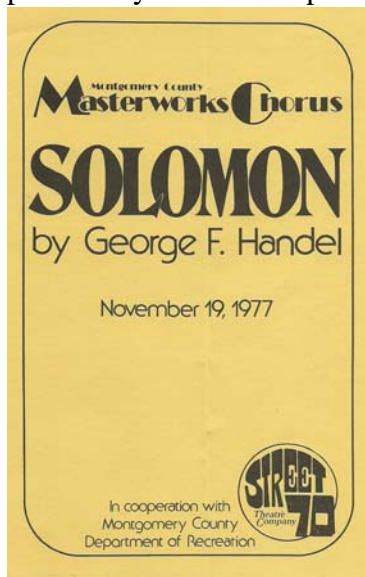


TAKING AIM AT AMES: Some fond personal memories

J. W. Gadzuk – June, 2013

There are a few of us who have been privileged to make music with all five directors of Masterworks Chorus/National Philharmonic Chorale since its birth in the mid 1970's. Let me start my nostalgia trip by quoting from the transcript of an interview I gave to *Applause* on the early days of the Chorale. "An interesting thing about the origins of the chorus. Roger Ames, the fellow who started Masterworks, was a wonderful human being, a guy who just had this amazing way of making music a joyful experience -- he was somewhat disorganized, but he was a real people person. And he was connected with a woman named June Allen, and June Allen was artistic director of what was called Street 70, it was a county organization, part of the Recreation Department, and they were run out of the old Round House Theatre on Viers Mill Road and Connecticut Avenue. At that time, Eliot Pfanstiehl was either the head of Round House or -- he was something that was important -- he had means for helping out Masterworks get started in '74 and it's interesting that as things went, he's now sitting as head of Strathmore", still helping us.

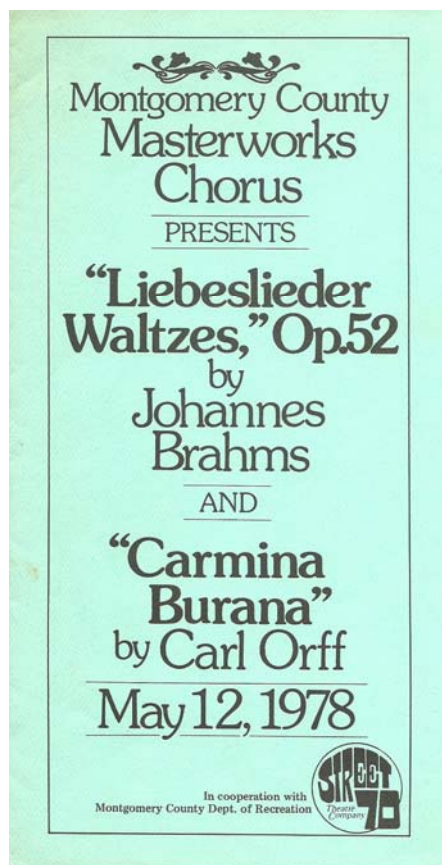
I loved Roger Ames. I loved that Roger Ames made music so much fun. I loved the joy that people felt being with Roger Ames and music. He was the personification of all that Leonard Bernstein's 1959 book *The Joy of Music* was about. Let's go back to September, 1977, the beginning of the third year of Masterworks, when Dave McGoff and I joined. Helen Altman was already part of Masterworks from its inception. The three of us are the only current members of the National Philharmonic Chorale to have enjoyed singing with Roger. The chorus with somewhat under 100 members was a fun-loving and spirited group, a reflection of Roger's personality that made up for in enthusiasm that which it fell short of in musical professionalism.



The projected 1977-78 concert season was amazingly ambitious for such a young organization. We opened in the auditorium of Einstein High School with an unforgettable performance of Handel's magnificent huge oratorio *Solomon* which is abundantly scored for double chorus, not exactly where Masterworks was at that time in its evolution. Our woefully undermanned troops tried valiantly, but we had three or four complete false starts in which we had to return to the beginning of the given piece to try again. Of course we were embarrassed, but we were singing mainly to friends and family who loved us "for better, for worse" and that night they probably got more "worse" than hoped for. But there was a deep secret behind our *Solomon* adventure that Roger shared with me several years later. It was a clerical error. Roger wanted to do the much less taxing Handel oratorio *Saul* but apparently

there was some mix-up in processing the order for the music and 100 copies of *Solomon*, not *Saul*, arrived in September. There was not enough time left to correct this mishap so based on the logic of expediency, that is a score in hand is worth two in the bush, ready or not we went with *Solomon* rather than the originally intended [and much more realistically doable] *Saul* and that is why we had some “worse” along with our “better” in Dave's and my debut with Roger, Helen, and Masterworks Chorus.

