

# New England Opera Club



*New England Opera Club Newsletter*

*Logo by Barbara Winston*

**Date:** April 7, 2019  
**Time:** 2:00 - 4:30

**Place:** Watertown Free Public Library  
123 Main Street, Watertown, MA

## ***Spring Song: The Art of the Vocal Transcription***

Speaker: Ed Tapper

How is it possible to have a NEOC program filled with dazzling vocal performances that contains no opera, lieder or any music at all composed for the human voice? Simple: Feature melodies from orchestral and instrumental classics transcribed for voice.

These once enormously popular transcriptions were either created by the composer himself by adding lyrics to his own, popular, non-vocal melodies, or fashioned retrospectively by a later composer. From the earliest days of recordings, this genre proved immensely popular, enabling the public to enjoy their best-loved tunes from the instrumental and symphonic repertoire, sung by their favorite opera stars. These vocal transcriptions also figured prominently in recital programs by several historic singers. In today's age of strict "political correctness" in the music world, this entertaining genre has all but vanished.

One of our regular presenters, Ed Tapper, will be returning in April to share a fascinating group of his favorite recordings of vocal arrangements. These rare selections will feature melodies from the Baroque to the Modern era, with a decided emphasis on the Romantic, sung in 10 different languages. Similarly, the soloists will vary greatly, from lovelorn basses to dazzling coloratura sopranos, as will the selections, representing every recorded genre, from the acoustic 78 to the compact disc.

In the past, Ed has presented diverse programs with subjects ranging from specific historic figures to the struggles of Jewish and African-American opera singers. Timed to coincide with the start of Spring, this delightful program will provide a true departure for Ed, and, for his friends in the New England Opera Club, a tuneful afternoon at the "Pops."

### **Directions and parking:**

- *From the West:* Take Route 20 East (Main Street) to Watertown Square. WFPL is at 123 Main Street.
- *From the East:* Take Rte. 16 (Mt. Auburn St.) west. Turn right on Main Street. WFPL is at 123 Main Street.
- *Parking:* Limited metered parking is in back of the library and on the street. All parking is metered - Sundays are free.
- *Public Transportation:* The library is accessible via MBTA Bus routes Express 502, Express 504, 52, 57, 59, 70, 70A, and 71. It is less than a five minute walk to the library from the buses that arrive at Watertown Yard.

### **The Library is fully handicap-accessible**

*Unfortunately, the Peter Sullivan tribute is being moved to a date later this summer, due to circumstances beyond our control.*



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**Annual Membership:**

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/ \$45 for a couple at  
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**2019 NEOC Programs**

*(listings are subject to change)*

**May 5,** *The second visit from the Berkshire Festival Organizers |*  
**June 2:** *Speaker Erika Reitshamer: Opera is Cool: Scandinavian Opera  
Houses and Great Nordic singers |* **July:** *no presentation |*  
**August 11:** *Speaker Bill Cotten |* **September 15:** *Speaker Meredith  
Palmer |* **October 13:** *TBA |* **November 10:** *TBA |*  
**December 15:** *Speaker Jack Jarzavek*

Sunday, April 7, 2019 at 3:pm 1689 Centre Street, West Roxbury, MA <b>REQUIEM FOR THE LIVING</b> for Chorus and Chamber Orchestra Music by Dan Forrest	<i>First Boston Performance</i> Dedham Choral Society, Jonathan Barnhart, Director Tickets: \$30 / Seniors: \$25 / Children: \$5 (ages 5-12)   <a href="http://www.dedhamchoral.org">www.dedhamchoral.org</a>
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***Lohengrin comes to Barcelona's Liceu in April 2020.***

*Posted by the Wagner Society of Northern California, 3/19/19*



A new production by Katharina Wagner, starring Klaus Florian Vogt, Erin Wall, Günter Groissböck and Evelyn Herlitzius will be conducted by Josep Pons.

The performances are currently being sold only in subscription packages.



**The Rape of Lucretia - Boston Lyric Opera**

When the Male Chorus (Jesse Darden) entered in modern dress I thought, "Oh no! A 'concept' production of an obscure opera, where they're saving money on costumes..."

Wrong! This was a rich, well-conceived production featuring brilliant performers, amazing staging, excellent set/lighting concepts... and beautiful, period-appropriate costumes.

