

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our first newsletter for the year. We are busy rehearsing for our early April season of *Prima Donna* and looking forward to opening night. Why not gather friends or work mates and join us at the Factory in Newmarket. Groups of 6 or more get 10% discount and it's a great way to catch up with friends. On February 22 we presented 'Opera by Twilight' and were grateful to Mr Ron Saunders for his kind sponsorship of this annual event. With supporting instrumental guest artists from the APO, this well attended concert proved again that the Opera Factory theatre has one of the finest acoustics in Auckland for vocal and instrumental recitals.

In January, I was privileged to attend a celebration of the life of Paul Person at his funeral in Hastings. It was an appropriate 'full house' and a great tribute to Paul's wonderful opera career and courage. Paul and Cyril Kelleway formed Perkel Opera many years ago and I was fortunate enough to tour with them for over 12 years learning first hand many 'tricks of the trade'. Without a doubt that experience enabled Opera Factory (and a number of other opera groups in NZ) to incubate and flourish and prove that the 'grass roots' and 'stepping stones' inspire the next generation of opera enthusiasts.

Like you, we face a challenging time ahead with an economic forecast, but rest assured we will carefully and frugally continue our mission to offer performance, opportunity, education and training to many singers and audiences of all ages and levels. With your support, our wonderful volunteers, talented performers and our generous benefactors, we look forward to another happy year at Opera Factory.

Kind regards

Sally Sloman (Director)

AMICI Our Friends

AMICI will be pleased to know that your annual supporting membership of \$50 will now be receipted as including a 'donation component' of \$35. If you have recently joined or renewed this year, please contact us for an adjusted receipt if required. Amici receive preferential bookings, concessions and priority news bulletins.



Opera Factory Musical Director Rosemary Barnes and assistant Musical Director Jesse Martins ready to start our Christmas Gala 08

DON'T MISS



PRIMA DONNA

A comedy by Arthur Benjamin

Venice in the 18th century - Two lovesick lads,
A mischievous maid, a tipsy Count
And two rivalling Divas - Ahhhhhhhh



1 – 4 APRIL

Wed to Sat 7.30 pm + Sat 2pm

Featuring

Anthony Schneider – Florindo
Cameron Barclay – Alcino, his friend
Tizane McEvoy – Bellina, a mischievous maid
Alexandra Ioan – Olimpia, a Prima Donna
Elizabeth Mandeno - Fiammetta, a Prima Donna
Philip Hines – Conte Legnano

With

Jesse Martins – Music Director
Sam Clements (Flute), **Stephen Diaz** (Clarinet)

Director – Sally Sloman

Designer – John Eaglen

BOOKINGS NOW OPEN

PH: iTICKET 09 361 1000

www.iticket.co.nz (booking fee may apply)



NEW TICKET PRICES

A Reserve Adults \$35, seniors \$33, Student \$18, Child \$12
B Reserve Adults \$30, seniors \$28, Student \$15, Child \$10
(Further discounts available for financial Amici)

*Note: Groups of six or more receive 10% discount.
AMICI may book direct to the Opera Factory office*

PASSAGGIO Performers' Journeys

Paul Person 1935-2009

Co-founder of Perkel Opera – *Ruhe, meine Seele*
"When you come to the end of a Perfect Day"

Jessica Smith & Nick Duirs Wedding bells are ringing in April and a little Diva or Divo joins them in August – congratulations!

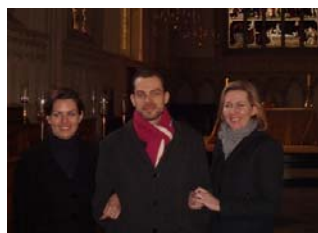
Kristen Darragh in Opera Factory's 'Game of Chance' (2001)

Kristen returns from the UK as the PWC Dame Malvina Major Resident Artist and performs with NBR NZ Opera Company in Rossini's "The Italian Girl" from 28 May in Aotea Centre.



Claire Filer continues formal studies at the Boston Conservatory towards her Masters. She recently sang Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and will soon cover the title role in Handel's *Serse*. Later in the year Claire will perform roles in excerpts from Charpentier's *Louise* and Adamo's *Little Women*.

Victoria Coleman -nee Rainbow (proud mum to 13 month old Harrison) recently caught up with Pene and Opera Factory singers in London.



