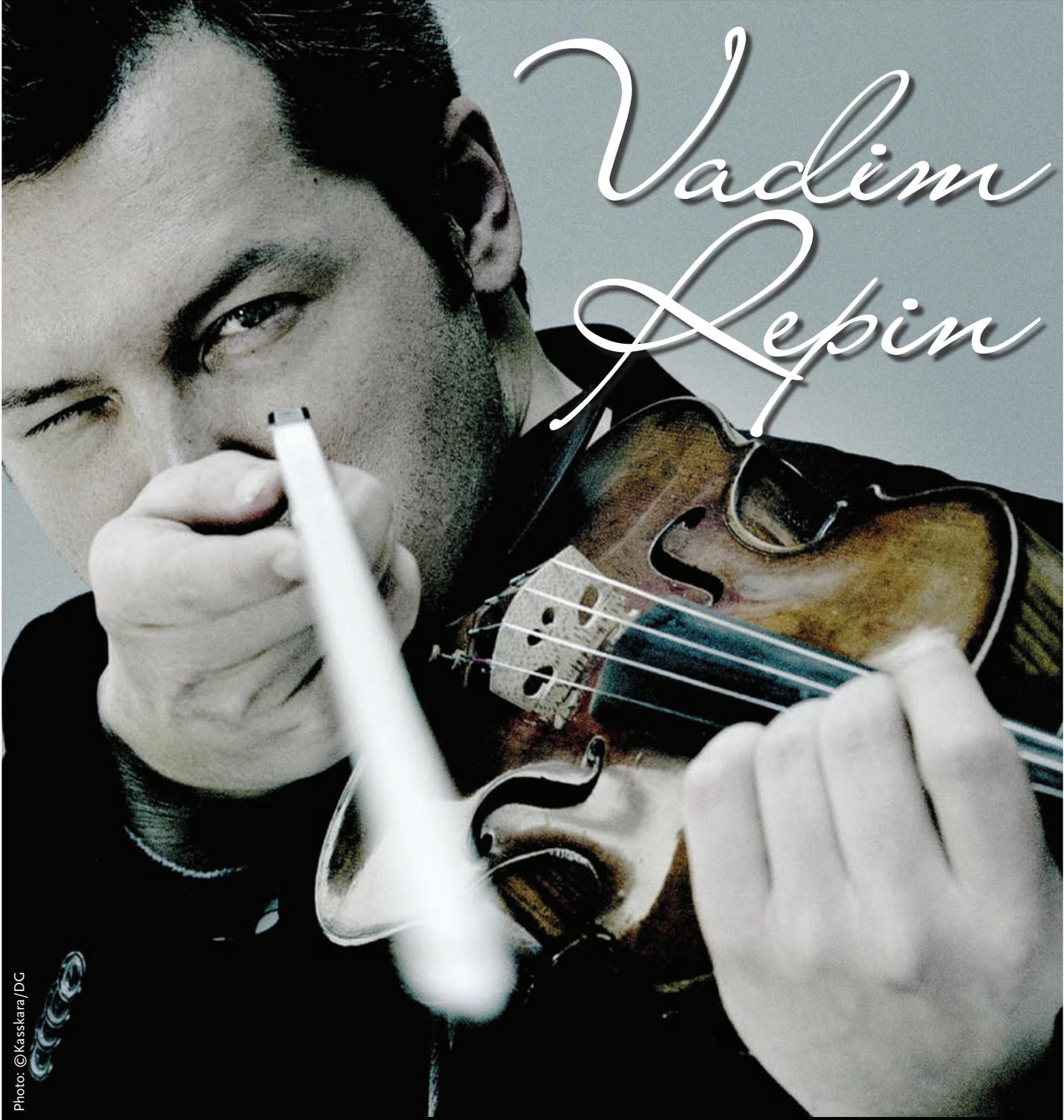
Current status: Ward-Bergeman and Golijov are close friends. They stated their separate works derived from jointly created music for Francis Ford Coppola's movie [Tetro](#). Both deemed the music too beautiful to leave on the cutting-room floor, so they agreed to share it. 



Osvaldo Golijov



Michael Ward-Bergeman



Vadim Repin

Photo: © Kassara/DG

“Simply the best, the most perfect violinist I have ever heard.”

—Yehudi Menuhin

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FRANCESCA
ZAMBELLO

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Stage director Francesca Zambello has long walked the delicate line between provocateur and entertainer—now challenging standard operatic mores, now bringing Disney musicals, such as *The Little Mermaid* to Broadway. Recently, she's taken on another balancing act, juggling the roles of director and administrator. Summer 2012

marked her second season at the helm of the Glimmerglass Festival in Cooperstown, N.Y.; it also saw her [being named artistic director](#) of the Washington National Opera.

Zambello had worked as an administrator in the past, but she was best known as a stage director, at least until 2008, when she came up with an intriguing plan for leading the foundering New York City Opera back to some semblance of health. When the City Opera job went to George Steel instead, it seemed to motivate Zambello to find somewhere else to put her plans into practice. By 2010, she was installed at the Glimmerglass Festival—as she renamed the former Glimmerglass Opera in upstate New York—where her new-broom, hands-on approach yielded several “innovations,” such as well-known singers acting as artists-in-residence and adding Broadway musicals to the program.

Meanwhile, she made no secret of her interest in the Washington job. Plácido Domingo's contract as general director ended in 2011, and the company was headed for bankruptcy if it couldn't negotiate a merger with the Kennedy Center. The merger—accomplished immediately after Domingo's departure—meant that

By Anne Midgette

the company was free of immediate financial risk (and of having to pay rent). And Zambello—who had already directed ten productions at WNO and had a working relationship with the Kennedy Center's president, Michael Kaiser—was named artistic advisor as the company began finding its legs in its new, perhaps more modest, but financially solvent role.

Few were surprised when Zambello's post was made permanent, although there was concern about appointing another director who, like Domingo, had both an active artistic career and another opera company (Domingo also runs the Los Angeles Opera). Zambello asserted that she was hoping to curtail her international directing; besides, her WNO contract stipulates that she spend more than four months a year in Washington.

“She made no secret of her interest in the Washington job.”

She arrives with a lot of energy and ambition to broaden WNO's programming and profile. The company plans to add offerings in some of the center's smaller theaters rather than confine performances, as Domingo preferred, to the opera house. November saw the start of a new commissioning program: three one-act operas, each 20 minutes in duration, performed by apprentice artists in the intimate Terrace Theater. Another new initiative, an annual holiday opera, begins this year with *Hansel and Gretel*, also at the Terrace.

“I will be adding more vocal concerts, concert opera, working with other companies, Baroque companies,” she told me recently. “I want to become a kind of producing umbrella. . . . We have a chance to be in such a city, with such a persona of government and politics and the capital of America. And we're not connected to any of that.” Zambello: opera lobbyist? Stay tuned. 

ANNE MIDGETTE

Anne Midgette is the classical music critic of The Washington Post.