For our second concert, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* provided soothing relief. We had a wonderful time with Roger preparing for a fine performance on February 25, 1978, at the National Presbyterian Center that was blessed with much more “better” than “worse”.




This lead us into the final chapter of my freshman year with Masterworks, *Carmina Burana* and it is here that the grand *Carmina* saga started for me, one that is still alive and well in 2013. We reveled in a spirited performance at National Presbyterian on May 12, 1978. To put the time frame in perspective, I note that my currently-42-year-old daughter was in our children's chorus. I guess the overused aphorism is really true that time flies when you're having a good time. I particularly recall with joy the sight and sounds of Nora Davenport, the late great young percussionist who sadly departed us all too early in life. But we were not through with *Carmina* that night. Some one of us came up with the inspired idea to stage as a fundraiser, a *Carmina* sing-along boat cruise on the Potomac the weekend after our performance. In 1978 the Wilson Line Boat Company hired out sizeable Potomac tour boats for special functions and the cost was within reason. Better still, we could bring our own "supplies" [i.e. kegs of beer, plenty of junk food, sausages/wurst, etc] thus avoiding the horrible cost markups usually inflicted by host venues. This minimal cost combination let us truly regard the *Carmina* Boat Trip on the

Potomac as the fundraiser that we labeled it as. But funds were not the only thing that was raised [how about the proverbial ceiling?] Mid-afternoon the Saturday following our concert, we embarked from the Wilson Line pier on Maine Avenue for four glorious bacchanalian hours inspired by Carl Orff, our own Roger, and our well-stocked "café". How could we not have a total blast cruising along by the Kennedy Center, beer stein in one hand, perhaps *Carmina* score or sweetheart's hand in the other, doing the musical things we love to do with Roger; and we made big bucks by our fiscal standards. Tremendous and memorable success!

CARMINA BURANA CHORUS - May 12, 1978

Montgomery County Masterworks Chorus Members



Roger Ames, Music Director
Sondra Proctor, Assistant Music Director

ALTO & SOPRANO

Helen Altman Helene Ambrogio Kathy Anderson Molly Baird Patricia Barron *Diane Behrens LaNita L. Bennett Judy Bernstein Barbara Borton Patricia Breen Betty M. Carnahan Miriam Carp Sally Champ Jeanne Cherer *Betty Clark Wilma Conti Marjory Donn Janet Donoian Audrey N. Fritts Hillary Beth Goodman Nancy S. Gorman Virginia R. Guy Donna Hahn Cynthia J. Hale Virginia E. Hollenbeck Faith Horowitz Fran Hrastar Hiltje Irausquin *Rita Kruhm Madeline LaBonte Ann Lawlor *Sara Landau Martha Leins *Eloise Levy *Helaine Lipson *Nancy Loewenthal Mary Ludwig	Shirley Ludwig Anita Marcus Eira Mattsson Kay E. McGoff *Joan McNeil Jill Metzger *Lolly Mills Susan Montrose Katherine Moorehead Alice Moskowitz +*Susie Munger Rosemary Nelson +*Geri Olson Joy Panagides +*Barbara Payne +*Nancy Plum Elise G. Reed +*Janet Rhinehart Marla Roberts *Evelyn Saile Margaret Scott Margaret Scroger +*Marjorie R. Seides *Brenda Shafer Heidi Shinn Marta Shepard Ellen Slaughter Katherine G. Smith Margaret Elaine Stack Mary Sudassy Laura Gibbs Thomas Ann Turnmeyer *Andrea Twomey Ann Wallace Ruth Walter *Dottie Wise *Vicky Wyan
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TENOR & BASS

Nick Aspiotis John P. Becker Mitchell Bender *Paul E. Carkin	*R.L. Carnahan *Kevin Caughlan Roger B. Clough Richard H. Dennis
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Tenor & Bass continued on next page.

