

Exploring Opera: New York City (Oct. 2006)

Treat yourself to a wonderful, long weekend of opera in “The Big Apple,” featuring wonderful meals, customized educational lectures, a behind-the-scenes tour at the Metropolitan Opera and glorious performances of wonderful operas, spanning three operatic periods (Classical, *Bel Canto*, and Romantic). You will also have some free-time during the weekend to explore museums, stroll through Central Park, go shopping on the Upper West Side, relax in the cafés of Little Italy, wander through the galleries of SoHo, attend a Broadway matinee or see other sites.

Tour Overview

- Tour dates:** Thursday, October 12 – Monday, October 16, 2006.
- Accommodations:** Four (4) nights at an elegant hotel on the Upper West Side.
- Meals:** The tour includes four (4) breakfasts at your leisure, a sumptuous “Welcome Dinner” to meet fellow opera-lovers and to kick-off our Manhattan musical journey together, and a “Farewell Dinner” with (at least) one special opera guest so that you can have the chance to chat with a working opera professional and get their insights on the business.
- Tickets:** Sit back in your orchestra seats for three (3) unforgettable shows, spanning three operatic periods: The spectacular Julie Taymor (known for her smashing designs for the Broadway musical *The Lion King*) production of Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* (Classical opera) at the Metropolitan Opera featuring the lovely soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian and gorgeous baritone Nathan Gunn; Ponchielli’s *La Gioconda* (Romantic opera) at the Met with the exciting dramatic soprano Violeta Urmana, the luscious Olga Borodina, and the passionate tenor Aquiles Machado. Our musical journey will end with a delightfully updated version of Donizetti’s charming *L’Elisir d’Amore* (*Bel Canto* opera) at New York City Opera with a cast of talented young stars-of-tomorrow.
- Lectures:** James Sokol will present three (3) customized educational lectures with musical highlights, focused on the opera that you will attend each evening.
- Tour:** Get an inside look at the making of opera with a backstage tour at the Metropolitan Opera. Tours usually include visits to dressing rooms, the stage, the set shop, costume storage areas and more.
- Draft Itinerary:** Thurs. (10/12) – Arrival, Orientation & “Welcome Dinner” (at 8:30pm)
Friday (10/13) – Breakfast, Lecture, Free Lunch-Early Afternoon, Met Tour, Free Dinner & *Flute*
Sat. (10/14) – Breakfast, Lecture, Free Lunch & Afternoon & *La Gioconda*
Sun. (10/15) – Breakfast, Lecture, Free Lunch, *L’Elisir d’Amore* & “Farewell Dinner”
Mon. (10/16) – Breakfast & Departure (**Note: “Free” = on your own**)
- Transportation:** Arrive at/depart from the NYC-area airport of your choice and enjoy a private town-car to/from the hotel. Transportation will be provided after the two evening performances back to the hotel.
- Cost:** \$2,095* for double occupancy (\$600 additional for single occupancy). Note: cost does not include airfare. Please let us know, *at the time of reservation*, if you are a “single” who would like to be matched up with a roommate to share a double occupancy room...we will do our best.
- *Discounts:** \$100 discount for *Exploring Opera* students (re: \$1,995), \$200 discount for past *Exploring Opera* tour participants (re: \$1,895). Please note: only one discount per person.
- Registration:** Step #1) Reserve your spot by contacting Roxy or Desmond Gribben at CBT Tours at 415-242-1957 or at information@cbttours.com; Step #2) Guarantee your reservation by submitting a *Tour Application Form* and non-refundable deposit of \$250 (check or Visa/MC accepted) to CBT Tours; Step #3) Submit final payment by Aug. 15th.

Space is limited. Reservations are taken on a "first-come; first-served" basis. Reserve soon!

Operas & Artists



Die Zauberflöte

Just when you're tired of *The Magic Flute*, director, designer and visionary Julie Taymor reinvents Mozart's classic to make it fresh, interesting and beautiful in a way to make it feel as if you're experiencing this opera for the first time. "Julie Taymor's highly anticipated new production of "The Magic Flute" for the Metropolitan Opera premiered to a packed house....You can bet that word quickly spread beyond the world of opera about the elaborate stage effects and exotic imagery that Ms. Taymor, the popular director, costume designer, mask-maker and puppeteer, has brought to Mozart's mystical fairy tale." – *The New York Times*



La Gioconda

A wonderful chance to experience the glorious melodies and riveting drama of this rarely-performed operatic treasure! Ponchielli's passionate melodies are brought back to The Met in a production that has not been seen in over 15 years. Based upon the Victor Hugo play about the tribulations of the beautiful Gioconda, the opera includes the immortal "Dance of the Hours," the gorgeous tenor aria "Cielo e mar" and "Suicidio!" a riveting tour-de-force aria for the soprano.

L'Elisir d'Amore

Jonathan Miller transforms Donizetti's rustic Italian setting into one of pure Americana: a 1950s diner straight out of an Edward Hopper painting. Ford Fairlanes, soda jerks, and pompadours abound amid sets that *Opera News* calls "brilliant." It's all part of Miller's ingenious way of, as he puts it, "dislocating things slightly so that people look at a work anew."



"**Isabel Bayrakdarian** has one of the most expressive voices in opera today – clear, clean and crisp, with a gentle vibrato that gives her sound its distinctive quality. The soprano is one of the great singing actresses of her generation, and she has few peers when it comes to interpretation of text." – *Globe and Mail* (Toronto)

"**Nathan Gunn** sang the role of the bird catcher Papageno...giving a performance that dominated the staging. His voice is moderate, not overwhelming, but is quite moving and is enhanced by superior acting. Whether jumping up stairs, sliding around the sets or getting scared at virtually every moment, Gunn entertained and was the center of attention in the performance." – *The Associated Press*

"The lead role was breathtakingly cast. Lithuanian soprano **Violeta Urmana** has a dark quality to her voice which radiates an almost unworldly power that extends seamlessly into the uppermost registers. Her higher passagework is reminiscent of a marble column while her low register, precise as it was, radiated warmth and ardor. She is even able to infuse coloratura passages with dramatic impact and not just with decorative nuance." – *Sächsische Zeitung* (Dresden)

"**Olga Borodina** has a distinctive languor in her creamy, rich mezzo-soprano...her fantastic, strong chest voice adds a fine dimension of earthy toughness [and] those top notes that she chose to take were also excellent." – *The New York Times*

"Tenor **Aquiles Machado** bravely attacks the high-C in his opening cavatina...elsewhere he sings expressively, making more of the text and predicament than most tenors, exhibiting a bright tone and, when needed, warm legato." – *Classics Today*