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On Friday, November 20, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, November 22, at 3 p.m. in the Mead Theatre of the Schuster Center, Dayton Opera will present Puccini's beloved *Madame Butterfly*, the heartbreaking story of a devoted wife willing to do whatever it takes in the name of love. The tragic story of *Madame Butterfly* has deeply moved countless audiences since its 1904 premiere with some of Puccini's richest scoring and most beloved music. The first act climaxes with a passionate love duet between Pinkerton, an American sailor, and Butterfly, the trusting Japanese girl he has just wed—temporarily in his mind, forever in hers.

Lovingly set in 19th-century Japan, this traditional production is perfumed with the exotic East, yet the emotional chords it strikes are very much at home anywhere in the world. It's hard not to weep at Butterfly's excitement when Pinkerton's ship, after three long years of waiting, finally returns to Nagasaki. Both Butterfly and Pinkerton have secrets to reveal. Butterfly has a young boy of three, dressed and ready to meet his long-awaited father. And Pinkerton has a pretty new wife.

Has Heartbreak Ever Sounded So Beautiful? Dayton Opera Presents Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* This November

That the audience already knows the wrenching eventual outcome only heightens the emotional tension as the voices of Butterfly and Pinkerton soar together to blissful heights of young love. Small wonder that *Madame Butterfly*'s place is secure in the world's top ten most-performed operas!

For the role of Madame Butterfly, Artistic Director Thomas Bankston has cast a newcomer to Dayton Opera in soprano Yunah Lee. Yunah Lee, however, is certainly not a newcomer to *Madame Butterfly*. This appearance will mark Lee's 31st performance as Puccini's heroine Cio-Cio-San, having performed the lead role with opera companies across the globe. Lee has been described as "...a revelation... [her] voice unites the girlish innocence and the wistful sensuality [of Cio-Cio-San]" (ONLINE MUSIK MAGAZIN) and "...utterly convincing in mood and presentation... a commanding and touching performance revealing the highs and lows of Butterfly's emotions." (DAS OPERNGLAS). Lee has sung the role of Cio-Cio-San with such premier opera companies as Opera Quebec, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Carolina, Glimmerglass Opera and most recently with The Metropolitan Opera in New York.

Balancing Yunah Lee's renowned portrayal, tenor John Pickle returns



John Pickle



Yunah Lee

to Dayton Opera as the commanding lead role of Lt. B.F. Pinkerton. Pickle recently made his Dayton Opera debut in May of 2014 in the role of Radames in Dayton Opera's outstanding presentation of the epic *Aida*. In a 2014 performance as Pinkerton with Florida Grand Opera, Pickle earned this succinct praise: "[Pickle as] Pinkerton was robust, and practically perfect." (*The Shot Glass Review*) Additionally, *Concertonet.com* lauded Pickle as being "...well-groomed for the role [of Pinkerton] with a big voice which he has no trouble controlling." Pickle will return to Dayton for a January appearance with the Dayton Philharmonic as soloist in Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*.

Mezzo-soprano Ryu-Kyung Kim returns to Dayton Opera to play the role of Suzuki, Butterfly's devoted maid and confidante. Kim performed with Dayton Opera twice in the recent 2014-2015 season as Third Lady in

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Opera Notes is published by the Opera Guild of Dayton.

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Opera Guild of Dayton Mission Statement

The Opera Guild of Dayton encourages and promotes opera in the Greater Dayton area and supports Dayton Opera through fundraising, marketing and educational activities.

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Live In HD: Metropolitan Opera

For opera lovers who just can't get enough of it, try LIVE IN HD 2015-16 SEASON. Now in its tenth season, live performances from the Met have been a staple for local opera lovers. Local Movie Theatres: Check your local newspapers as the dates grow near.

NOVEMBER 21

Lulu by Berg

JANUARY 16

Les Pêcheurs de Perles by Bizet

JANUARY 30

Turandot by Puccini

MARCH 5

Manon Lescaut by Puccini

APRIL 2

Madama Butterfly by Puccini

APRIL 16

Roberto Devereux by Donizetti

APRIL 30

Elektra by Strauss



Membership Changes

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President's Message

Penny Wolff



Interview with Tom Bankston

SINGING WITH THE STARS

Ever wonder how the gifted and talented singers for Dayton Opera's Artists-in-Residence (AIR) and Dayton Opera productions find their way to Dayton?