Tenor & Bass Continued

*Bill Gadzuk Daniel Glazer *William N. Harris George T. Hollenbeck Don Jansky *George F. Kenter Jim Klebau Warren G. LaHeist Richard Lee *Don Luckett Nils Mattsson	David J. McGoff *Ron Nelson Chet Ogan *Frank J. O'Donnell Fred Palmer, Jr. Thomas H. Peed *Julian Sante +*Jim Slavin Barclay M. Shephard Paul M. Spiegel *Lamar White
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*Bill Wise

*Chamber Chorus
+Member of Board of Directors

CHILDREN'S CHORUS (REGAZZI)

Michael Abrahams Anita Ambrogio Danny Ames Allison Becker David Carnahan Sally Cox Marlo Davis Wendy Gadzuk Aaron Guy Adam Guy	Allison Holder Melissa Holder Rachel Itscoitz Kirk Martin Scott Martin Todd Martin Cecilia Rai Grace Rai Mary Rea Melinda Spiegel
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Anne Marie Selee
 Andrew Selee
 Deirdre White

I will temporarily jump ahead to complete the sad story of our remaining *Carmina* boat trips. The following year, our new and equally charming and charismatic [in a different way] music director, Ed Polochick [founder and director of Concert Artists of Baltimore], shared our enthusiasm for doing another *Carmina* fundraiser on the water, but as we were to find out, the waterfront business climate had changed significantly in a year. Basically the Wilson Line went belly-up and their successor adopted a painful new business model. Boat chartering fees were dramatically increased and "refreshments" had to be provided through their catering service. In

spite of the new rules of the game, we did another *Carmina* boat trip in 1979 and again had a great time. Eddie was/is a wonderful guy to have around a piano/key board on such occasions. Under the new financial arrangement, our so-called "fund raiser" was lucky to break even. Unfortunately we did not learn the obvious lesson, so we staged yet another *Carmina* event in the spring of 1980 and this time the "fund raiser" was an unqualified big time "fund loser". Ever since then, we have enjoyed doing *Carmina* many times, but from then on, always in a concert venue and sadly, no longer on board a boat.

As I've already mentioned, life is full of for "betters" and for "worses", a mixed blessing which Masterworks was to experience during the summer between the 1977-78 and 1978-79 concert seasons; Roger was leaving! His life situation was spelled out in a *Persons to Watch* feature article in a 1978 issue of *Washingtonian Magazine*:

Roger Ames and **Georgine Resick** are a talented musical couple. But not a team; at the moment, their careers have spotted them on opposite sides of the Atlantic. She, a soprano, is currently singing with the Cologne Opera Company in Germany. He remains at their home in Rockville, where he composes music and conducts several local choral groups.

They have performed together in the past—they toured the East Coast last spring, she as singer, he as accompanist—and they will be making joint appearances next summer at the

Aspen Music Festival in Colorado.