The Female Chorus (Antonia Tamer) was also in modern dress, since the Chorus describe themselves as commentators from a later, Christian, era, but the people in the actual drama - Collatinus (Brandon Cedel), Junius (David McFerrin), Tarquinius (Duncan Rock), Lucretia (Kelly O'Connor), Bianca (Margaret Lattimore), and Lucia (Sara Womble) - were clearly living in Rome in the period before democracy.

They sang in modern English, since this opera was composed by the British Benjamin Britten. Their diction was quite good, but I was glad to take advantage of the provided surtitles, since English is often hard to understand when sung.

This production deserved the standing ovation it received!

*- Marion Leeds Carroll*

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*The mission of this nonprofit association is educational: To promote appreciation of the art of opera; to support performances of quality opera in New England; to encourage talented students in their pursuit of operatic careers.*

To subscribe to our newsletter or to join our mailing list, please send your name and email address to [neoperclub@gmail.com](mailto:neoperclub@gmail.com)

**Jacopo Peri Award**

*The NEOC frequently honors a person who has made a significant contribution to the local opera scene.*

Eunice Alberts  
John Balme  
Scott Brumit  
Sarah Caldwell  
Schuyler Chapin  
Carole Charnow  
Richard Conrad  
Federico Cortese  
Patricia Craig and  
Richard Cassilly  
Phyllis Curtin  
Jan Curtis  
Sharon Daniels  
Janice Mancini Del Sesto  
Ron Della Chiesa  
D'Anna Fortunato  
Randolph J. Fuller  
Boris Goldovsky  
Donald Gramm  
Roland Hayes  
Robert Honeysucker  
Norman Kelley  
Stephen Lord  
William Miranda  
John Moriarty  
Esther Nelson  
Martin Pearlman  
Bradley Pennington  
Jeffrey Rink  
Eleanor Steber  
Susan Stone  
John M. Tischio  
Ernest Triplett

**London Times Gives Netrebko/Kaufmann, et al, in 'La Forza' the 5 stars deserved from the Tribune  
*La forza del destino*, Royal Opera House**

Richard Morrison

Like the plot, in which the tenor accidentally shoots dead the father of the woman he loves (rarely a helpful move), Verdi's monster raving loony opera of ill-fate, Catholic guilt and vengeance has itself acquired a reputation for smiting bad luck on performers. And, true to form, rumours abound about the Royal Opera's new production.



One or other of the stars wouldn't turn up, it was said (they certainly weren't all present for the dress rehearsal). They were even whispers that the director himself, Christof Loy, had not been the most assiduous in attending his own rehearsals.

Sometimes, however, the force of destiny throws a bone to humanity, or at least that segment able to afford tickets soaring to £285 in the stalls, and a reputed £3,000 on resale sites. And the truth is that you are unlikely to hear Verdi better sung or played this year. In an opera with so many heartstopping arias and barnstorming choral and orchestral moments, that's almost all that matters.

Though she's an unlikely candidate for self-imposed exile to a hermitage, Anna Netrebko is in magnificent, anguished form as Leonora.

The voice has even more power in the lower register these days, but not at the expense of her timbre, which is still voluptuous right up to some exquisite floated high pianissimos. When she delivers Verdi's radiantly arching motto-phrase – the musical embodiment of divine grace – 2,000 spines tingle.

Jonas Kaufmann can't match that kind of sumptuous lustre, but I liked the way he matches his characterisation of her lover Alvaro (the chap who's careless with the pistol) to his rugged and volatile but sometimes uneven vocal delivery. This Alvaro, leaping in through a window in big boots, is a bit of a self-centred and sulky bully. Interesting twist.

No wonder that Leonora's brother Carlo, sung with terrific, brooding malevolence by the outstanding Ludovic Tézier, hates him so much.

Their duel, prolonged over two acts, is like two raging bulls vying for a prize turnip.

Around this central trio, on a night when everyone seems turbo-charged, are compelling cameos: Ferruccio Furlanetto's barrel-voiced Padre, Alessandro Corbelli's venal Fra Melitone (how Verdi mocked his clerics!), Veronica Simeoni's spitfire if splashy Preziosilla. There are stunning solos from the pit too – the solo clarinet *primus inter pares* in an orchestra brilliantly fired up by Antonio Pappano.

