



Photo: Denny Weigand for Festival Opera

Returning artist Isaac Hurtado will appear as the eternal optimist, *Candide*.

***Candide*: The Best of All Possible Operas?**

In director Michael Scarola's view, *Candide* may just be the best of all possible operas for our times. First published in 1759, Voltaire's deft satire needs no specific time or place—it is a study of the fundamental human condition. Asked if the opera relates to current times, Scarola responds with a story, "The first time

I directed *Candide* was for Harrisburg Opera in 2001, just a few weeks after the events of 9/11. I live quite near the World Trade Center area and had watched the whole thing unfold from my roof. As we started to meet, I began to question if we were doing the wrong opera for that time. But as we got into it, it turned out to be absolutely right. At the first run-through, we reached the song 'Universal Good' and you could tell people were touched by the message. By the time we reached the powerful finale, 'Make Our Garden Grow,' everyone was prac-

tically in tears. *Candide* is about coming out of a place of darkness to an understanding of how to make a better world. You could say that today we are in a world where there is a lot of darkness, where we have people not helping others, fighting each other. The essence of *Candide* speaks to how it is only when we are good to each other that we can all find a way to live in peace and harmony. *Candide* not only wasn't the wrong opera, it was the perfect opera for the time. And it continues to be."

Too Entertaining for Opera?

Festival Opera's artistic and music director Michael Morgan is in his element. Fresh from conducting his stunning Bernstein

Mass for Oakland East Bay Symphony last month, Morgan is looking forward to this summer's *Candide*. Both works were long on his list of dream projects. *Candide* is one of Morgan's favorite operas, having, as he describes it, music with "the usual Bernstein combination of energy

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"What is optimism?

I'm afraid to say it is a mania for insisting that all is well when things are going badly."

—Voltaire

Tutti Cantando!

A conversation with chorus master John Kendall Bailey

The individuality of the human voice is at the core of all opera. While a solo aria celebrates the sound of a single, clear voice, equally important is the unity of sound provided by the many individual voices of the opera chorus. Their voices lift the angelic Marguerite to heaven at the close of *Faust*. They celebrate the triumphant return of warriors in *Aida* and mock Rigoletto while scheming to kidnap his beloved Gilda. Some of the most compelling moments in opera turn, not on the sound of a soaring solo voice, but on the richness of a chorus of voices.

Festival Opera's chorus master, John Kendall Bailey, brings his extensive background as a musician, singer, composer and conductor to unite a group that is as diverse personally as their voices are musically. Bailey has worked with a remarkable array of musical groups in the Bay Area, including the Berkeley Lyric Opera, Oakland East Bay Symphony and Oakland Ballet. In 2002, Artistic and Music Director Michael Morgan brought him to Festival Opera. Since then he has made it his mission to raise the professional quality of the chorus, implementing a longer rehearsal schedule, holding more auditions, and providing members with more comprehensive scores. The

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From the Chair

Despite the economic challenges in recent years, Festival Opera has worked hard to take steps towards growing our reputation for creative, high quality opera in the Bay Area. Just two years ago, we were forced to scale back to a single opera production to help regain financial stability. Since then we have successfully returned to a two-opera season, established an annual fundraising gala and eliminated nearly all debt. For the past two years, we have even been able to budget a small reserve to cover production expenses earlier in the year.

None of this would have been possible without changing the way we think and do things. In 2004, for the first time, Festival Opera listed income from a new source. Our impressive, yet compact, *Aida* sets were sold and shipped to Birmingham Opera in Alabama for a net gain. This year, our production of *Un Ballo in Maschera* will feature sets co-created with our neighbor in the South Bay, Opera San José, which will mount its own production in November. This is our first collaboration with Opera San José, although we have featured many of their artists in past productions. They are a well-established and highly respected company and we appreciate

the relationship we are building with them. By sharing set design and manufacture, both companies can provide richer production values, while reducing costs. In part, this is allowing us to build our own elegant, ornamented costumes for the principal singers in what will be a magnificent new production.