2012's 10 Truly Inspired Ideas

By
Wynne
Delacoma

At Busch Stadium in St. Louis during the 2012 World Series playoff games, the Cardinals posted a huge video of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and Music Director David Robertson playing *Meet Me in St. Louis*. In Washington, D.C., a presenter has repurposed a 1938 Art Moderne movie palace in a hip, up-and-coming neighborhood and a performing arts center with its own cutting-edge new music series amid other, more traditional fare.

In Los Angeles, a venerable series at the University of California has been renamed and rebranded, adding residences with artists like Laurie Anderson and Robert Wilson to complement their concerts.

Life is challenging these days for musical organizations, large and small. But many of them are responding creatively, with projects that venture far beyond the standard operating procedures. We asked the major-market music critics to describe some of the more promising innovations from the organizations they cover.

The St. Louis Symphony Teams up with the St. Louis Cardinals

St. Louis is mad for baseball, and the St. Louis Symphony has long been a hotbed of Cardinal fans, especially since Leonard Slatkin cheered the team on during his nearly 30 years with the orchestra, first as assistant conductor, and then from 1979 to 1996 as music director. The bond between orchestra and ball team has been especially tight since the Cardinals won their 11th World Series last year.



"Members of the orchestra had frequently been asked to play the national anthem last year [during the playoff rounds]," says Sarah Bryan Miller, music critic for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. "And every time they played, they won." The orchestra also posted a clip on YouTube of Robertson and the musicians, all sporting Cardinal red, playing [Take Me Out to the Ball Game](#).

This year the Cardinals were looking for a signature tune for a fan sing-along, and the video of *Meet Me in St. Louis* was born. "This kind

of thing is typical of this orchestra," says Miller, noting that at least seven of the players performed as youngsters with the St. Louis Youth Orchestra. "The musicians really do care about the city."

Alas, clever video notwithstanding, the Cardinals lost the 2012 National League playoffs to the San Francisco Giants. But, as Miller likes to say, there's always next year: *Meet Me in St. Louis* will be played at every Cardinals home game next year, according to [Adam Crane](#), the orchestra's vice president of external affairs [and one of Musical America's Rising Stars].

"We're a local team as well," says Crane, a St. Louis native. "We've been trying to find ways to be more connected to pop-culture things in the community. We want to be part of the conversation."

Boston Lyric Opera Launches Opera Annex

"This particular series has allowed the company to have its cake and eat it too," says Jeremy Eichler, *Boston Globe* music critic. "They have been able to make a significant step toward modernizing as a company without creating the perception of a drastic change that might frighten traditional subscribers away."

Founded in 1976, Boston Lyric typically presents four operas per season. Since 2010, however, three of them—the relatively mainstream operas—have been on the company's main stage, the 1,500-seat Citi Performing Arts Center Shubert Theater—and one, a chamber opera, in an unusual space in the area. Boston Lyric launched Opera Annex with Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* in the Park Plaza Castle, an enormous stone armory built in the 1890s. The most recent Opera Annex production was Peter

WYNNE DE LACOMA

Wynne Delacoma was the classical music critic at the Chicago Sun-Times from 1991 to 2006. She is a freelance arts writer and lecturer and adjunct faculty member at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.

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Maxwell Davies's *To the Lighthouse* staged in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, which faces Boston harbor.

Audiences have taken well to the new program, turning out in large numbers for each production.

"The performances and repertoire choices have been very strong," says Eichler. "It seems to me that they get a nice combination of folks that you might see at their traditional operas but also these people coming out of the woodwork—musical insiders and a younger, hipper crowd."

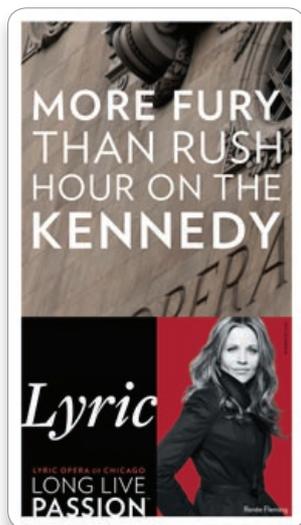
Opera Annex draws critics from beyond Boston as well.

"This means a lot to a regional company," says Eichler, who says the last two Annex shows attracted the only significant out-of-town press to show up at a Boston Lyric production that he's ever seen. "So all of a sudden the company is part of the national dialogue."

Chicago Symphony Orchestra Brings on Yo-Yo Ma as Creative Consultant Lyric Opera of Chicago Adds Renée Fleming as Creative Consultant

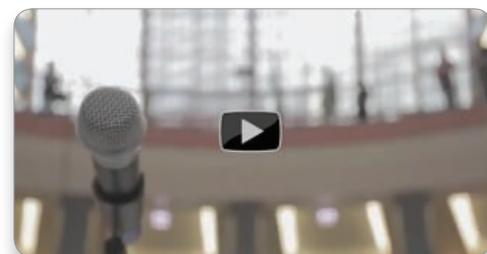
Chicago likes to think of itself as a no-nonsense kind of town. But star power has always been part of the city's musical DNA. Lyric Opera launched itself in 1954 in sensational fashion with the American debut of Maria Callas. In the 1970s and 1980s, Sir Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra strode the planet like classical music rock stars.

In 2007, the City of Chicago issued a detailed study of the local music industry titled *Chicago—Music City*. Virtually absent were the CSO and Lyric, whose combined budgets at the



time surpassed \$100 million. The focus, instead, was on pop music and various offshoots including blues and jazz.

That was then. Today, it's inconceivable that a similar study could ignore either institution. Yo-Yo Ma has popped up with his cello as part of a singing flash-mob at a downtown commuter station. Larger-than-life images of Fleming, looking hip and glamorous in a black jacket, adorn bus shelters and billboards. At one point, the two of them teamed up with the CSO for



a short, unannounced concert in the food court of a downtown Chicago office building.

Ma and Fleming aren't the only music stars circulating among the masses. CSO Music Director Riccardo Muti has made it very clear publicly that connecting with the community is a major priority, and many of the orchestra's musicians are active in more low-profile, long-term projects with schools and other local organizations.

"It's all about a new role in the community," says Susan Mathieson Mayer, Lyric's director of communications. "It's all about reaching out, talking to new groups of people in ways that we never did before. The days are gone when the opera company can be here in its beautiful house and expect everybody to come in."

UCLA Live Gets a New Name and a Revitalized Brand

In 2010, David Sefton, executive and artistic director of UCLA Live, the university's professional performing arts series, resigned. He cited drastic budget cuts and the loss of the important international theater series that he had built up during his decade-long tenure. These days he heads up Australia's Adelaide Festival.

"Sefton was terrific," says *Los Angeles Times* Music Critic Mark Swed. "He created the South Bank Festival in Britain. He's brilliant and really on top of things." But an arrogant streak made it difficult for him to work with university administrators and faculty.

"We all thought that was it for UCLA," Swed says. He and other observers feared that the school's distinguished 75-year-old performing arts series would become provincial, offering a predictable roundup of big-name artists plying the international circuit. "We were just astonished when they brought in Kristy [Edmunds], who

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is one of the most imaginative arts presenters in the country.”

