



CIRCUIT SHORTS

Spring 2010

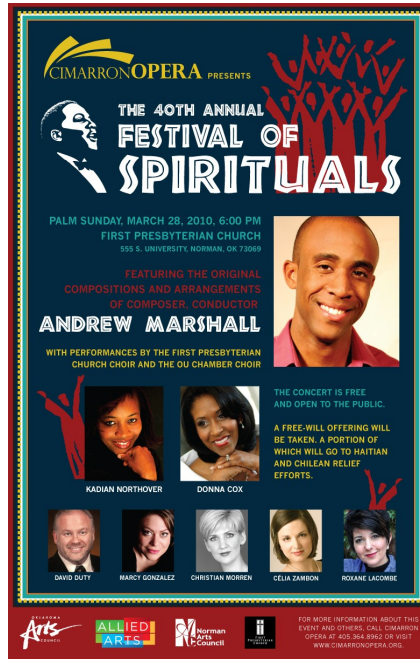
40th Annual Festival of Spirituals

Cimarron Opera is delighted to announce that our host for the 40th Annual Festival of Spirituals at 6pm on March 28, 2010, will be First Presbyterian Church of Norman, which has graciously supported Cimarron Opera for 40 years.

Our guest conductor for the 2010 Festival will be OU doctoral student Andrew Marshall (see page 2). This year the Festival will feature the OU Chamber Singers along with notable solo performers, and will feature an array of African-American spirituals, and world premiere arrangements of brand

new Jamaican spirituals for mixed choir and solo voice, including music by Jamaican composer Deneil Clarke.

There is no charge for admission to the Festival of Spirituals; it is our gift to the community. Contributions are always gratefully accepted, and a portion of this year's offering will be donated to Haitian and Chilean relief efforts.

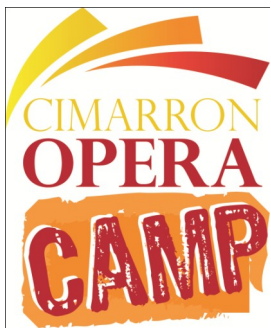


PALM SUNDAY
March 28, 2010 at 6 pm
First Presbyterian Church,
Norman, Oklahoma

Inside this issue:

Andrew Marshall to Guest Direct 2010 Festival of Spirituals	2
Cimarron Memories	2
Opera Is: A Family Thing To Do	3
News Briefs	3
Summer Opera Camp	4
Membership	5
Milestones	5

Summer Camp Auditions March 26 & 29



June 14-July 2, 2010

Auditions for this year's Summer Opera Camp will take place in the Chapel of the First Presbyterian Church, 555 S. University Avenue in Norman on March 26 and 29, from 4 -9 pm. Due to repeated requests, **the age range has been extended to include ages 9-18.** We want to hear your most

beautiful singing voice -- pieces from operetta, art, folk song and Broadway repertoire are all appropriate. If you don't have one of these, pick something you love -- a song that you have learned in school or church. An accompanist will be provided -- please bring sheet music.

Mission Statement
Cimarron Opera's mission is to provide aspiring performing artists and creative technicians a forum for their talents and opportunities to gain valuable training and stage experience, while providing cultural enrichment and education to various audiences across the state and beyond.

Andrew Marshall to Guest Direct Festival of Spirituals

We are delighted to welcome Andrew Marshall as the guest director for the 40th Annual Festival of Spirituals. Born in St. Andrew, Jamaica, Mr. Marshall started piano lessons at age 6. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education with an emphasis in piano performance from Northern Caribbean University in Mandeville, Jamaica, and a Master of Music degree in Music Education with emphasis in choral conducting from Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton, New Jersey. He is presently reading for a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting

at OU under the leadership of Dr. Richard Zielinski.

A self-taught composer, Mr. Marshall has written and arranged over sixty hymns, carols, sacred music and secular works for the professional chorus and orchestra, and has received commissions for works from organizations in Jamaica and internationally.

Prior to his studies at the University of Oklahoma, Mr. Marshall served as an Assistant Professor in the Music Department at Northern Caribbean University (NCU) where he conducted the University's choral ensembles,



Andrew Marshall

and served as the Coordinator of the Music Department. He is also the Music Director of Maranatha Ministries, a non-profit organization that travels frequently overseas each year to perform.

Cimarron Memories

A one-of-a-kind quilt featuring 12-inch squares with autographs of stars from the Metropolitan Opera such as Placido Domingo and Leona Mitchell and embroidered pictures of their notable roles was assembled by local seamstresses and taken on tour with Cimarron for a whole season by **Pollie Blanton**. The raffle of chances to win the quilt raised \$10,000. Mr. Carey offered to buy the quilt from the lady who won it, but she refused the offer. Several years later when she was moving away from Norman, she brought the quilt to his studio on the OU campus, saying that she would present it to him as a gift if he would sing a song for her. He did, and she did.

Dame Cleo Laine and **Sir John Dankworth** performed benefit concerts for our company several times. Once when they were here, Thomas enlisted the help of several local personalities and professors to play the parts of the dwarfs in a special performance of Snow White and the Seven

Dwarfs. Led by **Stanton Young** as the Voice in the Mirror, this colorful cast included **Barry Switzer, Ken Hoving, J.R. Morris, Irv Wagner, Gene Thrailkill, Dr. Gerald McCullough, and Stan Williams**. Ironically, TC himself stood in the wings in case any turned chicken.