The success of these projects is largely due to the creative energy of our production manager, Frederic Boulay. Since joining the company in 2000, he has implemented new ideas and methods—in areas from budgeting and set storage to collaboration—that have enhanced productions, increased safety, and trimmed costs. And the possibilities for further growth and development are endless.

This is an exciting time for Festival Opera. Our upcoming season will again move the bar higher for outstanding operatic productions. If you haven't already ordered your tickets, make sure to do so soon. And consider inviting friends, family, and colleagues to experience Festival Opera at its best. We intend to continue taking new and daring steps forward each year, but we need your support to be successful.

— Susie Hanson

“Glitter and...” Win!

Excitement is building for Festival Opera's fundraising gala, A Very Special Evening: “Glitter and Be Gay.” Themed around the famous aria from *Candide*, this not-to-be-missed event will light up the lovely art deco Oakland Rotunda on October 1, 2005. This year, a prize drawing for a diamond necklace has been added to the event. Tickets for the drawing are \$100 each and, as a gift, you will receive an 18-inch strand of high quality pearls from jeweler Taylor and Jacobson with each ticket purchased. The single strand of hand-knotted pearls comes without a clasp in an elegant velvet pouch. You can then add a clasp, join several strands into a longer length, or create a multi-strand necklace.

For yourself, or as a quality gift for anyone, consider purchasing tickets for the drawing now. Every ticket is entered in the drawing and you need not be present to win. All proceeds go to building the future of Festival Opera.

This spectacular event is coming soon—call (925) 944-9610 to reserve your table today! ■

Storybook Guild Event

This September, the Festival Opera Guild will sponsor two special performances of Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*. Produced and directed by The Apollo Touring Opera, and featuring a number of local performers of all ages, the opera will be performed in a charming garden setting in Walnut Creek. All of the sets, costumes and props were created by a dedicated group of volunteers specifically for this show, which was performed last year to sold-out audiences.

This year, performances will be September 10 and 11 at 2:00 p.m. Plan now to bring your friends, children and grandchildren to this delightful summertime event. For more information, contact Barbara LaGrandeur, Festival Opera Guild president, at 925-944-9610. ■

See us on the Web at
www.festivalopera.com

Festival Opera 2005 Preview

Un Ballo in Maschera

Un Ballo in Maschera

(in Italian with English supertitles)

Music by Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

Libretto by Antonio Somma

Conductor Michael Morgan

Stage Director David Cox

Set Designer Peter Crompton

Amelia Hope Briggs

Riccardo Mark Duffin

Renato Scott Bearden

Ulrica Patrice Houston

Performances:

July 9, 12, 15 • 8:00 p.m.

Matinee Sunday, July 17 • 2:00 p.m.

Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts

Tickets: \$35–\$100 • Call (925) 943-7469
or visit www.festivalopera.com

Background:

Although *Un Ballo in Maschera* is considered one of Verdi's finer works, it was not the opera he originally planned to write. In 1858, Verdi was working on a commission of *King Lear* for the Naples Opera when plans fell through. With the goal of fulfilling his contract quickly, he chose instead a well-known story that had already been presented in operatic form several times. Originally to be titled *Una Vendetta in Domino*, the opera is loosely based on the story of a Swedish king who was assassinated by a friend during a masked ball in 1792. Although Naples voided the contract and the controversial plot had to be altered numerous times to satisfy Italian censors, *Un Ballo in Maschera* made its debut in Rome the following year to great acclaim. With its passionately beautiful music, audiences today find this complex and emotional tale of political conspiracy, adultery, social manipulation and murder as compelling now as when it was written nearly 150 years ago.