Hired in 2011, Edmunds had done cutting-edge programming at the Melbourne Festival in Australia and at the Park Avenue Armory in Manhattan. For UCLA, she has devised a series of long- and short-term residencies that will

bring Laurie Anderson, Robert Wilson, Meredith Monk, and two local artists—Lars Jan and Barak Marshall—to the campus for performances and sessions with students. UCLA Live has been renamed CAP (Center for the Art of Performance) UCLA.

Edmunds’s innovations reach far beyond presenting hip artists. “She brings the students in,” says Swed, “and actually creates relationships with the community—like having Wilson in a three-year residency. It’s great to see somebody like this coming into town and really figuring out” how to set the right tone for the environs.

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Teaches the Kids, Tolerates the Adults

OrchKids, for elementary school students, is “much different from any educational programs this orchestra has ever tried,” says *Baltimore Sun* Music Critic Tim Smith. The Baltimore Symphony, founded in 1916, has been taking its music beyond the concert stage for decades. But since Marin Alsop arrived as music director in 2007, its education and community efforts have intensified. Using some money from the \$500,000 MacArthur Foundation “genius” grant she won in 2005, Alsop helped launch OrchKids. Based on Venezuela’s El Sistema, it runs year-round in four public schools in Baltimore’s west and east sides. Now in its fifth year, it includes 600 children in music classes and programs during and after the school day.

“This is setting up an actual education program in an inner city school,” says Smith. “That in itself is pretty amazing. It’s a different way of getting the orchestra into the community.”

At the other end of the age spectrum is the BSO’s [Rusty Musicians](#) program, which invites amateur adult singers and instrumentalists to join the orchestra onstage at its home base of Meyerhoff Hall for one night. (Singers are required to attend a special rehearsal.) Adults looking for more immersion can sign up for the BSO Academy, a week of study with BSO players that ends with a kind of Pro-Am concert conducted by Alsop.

“It all comes from Marin,” says Smith. “Any kind of thing that changes people’s perception of what an orchestra is. It’s not just this holy thing you come and see once in a while. You can interact with it in some ways.”



D.C.’s Atlas Performing Arts Center Gives Context to New Music

Once a sleek, Art Moderne landmark in the thriving H Street Northeast neighborhood of Washington, D.C., the Atlas movie house fell on hard times as residents began moving to the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s. The theater became an all-purpose performing arts center in 2001, and last year its lineup expanded to include a cutting-edge new music series. This season’s nine concerts are performed by guitarist Tim Brady, Prism Saxophone Quartet, So Percussion, cellist Maya Beiser, and the vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth, among others.

“I don’t know of any other series devoted exclusively to cutting-edge, contemporary music groups,” says Anne Midgette, chief critic for *The Washington Post*. Typically, new-music ensembles share a series with other kinds of music, along with theater or dance. Or a group will create its own series, performing music by assorted composers over the season.

That the Center has carved out a special spot for these hot young groups is particularly laudable, says Midgette, “because it contextualizes the new music. And for a performing arts center that is trying to define itself as an alternative to the status quo and as having something to say to the neighborhood around it, it’s a really good idea.”

66-year-old Fort Worth Opera Does a 180

According to *Dallas Morning News* Critic Scott Cantrell, the Fort Worth Opera, located about 30 miles west of Dallas, “was a pretty



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dreary provincial company 12 years ago." With the arrival in 2001 of its current artistic director, Darren Keith Woods, a Texas native and former character tenor, things began to turn around. At the same time, Cantrell reports, the Fort Worth Symphony was improving mightily under Music Director Miguel Harth-Bedoya. And

the city's downtown was beginning to blossom as an after-work entertainment center as well.

Woods has beefed up the casting at Fort Worth Opera and managed to find an audience for contemporary repertoire. He reshaped the season into a spring festival that includes three traditional operas and one contemporary work. The newer pieces are performed in alternative spaces away from the opera's home, the 2,000-seat Bass Hall in downtown Fort Worth. Recent contemporary operas have included the world premieres of *Frau Margot* by Thomas Pasatieri and *Before Night Falls* by Jorge Martin, as well as *Angels in America* by Péter Eötvös and Philip Glass's *Hydrogen Jukebox*.

"Fort Worth is about as red as a city can get," says Cantrell, "yet the city has really embraced [Woods]. He has the pizzazz to bring it off. He's started introducing pretty edgy subjects. It's a combination of good, energetic marketing and his getting out there and really talking to groups.

"The arts organizations that seem to thrive have these really visionary, charismatic leaders who take no prisoners," says Cantrell. "That is the defining point about really successful artistic companies these days."

Brooklyn Philharmonic Solicits the Hood for Programming Ideas

"The Brooklyn Philharmonic wasn't the only organization facing near-bankruptcy and the loss of its home," says Corinna da Fonseca-Wollheim, a freelance critic for the *New York Times*. "But they have completely turned things around with some really creative—and also quite hard-nosed—investment in the very communities where they perform."

Two years ago the orchestra, facing ruinous financial problems and dwindling audiences, canceled its 2010–11 season at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. But in 2011–12 the orchestra

came roaring back with an entirely new modus operandi and a new leadership team: Artistic Director Alan Pierson and Executive Director [Richard Dare](#) [a Musical America Rising Star].

"People say [the Brooklyn Philharmonic] had an itinerant season because they performed in different venues, that they were nomadic," says Da Fonseca-Wollheim. "But I think they were the opposite of nomadic because they really put down roots in these three Brooklyn communities."

They began by visiting neighborhoods. In each one, Dare and Pierson would sit down over cups of coffee with local leaders of all types—clergy, politicians, business people, artists.

"Initially people were sort of sitting there with their arms crossed," says da Fonseca-Wollheim. "But [Pierson and Dare] were just trying to figure out who the people in these communities were and what interested them." In the process, the duo made themselves and their orchestra relevant to the community and vice versa.

In the heavily Russian Brighton Beach area, for example, people suggested that the orchestra look into music from the cartoons many of them had watched as children in the Soviet Union. The Orchestra created a special promotional video for the occasion.



"At every single step of the creative chain community members were involved," says da Fonseca-Wollheim. The Brooklyn Philharmonic is no longer "like a visiting spaceship of an old, dead culture. It has become something that people want to get involved in and help shape." At that first Brighton Beach concert, the orchestra played Soviet-era cartoon music and set up ancillary projects along the cartoon theme. The concert was a huge success. In the hip, Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood, it offered local DJs and composers a chance to riff on Beethoven's Third Symphony. And in Downtown Brooklyn, they acknowledged the area's indie-music scene with a program of several premieres. Enthusiastic audiences showed up, and the orchestra's finances are improving.

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Opera Company of Philadelphia Goes Patriotic

"Traditionally the Opera Company of Philadelphia has not been adventurous," says David Patrick Stearns, music critic of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. But in the last five years—roughly parallel to David B. Devan's tenure with the company, first as general manager, now as president—new work has increasingly become part of the mix. Last year the opera launched an ambitious plan to present one new American work per season over the next decade, virtually all of them co-commissions. In September, high-profile baritone [Nathan Gunn](#), who specializes in contemporary and American repertoire, came on board as director of the company's American Repertoire Council to help oversee the project.