And Loy's staging? Presented in one adaptable set (Christian Schmidt) that opens out to an old-fashioned painted backcloth for the battle, there are childhood flashbacks in the overture, some trendy if inconsequential video projections and an entire vaudeville show, replete with hyperactive acrobats, presumably to keep us from fidgeting in Act III.

No need. This world-class cast is transfixing enough.

♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ **Opera Diary** ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

**Local Opera and Classical Music, March 2019**

For up-to-date activities, visit FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/NEoperaevents/>  
Join NEOC! Visit [operaclub.org/membership.html](http://operaclub.org/membership.html)

March 28-April 6, 8 PM

**Boston Opera Collaborative** | *Don Giovanni*, Mozart | Limited seating |  
<https://www.bostonoperacollaborative.org/don-giovanni-march-19>  
Ben Franklin Institute of Technology, 41 Berkeley Street, Boston

## New England Opera Club Newsletter

April 5, 1:30 PM; 6, 9, 8 PM

**Boston Symphony Orchestra** | Gustavo Dudamel conducts Schumann and Stravinsky  
Symphony Hall, 301 Mass. Ave. Boston | <https://www.bso.org>

April 7, 7:30 PM

**Music For Food** | Love Matters | <https://boston.carpe-diem.events/calendar/8557281-boston-season-love-matters-at-brown-hall-new-england-conservatory/> | NEC's Brown Hall, 290 Huntington Avenue, Boston

April 9, 12:30 – 2:00 PM

**Sudbury Senior Center** | Countess Maritza, Kálmán - talk by Erika Reitshamer  
40 Fairbank Road, Sudbury | 978.443.3055, <https://sudburyseniorcenter.org/>



April 11, 12, 13, 8 PM

**Boston Symphony Orchestra** | Gustavo Dudamel conducts Desenne, Ginastera and Estevez  
Symphony Hall, 301 Mass. Ave. Boston | <https://www.bso.org>

April 13, 3 PM

**Opera On Tap Boston** | Outside the Box (Fach I'm Confused)  
Club Cafe, 209 Columbus Ave., Boston | <https://www.operaontap.org/boston/>

April 13, 7:30 PM

**Juventas New Music Ensemble** | Voices of America, including White Snake Productions' *I Am A Dreamer Who No Longer Dreams*, a new opera by Jorge Sosa | <https://www.bostonsingersresource.org/vocal-music-calendar/voices-america>  
First Church Boston, 66 Marlborough St., Boston

April 16, 12:30 – 2:00 PM

**Sudbury Senior Center** | Die Zauberflöte, Mozart, directed by Ingmar Bergman - talk by Erika Reitshamer  
40 Fairbank Road, Sudbury | 978.443.3055, <https://sudburyseniorcenter.org/>

April 27, 12 PM

**Opera On Tap Boston** | Drunk Opera History: Puccini Edition  
The Burren, Davis Square, Somerville | <https://www.operaontap.org/boston/>

April 27/19 3:00 PM

**Handel + Haydn Society** | Nigra Sum Sed Formosa (I am black but beautiful)  
Roxbury Community College | <http://www.rcc.mass.edu/> | <https://cart.handelandhaydn.org/single/eventDetail.aspx?p=658>

April 27, 8 PM

**Emmanuel Music** | Evening Concert Series: Bach and Harbison

Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury Street, Boston | [emmanuelmusic.org/calendar\\_tickets/18-19season/caltix18-19\\_reconciliation.html](http://emmanuelmusic.org/calendar_tickets/18-19season/caltix18-19_reconciliation.html)



Poppea

April 26, 7:30 PM; April 28, 3:00 PM

**Boston Baroque** | *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Monteverdi  
NEC's Jordan Hall, 30 Gainsborough St, Boston | (617) 987-8600, [bostonbaroque.org/concerts/all-shows](http://bostonbaroque.org/concerts/all-shows)

April 26, 7:30 PM (Pre-Concert Talk at 6:30 PM)

**Cantata Singers** | Women Composers of America | [cantatasingers.org/April-2019/](http://cantatasingers.org/April-2019/)  
American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 200 Beacon Street, Somerville

April 28, afternoon

**Boston City Singers/Cambridge Children's Chorus** | Providing the highest level of musical training and wide ranging performance opportunities to young people ages 4-18  
First Parish Milton, 535 Canton Ave., Milton | <https://bostoncitysingers.org/>



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