Recently I sat down with Tom Bankston, artistic director for Dayton Opera at the Dayton Performing Arts Alliance and asked him to tell our readers how he goes about selecting singers.

As Tom explained, there is a difference in the method he uses for Artists-In-Residence, newly graduated from college/conservatories, and professional singers who are already out there advancing their careers and who have agents. With AIR Tom offers a one year residency starting at the beginning of a calendar year. This means he starts recruiting in early spring of the year before. Dayton Opera posts online through contacts with regional conservatories and the Opera America network throughout the United States. The application requires a head shot and resume.

Bankston reviews hundreds of applications.

What is the Artistic Director looking for?

- young artists who have finished

- training at a college or conservatory;
- experience in singing various roles at their schools;
- participation in other apprentice programs outside their schools;
- names of professionals with whom they've worked and who Tom might know so he can check their credentials."

In late spring, after getting prospective applications whittled to a manageable number, Tom schedules a long day of auditions in early summer, both in Dayton and in New York City. This can be expensive for the young artist who has to bear the travel costs. However, Dayton Opera provides the venue and the accompanist.

So what are the singers looking for?

- performance opportunities;
- being on the main stage in full opera productions;
- rubbing shoulders with seasoned singers;
- singing for conductors and with a live orchestra;
- working with stage directors.

The AIR program also has an educational component in which the singers go to schools in the Dayton community to present specific age-appropriate programs written by the Education Staff at DPAA. This adds to their experience.

Tom told me that two of his AIR singers for next year are actually coming to Dayton early so they can be in the *Madame Butterfly* production in November. This is a bonus for them.

How are Main Stage Production Singers Chosen?

Main Stage auditions for Dayton Opera productions begin up to two years in advance. Currently Bankston is lining up the 2016-2017 season.

Most of these singers are represented by management company agents although a few are independent. Again, there is a process whereby Tom sends the agents information on selected future performances and main roles for which he wants to audition. The agents suggest singers. Tom culls the applications. Agents also suggest singers who

may not be available for the season but might be considered for future productions. Some singers don't have to audition, especially those who have performed in Dayton before.

Auditions are scheduled for three days in New York City in early December. In this instance, the singers must provide their own accompanists. Tom told me he records all auditions so he can go back and listen to confirm his choices. He says people ask, "Isn't it a blur after several hours? Doesn't it run together?" But, he counters that good auditions "stand out and your ears pick up immediately."

After the auditions are concluded, Tom compiles first, second, and third preference lists. From there it's a matter of negotiating with agents on contracts.

In answer to my question about the attractiveness of Dayton to these singers, Tom states that Dayton has a respectable reputation and singers get a good experience. That word travels. It is especially significant that Dayton Opera has a longstanding track record without lapses in season performances.


Tom told me that the home hospitality and transportation offered through the Opera Guild are greatly appreciated by the singers.

This is Tom's 20th year as Artistic Director for Dayton Opera. I asked him to comment on how the search and selection process has changed and what he has learned over that time period:

- The process hasn't changed that much despite the technology.
- Trust your instincts; his have borne out positively.
- Make sure to hear the singer in person - there's more than voice - you get a sense of the individual person and other qualities of the artist. "This is a very important part of the package."
- Dayton audiences like having singers who are visually credible to the roles they play.

Tom spent ten days in Santa Fe this

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past summer. He and his wife Frances attended every opera presented. One of the apprentice singers was a former Opera Guild vocal competition winner. He says that in the future he wants to continue to visit Santa Fe and Lyric Opera of Chicago to see the talent offered through their apprentice programs. He concludes with saying, "the level of artistry [at these venues] is a great thing to hear. I'd like to bring them to Dayton for leading roles." 

Madame Butterfly, continued from p. 1

The Magic Flute and as Jade Boucher in *Dead Man Walking*, in which she gave a gripping performance as the mother of one of the convicted criminal's victims.

