

Judith Forst receives Opera Canada award

Our honorary patron, mezzo-soprano Judith Forst, received accolades this past fall from Opera Canada, as she was awarded a Rubies Award, alongside conductor Mario Bernardi and bass Joseph Rouleau. As well, she received an Ontario Arts Council Lifetime Achievement Award last year.

Born in New Westminster, Ms. Forst is a leading singing actress on the contemporary opera stage, winning praise and awards for her technical mastery, musicality and the intense characterization of her portrayals. She has sung with almost every company in North America, including more than thirty roles in seventeen seasons at the Met. She won rave reviews for her portrayal of the Kostelnicka in Janacek's *Jenufa* in the composer's home territory in Prague. She has ranged widely and adventurously in her repertoire throughout her career, scoring a string of major successes in everything from bel canto to contemporary works. She is now in the fourth decade of her career, having started studying voice and piano as a child, leading eventually to studies at the University of British Columbia under Robert Morris and French Tickner. Of the latter, she says, "He scared the high notes out of me."

According to an article by Robert Jordan in Opera Canada's magazine, Mr. Forst's *Acredo* is preparation, preparation, preparation - she is a consummate professional known for her style and integrity, whose voice has been called "bright, sensuous, seamless" and "opulent, golden, mellifluous and shimmering." Her other recent awards include an honorary doctorate from UBC in 1991 - she was the first performing-artist alumna to receive the degree - followed by one from the University of Victoria in 1995, a Freedom of the City Award from the city of Port Moody, where she now makes her home, and she has received the Order of Canada and the Order of British Columbia. We are thrilled to have her as an honorary patron, and wish her continued success.

We're famous!

Recent requests for some of our recordings led us to wonder what caused all the interest. Wouldn't you know it, Phoenix's recording of *The Beaufort Scale* by Aulis Sallinen (*To Music - 10th Anniversary Album*) was noted in the book *Defining the Wind: the Beaufort Scale and How a 19th-Century Admiral Turned Science into Poetry*, by Scott Huler. According to a review in the *Dallas Morning News*, the 2004 book is the story of an obsession that started when the author, then a copyeditor for a small technical publisher, discovered the entry for the "Beaufort Scale" (measurement for wind intensity), in the Merriam-Webster Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary. What made the entry unforgettable for Huler was the inherent poetry in its definition and description of wind. The author then began a two-decade long quest around the world to discover all he could about Admiral Beaufort, the originator of the scale. A taste of the definition, at level five of the Beaufort scale, the effects of a fresh breeze: "small trees in leaf begin to sway; crested wavelets form on inland waters." Who knew?

VANCOUVER ARTS AWARDS

Ramona Luengen, our esteemed director, was chosen as the inaugural recipient of a Vancouver Arts Awards in March last year.

The Awards honour both achievement and promise: in this case, the fantastic philanthropic achievements of one of our patrons, Martha Lou ("Louie") Henley, who was the first-ever recipient in the category of philanthropy. Honorees in seven categories - design arts, visual arts, media and recording arts, performing arts, writing and publishing, and culinary, in addition to philanthropy - each chose an emerging or up and coming artist on which to bestow a commission.

Ramona was honoured to be chosen as Louie's recipient, and received \$5000 to go towards a commission. The funds will go to support Ramona's work for Vancouver Opera's *Naomi's Road*, a work for young audiences based on Joy Kogawa's novel of the same name. The 45-minute opera, written for four singers and piano, will tour 100 to 150 schools across the province in 2005-2006.

Recently commissioned by CBC to compose a piano concerto for Jane Coop and the CBC Radio Orchestra, Ramona has also recently joined Roy Campbell, interim music director at Shaughnessy Heights United Church, to assist their choir, Sanctuary Singers.

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OUR 21st SEASON



The inaugural run of our Young Choral Composers Development Program culminates this spring with the performance of several works by these up and coming artists at our spring concert, *Revelations*. Phoenix started the program in October, 2003 with phase one -- inviting students to participate and asking teachers to promote the program, as well as nominate students for it.

Since then, we have introduced the art of choral music to a number of high school students as well as to university students, giving them access to all of the knowledge and training our choir members and our director have received. Participants have attended open rehearsals for the past two seasons, including a session this past fall that was more classroom than rehearsal -- students were able to ask questions (and even interrupt the director and choir!) about various choral styles, approaches and textures while the choir demonstrated techniques. A day-long workshop this past January, attended by 13 students, allowed the choir to read through compositions submitted by the students, followed by intense discussion on each piece. We hope

that we've inspired the participants and that many of them will pursue choral composition. We learned a lot from them as well! At our next concert, composers Anny Chen, Heather Harty and Elizabeth Knudson will get the chance to introduce their work and hear it performed for the first time. A great opportunity for young composers.

