

# The Mother of Pacific Opera

Pacific Opera Victoria is honoured to dedicate the 2011/2012 opera season to the memory of Jane Heffelfinger, who died in June.

Jane joined the Pacific Opera board in 1983, after having supported her husband George in his efforts as co-founder and first President of the fledgling Pacific Opera Association. Jane's work and support over the decades that followed were instrumental in making POV what it is today. Jane served as President from 1989 to 1995, and chaired the POV Foundation from 1998 to 2008. For nine months in 1989/90 she rolled up her sleeves and put in long hours at the office as volunteer General Manager.

Over the decades Jane acted as POV's fundraiser extraordinaire, a dynamo who pioneered the festive Opening Night Sense of Occasion receptions, spearheaded a series of luxury car lotteries, and organized gala fundraising concerts with such luminaries as Ben Heppner, Richard Margison, Tracy Dahl, and Judith Forst.

As POV's artistic director Timothy Vernon once said, *No one has been more important in developing this company and pushing it forward. She is reliable, resourceful ... and doesn't take no for an answer — trust me.*

Indeed, Jane's charm, energy, and formidable powers of persuasion induced many donors and sponsors, not only to give, but to see their support as a form of "enlightened self interest". As Jane said in one of her many programme messages, *That form of enlightenment — that form of "self interest" — that generosity — these are really the things that have made Pacific Opera the company it is and that have made it as celebrated for the quality of its production. We are indeed blessed!*

After Jane's death, George found among her papers a note that read: *Throughout the darkest days of World War II, Winston Churchill continued to fund the arts. "What else" he said, "are we fighting for?"*

Though the quote is apocryphal, the sentiment is absolutely in tune with Jane's own fighting spirit when it came to the arts. She once told an interviewer, *I will not do anything for anybody unless I love the cause, and then I go at things like a tiger because I care so much.*

She was a tiger for Pacific Opera, bringing to bear both fierceness and love as she

dealt with the vicissitudes of helping an opera company flourish over three decades.

Jane also worked tirelessly for a multitude of other causes — helping raise over \$12 million for the Greater Victoria Hospital Foundation and serving on the boards of the Lester B. Person College of the Pacific, the Victoria Commonwealth Games, CBC, the TELUS Community Board, and the University of Victoria Foundation.

Proclaimed an Honourary Citizen of Victoria in 1998, she received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002; an honorary Doctor of Law degree from the University of Victoria in 2004; Leadership Victoria's 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award; and in 2008 she was named an Honourary Life Member of Pacific Opera Victoria.

Jane Heffelfinger's influence extended far beyond POV. The citation for the Order of BC awarded to her in 2000 reads, in part, *Her dedication to showcasing Canadian talent changed opera. Her leadership and volunteer fundraising brought new standards to Canadian opera.*

We all hope to one day look back on our lives and know we've made a difference... Jane could do that in spades, and we are all the better off for having her in our lives. She lives eternally in our hearts.



Photo: Barbara Pedrick

*With its ravishing vocal risk-taking, opera is like a vocal Olympics ... Its power and beauty will reach into your hearts and touch you in places you didn't know were there ... Opera has the ability to transform the audience and envelop it in a shared experience reminding us of our common humanity.*

Jane Heffelfinger  
quoted in *Bravo! The History of Opera in British Columbia*, by Rosemary Cunningham

## Events Calendar

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS

**INSIDE OPERA with Robert Holliston**  
Sunday, September 25  
TWO SESSIONS: 10 am and noon

Phillip T. Young Recital Hall, MacLaurin Music Wing, University of Victoria.

Robert Holliston and guests present a guided tour of *The Flying Dutchman*. Bring your friends. It's all free, including the parking.

Please reserve before noon September 23, specifying which session you plan to attend. 250-382-1641 or [rsvp@pov.bc.ca](mailto:rsvp@pov.bc.ca)

### Sense of Occasion

Thursday, October 6, 6:30 pm.

East Lobby, the Royal Theatre.