OU Dean of Fine Arts **Rich Taylor** sang on the 1972 Festival of Spirituals at McFarlin Methodist Church. He was accompanied by **Mildred Andrews**. During the previous summer, actor **Ed Harris** and Rich had been members of the company of OU's Southwest Repertory Theater which brought several productions to local audiences.

One of the company's tours to the Oklahoma town of **Seling** was unusual. As the performance was about to begin, the tornado sirens sounded. Audience and cast fled to the school's underground classrooms. When the all-clear sounded, everyone returned to the

auditorium and the show was enjoyed by all.

Cimarron Divas were reunited in 1993 as part of OU's Summerwind series and featured **Patricia McGlothlin Palmer, Lowelle Childers, Vickie Werner Smith, and Jody Miller**.

Daniel Boulud, New York chef extraordinaire, has traveled to Oklahoma twice to supervise the preparation of fundraising dinners for Cimarron. In 1994, a Petroleum Club event raised \$50,000 for a touring truck. In 2000, Daniel returned for another dinner at the home of Alice and Phil Pippin in Edmond, where \$30,000 was raised to fund performance grants for a touring group of four of our singers selected by competitive auditions. Both evenings featured excerpts from opera and musical theater performed by our company artists.

~~ Carol Renner Carey

Opera is a family thing to do!

Over the years, Cimarron Opera has been blessed with many two and three-generation family groups. Here are a few of them:

Bill Fisher (bass), daughter **Sonja Sipe** (soprano), and grandchildren **Philip** and **Francis** (Cool Kids)

Former board member **Peggy Bagby**, daughter **Nancy Nortz** (choreographer), and grandchildren **Jake**, **Hilary**, and **Kat Nortz** (Cool Kids)

Soprano **Donna Cox** and children **Barteas**, **Cory** and **Jordan** (Cool Kids)

Former board member **Karen**

Rieger and children **Patrick**, **Hannah**, and **Lauren** (Cool Kids)

Soprano **Melany Pattison** and children **Clay**, **Nick** and **Molly** (Cool Kids)

Mark Krittenbrink, baritone and local architect, and his son **Chris** (Cool Kid and now a student at the University of Arkansas), once played the same role in the adult and children's versions of THE GONDOLIERS.

Board member **Carol Renner Carey**, daughter **Mary Jo Heath** (musical director), son **Michael Renner** (baritone), and granddaughter **Moriah Renner** (Cool Kids)

Operations Manager **Katherine McLaughlin** and daughters **Kelly** and **Colleen** (Cool Kids)

Board member **Mary Martin Rivas** and daughters **Alexandra** and **Cristina** (Cool Kids)



News Briefs

Erica Thomas, soprano, serves as Associate Pastor at Quayle United Methodist Church in Oklahoma City after six years as our Artistic Director. She also teaches voice at Rose State College and Langston University.

Bradley Williams, tenor and our General Director, sang the role of Ferrando in the National Opera of Costa Rica's production of *Così fan tutte* in August 2009.

Kevin W. Smith, music director, has been touring with Lyric Theatre's interactive touring program of 1776 *The Declaration of Independence*. In addition to serving as Music Director for Cimarron Opera, Kevin has music directed several shows at the Poteet Theatre in Oklahoma City, and will be on faculty at the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival in July of this year.

Donna Cox and **Dolores Leffingwell**, sopranos and faculty members in the OU School of Music, presented a recital in Pitman Hall on March 8 as

part of the Sutton Faculty Artist Series.

Sonya (McCaskill) Grant, former company manager, is Assistant to the Director of the School of Petroleum Engineering at OU.

Harvey Fort, bass, is in the cast of Washington National Opera's *Porgy and Bess* which opens later this month.

Hank Grant, baritone, recently spent a week in Haiti on a mission trip. He worked with K-12 students at Christianville Christian School.

Melany Pattison, soprano, teaches music at All Saints Catholic School. She is also a studio instructor at Sooner Theatre and is Co-Director of their summer camps.

We were saddened to learn of the recent death of **John Dankworth** in London. A brilliant saxophonist and

one-time POPS Conductor of the London Symphony, John and his wife (Cleo Laine) came to Oklahoma several times to perform benefit concerts for Cimarron. The two were close friends of Mr. Carey, who appeared with Cleo in *SHOWBOAT* in London for an extended run. During that time TC's classes at OU were taught by his wife, Carol Brice Carey.

We also mourn the loss of **Duane Blanton**, longtime Cimarron friend, former Noble City Manager, and husband of former Cimarron Circuit Manager Pollie Blanton. Our condolences to Pollie and family.

CO expresses its continued appreciation to the congregation of Norman's First Presbyterian Church for providing office space for our operations through the years. They have played an integral part in making it possible for us to be one of the Norman community's gems since the company's founding in 1975.



P.O. Box 1085,
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Cimarron Opera is located
downstairs in the First
Presbyterian Church,
located at 555 S. University
Blvd in Norman, Oklahoma.

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