REVELATIONS

8pm, Saturday, April 16, 2005
Queen's Avenue United Church
529 Queen's Avenue (at 6th St) New Westminster

Join us as we premiere works written by the promising participants of our inaugural Young Choral Composers Development Program. We are also delighted to be able to premiere two additional works by young BC composers: a new work by Michael Onwood, and *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, by Eric North.

TICKETS: Adults \$25 | Seniors/Students \$20 |
High School students (ID required) \$10
CALL: 604-986-7520
EMAIL: tickets@phoenixchamberchoir.bc.ca



THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SOLICITOR GENERAL, GAMING POLICY AND ENFORCEMENT BRANCH, PROVINCE OF BC

THE MARTHA LOU HENLEY
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Astronaut Roberta Bondar touches ground

Phoenix was thrilled to play host to Canadian astronaut Dr. Roberta at the last concert of our 20th anniversary season, *Lost in the Stars* in May last year. It was a fantastic success and truly a moving evening for our audience, as they enjoyed a wondrous combination of music and image. In between ethereal singing by the choir, Dr. Bondar showed amazing images she's taken both from space, and on earth, as she is an avid photographer of the environment.

Ramona Luengen, our director, has long been a fan of our guest, "I've always admired Dr. Bondar, but not just as an astronaut/physician/photographer with many an accolade behind her name," she told *The Georgia Straight*. "What I'm really inspired by is her awe for the beauty and fragility of the earth."



Photo by Dean Buscher

people know from the soundtrack to 2001: A Space Odyssey. It's sort of a litmus test for choirs...and had been sitting on the repertoire back-burner for several years. Then, as I was planning what to do for our 20th anniversary, I thought - this probably shouldn't be one of those trips down memory lane, singing our favourite music from the past 20 years. I wanted our music to be part of a bigger picture, not just a traditional choral concert."

The images shown by Dr. Bondar, many of which can be found in her photography books, were captured both from space as she orbited the planet, and on land as she travelled across its surface. They seemed at times to be impressionist paintings of ice, sand and sea. Listening to her speak brought a hush over the audience as her passion for the environment shone through.

She says, on her website www.robertabondar.com, "Filters on our perceptions are universal but the unknown, the "not seen", is there all the time. Look for the hidden. The first step in acquiring new information is paying attention." Dr. Bondar is not just an astronaut and photographer, she is an author, physician, scientist and a "passionate earthling".



Photo by Allison Markin

Members of our Young Choral Composers Development Program at a recent rehearsal, intent on the task at hand.



Join us for our 22nd season

Next year we'll be performing all of our concerts at Shaughnessy Heights United Church, 1550 West 33rd Avenue in Vancouver (just west of Granville). Subscribe to our 2005-2006 series:

THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE

8pm Saturday, November 5, 2005

Works by MacMillan, Mauersberger, Moran and Swayne, featuring organist Roy Campbell.

A PHOENIX CHRISTMAS

8pm Sunday, December 18, 2005

Join us for our traditional Christmas concert, a seasonal favourite, featuring our annual audience singalong.

BON VOYAGE!

8pm Saturday, May 13, 2006

The final concert of the season, wish us *bon voyage* as well prepare for our tour to Europe.

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What's coming up

Even before this season comes to a close, we are eagerly planning for next year. The 2005-2006 season promises to be an exciting one for us, as we look forward to an international tour to Europe in the summer of 2006, in addition to our regular series of concerts. We are honoured to represent the choral community of Canada abroad, and if our last tour is any indication, our members will learn a lot and we may even get a CD out of the trip.

But we can't do it alone. While we are generously supported by several foundations as well as through government grants, we need to raise funds to get us to Europe. We are calling on you, our faithful audience, to lend us a hand, by making a donation:

Miraculous Phoenixians give \$5000 or more;
Angelic Phoenixians give \$1000 to \$4999;
Unbelievable Phoenixians give \$450 to \$999;
Fanatical Phoenixians give \$350 to \$449;
Passionate Phoenixians give \$250 to \$349;
Fervent Phoenixians give \$150 to \$249;
Enthusiastic Phoenixians give \$50 to \$149;
Loyal Phoenixians give \$49 and under.

Donations over \$10 receive a tax receipt, and each level offers an attractive package including such benefits as reserved seating, tickets for you and your friends, rehearsal and reception invitations, CDs, and our profound gratitude!

Please consider supporting us, and bring your cheque, made out to Phoenix Chamber Choir, to a future concert, or pop it in the mail. Thank you!



Photo by Chris Cameron

Our director, Dr. Ramona Luengen, and Martha Lou Henley congratulate each other at the first Vancouver Arts Awards. Read all about it in an article elsewhere in this issue.