Synopsis:

Governor Riccardo is secretly in love with Amelia, the wife of his best friend and secretary, Renato. While investigating the suspicious political activities of the fortune-teller, Ulrica, Riccardo overhears Amelia privately ask for a remedy to cure a hopeless love. After Amelia leaves, a disguised Riccardo asks Ulrica to read his palm, but scoffs at her warning that he will be killed by a friend. Asked to identify the killer, she tells him it will be the next person to grasp his hand. Renato arrives to warn Riccardo of danger and shakes Riccardo's hand in greeting. Riccardo touts his innocent action as proof that Ulrica's warning must be fiction, claiming Renato is his most loyal friend.

Following Ulrica's instructions, Amelia visits the gallows at midnight seeking a magic herb and is surprised there by Riccardo. In a moment of passion they declare their love, but are interrupted by the arrival of Renato, who has followed Riccardo to warn him of a conspiracy he has uncovered. Renato is told to take the veiled woman back without asking her name, but as they return they are accosted by the conspirators and Amelia's identity is revealed.

Renato, believing himself betrayed by both his wife and friend, joins lots with the conspirators. Amelia pleads with her angry husband for forgiveness, but is instead forced to play a part in the assassination plot, unwittingly choosing Renato's name to strike the fatal blow.

While awaiting the masked ball that evening, Riccardo reluctantly decides he cannot compromise Amelia's life and resolves instead to assign Renato and his family to a distant post. Amelia sends a note to Riccardo during the ball to warn him of the plot against him and, when they meet, he informs her of the new assignment. As they bid each other a final farewell, Renato enters and stabs him. Mortally wounded, Riccardo forgives Renato and admits to loving Amelia, but assures Renato of her innocence before his death.



Hope Briggs (soprano) last sang with Festival Opera as the High Priestess in *Aida* in 2003. This past summer, she made her highly acclaimed debut with San Francisco Opera as the Duchess of Parma in *Doktor Faust*, a role she reprised in her recent debut with Staatsoper Stuttgart. Briggs has appeared throughout the United States in major roles such as Leonora (*Il Trovatore*) and Countess (*Le Nozze di Figaro*.) A past Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions finalist, she is scheduled to return to San Francisco Opera next year as Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*).



Mark Duffin (tenor) is making his first appearance with Festival Opera. During the 2003-2004 season, he made his San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of Verdi's *Don Carlos*. He has sung numerous roles, both here and abroad, including the title roles in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and *Roméo et Juliette*, Alfredo (*La Traviata*), the Duke (*Rigoletto*) and Don Jose (*Carmen*). Duffin has appeared in performances of the works of Britten and Weill, and was highly acclaimed for his portrayal of Mao Tse Tung in *Nixon in China* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis.



Scott Bearden (baritone) makes his Festival Opera debut as Renato. While a resident artist with Opera San José from 2000-2002, he was heard in the title roles in *Rigoletto* and *Falstaff*, as well as many other roles. He was invited to reprise the role of Falstaff for Tanglewood Music Festival's 60th Anniversary under the baton of Seiji Ozawa. During the past year, Bearden has been featured as Renato with Opera Memphis, Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*) with the Sanibel Music Festival, and again as Falstaff in a critically acclaimed performance with Mississippi Opera.



Patrice Houston (mezzo-soprano) returns to Festival Opera following her 1998 debut as Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. She has sung numerous roles locally, most recently Ulrica for San Francisco Lyric Opera and Alisa (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) with West Bay Opera. A regional semi-finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Houston appeared as the alto soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* with the Royal Conservatory Orchestra, Den Haag, Holland. In September, she will debut as Azucena (*Il Trovatore*) with Opera in the Heights, Houston, Texas.

Festival Opera 2005 Preview

Candide

Candide

(in English)

Music by Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)
Libretto by Hugh Wheeler, et al.