Baritone Corey Crider also returns to Dayton Opera in this production to play the role of Sharpless, the American Consul in Japan who is sent to break the news to Butterfly that Pinkerton will return to Nagasaki, but not for the reason of which Butterfly has dreamed. Crider appeared with Dayton Opera last in the role of Morales in the 2005 production of *Carmen*, and has recently appeared in leading roles with Opera Roanoke, Arizona Opera, Sarasota Opera, Madison Opera and Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

Returning to Dayton Opera for his fifth performance, bass Adam Fry will perform the role of The Bonze, having appeared with Dayton Opera once before in a *Madame Butterfly* production in 2006, as well as appearances with Dayton Opera in *Macbeth* in 2008, in *Turandot* in 2008, and most recently in *Tosca* in 2013. Rounding out the cast are three vocalists who will be making their Dayton Opera debuts: tenor Robert Norman as Goro, baritone Andrew Pardini in the dual roles of Imperial Commissioner and Prince Yamadori, and soprano Kasia Borowiec as Kate Pinkerton. Pardini and Borowiec are both members of Dayton Opera's upcoming 2015-2016 Artists-in-Residence Program.

Puccini's gorgeous score will be provided by the impeccable Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra under the di-


rection of Conductor Robert Tweten, hailing originally from Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, and making his Dayton Opera debut with this performance. Tweten has masterfully conducted *Madame Butterfly* with both Edmonton Opera and Utah Opera, both in 2014. He has been described as leading with "verve and precision," as well as having "flawless" pacing and "musicality and near-symbiotic accord with singers, which always impresses."

Albert Sherman returns to Dayton Opera to stage-direct Puccini's masterpiece, bringing this beautiful story to life on the Mead Theatre Stage. Sherman's directing expertise was enjoyed in five past Dayton Opera productions, *The Elixir of Love* in 1998, *Così Fan Tutte* in 1999, *Cinderella* in 2006, *The Merry Widow* in 2009, and most recently in *Romeo and Juliet* in 2012.

The ever-remarkable Dayton Opera Chorus, under the skillful direction and leadership of Chorus Master Jeffrey Powell, will be part of the production. Artistic Director Tom Bankston reminds us that the opera will be sung in Italian with English surtitles made possible by the Opera Guild of Dayton.

Want to learn even more about the beauty of *Madame Butterfly*? Come one hour prior to both performances to hear pre-performance talks presented by UD music professor Dr. Sam Dorf. Delicious "Opera bites" are also available in the Wintergarden before the performance and at the first intermission.

Tickets for *Madame Butterfly* range from \$38 to \$94 and are available at www.daytonperformingarts.org or by calling Ticket Center Stage at 937/228-3630. Senior, student, and military discounts are available. For more information on tickets, or how to subscribe to the 2015-2016 Ascend Season, visit www.daytonperformingarts.org.

Don't forget to bring a handkerchief for the gripping ending as Butterfly does what she feels she must to preserve her honor. 

The Guild this Month:

STUDENTS' NIGHT @ DRESS


REHEARSAL. Invitations have been sent to 204 high schools and colleges to see a dress rehearsal of *Madame Butterfly* on Wednesday, November 18 at 7 p.m. in the Schuster. Guild members will register the students and serve as ushers for the performance. Judy Hudson, Pat Ferguson, and Gisela Warner chair this event.

CHILDREN'S TRAVELING OPERA.

A new soprano has been added to the CTO's cast of *The Barber of Seville*. Joining Tamra Francis and Tammy Schaff, is Cassandra Hockney as the beloved Rosina. CTO has a busy fall schedule and is preparing a new production for its school visits in spring 2016. Pat Ferguson, Cindy Hoffsis and Linda Rountree chair a loyal and active team of volunteers.

MEMBERSHIP. Margarete Jennings reports that six new members have been added to the roster. Some are using the new on-line capability on the Guild Website. Suzanne Crippen will assign mentors to each to help them find their niche in the Guild's activities.

HOSPITALITY. Rosalie Jennings has found living arrangements for stars and staff of *Madame Butterfly*. Thanks go to Ron Anderson and Robb Sloan, Tom and Kathy Brown, Bob and Diane Johnson, Rosalie Jennings, Helen Miller, and Paul and Susie Weaver. This in-kind donation of hospitality increases the Guild's support of Dayton Opera. Helen Miller is working with Kimberly Robinson to have members provide sandwiches and cookies for the Cast Refreshment Night.

SPECIAL EVENTS. Diane Johnson and Barbara Haller are chairing a pre-opera supper in the Schuster's Donor Lounges before the Friday night performance of *Madame Butterfly*. It is open to members and their guests. 