Vic with Pene & Andrew Buchanan

Vic with Rebecca Samuels & Edward Scorgie



A NEW LIBRARY AT THE FACTORY

Jesse has just unpacked a wonderful collection of donated books on famous singers, composers, operas, songs and music history, opera houses, companies and opera productions, translation dictionaries, art of the singers, singing teachers manuals etc. The new Library will be open shortly. An up-graded CD/tape/DVD/record player will enable singers to book the Rossini study and quietly research and study repertoire and roles. Contact Jesse for Library hours Ph 09 921 7801.

We urge singers and visitors to respect our hard-earned resources, register whatever you borrow and accept a commitment to pay your dues. It is disappointing that many of our library resources, DC's and scores have disappeared over the years. Remember, we have an 'open door' policy on the return of all our belongings – regardless of how long they have been under your bed!

PHOTO GALLERY



Jessica Graham, Sarah Kim, Cameron Barclay, Catherine Reaburn, Tizane McEvoy, Jesse Martins at the Gala



The talented cast & volunteers of our Christmas Gala!



Carmel Carroll & Emma Sloman
Couldrey House outdoor opera concert (March 09)

♪ BREVE NOTES ♪

Margaret Woolcott (*Front of House Duty Manager*) reminds us "You can have your cake and eat it too – we still have fabulous fruit cakes and marmellata on sale during our coming Prima Donna season – perfect for the looming winter months - and our T-shirts make a splendid gift".



Congrats to Shelagh Richardson, winner of our Christmas raffle. We thank Shelagh and many other professional Teachers of Singing in the Auckland area who encourage their students to join Opera Factory.

"No good opera plot can be sensible, for people do not sing when they are feeling sensible."
W. H. Auden (1907-1973)

OPERA PROLOGUE

Our annual programme for school students 8-18 yrs



Please note the Prologue workshop scheduled for Sat 21 March has had to be re-scheduled for later in April. The next series of workshop will also be preparing for youth opera excerpts for presentation in June. You will receive an email bulletin shortly.

Advance notice to school students
OPERA IDOL 11 – 13 September
Our annual contest for budding Diva's and Divos' up to 18 yrs
Prepare now – talk to your singing teachers

CURTAIN UP

Our programme for senior & advanced singers

Thank you for recent auditions and return of response forms. Coming opportunities for seniors include workshops for opera and music theatre performers with our special guest **Brian Castle-Onions** (MD for the visiting 'My Fair Lady' and guest conductor at Opera Australia). Do we have your contact details?



'JAZZ'N IT UP'

Sunday 3 May 6pm.

A new initiative for performers and audiences who love Jazz and cross-over repertoire. Apply now to sing at this event - Jazz ensemble, band or keyboard items also welcome. Phone Jesse 09 921 7801.

All welcome – bring flatmates, work mates and friends for a cabaret night at the Factory. Checkout our website for updates. Bookings at the office.

Guests at the Factory

We are often delighted to welcome professional colleagues performing onstage and working on our production teams. We are also pleased to often share our home and resources with the NBR New Zealand Opera Company, the University of Auckland School of Music, Court Theatre and other friends and colleagues in the performing arts industry.

Thanks to the ASB Community Trust we are about to install new theatre lighting systems to help our rigging practicalities and upgrade our production facilities. We acknowledge with gratitude our Foundation Donors who made our happy home a reality.

PRIMA DONNA

Music by Arthur Benjamin. Libretto by Cedric Cliffe.



The opera is set in Venice, in the mid 18th century.

The profligate *Florindo*, expecting a visit from his rich uncle, a Count, takes the advice of his friend, *Alcino*, and borrows money to lay out an impressive feast. The *Count*, a spry old countryman, requests entertainment from *Filomela*, the opera star, but *Florindo* sends for his current favourite, *Olimpia* instead.

Unbeknown to him, *Alcino* also sends for his own lady love, *Fiametta*. In consequence, the old man sees and hears 'double' but is persuaded that his drunkenness is responsible. When he demands the company of 'Filomela', the two naughty Diva's, already exasperated by their rivalry in song, refuse, but *Bellina* (the scheming maid) dons one of their costumes and further deceives the inebriated *Count*. The young men pacify their own ladies and the *Count* woos *Bellina* as the curtain falls.