Already on the schedule are Jennifer Higdon's *Cold Mountain*, taken from the book of the same name, and, in February, *Silent Night*, an opera by Kevin Puts that won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize. *Oscar*, a co-commission with the Santa Fe Opera based on the life of Oscar Wilde (by composer Theodore Morrison and librettist/director John

Cox) is also in the pipeline, starring David Daniels in the title role. Gunn takes the starring role in Higdon's opera, scheduled for 2016.



The nearly 3,000-seat Academy of Music auditorium remains the company's home base, but two of the season's five productions are staged in the 650-seat Perelman Theater in the Kimmel Center. Having a small theater gives the company "almost carte blanche" in terms of programming, says Stearns.

"Because the Perelman's smaller, they can sell out anything," he says. "It's almost the law of averages. One out of 25 opera goers will be attracted to this kind of [new work]. And if they get enough of them, they'll fill the Perelman Theater."

Stearns emphasizes the importance of new American work and heralds the company's key role in it. "It's us, it's our identity, and they're excited about."

Exploring possibilities for next season's programs? *Don't wait for a paper score.*

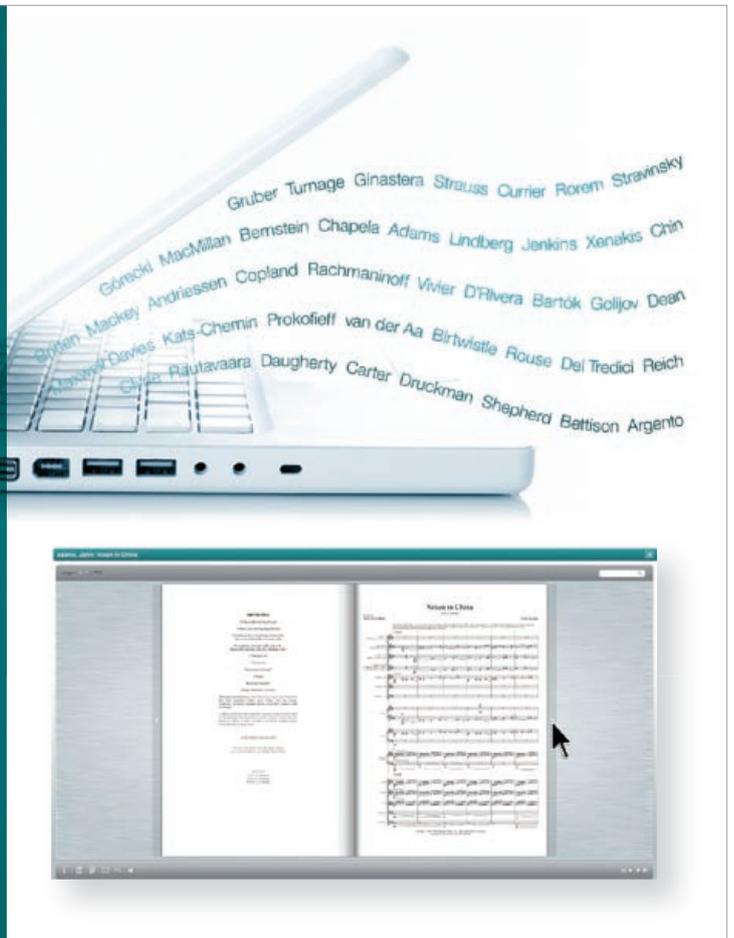
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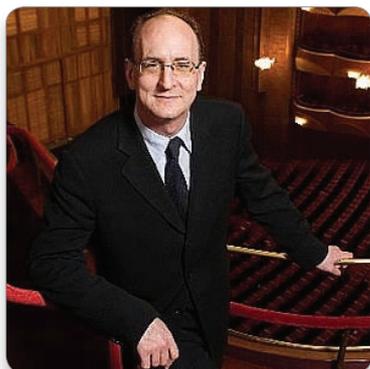
in 2012

Peter Gelb

taking RISKS proving his MOXY

By James Jorden

“If Levine’s return is a triumph, the whole Met will share in the success; but if something does go wrong, the blame will fall squarely on Gelb.”



It’s not like Peter Gelb doesn’t have enough reasons to get angry. Opera singers agree to extravagant projects five years in advance and then get cold feet at (sometimes literally) the last minute. Or when he unveils a new multimillion dollar production

featuring the highest of high tech, the first question he’s asked is “but the old sets, those threadbare drops and costumes we’ve been staring at for the past three decades, they’re safe, right. . . for when this newfangled stuff flops?”

But even the stress of working an 80-hour week as general manager of the Metropolitan Opera doesn’t excuse acting like a bully, and sadly that’s the reputation Gelb has garnered over the past year or so. First the Met clamped down on hobbyist Bradley Wilber’s web site speculating about repertoire and casting for future Met seasons—apparently because the resource was so accurate that artists and managers were treating it as fact.

Then, in May, WQXR killed, at Gelb’s personal request, a blog post critical of the Met’s new *Ring* cycle. Just a few weeks later, the news

broke that venerable *Opera News* would be denied the privilege of reviewing the company’s performances, mostly on account of an op-ed piece by one of the magazine’s editors, Brian Kellow, that dished recent casting and productions.

Gelb almost immediately blinked, citing what he euphemistically called a “groundswell of disappointment,” and reinstated the status of *Opera News* within 24 hours. No harm, no foul, then—except to the GM’s prestige.

So just when it looked like Gelb was permanently doomed to Blue Meanie status, the opera story of the year suddenly broke. On October 11, the Met announced the return of James Levine to conducting after a two-year hiatus due to illness and injuries.

Levine’s comeback is an elaborately complicated process involving scheduling of performances and rehearsals, casting, accommodation for Levine’s ongoing disabilities and, most of all, willingness of the Met to take the risk that the maestro’s recovery may not go off exactly as hoped.

Even if Gelb didn’t personally make every small decision, vet every doctor’s statement, or sign off on the mechanics of the elevator system that will boost Levine to the podium, he is at the top of the chain of command, occupying the desk where the buck stops. What that means is if Levine’s return is a triumph, the whole Met will share in the success; but if something does go wrong, the blame will fall squarely on Gelb.

It’s a precarious position to put yourself in, and there are many world-class intendants who would shy away from taking this level of risk. But if Peter Gelb is not the cuddliest man in the business, neither is he a coward. The Met is a great opera company, and Gelb is now proving himself one of its greatest leaders. 

JAMES JORDEN

James Jorden’s opera-going experience predates HD, supertitle, and vibrato. He is a regular contributor to the *New York Post* and an unregulated one to parterre.com, which he founded shortly before the development of movable type. His blog on MusicalAmerica.com, *Rough and Regie*, appears semi-regularly.

A Few PREDICTIONS

for the

Year

2022

By Heidi Waleson

What does the future hold for the industry? Fewer orchestras? More new operas? IC-chip-playback for the eardrum? We asked some of the field's best and brightest to predict The State of the Art in five to ten years. Here's what they said.



DAVID STULL

Dean, Oberlin
Conservatory

Prediction: Self-governed
artist ensembles

I am excited about the success of artist-driven ensembles. Their new organizational models emphasize adaptability, a sustainable financial model, and a vision of how to produce art that is special for audiences—something they can't get from an electronic device.