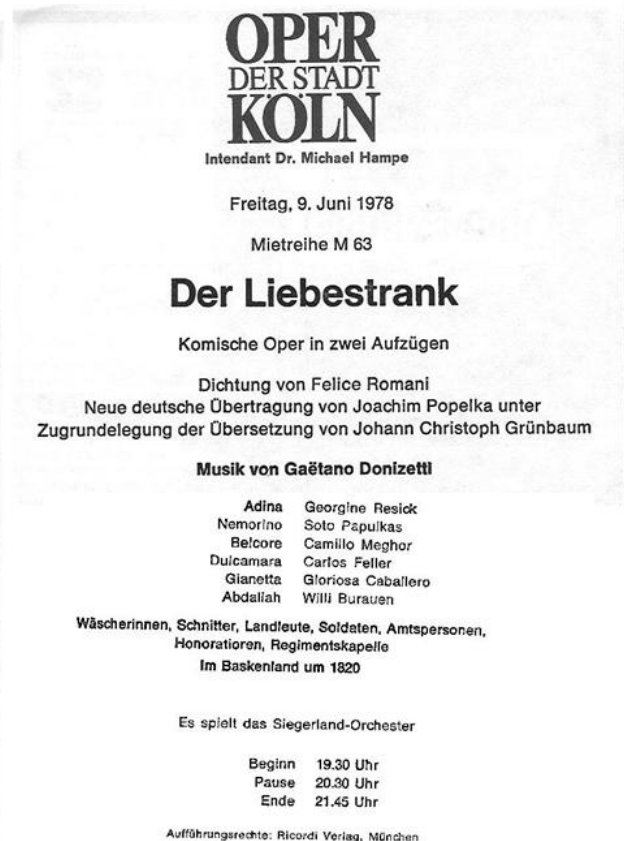
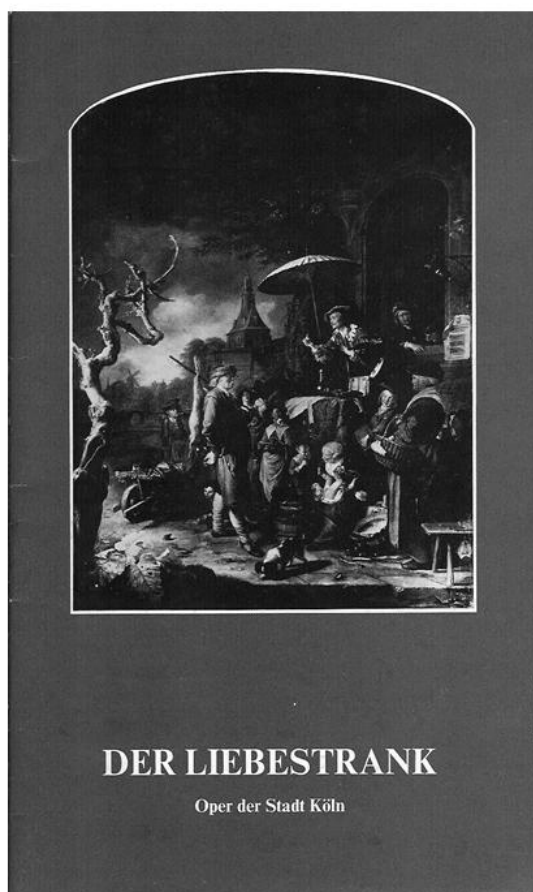
But for the meantime, they are apart and, as Ames says, running up an astronomical phone bill. Besides her work with the Cologne Opera, Resick will have three leading roles in the upcoming Mozart Festival in Cologne, and will not return to this area until spring, when she is scheduled to sing with the Baltimore Symphony.

Also next spring, Ames's first opera will receive its premiere in Washington. Called *Amistad*—Spanish for "friendship"—it was composed in honor of Senator Hubert Humphrey.



This being the reality of life, Roger planned on moving to Cologne at the end of the summer to be with Georgine. As a consequence of this timing, I became a winner due to a small personal crisis that presented itself to Roger and Georgine. Their wedding anniversary was on Friday June 9, after our *Carmina* boat trip but before Roger was to depart. Very fortunately [said with tongue in cheek!], I was to be in Cologne that weekend as I was scheduled to give a Physics Colloquium on Monday at the Institut für Festkörperforschung der Kernforschungsanlage [KFA] Jülich [the name kind of just rolls off your tongue], a nearby national laboratory. Problem

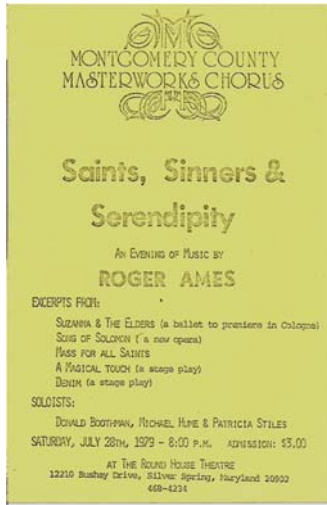
solved! I was commissioned to be a surrogate Roger to celebrate their anniversary with her. All sorts of good things fell my way. Not only was I to stay with Georgine over the weekend, but it all was to start with her Friday night performance as the beautiful and flirtatious Adina in *L'elisir d'amore* [*Der Liebestrank* in Germany] at the Opernhaus Köln. I arrived at the bahnhof late



Friday afternoon with enough time to discharge my first assigned duty, acquire anniversary flowers that I was to see delivered to Georgine's dressing room prior to the performance. Big shot that I was, at least for this evening, I picked up the ticket left at the ticket office by THE diva; no small potatoes Ticketmaster or its German equivalent for me. The performance was wonderful and I was mesmerized by the realization that it would be me and not the lovable but simple Nemorino who would be going home with Adina/Georgine at evening's end. Taking this fantasizing to yet another level, I really became into myself when I also realized that not only Nemorino but everybody else in the audience but me would leave with their fantasies of this particular evening unfulfilled. I was in the alleged Seventh Heaven.