Pre-performance reception to celebrate the opening night of *The Flying Dutchman*. Gourmet finger foods and wine. Space is limited. Dress is festive. \$25 per person.

Call 250-382-1641 to reserve with payment.

### THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

at the Royal Theatre

October 6, 8, 12, and 14, 8 pm

Matinée: Sunday, October 16, 2:30 pm

Pre-performance lobby lecture:  
6:45 pm (1:30 pm on October 16)  
in German with English surtitles

### DONOR EVENTS

Invitations have been mailed for the following special donor recognition events:

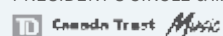
#### President's Circle Meet & Greet Working Rehearsal

Wednesday, September 14, 2 pm  
St. John the Divine Rehearsal Hall

#### POV Season Launch Party

Thursday, September 22, 7:00 to 9:30 pm  
Parkside Resort and Spa Indoor Courtyard,  
810 Humboldt Street  
For members of the President's Circle and Impresario Circle.

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE & IMPRESARIO CIRCLE SPONSOR



EDITOR: MAUREEN WOODALL

BRAVO SOCIETY SPONSOR



PUBLIC FUNDING



# Key Notes

## The Genesis of *The Flying Dutchman*

Richard Wagner's turbulent romance about a sea-captain doomed to sail the ocean forever and the lovestruck girl who yearns to save him was, in large part, the result of a bad trip.

In July 1839, the 26-year-old composer, recently fired from his job as Music Director of the Riga opera and so deeply in debt that his passport had been confiscated, decided to flee to Paris, the centre of Grand Opera in Europe. He planned to take the city by storm with his new opera, *Rienzi*.

Wagner, with his wife Minna and their giant Newfoundland dog Robber in tow, set off on a mad journey, crossing the Russo-Prussian frontier on foot, evading armed Cossack sentries, and finally embarking for London on a small merchant vessel, the *Thetis*.

Violent storms turned an eight-day sea voyage into three weeks of terror, during which the *Thetis* had to seek refuge in the Norwegian harbour of Sandviken.

In his book *Mein Leben (My Life)*, Wagner wrote that on reaching the safety of the fjord, *a feeling of indescribable content came over me as the enormous granite walls of the cliff echoed the chantings of the crew as they cast anchor ... The sharp rhythm of their call ... soon resolved itself into the theme of the sailors' chorus in my Der fliegende Holländer. The idea of this opera ... took on a definite poetic and musical colour under the influence of the impressions I had just gained.*

But after the ship left Norway, they were caught in another violent storm: *We thought death would be upon us at any moment. It was not the terrible force pitching the ship uncontrollably about, entirely at the mercy of a sea showing itself now as a darkest abyss and now as a steep mountain peak, that awakened in me the fear of death; rather my premonition of our approaching end was based on the despondency of the*



*crew, from whom I caught despairing and malevolent looks, as if we were to be blamed in some superstitious way for the threatening disaster... Minna expressed the heartfelt desire to die with me, if need be, by a bolt of lightning rather than by sinking while yet alive into the vasty deep.*

They survived and made it safely to Paris, only to find that the Opéra was not interested in Wagner's new opera. It was only thanks to the support of that guru of Grand Opera, Giacomo Meyerbeer, that *Rienzi* was finally produced — in Dresden, in 1842.

*Rienzi* was a hit. It made Wagner's reputation, for it was totally in fashion — a five-hour extravaganza of grandiose choruses, lavish orchestration, dramatic spectacle, and sumptuous stage effects — all culminating in a building collapsing on stage and burying the principal characters alive!

The opera was based on the novel *Rienzi, the last of the Roman tribunes* by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, who today is best known as the inspiration for the annual Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest which offers a prize for the most floridly overwrought opening sentence to a bad novel. (It was Bulwer-Lytton's novel *Paul*

*Clifford* that began with the words: *It was a dark and stormy night.*)

Meanwhile, other dark and stormy nights were percolating in Wagner's brain as he laboured over *The Flying Dutchman*. He wrote a prose sketch and, hoping for an audition that never happened, composed three of the opera's songs: Senta's Ballad recounting the Dutchman legend, the Sailors' song of Act 3, and the phantom song of the Dutchman's crew.