Artists now have skills and savvy to build teams and accomplish tasks. A prime example is ICE [International Contemporary Ensemble],

led by Claire Chase, who was just named a 2012 MacArthur Fellow. ICE is completely adaptable; it can go from 33 players at Mostly Mozart in Avery Fish Hall to three players in a café. That enables the group to work in a multitude of venues and locations and gives it a lot of latitude in picking genres. It doesn't have to worry about maintaining a concert hall, so the dollars it takes in go to the musicians. ICE has also expanded the canon; through a Mellon grant, the players have been able to link the compositional process between themselves and composers with vision, so that they are thinking, among other elements, about how they are presenting works to audiences.

While these new entrepreneurial endeavors will not necessarily dominate the classical music landscape, they will fill in the spaces where traditional models are no longer working. Some traditional institutions are healthy: the Los Angeles Philharmonic is on fire, for example. The Met HD broadcasts have been hugely successful. And if they have an impact on local opera companies, maybe the key there is for the local company to partner with local movie theaters. That kind of thinking is also entrepreneurial in nature. Where there is leadership in communities, the arts will thrive.

HEIDI WALESON

Heidi Waleson is the opera critic for The Wall Street Journal and writes about the performing arts for a variety of national and international publications.

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TIMOTHY O'LEARY

General Director, Opera Theater of Saint Louis

Prediction: New operas addressing current issues

One of the great things that is happening is the exuberance for new work. Opera companies and audiences are getting on the same page in recognizing that opera is not either music or theater, but both. Composers increasingly seem to care about this and about [audience response]. If the opera company lives up to the promise of both great music and theater,

the audience is increasingly unbothered by questions of genre.

Another hopeful sign is that much of the new work addresses contemporary questions and topics. I feel like we have finally moved out of the 19th century and that we don't have to tear it down to be in a new era.

[The viability of] opera has proven itself over and over for 400 years. Successful companies can avoid the audience attrition we've seen in other art forms; we can tell stories that are relevant and moving. We also have the opportunity for the opera audience to evolve into something that looks more and more like the population at large. I think companies are waking up to the idea of lots of cultural influences and diversity among both creators and casts, and that this will, with a genuine [commitment], lead to vibrant, diverse 21st-century audiences.

ALBERT IMPERATO & JESSICA LUSTIG



Founding Partners, 21C Media Group

Prediction: New online audience experiences

Classical music doesn't ever really boom, but it doesn't bust either. There's a built-in strength, and a wide variety of people with passion for it. It has resilience.

The growing role of digital technology and the online experience are already having a transformative impact. Webcasting of concerts is an encouraging trend, especially of such big events as the [Philharmonic 360](#) concert at the Park Avenue Armory in June.

There is a massive online audience; in 18 months, 76,000 people all over the world watched a master class by a London Symphony Orchestra contrabassoonist! We have better tools than ever for finding people interested in what we do, and for delivering



the highest quality work to them.

In another area, as orchestras of all sizes and varieties move out of concert halls and into different venues, audiences are enlivened by just walking into unfamiliar spaces. There's a deadening aspect to the traditional concert ritual; people who come for the first time sense that the audience is not excited and think, this is not for me. Audience excitement, like the roar of a crowd at a baseball park, is very underestimated in our field, and that sense of energy can create its own multiplier effect.

One other trend is the increased focus on the atmospherics of concerts, using lighting, film, or photography, like Leif Ove Andsnes's [Pictures Reframed](#) recital, which included a video component. Artists and artistic organizations that understand the importance of innovation will be the ones that succeed. Business as usual will yield diminishing results.

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Photo: Mathew Imaging 2011.

DEBORAH BORDA

President and CEO, Los Angeles Philharmonic

Prediction: Partnerships in technology

The orchestra is a microcosm of society, and we are facing a rapidly evolving universe of challenges and opportunities. It can't be seen in a vacuum. To make a somewhat Darwinian and draconian prediction, in five to ten years the most flexible and imaginative will survive, but we shall all be changed.

What will those changes be? We need to think very seriously about new forms of access, and to make true access on a grander scale possible, more nimble and flexible music generators are required. This means everything from new formats to changes in the way musicians

see themselves and their role in society, and the way institutions perceive themselves. Also, in addition to the artistic imperative, we must consider the social imperative.

How do we imaginatively make technology our friend? We have to harness methods we don't even know yet, and be ahead of curve, not behind it, as we have been. Managements and musicians need to work together and create methods to be partners in technology. Also, the competition for the leisure hour is more intense, and there's an inexorable decline in the subscription system. How do we reboot and address the new way people will buy tickets and attend concerts?

These are challenges that we can manage. There's a lot of hope right now. I have tremendous hope for the young musicians coming out of music schools, seeing how they relate to audiences and perceive their role in the world. Venezuela's El Sistema has fired the imagination; our [YOLA](#) [Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles] program is a model of how it can work here. I think it could be a Trojan horse for music, sneaking it back into the walls, and returning music to the center of discourse in our society.



Photo: David Michalek

ALEX ROSS

Author, Music Critic, The New Yorker

Prediction: Alternative venues, livelier programming

I'm on the optimistic end of spectrum, but I've been shaken in past few months by the sudden swarm of orchestras in crisis. I've always had the feeling that the music itself will continue to be played indefinitely, but the institutions are another matter. These organisms that seemed essential to survival of music may turn out not to be. I am more worried about the money to pay for these institutions at the top of the structure than I am about the audience. We are coming to a point where there needs to be some painful evolution in how these institutions operate.

The explosion of orchestras and opera houses after World War II was great, but were there ultimately too many to be supported over

the long term? The downside of the remarkable professionalization and the raising of standards is that all those skilled musicians expect to be paid in respect to their talents, which may be unsustainable. How tragic, if the audience was still there, but we couldn't pay musicians, the stagehands, and everyone else. In a drastically changed landscape, how will we hear operas and orchestras? There's no model in existence except for an expensive one.



Le Poisson Rouge: Multimedia Art Cabaret

On a more positive note, 20 years ago, concerts in New York were all about Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. Now we have an explosion of alternate venues and new music ensembles. The scene is livelier, and more diverse, healthier in a lot of ways. The programming is livelier, with more 20th-century music, redressing the balance of past and present in the classical repertory. New music could also be a way for the older institutions to bring in

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the younger audience: the LA Philharmonic model, adopting multiple identities, is very successful.

It's different in Europe, where subsidy and media presence have made classical music and new music part of the wider spectrum of modern cultural pursuits, along with art and literature. In Europe, the image of opera in an average person's mind is something contemporary, like a crazy Calixto Bieito production; here, it's the most stereotyped image of the oversized woman in the *Walküre* hat. That holds people at bay—who wants to plunk down \$150 to venture into a world that's treated unappetizingly in mainstream media?

In the new music scene, it's a confusing moment. There's no lingua franca or sense of style. Every innovation put forward

in the 20th century is still alive and well, and new ideas are being added, as is technology. There's a dearth of younger voices who have really found a strong identity; with the availability of music of every style via the Internet, you get a large number of works that are a pile-up of influences. That was true in 1920s as well—I would compare our time to that. It was also boom and bust, a profusion of styles among younger composers. I find it tremendously exciting.