The rest of the weekend in Köln with Georgine was lovely until my bubble was burst on Sunday evening when my friend/colleague from the KFA came to pick me up at her apartment and whisk me back to the real world. I guess if physics was paying my bills, I had to do my own song and dance at the KFA which I can assure you had little to do with L'elisir d'amore. Sometime later I spilled out my memories of the weekend to Roger, particularly my feelings of triumph concerning who in the opernhaus was the ultimate winner of Adina's heart; me of course as revealed by who accompanied her home. Roger's response was something like "Yeah, I know all about it; I feel exactly that way absolutely every time I see/hear her perform."



Masterworks survived the first Roger-less concert year of 1978-79 thanks in large part on account of our delight with Ed Polochick as our new Maestro. Roger and Georgine returned to the states for a brief period over the summer of 1979. During that time, Masterworks and other friends of Roger put on a heart-felt concert of his music at the Round House Theater in which Georgine sang; beautifully I might add.

It was not until the summer of 1983 that I next saw Roger and Georgine; this time in



Düsseldorf where Georgine was now under contract. No surprise that we had some wonderful days together that included a particularly scary day of sailing in which a surprise storm almost caused big problems for us. There we go with yet another boat trip, but without the benefits of

Carmina. It was on this visit that Roger spoke of his correspondences with Carl Orff. As he tells it, a while after our [profitable and great] 1978 *Carmina* Boat Fundraiser, Roger wrote to Carl Orff describing the joys of our *Carmina*-inspired day on the Potomac. As Roger put it, "Here we were floating on the Potomac River in the shadow of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, great iconic monuments which represented the basic quality of the United States in view in all directions. A boat full of happy people united in song [yours], spirits, and an overall zest for life. These are the moments that seem to be really made in heaven." To Roger's surprise and delight, Orff responded with a message in the spirit of "I am so happy to hear of your wonderful experiences making music, happiness, and zestful life in which *Carmina Burana* added to the mix. I cannot imagine a better way for my music to be performed. Thank you for telling me your story." Carl Orff died in 1982 at the age of 86 and was buried in the Baroque church of the beer-brewing priory of Andechs, south of Munich.

Fast forward to 2013, the year of National Phil's two performances of *Carmina* on June 8 and 9, the same days as the [MIT Class of 1963 50th Reunion](#). In keeping with a recurring theme throughout this nostalgia trip, water and boat adventures seem to be a unifier. As some of you



know, I as an MIT alumni have been associated not only with the MIT Choral Society but also [MIT Crew](#). With respect to crew, I rowed as an undergraduate and then allowed myself to be completely cut off from it for more than 35 years. As a consequence of some wise strategies at MIT, I have been reinvented with the crew

program for the past 15 years and have been part of a semi-competitive MIT Alumni Master's crew that has "raced" in some big-deal intercollegiate regattas over the past ten years. It's been fantastically great to actually do now that which we did back in the 1960's. The MIT reunion classes participate in "fun" races on their appropriate reunion years. My class of '63 has won at our three past reunions in 1998, 2003, and 2008. On the occasion of our 50th reunion, I/we intend to continue our "superiority" into 2013 so on June 8 and 9, I will be thinking of you all and of *Carmina*, but I will be found in Boston/Cambridge defending our honor rowing on the Charles. I think that Carl Orff would approve.



CARMINA BURANA



Meister der Carmina Burana, 1230 AD

Lutoslawski Three Poems by Henri Michaux Orff Carmina Burana

Audrey Luna , soprano
Robert Baker , tenor
Leon Williams , baritone
National Philharmonic Chorale
Choralis Youth Chorus
Stan Engebretson , conductor

Saturday, June 8, 2013, 8:00 PM Sunday, June 9, 2013, 3:00 PM
At the Music Center at Strathmore

Tickets from \$28. Students \$10. Group Sales Available (301-581-5199). Kids 7-17 free! Complimentary Parking.
Call 301-581-5100 and mention promotion code NPOrff for a 20% discount on tickets.
Available for purchases made by phone or in person. In addition, they can be purchased online
at www.nationalphilharmonic.org by using the code 3429 when logging in.
Not applicable to previously purchased tickets.