In July 1841, desperate for cash, Wagner reluctantly sold the prose sketch for *Dutchman* to the director of the Paris Opéra, who handed it over to Pierre-Louis Dietsch to compose an opera called *Le vaisseau fantôme* — which premiered in November 1842 and sank without a trace after 11 performances.

Meanwhile, Wagner completed his own *Dutchman* and shopped it round to Munich, Berlin, and finally Dresden, which held the premiere on January 2, 1843, with Wagner conducting.

Although *Dutchman* was moderately successful, the audience, primed to expect another conventional Grand Opera in the vein of *Rienzi*, wasn't quite ready for what is now seen as the first great work of a colossal genius.



## Synopsis

Daland's ship has taken refuge in the bay of Sandwike a few miles from his home. As a storm rages, a ship with blood-red sails and black masts casts anchor; its spectral crew furl the sails as the captain – the Dutchman – steps ashore. Condemned to sail the seas forever, he is cast ashore every seven years to search for a wife whose love will save him.

The Dutchman offers Daland treasure in return for a night's lodging and, on learning Daland has a daughter, offers to marry her. Daland, dazzled by the stranger's wealth, agrees immediately.

In Daland's home a group of young women are hard at work spinning – save for Senta, Daland's daughter, who gazes intently at a portrait of the Dutchman. When Senta's nurse Mary scolds her for her idleness, Senta recounts the legend of the Dutchman and shocks everyone by declaring that she will be the one to save him.

Senta's suitor Erik announces that Daland's ship is approaching, and he begs Senta to persuade her father to let them marry. But Senta's thoughts are fixed on the Dutchman.

Daland enters with the stranger and tells Senta of the riches in store if she marries him. Senta recognizes the Dutchman from his portrait and agrees unreservedly to be faithful to him till death.

The two ships are at anchor. The Dutchman's ship is eerily silent, while the Norwegian sailors dance and drink with the village girls. Their offer to share with the Dutchman's crew is met with silence. Then the sea around the Dutchman's ship becomes violent and the ghostly crew begin to sing, mocking their captain's efforts to find love and redemption. The Norwegians try to drown out the ghostly song but finally flee.

Distraught that Senta has agreed to marry the Dutchman, Erik reminds her that she had pledged her love to him. The Dutchman overhears them and, convinced that Senta is unfaithful, orders his crew to set sail.

As he sails away, Senta cries out that she is true to him till death and throws herself into the sea. At that moment the

## FURTHER LEARNING ABOUT The Flying Dutchman

For musical excerpts, links, and more about the opera and artists, visit [www.pov.bc.ca](http://www.pov.bc.ca)

Dutchman's ship sinks and the Dutchman and Senta are seen embracing, ascending toward heaven.

### The Legend

While his experience as an accidental tourist in Norway inspired the flavour of *Dutchman's* music, Wagner was certainly already familiar with the legend of a ghost ship doomed to sail the seas forever.

The story emerged from accounts of a Dutch ship attempting to round the Cape of Good Hope in a storm. Refusing to turn back, the captain cursed the weather and swore he'd be eternally damned before giving up. In punishment for his blasphemy, he was condemned to sail forever in a phantom ship with a phantom crew.

The story became wildly popular in the 19th century. As myths go, it is rather modern. According to Metropolitan Opera broadcaster commentator M. Owen Lee, it *certainly sounds like an old sailor's yarn, but in fact in Wagner's day it was relatively new ... the Flying Dutchman himself appeared in print only a few years before Wagner took that perilous sea voyage. The Dutchman seems suddenly to have emerged, along with Dracula and the Frankenstein monster, in the nineteenth century, as if to prove that new myths could still surface in an industrial age.*

Wagner based his opera on Heinrich Heine's delicious retelling of the myth in a satirical 1834 novel *Aus den Memoiren des Herren von Schnabelewopski (The Memoirs of Mr. von Schnabelewopski)*, in which Mr. von Schnabelewopski recounts the experience of attending a play in Amsterdam about the Dutchman legend.