I'm reluctant to make predictions. I would not want my prediction of where things are headed to prevent me noticing something else! One constant in music history is that you never know what's coming around the corner.



MATT MCBANE

**Composer and
Founder, Carlsbad
Music Festival**

Prediction: Controlling
our own destiny

Many young composers and musicians like myself don't see classical music as being so removed from other genres of music, which is a really notable change. Also, people in my circle of colleagues and collaborators are taking an entrepreneurial approach to our careers: We form ensembles, create our own performance opportunities, and start festivals, collectives, and record labels. There has been a lot of that activity in the last five years. For me, the big inspiration was the Bang on a Can institute at [Mass MoCA](#) that I attended in 2002, the summer I graduated from college. That's where I met lots of my musical friends; everyone in my immediate musical world has been there.

Now that I am 33, and the things we started have been around longer, I'm curious to see how they continue to grow, and how the

people who started them can reshape the landscape of contemporary music and classical music. The Carlsbad Music Festival is so much farther along than it was when I started it 10 years ago. Our budget grows by 20 percent every year; we've built it enough to pay three people to work part-time year-round. The infrastructure is in place to last 10 years more.

We are not taking over the landscape; we are creating our own ecosystem, through grass roots. We don't have to wait for gatekeepers to give us the OK to make a career. My teachers' generation of composers was the least powerful—their careers were at the mercy of performers and presenters. As performers and presenters ourselves, we have control over our own destiny.

At the same time, the entrepreneurial work gives you a profile. My group Build plays in performing arts centers as well as clubs and galleries. To build a healthy career, you need mix of grassroots and access to the organizations with bigger budgets.

What you need when you are 25, 35, or 45 is different, and it remains to be seen whether we will be able to have middle-class incomes. People are using all their creativity to make . . . their lives in music. There's no guarantee that you can get one of the jobs—orchestral musician or academic—that used to provide that middle-class income, or that it would be something you would want.



DAVID BURY
Management and
Fundraising Consultant,
David Bury & Associates

Prediction: Crowdsourcing
for raising funds

There's a group of 100 or more ensembles around the country—like ICE and the Prism Saxophone Quartet—that are being remarkably creative. They have a distinctive, curatorial programming mindset, and their leaders network like mad, so they build relationships with presenters and other ensembles. There's a new entrepreneurial spirit that makes these groups contemporary even if they are not playing contemporary music. Other new trends



include the higher profile of composers and efforts to engage audiences directly in the music, in a variety of ways.

The emergence of social media and crowdsourcing technology has brought potent marketing and fundraising capabilities at low cost to anyone who is computer savvy. The arts represent the largest percentage of [Kickstarter](#) users, for example. An emerging ensemble or choreographer can do project-based funding in a way that was not available before. This has changed the rules of the game: People don't need to be sophisticated in the traditional methods, such as grant writing or board development, which means that there is a dynamism and capacity that wasn't there 10 years ago.

In general, there is a shift in focus toward individual donors. The world of institutional funding for the arts has not grown significantly, but the level of demand is not diminishing. That is forcing groups to look for other sources of support. Traditional fundraising avenues are still valid, of course, but since [raising money] is more competitive, groups are looking at where they can get the best return. There are still a handful of important institutional funders, particularly in markets like Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Minnesota, that support groups that have proven themselves.

Can these emerging organizations become institutionally viable? Yes, but they have to be remarkable curatorially, artistically, and institutionally. ICE and The Knights are two examples of that. Right now in New York, we're seeing for the first time a new generation of really interesting entities on the level of St. Luke's, Orpheus, and the American Composers Orchestra since those groups emerged 30 years ago.



**ROBINA
YOUNG**
Producer and Co-
Founder, Harmonia
Mundi USA

Prediction: More new
delivery methods

Will recordings survive? Sure they will. People have loved and needed music from the beginning of time. The difference going forward will clearly be the method of delivery. CDs per se may not survive the five-to-10 year timeline, but recorded music will. And hopefully there will still be a need for producers and sound engineers!

So out with the old and in with the new—all manner and means of delivery, some of which haven't been invented yet. These are interesting and challenging times. It's never been easy or economical to produce good classical music, but if we don't have hope, we may as well pack up! 

in 2012

John Smith

fearless **DEFENDER** of musicians' **RIGHTS**

By Keith Clarke

To U.K. musicians, John Smith is a hero. As both general secretary of the Musicians' Union (which just elected him to another five-year term) and president of the Federation of Entertainment Unions, he has spent the year fighting for musicians' rights on several fronts. His top



priority is to improve their pay, in an environment of ruthless funding cuts. He knows their lot only too well. As a working musician he was principal tuba in the orchestra of English National Opera for almost 20 years. He points

out that 76 percent of British musicians now earn less than \$48,400 a year and it is his five-year objective to do something about it.

His next challenge is the airlines. Since only a minority of them serving the U.K. is British, he has escalated the dialog to an international level, launching a petition for the European Union to legislate for fair treatment of musicians traveling by plane, following a similar move in the U.S. [The petition](#) has more than 42,000 signatures and is currently before the European Commissioner.

Smith carries a velvet hammer. An avuncular, approachable man, he is well respected in the business, even as an outspoken campaigner for his flock's causes. He is a regular delegate at the annual conference of the Association of British Orchestras, and given

KEITH CLARKE

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"Pubs without featured music are three times more likely to close than pubs with featured music."

that orchestra managers are not obvious best friends with union chiefs, he seems to generate genuine affection.

The 2012 Olympics threw a number of issues in his path, first when the organizing committee declared that opening ceremony artists should mime to a pre-recorded track—a missed opportunity for promoting live music, said Smith—then more seriously when musicians began to get requests from the organizers to play unpaid at related events. In the end, the London Symphony Orchestra mimed to a track recorded six weeks earlier, and reports of "play for nothing" requests continued to leak out. But the MU's involvement did put musicians' causes in the public consciousness.

He's also battling changes to tax regulations for self-employed musicians that would mean a hike in contributions to state benefits. And he's deeply involved in the Lost Arts project, which is recording and publicizing the effects of funding cuts. Whether it will yield tangible results as the government draws up ever tighter spending plans remains to be seen.

One campaign that bore fruit was the Live Music Act, which overturned legislation that effectively prevented many musicians performing in restaurants and pubs without paying costly licensing fees. Smith said at the time: "Live music can be hugely beneficial for pubs—pubs without featured music being three times more likely to close than pubs with featured music." As a man who is always comfortable with a pint of beer in his hand, he probably took pleasure in helping to bring about a change that was not just to musicians' benefit. 

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MUSICAL 1st annual Opera Awards

By James Jorden

In order to gather as many important operatic events of the recent past as possible in one place, I have prepared not so much a roundup as a stampede of 18 months' duration, extending back from the present to May 2011.

Most Important News Story

May 14, 2011 marked the most recent Metropolitan Opera performance conducted by James Levine, *Die Walküre*. Earlier that month in this still unfurling yarn, Levine resigned as music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra after repeated cancellations and absences. That summer, he underwent surgery for his back then suffered a setback when he fell in September. For a year, almost complete silence reigned, with Met Principal Conductor Fabio Luisi taking up much of the slack on the podium. Then, on October 11, 2012, the Met announced Levine's successful physical rehabilitation and his plan to return in 2013–14 for three productions including a new *Falstaff* staging. If Levine's recovery can be sustained—and that's a big "if"—this will continue to be one of the most important opera news stories of the 21st century.