Applause! Applause!

Myrna Cunningham



"*Tosca* touched my soul!" This is how Opera Guild member Myrna Cunningham describes how she came to love opera. Myrna came to the art form later in life through her husband Dick Cunningham. She says her favorite movie is "Pretty Woman" and talks about the scene where Richard Gere takes Julia Roberts to see her first opera. He tells her people either hate opera or "it touches your soul." Cunningham says she saw several operas, with no particular effect and then she saw *Tosca* and "it touched my soul." Of course, as opera lovers know, Puccini is a master of the heart grab and the soul touch! In any event, after seeing *Tosca*, Myrna was hooked and has been a mainstay of the Dayton Opera and the Opera Guild ever since - generously offering her time and financial support to opera in Dayton.

Myrna was born in Akron, moved to Dayton when she was seven years old and was raised in Mad River Township. She graduated from Wilbur Wright High School. After graduation she got a job working as a long distance operator with the telephone company. Wright Patterson AFB was within her territory and she describes the job as very interesting, linking calls and conference calls from around the country and the world. She considered a career with the telephone company, but had a chance to attend college, an opportunity a colleague advised her to take. Good advice as it turns out! Myrna attended Ohio University and

then the University of Dayton, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in medical technology. While in college she joined the Phi Mu sorority and is still very active in this organization. She is a past president of the Board of the Dayton Alumnae Panhellenic Council. She describes the training received from this organization as very helpful: upon joining the Board, a member starts at the least responsible level and then moves up a level in responsibility each year until becoming President. Myrna married and lived with her family several places in the United States before moving back to Dayton in 1971. At that time she took a job with Kettering Hospital working in the blood bank. She retired from this position in 2006.

Myrna met her second husband, Dick Cunningham (another familiar face to the Opera Guild) at a singles event in 1992. At the time, Dick was a civilian employee with the Air Force at Wright Patterson AFB. Originally a physics major from Illinois, he came to WPAFB to fulfill his ROTC assignment and stayed for 46 years! The couple have been married for 20 years. Dick had season tickets to both the Dayton Philharmonic and the Victoria Theater and Myrna began attending events at these venues with him. When he retired, he suggested, "Why don't we try opera?"

The couple joined the Opera Guild and attended operas at Memorial Hall in Dayton. She credits the Guild's educational program "Ear for Opera" with developing and maintaining her interest in the art form. She really enjoyed the presentations on the actual mechanics of staging an opera: how the singers are selected, the budget proposed, the importance of make-up and costumes, the significance of the stage manager and the difficult job of the conductor. One of her most memorable sessions was on opera directors and how they differ in their interpretations of each piece. Luke Dennis was one of her favorite presenters. It was at an "Ear for Opera" that they

learned of the Sorg Opera Company in Middletown and began attending operas there. Myrna describes these productions as sort of a "one-man show" where the artistic director was also the conductor and the music director. It was at Sorg that she saw first saw her first and transformative *Tosca*. As an aside, these operas were held in the Sorg Opera House, a Middletown building fallen into disrepair, subsequently remodeled and rumored to be haunted by the ghost of its founder, Paul Sorg. Myrna says she never saw any ghosts when she was there!

In addition to *Tosca* another of her opera favorites is *Turandot* with its beautiful and haunting aria "nessun dorma." Myrna was enthralled by Dayton Opera's 2006 production of *Madame Butterfly*, and its riveting finale of Cio-Cio-San's suicide, back-dropped by a huge Japanese flag running with blood. Like the rest of us, she eagerly awaits Dayton Opera's new production of this opera, coming in November.