In this version of the story, the cursed sea-captain is allowed ashore every seven years to find a woman who will save him. But as Herr von Schnabelewopski cynically observes, *Poor Dutchman! He is often only too glad to be saved from his marriage and his wife-savior, and get again on board.*

Mr. von Schnabelewopski is less interested in the play than in hooking up with a blonde

who's been dropping orange peels on his head from the balcony; he leaves the theatre for a romantic interlude, returning in time for the last scene as Mrs. Flying Dutchman, like Senta, throws herself off a cliff to save her man. But Schnabelewopski points out a moral – that *Women should never marry a Flying Dutchman, while we men may learn that at best, women are the ruin of us all!*

Wagner kept most of Heine's plot elements – the seven-year cycle; the acquisitive father eager to marry off his daughter; the girl's fixation on the picture of the Dutchman on her wall, and the notion of redemption through the absolute love of a selfless woman. But Wagner ignored the satirical edge of Heine's novel.

At first Wagner also followed Heine in placing the action in Scotland. But during rehearsals he moved it to Norway and gave the name Sandwike to the bay in which Daland's ship takes refuge. He may have made these changes to distance his opera from *Le vaisseau fantôme*, which had its premiere just two months before *Dutchman* – or to finally pay tribute to the tumultuous Norwegian sea and the cliff-lined fjord that so inspired the most gripping music in the opera.

### The Music

During rehearsals of *Dutchman* in Munich in 1864, conductor Franz Lachner grumbled about *the wind that blows out at you wherever you open the score.*

Indeed, much of the opera's music is bracing – tempestuous – in your face. Full of variety, it evokes multiple worlds – mystical and real, devilish and divine.

The music calls up the storm-tossed world of sailors and the raging sea; it conjures up the eerie, supernatural haunts of the Dutchman and his crew of zombie sailors.

And it invites us into the ordinary world of working folk. Behind the charming Spinning Song and the rambunctious Sailors' Chorus we can find down-to-earth men and women carving a living out of a harsh environment – something we don't necessarily expect amid the *Sturm und Drang* of Wagner.

In *Dutchman*, Wagner began feeling his way toward the techniques that would dominate his later operas: increasing the dramatic role of the orchestra, making it an equal partner with the singers; moving away from traditional numbers opera into a

to page 3

## Our 2012/2013 Season

### A Message to our Subscribers and Supporters

Since expanding our season to four operas in 2009/10, POV has attracted record audiences with vibrant and unique original productions.

The 2011/12 season promises to be one of our most thrilling ever, with *The Flying Dutchman* – our first Wagner opera in 23 years; *Mary's Wedding* – our first fully commissioned new work, a story set on the Prairies that pays tribute to Canada's role in WWI; *Carmen* – uncontested as the most popular opera of all time; and *Maria Stuarda* – just in time for Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee!

We are proud of all we've accomplished in partnership with our artists, donors, sponsors, subscribers, audience, and public funding partners.

However, we have made the decision to present a three-opera season in 2012/2013. Here's why:

- Our last two four-opera seasons have ended with deficits. Given the growing uncertainty in the economy, we believe that for the time being, continuing to offer four operas presents too much risk for POV.
- We planned the expansion to a four-opera season in better times – after a decade of record growth and before the recession of 2008.
- Although our community support has increased each season, the economy and reduced government support have made our goal of sustaining four operas impracticable. One need only look at what is happening to other companies around North America to recognize that these are challenging times for the arts.

While a four-opera season allows POV to explore and present a much wider range of repertoire, to make the best use of our artistic and administrative resources, and to better fulfill our mandate to our audience and artistic partners, we also recognize that we have a duty to protect both the long-term health of POV and the artistic quality of our productions and programs.