JAMES JORDEN

James Jorden's opera-going experience predates HD, supertitle, and vibrato. He is a regular contributor to the *New York Post* and an unregulated one to parterre.com, which he founded shortly before the development of movable type. His blog on MusicalAmerica.com, *Rough and Regie*, appears semi-regularly.

Biggest Disappointment

Speaking of that *Ring* cycle, it deserves a nod for biggest disappointment. Robert Lepage's résumé suggested he was an interesting if controversial choice to bring Wagner's tetralogy up to date for the Met, and early computer renderings indicated fluid and brisk movement from the massive 45-ton, 25-plank rotating "Machine" unit set. But on opening night, some effects looked unconvincingly half-baked (e.g., a singularly unscary dragon) or else obviously didn't work (notoriously, the entrance of the gods into Valhalla, presented to a gala audience, plus every critic you've ever heard of, as a few vaguely pulsing disco lights as the planks malfunctioned and froze). It just got worse from there: accidents, delays, technical glitches, and noisy scene changes. Finally, exploding statues at the end of *Götterdämmerung* set the whole theater giggling. And now, starting with the production's first performance in the spring of 2012, New York is stuck with it until a board member coughs up the \$30 million required to replace it. I'm not holding my breath.



Jay Hunter Morris as the title character in the Met's production of Wagner's *Siegfried*. Photo: Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera 2011.

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A scene from Wagner's *Das Rheingold*. Photo: Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera 2012.



From the San Francisco *Ring* cycle: *Siegfried*. Photo: Cory Weaver.

Best Opera Production



Photo: Stephanie Berger

This award goes not to the Met but to the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Les Arts Florissants's revival of Lully's *Atys* in September 2011. Really superb art is quite difficult to describe, harder yet to criticize. The best I can do is to say that when I exited the matinee performance, the stunning autumn afternoon outside seemed phony and cheap in comparison to the monochromatic splendor of Jean-Marie Villégier's staging and William Christie's splendid musical direction. What perhaps I loved best about this production is that it didn't impose any overt intellectual concept on the piece; rather, the opera's superb taste and restraint spoke for itself.

Most Successful Ring Cycle

Never mind the Met's attempt, San Francisco Opera's new *Ring*, launched in the summer of 2011, is deserving of highest accolades. True, Francesca Zambello's all-American take on the drama is hardly the most imaginative approach—that honor would go to

Achim Freyer's surrealistic vision for Los Angeles Opera the previous summer. But, in contrast to Lepage at the Met, Zambello at least seems to have a clear idea of what the saga is about, and, as she generally does, she brought out sensitive acting details, particularly among the women of the cast. This production marked the pre-Met emergence of Jay Hunter Morris as Siegfried (subbing for an ailing Ian Storey) and starred the Brünnhilde who should have been at the Met, the magnificent Nina Stemme.

Most Important Opera Production



A Scene from Act III of Glass's *Satyagraha*. Photo: Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera.

The Met can claim this one, even though the company didn't really have anything to do with what made it so timely and vital. The revival of Glass's *Satyagraha* in the fall of 2011 happened to coincide with the zenith of the Occupy Wall Street movement, and history was made after the last performance on December 1. A large crowd of Occupy supporters assembled just outside the Lincoln Center plaza to hear the composer take to the "people's microphone," reciting a snippet of the opera's text about how goodness is "thrusting back evil and setting

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virtue on her seat again.” With Alex Ross Tweeting the news, the event bracingly reaffirmed the often-ignored connection between culture and political action.

Grandest Opera Production

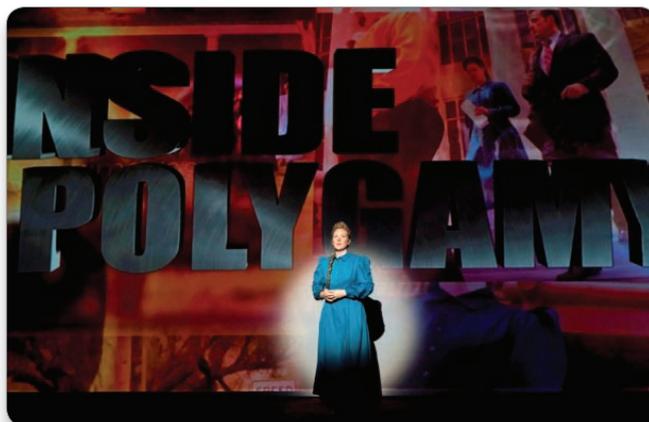


Opera Orchestra of New York's performance of *Adriana Lecouvreur*.
 Photo: Stephanie Berger

Less intellectually lofty, but hitting every button on the “You had to be there” board was Francesco Cilea’s *Adriana Lecouvreur* at Opera Orchestra of New York on November 8, 2011. Oh, everyone was there, including people you had long since assumed were dead. Who knows, maybe they were dead, but just had to come back this once. Angela Gheorghiu and Jonas Kaufmann cooed and roared and sighed and swooned, looking like Nouvelle Vague film stars the whole time. The mere presence of the cancellation-prone Gheorghiu was enough to transform the concert into an operaphile’s best dream. Even if her wispy performance of “Io son l’umile ancella” provoked less than flattering comparisons to Scotto or Tebaldi, nobody could fault her fluttering of that white silk caftan in her death scene.

Most Interesting Failure

Not every premiere can be a hit, and you have to admire companies that take the risk of presenting new works—such as Gotham Chamber Opera’s production of Nico Muhly’s *Dark Sisters*. The piece was oddly proportioned and slow to get started, but fascinated with both its unconventional subject matter (a rebellious “sister wife” of a self-styled Mormon prophet) and eclectic musical treatment (from haunting part-writing for the women’s voices to jittery pastiche in a segment set on a cable news show.) If he can develop a firmer grasp of musical dramaturgy, Muhly may well have a bright future as an opera composer.



Caitlin Lynch in Act II of *Dark Sisters*. Photo: Richard Termine

Least Interesting Failure



A scene from Rufus Wainwright’s *Prima Donna*.

On the other hand, I’d sit through *Dark Sisters* a dozen times before I’d return to Rufus Wainwright’s *Prima Donna*. The New York City Opera’s American premiere of this syrupy pastiche attracted all sorts of arty celebs—Yoko Ono, Parker Posey, and the composer himself in one of his trademark silly hats—who stoically endured a nearly plotless, nearly tuneless trifle about an opera singer who doesn’t want to sing any more. With music like Wainwright’s on the program, who can blame her?

Sleeper Hit

Back at the Met, there were a few high points among (many) lows. The revival of Mussorgsky’s densely historical *Khovanshchina* showcased bravura performances of a galaxy of stars of the Met’s Russian wing: Olga Borodina, Misha Didyk, Anatoli Kotscherga, George Gagnidze, and Ildar Abdrazakov. Conductor Kirill Petrenko’s controversial decision to use an alternate quiet finale for the climactic mass suicide of the Old Believers worked brilliantly, ending the four-hour saga like an eerie dream.