Since joining the Opera Guild, Myrna has done everything from soup to nuts, as the saying goes. Her first volunteer activity was for a Holiday Tables event done at the Wright Brothers' home, Hawthorn Hill in Oakwood. Since then, she has worked on the BRAVO! Committee, the Membership Luncheon Committee, served on the Marketing Committee, made cookies for the cast of the Dayton Opera, helped with the telephone tree and the student dress rehearsals. She has been a board member of the Guild for many years. She and Dick are loyal supporters of the Dayton Opera and the Opera Guild. Not only do they contribute financially to the arts, but the couple has attended every Opera Ball, the 50th Anniversary Gala, the Doctor and the Diva function at Books & Co. and many other events. Myrna would

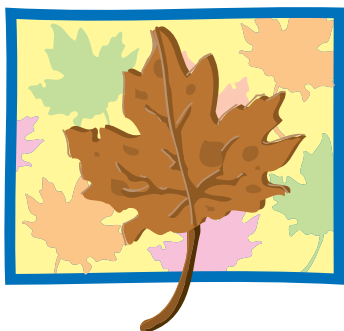
Applause! Applause! continued on P. 6

Applause! Applause! continued from p. 5

not miss a membership luncheon or a BRAVO! Fashion Show. This year, the two are attending a "Dinner with the Stars" that they won at the 2015 Opera Ball Silent Auction. Twice Dick has bid on and won a position as a supernumerary, and was then asked back by Dayton Opera to appear onstage. On one of these occasions they gave their performance tickets to another couple who had never seen an opera and ended up "just loving it." Talk about winning friends for opera!

Dick's three sons live in Washington, DC. Myrna's daughter Julia is an attorney and a graduate of Temple University Law School. She works for a private bank in Delaware. Consequently, the couple are frequent visitors to the east coast. In addition to her work with the Opera Guild, Myrna is an avid reader and has a gym membership with LA Fitness at the Greene. She has been a weaver since the 70's and belongs to the Weavers Guild of Miami Valley. She has attended many workshops put on by the Weavers Guild and enjoys weaving table runners, scarves and place mats on her several looms. She recently joined husband Dick as a volunteer at the Packard Museum.

This Opera Guild member has certainly lived a varied, interesting and active life here in the Miami Valley. Myrna has embraced opera and brought to the our organization her love for the art form as well as her energy, enthusiasm, dedication and capacity for hard work. Thank you Myrna, and a hearty "Applause, Applause!" 🎭



Where Are They Now?



Sydney Mancasola

Sydney Mancasola. If you wish to see 2010 Tri-State College Vocal Competition winner Sydney Mancasola, get out your passport. During September and October 2015 she is appearing as Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* by Georg Friedrich Händel at the Komische Oper in Berlin. She will stay in Berlin to perform in *Les Contes d'Hoffman* by Offenbach (October 2015-February 2016), *Die Zauberflöte* by Mozart (March-May 2016) and *La Clemenza di Tito* by Mozart (May 2016). She will return to the United States to sing in *Manon* by Massenet at Des Moines Metro Opera next June and July.

Sydney has had many other accomplishments since she won our Competition. In 2013 she was a Grand Finals winner at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. In addition she earned her degree from Oberlin in 2011 and recently graduated from the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. She has sung a variety of roles throughout the country including: Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Fort Worth Opera, Santa Fe Opera and Florida Grand Opera. In Florida she sang the part of Leïla in *Les pêcheurs de perles* by Georges Bizet. Of her performance Jean-Francois Lejeune of *Opera News* said, "The principal reason for FGO's success with this opera was the company's young and credible cast of singers. Californian Sydney Mancasola sang a bewitchingly full-voiced and vocally agile Leïla. A highly engaging singer and actress, Mancasola made us feel the priestess's panic in "*J'étais encore enfant*" before she soared to coloratura heights in "*comme autrefois*." Brava, Sydney!

Elizabeth DeShong. In the Summer 2015 edition of *Opera Notes* Eliza-

beth DeShong was "a bright star" – one of our own, featured in an article in *Opera News*. As a student at Oberlin College, DeShong won second place in the Guild's Tri-State College Vocal Competitions in 2001 and 2002, going on to an internship at Chicago's Lyric Opera. She has been featured in *Opera News* again. This time honored to be chosen by October 2015, *Opera News*, as one of the 25 *Rising Stars* to keep an eye on for future. We in the Guild send congratulations and best wishes to Elizabeth for continued success. 🎭

Remembrance Fund

You can help these young singers through THE REMEMBRANCE FUND.

The Remembrance Fund helps support the Guild's High School and Tri-State College Vocal Competitions. Gifts made in observance of a birthday, anniversary, promotion or other event, as well as those remembering the lives of loved ones, help further the dreams and goals of many talented young people. Gifts can be made online at <http://www.operaguildofdayton.org> or gifts can be sent to Evelyn M. Lewis, 3104 Carrier Avenue, Dayton, OH 45429, 937/299-4825. Make checks payable to the Opera Guild of Dayton. 🎭



And the Winner is ...