Conductor Michael Morgan
Stage Director Michael Scarola
Set Designer Matthew Antaky

Candide Isaac Hurtado
Cunegonde Marnie Breckenridge
Pangloss David Cox
Old Lady Darla Wigginton

Performances:

August 13, 16, 19 • 8:00 p.m.
Matinee Sunday, August 21 • 2:00 p.m.
Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts

Tickets: \$35–\$100 • Call (925) 943-7469
or visit www.festivalopera.com

Background:

One of Bernstein's most popular works, *Candide* is based on Voltaire's comic satire of 1759. This complex fable maintains a sublime measure of farce, while mocking nearly every political and philosophical teaching, thus remaining both relevant and engaging to audiences the world over. Bernstein was invited by legendary playwright Lillian Hellman to collaborate on the project in 1953. The opera, first staged in 1956, has been in a nearly constant state of evolution ever since, including revisions by more than six lyricists. Although various productions shortened and then restored this complex work, the 1988 Scottish Opera version is now most commonly used, and was chosen by Festival Opera. In *Candide*, Bernstein created music that is by turns comic, spiritual and intense, reflecting the opera's mercurial storyline. The moving ensemble piece that ends the opera never fails to leave its audience uplifted, ready to go out and "make their gardens grow."

Synopsis:

The Baron of Westphalia's children, Cunegonde and Maximillian, together with Candide, his illegitimate nephew, and a servant girl, Paquette, are instructed in the Philosophy of Optimism by Dr. Pangloss, who tells them that "all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds." When Candide and Cunegonde have the temerity to fall in love, Candide is instantly banished. Westphalia is subsequently invaded by the Bulgarians and Candide is told that Cunegonde and her family have been killed. Candide escapes the battle and, in spite of his despair, is determined to believe "all is for the best."

After a number of misadventures, Candide unexpectedly encounters Pangloss in Portugal, where they are arrested by the Spanish Inquisition for their liberal proclamations. Pangloss is to be hanged, but Candide evades punishment and, with the help of an Old Lady, is reunited with Cunegonde. She had not been killed but abducted, and is now the mistress of two wealthy men. When Candide inadvertently kills the two men, the three make their escape.

Traveling to the New World in a continued search for happiness, Candide is again separated from Cunegonde. He instead meets up with Paquette and Maximillian, who also survived the Bulgarian invasion. After accidentally stabbing Maximillian in an argument, Paquette and Candide set off for the fabled land of El Dorado. Once there, despite the perfection of their surroundings, Candide is determined to find his true love. He and Cunegonde are reunited and, together with Maximillian and the Old Lady, decide to seek out a man said to be "the wisest man in the world." Arriving at the wise man's cave, they are surprised to find that he is the venerable Dr. Pangloss. Having survived the hanging, Pangloss now proclaims a new philosophy that the group readily adopts: settle for the life one is given and "make [your] garden grow."



Isaac Hurtado (tenor) made his debut with Festival Opera last season in the title role of *Roméo et Juliette*. He has appeared with Opera Circle of Cleveland as Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Arturo (*I Puritani*) and Tebaldo (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*), and with Central City Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Opera Theatre of Lucca, and Opera North (New Hampshire), where he was a member of the Young Artists Program. Hurtado recently completed his Doctorate in vocal performance at Florida State University, and will debut with New Orleans Opera this fall as Roderigo in *Otello*.



Marnie Breckenridge (soprano) made her company debut last season, winning audience and critical acclaim as Gilda in *Rigoletto*. Her prior season had included Papagena (*The Magic Flute*) and Inez (*Il Trovatore*) with San Francisco Opera and her debut as Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*) with Sacramento Opera. Earlier this year, Breckenridge made her first appearance in the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* for West Bay Opera, with whom she has previously sung the role of Cunegonde. She repeated the role of Lucia for her April debut with Indianapolis Opera.



David Cox (baritone) makes his Festival Opera stage debut as Pangloss. A former resident artist with Opera San José, Cox was featured in numerous roles, including the title roles of *Falstaff* and *Don Pasquale* and as Don Magnifico (*La Cenerentola*). He has appeared with Nevada Opera, Eugene Opera, Austin Lyric Opera and many other companies in the United States, Europe and Japan. Cox appeared as Antonio in Opera San José's *Le Nozze di Figaro* last fall and returned there to direct *Carmen* in February. He made his directorial debut with Festival Opera last year with Verdi's *Rigoletto*.



