

Musical Treasure Chest #11

My datebook (yes, I still use one) bears, despite erasure, the faint markings on its pages of the Glimmerglass Opera orchestra rehearsals that should have begun this week. The opera season, for the orchestra, begins about three weeks before opening night, and we dive right in, rehearsing two of the four operas in the first days, and then adding the third and the fourth in the next week. Comprised of players from around the country, we generally only see each other during the ten weeks of the opera season, so the first week is a wonderful and joyous time, filled with warm greetings and enthusiastic catching-up. The schedule is intense and rigorous, but there is great camaraderie among the players, and long days of rehearsal are followed by fun nights. Orchestra players, singers and the occasional conductor show up for conviviality, and the conversation often centers on dissecting the productions and the music. These "sessions" often go much later than they should, but there is so much to fit into few weeks, you don't want to miss a minute.

The orchestra is one of the only departments of the opera company (aside from year round staff) that stays the same; the singers, production teams and seasonal staff all change from year to year. Much of the orchestra personnel have been members for many years, and our friendships are deep. Time spent together extends beyond rehearsals and performances to long bike rides round Otsego Lake, glorious treks on the many back roads of the hills nearby, and even ballroom dance lessons (led by my husband and me). These summers are always special and eagerly anticipated. I have to say, as I opened my datebook this week, the opera's void left me sad. I will miss seeing my colleagues and sharing the music and fun (although there is talk of a special, socially-distanced mini-dance camp!!).

I find that I turn to music to pull me out of my funk. One of the regular features of my life these past three months has been performing Sunday *Musical Sanctuaries* at First Reformed Church in Schenectady. When COVID-19 first shut life down in mid-March, I reached out to Pastor Bill Levering, who has been a wonderful and steadfast friend to Musicians of Ma'alwyck and to me, to see if I

could offer my musical talents to the church to give something back to the community. But Bill already had ideas about creating daily mini-performances and offered me a weekly spot. Musicians of Ma'alwyck or my husband and I and Max Caplan have performed a new program every week since. I haven't actually counted, but we have performed at least 15 mini-concerts, and what initially was meant to be my gift to the church, has turned into a tremendous gift to me, keeping me going musically and giving me great satisfaction and pleasure programming and playing. These musical sanctuaries have offered me and my musical circle a tangible goal each week and provided us a chance to keep interacting musically. That's a lifeline for a musician. And though the audience isn't with us in person, without fail when we finish each week, there are several enthusiastic emails praising the concert, which make us feel connected and appreciated.

The *Musical Sanctuaries* have given me a chance to explore some new music repertory, and I thought I would share with you some of the pieces I have "discovered." By the way, you can listen on Sundays at 3 every week!

Rameau *Thetis*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Gg1cvGNyag>

Telemann Harmonic

Gottesdienst: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODvopuOnEQw>

Kurt Weill *One Touch of Venus*

"Westwind" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4gWy7oU57w>