**Planning for a three-opera season in 2012/13 will help us maintain our artistic quality while building up the resources and sustainable revenues we will need to successfully expand our programming in the future.** Our highest priority is to continue to deliver spellbinding productions at the standard of excellence this community has come to expect from Pacific Opera – while managing your opera company with care and prudence!

We are confident that with your support, POV's future will only grow brighter.

And as always, we look forward to seeing you at the opera, and to the exciting season ahead!

**David Flaherty**  
President

**Timothy Vernon**  
Artistic Director

**Patrick Corrigan**  
Executive Director

*The Music, continued from p.2*

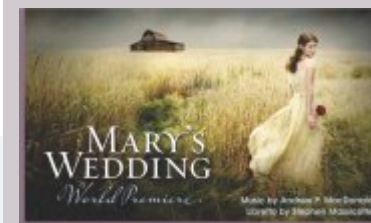
through-composed music drama; working to fuse music, song, orchestration, drama, text, visual arts, and stagecraft into a total work of art – what Wagner called *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Even with this early opera, Wagner was beginning to sense the possibilities ahead. Of his *Flying Dutchman* he wrote:

*The vast wild ocean ... does not willingly and obediently permit itself to be polished down to fit a modern opera ... The modern division into Arias, Duets, Finales, and so on, I had at once to give up; and in their stead narrate the Saga in one breath, just as should be done in a good poem ... never a Frenchman nor Italian would have dreamt of conceiving it.*

Maureen Woodall

## Mary's Wedding Memory Project



**Tell us your story to celebrate this world premiere opera and our Canadian History**

Do you have old family photos or letters from 1914 to 1918? How was your family affected by World War I? We invite you to submit your stories and photos so that we can share them on our web site and display them at the McPherson Playhouse during the performances of *Mary's Wedding* in November.

Just go to [www.pov.bc.ca/maryswedding.html](http://www.pov.bc.ca/maryswedding.html) to post your materials on our Mary's Wedding Web Forum.

## About the Artists

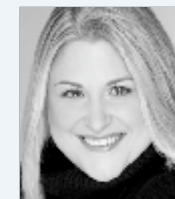


**John Fanning, CM**, debuts the role of the *Dutchman* in this, his 10th POV appearance. He has performed often at the Metropolitan Opera, as well as at San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera, and the Canadian Opera

Company. Notable Wagnerian roles include Wotan and Gunther with the COC. Next spring he debuts with the English National Opera.

*This was surely a man who could call doom down from the heavens.*

Get Out Magazine, Arizona



We welcome **Joni Henson** in her POV debut as *Senta*. For the Canadian Opera Company she has performed Elisabetta in *Don Carlos*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, and Guttrune in *Götterdämmerung*. A prize winner at the Concours

International de Chant de Verviers in Belgium and the Concours International de Chant de Marmande in France, she was also a semi-finalist in the Metropolitan National Council Auditions.

*It's not hard to imagine this singer performing major Wagner roles in important opera houses within the next few years.*

The Globe & Mail



**Gary Relyea (Daland)** has previously appeared with POV as Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* and as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, a role he also performed in the movie *Leporello's Revenge*. He has sung as a soloist with

all the major Canadian orchestras and many Canadian choirs. His discography includes CBC's *Thine Angel's Spirits* and *Rarities By Rossini And Verdi*.

*Relyea almost stole the show... with a resonant bass-baritone and an honest emotional intensity that resonated right to the Royal Theatre's rafters.*

La Scena Musicale



**Glynis Leyshon** has directed 21 POV productions, as well as productions for Vancouver, Calgary, and Edmonton Opera, Opera Lyra Ottawa, the Shaw Festival, Tarragon Theatre, and Bard on the Beach. She has been Head

of the Opera as Theatre Programme at The Banff Centre, Artistic Director of the Playhouse Theatre Company in Vancouver, and Artistic Director of Victoria's Belfry Theatre.

*Glynis Leyshon ... has a knack for making convincing actors out of opera singers and convincing theatre out of opera librettos.*

Times Colonist

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CHORUS DEVELOPMENT



MARY'S WEDDING COMMISSION