Darla Wigginton (mezzo-soprano) made her Festival Opera debut in 2002 as Mrs. McLean in *Susannah*. She has since returned in such roles as Giovanna (*Rigoletto*) and Gertrude (*Roméo et Juliette*). Wigginton's roles with West Coast companies include recent appearances as Tisbe (*La Cenerentola*) for Sacramento Opera and Maddalena (*Rigoletto*) with Eugene Opera. She has been featured in several new works, including an acclaimed performance as Nerfertiti in the recent West Coast premiere of Philip Glass' *Akhmaten* with Oakland Opera Theatre.

Tutti Cantando! ...continued from page 1

transition has not been easy, but his efforts have paid off. For the past two seasons, Morgan says he has been able to choose operas that demand more from the chorus, and they have met the challenge. Festival Opera caught up with Bailey as he prepares the chorus for what may be their most difficult season yet.

FO: Who are the people who sing in the Festival Opera chorus?

JKB: *Everyone under the sun! Our chorus is about 40 members now, which is just about ideal for us, and includes members from all walks of life—doctors, technical writers, students—and all ages. They are very different in many ways, but all love to sing. We are a volunteer chorus, which means most of these people work all day and then donate time each week to learn and practice music. During tech week—the week before we open—they sing from 7–10pm every night after working all day. You really have to love it to do it.*

FO: What kinds of challenges do chorus members face?

JKB: *Unlike other choral groups, opera choruses must sing while moving around the stage in costume. And then there is the issue of language. The traditional languages of opera—such as Italian or French—must be properly pronounced to sound authentic. Although operas such as *Candide* are easier, since English is our native tongue, we still have to work on diction to make the words recognizable when sung.*

FO: Isn't diction a challenge for all singers, not just the chorus?

JKB: *Unity of sound is what people listen for in the chorus. Correct pronunciation when singing a solo aria is important, but a chorus must not only have correct pronunciation, they must have uniform pronunciation. It's not just a matter of singing the notes at the same time. We try to keep the same people year to year because the continuity is helpful. They know how I do and say things—we have a common terminology—which makes the learning curve shorter. The chemistry that exists among our chorus members makes a huge difference in the overall sound.*

FO: I know there must also be a lot of work behind the scenes too.

JKB: *There's always a lot of preparatory work before a production, from the mun-*

*dane—preparing choral scores—to the more complex—splitting and assigning parts. In the more complicated scores, such as *Aida* in 2003 and *Un Ballo* this year, there might be three different choruses singing different things. Sometimes there's just not enough of one type of voice and you have to decide who is going to sing which lines. It's a time-consuming task. It also means you have to depend on everyone to be there—you can't afford to lose a voice.*

FO: What particular challenges do you face this year?

JKB: *It's always something different. As with *Rigoletto* last year, *Un Ballo* has a lot of mens' choruses that require special work. I think *Candide* is the most challenging opera we've ever done. There's a lot of chorus music and it's some of the hardest music, harmonically, they've ever been asked to sing. Some parts are bi-tonal, which means they must hold their own note, no matter what they hear others singing. It takes great control and discipline. Then, on top of that, they have to juggle multiple costume changes, some of which actually take place on stage. But that complexity is just part of this opera—how everyone and everything is in constant motion*

FO: It must be very exciting for them... and for you.

JKB: *It is. The chorus sounds better right now than they ever have. We began preparing *Candide* early and we're now working on *Un Ballo*. They have excellent tone, the blending of voices is rich and warm—there are moments when it just sounds thrilling. What's great about working with a volunteer group is they put a very special energy into it. They're there because they love it, because they want to have a good time—they don't have to be there, they want to be. For me the biggest challenge is finding a way to focus all that energy and enthusiasm into the control needed to make a truly great chorus. I'm looking forward to hearing them all come together this summer.* ■



Photo: Tom Bacon for Festival Opera

Members of the Festival Opera Chorus (with Bojan Knezevic) in Don Pasquale (2002).

