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January 2015

The Metropolitan Opera
National Council Auditions
ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

Karen Mohr, Editor

Rocky Mountain Region Welcomes Nevada District

This month the Rocky Mountain Regional auditions welcomes a brand new district. Joining the region's Colorado-Wyoming and Utah districts, the Nevada district held its first auditions on January 10, 2015 at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. Twenty-nine singers from



Canada, Bogota-Columbia, Puerto Rico, Alabama, California, Idaho, New York and many talented singers from Nevada competed for a chance to come to Denver in February for the Regional Finals. University of Nevada at Las Vegas voice professors Dr. Alfonse Anderson and Dr. Tod Fitzpatrick along with Tod's wife Elaine had wanted to bring the auditions to Las Vegas for some time. An opportunity presented itself through a neighborhood magazine, *Red Rock Life*. Publisher Joe Piotrowski proposed a gathering called *Musicians in the Neighborhood* so that neighbors could play music together. He also suggested that the group support a nonprofit cause. A silent auction, raffle and a donation from a friend provided half of what was needed by the end of the first fundraiser. The event created more local awareness and provided an opportunity for further community involvement. Elaine Fitzpatrick and Kimberly Anderson, an Orchestra Director for Clark County High School, are currently working on public relations, fundraising ideas, and looking to recruit board members and volunteers. A second *Musicians in the Neighborhood* will be January 15, just five days after the inaugural auditions. *(continued on p. 2)*

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL AUDITIONS

Colorado-Wyoming District Finals
Saturday, February 7, 9:30am
June Swaner Gates Concert Hall
Robert and Judi Newman Center for the Performing Arts
University of Denver

Rocky Mountain Regional Finals
Sunday, February 8, 1:30pm
June Swaner Gates Concert Hall
Robert and Judi Newman Center for the Performing Arts
University of Denver

National Grand Finals
Sunday, March 22, 3:00pm
Metropolitan Opera House
New York, NY

Winner Update: Soprano Rachel Willis-Sorenson



December 2014 marked the Metropolitan Opera debut for this 2008 Rocky Mountain Regional winner who took a National Auditions prize in 2010. The NY Times reviewed that winning performance, noting her "gleaming voice, capped with big top notes, impressive in "Elsa's Dream" from Wagner's *Lohengrin* and "Come scoglio" from Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. She has bachelors and masters degrees, the latter in vocal performance and pedagogy, both from Brigham Young University. She has also studied at the Houston Grand Opera Studio and under famed mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick. In the 2011-12 season, Willis-Sorenson made her Royal Opera House debut as the Countess in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. In 2012, she appeared at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*. She returned to Covent Garden as Gutrune in *Götterdämmerung* and to Houston Grand Opera as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*. As a member of the ensemble at the Semperoper in Dresden, she sang Elettra in *Idomeneo*, Rachel in *La Juive*, and in *Don Giovanni*, *Alcina* and

La clemenza di Tito. In 2013, she was part of a film commemorating the bicentennial of Wagner's birth. At 2014's Operalia competition, she took first prizes for Opera and Zarzuela, as well as the Birgit Nilsson prize. The year was topped off by her Met debut as the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* (right). The NY Times praised the "creaminess of her tone" and her phrasing. She returns to Dresden this winter as Mimi in *La bohème*, Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, and in the title role of *The Merry Widow*. Brava, Rachel!



(Nevada, continued from page 1) .

Jeff Koep, Dean of the College of Fine Arts, Jonathan Good and Sue Muehler, Chairs of the Department of Music at UNLV offered to provide the remainder of the required funding, as well as access to the Beam Music Center for the auditions. Gayletha Nichols, Executive Director of the Met's National Council Auditions, and Melissa Wegner, Associate Director, helped to navigate and establish a non-profit bank account and suggested that the district might join the Rocky Mountain Region. According to Elaine Fitzpatrick, "Rocky Mountain Regional Director Stephen Dilts and everyone with whom he has connected us have been extremely helpful and welcoming as we get started. Our information was online overnight and we had access to all the information we needed to launch this exciting opportunity for the growing arts community in Las Vegas."

If you have had a successful event that helped with cultivating volunteers or fundraising, Elaine would love to hear your ideas: elainefitzpatrick@me.com

We look forward to welcoming you to the Auditions' new home next month. The Robert and Judi Newman Center is located at 2344 East Iliff Avenue at the corner of Iliff and University on the University of Denver campus in southeast Denver . The June Swaner Gates Concert Hall is the main auditorium within the Center.

RISING STARS SOCIETY: *Supporting your local Met Auditions*

The RISING STARS SOCIETY helps guarantee our expenses and singer awards of \$29,000 per year. If you have not already made a pledge to the Society and would like to do so, please fill out this form and include it with your Patron Membership card. We have over 30 Rising Stars Society members at this time; 20 more members this year will take us to our goal!

_____ Creating Opportunities:
I pledge \$250 per year for 5 years for a total of \$1,250.
_____ Nurturing Talent:
I pledge \$500 per year for 5 years for a total of \$2,500.
_____ Realizing Dreams:
I pledge \$1000 per year for 5 years for a total of \$5000.
_____ I am unable to be a Rising Star Society member today; however, I want my support of young singers to matter by pledging \$_____ a year for _____ year(s) for a total of \$_____.
_____ I wish to be an MONC patron for \$75/ year/person. Number of people _____

Join by credit card at www.metoperaauditionsrockies.org or call Steve Dilts at 720-530-0483.

You may also send this form with your check (payable to MONC-RMR) or credit card information to: Steve Dilts, 16684 Antero Street, Broomfield, CO 80023.

Please include your name(s), address, phone number and email address with your donation. Thank you!



Karen Mohr
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Denver, CO 80235

Coming Soon!
Rocky Mountain
Regional Finals
Sunday, February 8, 1:30pm
June Swaner Gates
Concert Hall
Robert & Judi Newman Center
University of Denver
\$10 requested donation

Metropolitan Opera 2015 HD Calendar

Lehar: The Merry Widow
January 17, 10:55am
Encore: January 21, 2015, 6:30pm
Offenbach: The Tales of Hoffmann
January 31, 10:55am
Encore: February 4, 6:30pm
Tchaikovsky: Iolanta
Bartok: Bluebeard's Castle
February 14, 10:30am
Encore: February 18, 6:30pm

Rossini: La Donna del Lago
March 14, 10:55am
Encore: March 18, 6:30pm
Mascagni: Cavalleria Rusticana
Leoncavallo: Pagliacci
April 25, 10:30am
Encore: April 29, 6:30pm

See www.metopera.org for cast information and to find local theaters.