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Olga Borodina as Marfa and Ilda Abdrazakov as Dosiferi in a scene from Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*. Photo: Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera.

Most Encouraging News

Lyric Opera of Chicago suffered a frankly dreary 2011–12 season: When *Show Boat* is the most talked about event of the year, all the rebranding in the world isn't going to help. So it's encouraging that the company kicked off fall 2012 with a crackling production of *Elektra*—most unlikely opening-night fare. It won some of the loudest ovations heard at the Civic Opera House in years, with Christine Goerke's fearless performance of the title role and David McVicar's suitably creepy production singled out for top honors.



Least Encouraging News

The stagnant U.S. economy continues to batter regional companies. Innovative Opera Boston shut down completely at the start of 2012, and even such stalwarts as Seattle Opera and Dallas Opera are feeling the pinch, laying off staff, curtailing programs, and generally just trying to hold on season by season. Will regional opera ever



rebound, or will shorter seasons and safe repertory be “the new normal?”

Most Fabulous Farewell



A scene from Janáček's *The Makropulos Case*. Photo: Cory Weaver/Metropolitan Opera.

This belongs to Karita Mattila in *The Makropulos Case* (May 11, 2012) at the Met, though the accolade may have to include an asterisk. This vocal supernova depicting the demise of 300-something diva Emilia Marty was not officially announced as her last at the Met, but a witness at the final performance in the run testifies that during the thundering standing ovation, Mattila took a moment to kneel and plant a kiss on the stage. (A week later, the company announced she would withdraw from this season's new production of *Un ballo in maschera*.) Anyway, if magnificent Mattila does return to the company at some later date, she'll surely garner a nomination for Most Spectacular Comeback.

Einspringer of the Decade

At the other end of the career scale, the Met featured a number of very promising debuts, including countertenor Iestyn Davies and soprano Latonia Moore. But overshadowing them all was the



[left to right]: Iestyn Davies, Latonia Moore, Jay Hunter Morris. Photos: Gil Larvi

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second debut of sorts for Jay Hunter Morris (previously heard at the Met in *Jenůfa*) in that most exacting of tenor roles, the titular hero of *Siegfried*. The production opened October 27, 2011, barely a week after Morris, third in line for the part, was promoted. His tireless voice, plausibly heroic look, and, wonder of wonders, actual acting won him success on the first night. That triumph was followed by the achievement of bringing a few sparks of excitement to otherwise dreary full *Ring* cycles the following spring.

Egg-on-Her-Face Diva of the Decade

Other newcomers made less favorable impressions, but only one



Nadja Michael as Lady Macbeth in Verdi's *Macbeth*. Photo: Marty Sohl/Metropolitan Opera.

qualifies for this category. Mess o'soprano Nadja Michael caterwauled and flailed her way through Verdi's *Macbeth* in March 2012 to a notably frigid audience response. It would be unfair to single out her screeched high D-flat in the Sleepwalking Scene—broadcast and then shared widely among connoisseurs of operatic *Schadenfreude*—if in fact this singular note were not emblematic of Michael's sheer overwhelming awfulness.

Most Vitaly Important Tenor

You could say a lot of nasty things about the listless, pointless, cheesy staging of *Faust* by Des McAnuff at the Met (see how easy that was?). But you have to admit even so ghastly a night as November 29, 2011 had one saving grace: the clear demonstration that Jonas Kaufmann can sing practically everything. What's more, he sings it all in a superbly musical



Jonas Kaufmann in the title role of Gounod's *Faust*. Photo: Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera.

and personal way, and what's even more than that, every moment he's on stage, he is intensely and viscerally engaged from his toes to the tips of his tousled sable curls. It's a tribute to Peter Gelb's casting acumen that Kaufmann features so prominently in (rumored) casting for the Met over the next five to seven years, beginning with the (confirmed) title role of *Parsifal* in February 2013.

Most Promising Trend

Speaking of the future, the overdue advent of some of Europe's most exciting and controversial stage directors bodes well for the future of the Met. A first step this season is the arrival of David Alden (now in the fourth decade of his career) to stage *Un ballo in maschera*, to be followed next year by Dmitri Tcherniakov for *Prince Igor*. The names of a number of other *Regietheater* superstars are apparently in the hopper for the planned seasons of 2015 onward. Is it too much to hope that by 2020 or so the Met will showcase Stefan Herheim of the legendary Bayreuth *Parsifal*?



Stefan Herheim

Silliest Costume

There's strong competition in this category, but one front-runner is Chabrier's *Le Roi Malgré Lui* at Bard SummerScape in July 2012. In this determinedly wacky production by Thaddeus Strassberger, baritone Liam Bonner made his first entrance inside a tanning bed



Anna Netrebko as Adina and Ambrogio Maestri as Doctor Dulcamara in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*. Photo: Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera 2012.

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as the reluctant king sang of the warm sun of his native France. He then emerged sporting a tricolor Speedo and, frankly, looking more than a little embarrassed. But the winner of this category would have to be the top hat perched on the lovely noggin of Anna Netrebko through most of the Met's production of *L'elisir d'amore*. I've long since given up on Bartlett Sher's shows being imaginative or even visually interesting, but this infernal topper was distracting; it was ugly; it was pointless; and, what's worse, it kept falling off. Netrebko seemed to find this mishap pretty hilarious (regardless of the current mood of the scene) but she was the only one.

Best Opera Based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to Premiere at the Met.

I'm going to have to call this one a tie. The Jeremy Sams pastiche *The Enchanted Island* (January 2012) was a fascinating idea and



Plácido Domingo as Neptune in *The Enchanted Island*. Photo: Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera.



A scene from Act 1 of Thomas Adès's *The Tempest* with acrobat Jaime Verazin as Ariel. Photo: Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera 2012.

a showcase for some terrific baroque tunes and musical stylists, notably conductor William Christie and singers Joyce DiDonato (Sycorax), David Daniels (Prospero), and Elizabeth DeShong (Hermia). On the other hand, the music of Thomas Adès's *The Tempest* (October 2012) was worked out with precise elegance superbly highlighted by the composer's virtuoso conducting. Robert Lepage's production was surprisingly chic and focused, and the cast, headed by Simon Keenlyside (Prospero) and Audrey Luna (Ariel) could hardly be bettered.

Worst Opera Based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to Premiere at the Met

This looks like another tie. *The Enchanted Island* lasted, oh, what was it, 18 hours or so, and Plácido Domingo (Neptune) kept showing up looking like he wandered into the wrong rehearsal. Plus there was way too much of Danielle de Niese at her most tooth-rattling as Ariel, including the evening's final aria, a rough approximation of Vivaldi's "Agitata da due venti." Despite its brevity, *The Tempest* also outstayed its welcome by presenting all the least dramatic scenes of Shakespeare's original, translated by Meredith Oakes into couplets that would make Dr. Seuss shudder, and accompanied by the bloodless Adès score. And though it's a minor matter, that bare-assed ballet was enough to make even *Fame* star Debbie Allen cringe.

As we move toward 2013, let's definitely have more new operas, but please, no more *Tempests*.

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