Candide: The Best of All Possible Operas? ...continued from page 1

and sentimentality.” Although the plot has been described as disjointed, Morgan doesn’t find it disturbing and contends that “it works on its own untidy terms and is very entertaining in the process.”

In fact, *Candide* has been accused of being too entertaining to be opera. Whether it is opera or musical theater is often debated. Professor Philip Manwell, who leads Festival Opera’s pre-performance lectures, argues that the distinction is unimportant. “When I teach, I try hard to get rid of the ‘boxes’ or categories. In my mind, it’s all ‘musical’ theater,” he says. “The stories have universal appeal and the music is a reflection of current taste.” The reason *Candide* is often classified as musical theater is because of the amount of dialogue that bridges the music. Scarola adds, “If you look at Mozart’s *Magic Flute*, though, you could argue there’s a similar format.” And the singing is complex in *Candide*—few Broadway singers can handle the coloratura demands of ‘Glitter and Be Gay.’ “What matters,” asserts Manwell, “is that the music inspires and entertains; it’s a very accessible work.”

A Playground for Discovery

There is no question that *Candide* is one of the most challenging works Festival Opera has ever mounted. Only the company’s second

gave Scarola and Antaky additional time to develop their ideas. Scarola, a member of the New York City Opera directorial staff since 2002, previously worked for five years on the Metropolitan Opera staff and has staged both classic and contemporary operas and other works around the world. During the past few years, he has collaborated with Antaky on several works by American composers, including Bernstein, where Antaky’s unique and visually exciting work has been highly praised. The two were enthusiastic about working together again.

At the core of their vision for *Candide* is the concept of discovery. As Antaky describes it, “The set is a visual playground—always moving, always changing—just as the scenes, locations and characters do in the opera. Like *Candide*, the audience will discover new things and new ideas as the opera evolves.” With unusual elements and a delightful illustrative style evocative of M.C. Escher, Antaky’s visual concept will be carried through the production, from sets and lighting to costumes.

Of the many versions available, the production team opted to use the Scottish Opera’s *Candide*. Unlike abbreviated versions used on Broadway and elsewhere, the Scottish Opera included nearly all the music Bernstein ever wrote for the opera. According to Scarola, only two numbers were cut, eliminating a superfluous scene, simplifying the convoluted story, and keeping the length manageable.

Cultivating a Deeper Garden

Although the music was kept intact, the production team found the dialogue needed adjustment to suit today’s audiences. “This is a work that must be staged with a lot of imagination,” says Morgan. “Michael Scarola understands both the serious subjects being satirized and at the same time the silliness of the satire itself. He is working very hard to make sure the dialogue is entertaining to a contemporary American audience.”

According to Scarola, the Scottish Opera version is definitely darker than those used on Broadway, which are typically played for laughs. Festival Opera’s production will be closer to what Scarola sees as Bernstein’s original vision. “In the Broadway version, *Candide* is naively optimistic to the very end. In the original Voltaire, and in our version, he begins

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Set designer Matthew Antaky's scale model for *Candide*.

American opera production, *Candide* involves an extensive cast, more than 200 costumes—“everything from soldiers to sheep!” says set designer Matthew Antaky—and complicated logistics with multiple set and costume changes. Not to mention extremely challenging music for the singers and orchestra.

Preparation for the production began early, with initial meetings held in late 2004, which

Before the Curtain Opens

Ever wonder how an opera artist gets ready for a big performance? We did! So we asked a few Festival Opera favorites what they do before the curtain opens. It turns out their preparations share many things in common—most of all food!



Brian Leerhuber, baritone—“The most important thing I do on the day of a performance is eat—a lot! I need the calories and am one of those rare performers who sing my best on a full stomach. I do some yoga or a light workout at the gym to get the blood pumping. Then I usually have to do things like get gifts or cards for the cast, which keeps me too busy to think about nerves!”