Arthur Benjamin (1893-1960)

Teacher, composer and pianist Arthur Benjamin was born in Sydney, Australia. In 1911 he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music in London, where he studied composition with Charles Villiers Stanford, harmony and counterpoint with Thomas Dunhill, and piano with Frederick Cliffe. Benjamin wrote 5 operas. The one-act operas *The Devil Take her* (1931) and *Prima Donna* (1949); two full-length operas *A Tale of two cities* (1950) and *Mañana* (1955) and the unfinished *Tartuffe*. Among his students were Benjamin Britten, Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst and Arthur Bliss. Benjamin also wrote music for films, including *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, Alfred Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934, remade 1956), for which Benjamin composed the extended *Storm Cloud Cantata*, *The Ascent of Everest*, Alexander Korda's 1947 film of *An Ideal Husband*, *Above Us the Waves* (1955) and *Fire Down Below* (1957/60). The librettist for 'Prima Donna' was Cedric Cliffe, the son of one of Benjamin's early piano teachers.



John (Eaglen) & Dave (Gravatt) clear the stage ready for pack-in

John has designed a fabulous traditional box set, and he and his skilled team of volunteers have constructed and painted a zany Venetian interior complete with cabinets and archways.

OPERA FACTORY CALENDAR

Unless advised - all events are at Opera Factory

OPERA OFF BROADWAY – 'PRIMA DONNA'

Wednesday 1 April	7.30pm
Thursday 2 April	7.30pm
Friday 3 April	7.30pm
Saturday 4 April	2.00 pm
Saturday 4 April	7.30pm

JAZZ'IN UP AT THE FACTORY

Sunday 3 May 6.00pm
Join us in jazz cabaret for an entertaining social evening - special guests - all welcome.

SENIOR AUDITIONS – 'Orpheus in the Underworld'

Sunday 24 May 10am – 4pm
Rehearsal start in June – season mid-August

THERE'S A DIVA IN MY SOUP *A series winter recitals*

Sunday 7 June	12.00 pm
Sunday 5 July	12.00 pm
Sunday 2 August	12.00 pm
Sunday 6 September	12.00 pm

Opera Factory singers and guest artists

Opera Factory reserves the right to make any alteration to the calendar, programme, events or casts that may be necessary

Keep and eye on our website for updates

JOIN US NOW

We invite all readers of this newsletter who are not already Amici, to join us for 2009.

Your support helps us administer our programmes and events and assists the production and distribution of this newsletter. Amici application forms are available on our website or phone the office to have one mailed to you. Singers and colleagues who use our resources and partake of our opportunities are especially invited (and expected) to join Amici.



PRIMA DONNA

1st – 4th April Wed to Sat 7.30pm + 2pm Sat

Group bookings of 6 or more 10% discount

A novel way to entertain friends & work mates

Public parking nearby, close to bus & train links

Bookings at iTICKET 09 361 1000

Or book online: www.iticket.co.nz

What reviewers really mean!

"A spontaneous performance" - Under-rehearsed and winging it
"For connoisseurs" - Dull, dull, and dull
"An idiosyncratic performance" - The composer would turn in grave
"They have onstage chemistry" - They are sleeping together
"The soprano has a majestic presence" - The soprano is fat

**WE ACKNOWLEDGE & THANK
OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS & DONORS**
Who fund many areas of our operations & facilities?



Opera Factory's 'Orpheus in the Underworld' (2000)

**Is my donation or sponsorship to
Opera Factory tax deductible?**



The Opera Factory Trust is a registered charitable trust, approved by the IRD and the Charities Commission. Donations will entitle you to a tax rebate – and recent generous changes to the tax rules have removed the earlier limits on the total annual qualifying amount you can give.

You may prefer to sponsor or donate to a specific area of our training and educational programme, a production or event, our advertising or assist one of our talented singers in their studies. We have many enticing packages available now to suit your requirements. Contact Sally for further information Ph 09 921 7801 or Email admin@operafactory.com

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*"And if there come the singers and the dancers – buy of their gifts also. For they too are gatherers of fruit and frankincense, and that which they bring, though fashioned of dreams, is raiment and food for your soul."
Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931)*

OPERA FACTORY

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