Everyone who attended this year's BRAVO! Champagne Brunch and Fashion Show was a winner. The Ponitz Center was overflowing with incredible energy on Friday, September 11, as soon as guests started to arrive. There was underlying excitement throughout the event from the social hour in the colorful vendor boutique to the parading of the latest fashions from Chico's of Oakwood, Soma and J. Hilburn on the runway. The hot pink accents on the tables and special effect lighting added to that sensation. And who could forget those stunning centerpieces?

The stars were wonderful Community Role Models. They represented every facet of this diverse Dayton region. They are all winners and the Guild thanks them for their participation. For approximately a month, the volunteer models worked to encourage friends and family to submit on-line votes to determine who would be named this year's favorite. Emcee Shaun Yu, president and CEO of Discover Classical WDPR 88.1 FM and WDPG 89.9 FM, opened the envelope to announce the highest vote-getters of that group. The title went to Janice Allen, treasurer and CFO of Trotwood-Madison City School District. Runners-up were Joanie Haverstick, board chair of Artemis Center; Cecelia Brendel, owner of Olde Masters Galleria; and Neal Gittleman, conductor of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra.

Another special moment occurred when the firefighters from Local 136 were called to the stage. Shaun read tributes to them as our Hometown Heroes. Lt. David Grubb, Lt. John Syz, Firefighter Paul Volosin and Paramedic

Danielle Duffy represented the heroes of 9/11. Attendees lifted their glasses in a toast to honor them and to remember other first responders for their dedication in the face of adversity and danger. Everyone joined in a moment of silence to remember the significance of 9/11.

More appreciation must be extended to our singing sensation Joshua Blue, who mesmerized the audience with his rendition of "*una furtiva lagrima*" from *The Elixir of Love* by Donizetti. Joshua is a senior at Oberlin Conservatory of Music and winner of our 2015 Tri-State College Vocal Competition. He was accompanied by Jeff Powell at the piano.

Models were

Accolades must also go to Cindy Gabor, chair of this year's BRAVO! Her hardworking and talented committee included: Dolores Anderson, Sam Bennett, Barbara Bostick, Kathy Brown, Suzanne Crippen, Myrna Cunningham, Nancy Farkas, Pat Finley, Betty Holton, Valerie Jones, Dana Kane, Helen Jones-Kelley, Norva Loyd, Helen Miller, Brenda Philips, Geri Prada, Jane Reynolds, Karen Wilson and Penny Wolff.

Community Role Models were: Janet Dorsey Allen, Tom Bankston, Cecelia Brendel, Branford Brown, Dr. Annessa Cheek, Judy Dodge, Angela Duggar, Neal Gittleman, Joanie Haverstick, Nakia Jones, Valerie Jones, Tom Kelley, Debbie Lieberman, Britni Marcum, Shelagh McGovern, Linda Menz, John North, Cathy Ponitz, Jeanne Porter, Tom Rubens, Lois Sutherland, Soleil Verse, McCall Vrydaghs, Penny Wolff, and Evelyn Yaus. Many thanks go to Karen Wilson, Manager of Chico's in Oakwood and Sara Priest from J. Hilburn Clothier for supervising the fashions presented. 



And the Winner is... continued on P. 8

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday, November 18, 2015
STUDENTS' NIGHT @ DRESS REHEARSAL

Friday, November 20, 2015
PRE-OPERA LIGHT SUPPER
5:30 p.m. Donors' Lounge
Schuster Center

Friday, November 20, 2015
Sunday, November 22, 2015
DAYTON OPERA'S
Madame Butterfly

Friday, February 26, 2016
Sunday, February 28, 2016
DAYTON OPERA'S
Otello

Thursday, March 17, 2016
MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON
Moraine Country Club

Saturday, March 19, 2016
HIGH SCHOOL VOCAL COMPETITION
Lutheran Church of Our Savior

Sunday, April 10, 2016
TRI-STATE COLLEGE VOCAL COMPETITION
Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Saturday, April 30, 2016
OPERA BALL "HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD"
1700 S. Patterson Blvd.
UD's River Campus

And the Winner is... continued from P. 7