Hope Briggs, soprano—“After a good night’s rest, I like to start my day with a healthy breakfast and have another meal with protein before I leave for the theater. I don’t really talk a lot on the day of a performance, but I try not to make too big a deal out of it. I try to remain calm and confident and I say one more prayer before going out on stage!”



Hector Vasquez, baritone—“I find that it’s important for me to get in a run—it just gets my whole body working. I try to eat several small meals, although sometimes I have to be reminded to eat or I’ll find myself going on stage hungry. I might vocalize a little throughout the day to see how I feel, and then I warm up when I arrive at the theater.”



Marnie Breckenridge, soprano—“I sleep in as long as possible and don’t say a word until about two hours before makeup. During the day I stretch or do yoga, write notes to cast members, and review the score and staging. I try to avoid doing everyday chores. I might take a walk or a nap, and I eat a good meal, like pasta with fish or chicken, before going to the theater to warm up.”



Michael Morgan, conductor—“Ideally, I’ll eat several meals throughout the day, with the last one in the late afternoon containing some kind of carbohydrates, usually pasta. I also like to sleep earlier in the afternoon to get ready for the performance.”



Cynthia Clayton, soprano—“I try to sleep in and eat a good breakfast. I’ll have a large late lunch, or I’ll bring a deli sandwich to the theater to eat while getting ready. During the day I’ll drink sports drinks for extra hydration if I need it. I usually nap in the afternoon and relax with my score so I can run everything mentally. Sometimes that’s not possible, if I’m where my kids are—then I just make do!”

Candide ...continued from page 6

to understand that not everything is perfect and it is up to each of us to make our own ‘best of all possible worlds.’ His gradual enlightenment gives the piece more depth and makes the finale that much more poignant. We’ll make it fun, but we’re not downplaying the darkness,” says Scarola.

Voltaire’s *Candide* was described by editor Roger Pearson in a 1990 translation as “...the most entertaining of all philosophical novels and the most philosophical of entertainments.” Audiences this summer will be presented with a stellar opportunity to weigh that claim as Voltaire’s story, set to music by Bernstein, directed by Scarola, and produced by Festival Opera, comes to life on Antaky’s lively stage in this best of all possible operas for our time.

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Call (925) 944-9610 to reserve
- **June 26, 6:00 p.m.**
Opera in the Park
Civic Park, Walnut Creek
- ☆ **July 9, 8:00 p.m.**
Opening Night: *Un Ballo in Maschera*
Pre-curtain lecture in the theatre: 7:00 p.m.
No-host reception following the performance
- **July 12 & 15, 8:00 p.m.**
Evening performances: *Un Ballo in Maschera*
Pre-curtain lecture in the theatre: 7:00 p.m.
- **July 17, 2:00 p.m.**
Matinee performance: *Un Ballo in Maschera*
Pre-curtain lecture in the theatre: 1:00 p.m.
- **July 19, 7:00 p.m.**
Opera on the Lawn: *Un Ballo in Maschera*
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- ☆ **August 13, 8:00 p.m.**
Opening Night: *Candide*
Pre-curtain lecture in the theatre: 7:00 p.m.
No-host reception following the performance
- **August 16 & 19, 8:00 p.m.**
Evening performances: *Candide*
Pre-curtain lecture in the theatre; 7:00 p.m.
- **August 21, 2:00 p.m.**
Matinee performance: *Candide*
Pre-curtain lecture in the theatre: 1:00 p.m.
- **September 10–11, 2:00 p.m.**
Festival Opera Guild: *Hansel and Gretel*
in cooperation with Apollo Touring Opera
Call (925) 944-9610 for ticket info
- **October 1, 6:00 p.m.**
Gala Fundraising Event:
"A Very Special Evening: Glitter and Be Gay"
Location: Oakland Rotunda
Call (925) 944-9610 to reserve

Roberta Emerson
Editor