



Altamura Center for Arts and Cultures, 404 Winter Clove Rd, Round Top, NY 12473

Celebrate the  Christmas Spirit

Dear Altamura Arts Family,

As Christmas is approaching, it is good to look back on the happenings of 2011. Indeed, we have much to be grateful for. Although these are difficult times, most of us have food, shelter, family, friends and most important the gift of **FAITH**, which allows us to look forward with a thankful and positive attitude.

Much has been accomplished during this past year 2011. Our arts company and arts family keep growing. We enjoyed the pianistic excellence of a celebrated pianist, **Lorenzo Di Bella**, first prize winner of the Vladimir Horowitz international piano competition which yearly takes place in Russia. Theatre lovers enjoyed another one of our innovations, the murder mystery comedy, **"A Shot in the Dark"**. By popular requests, we will continue to present plays. For next season we chose another theatre masterpiece to be performed by a cast of professional actors, **"Light up the Sky"**. (See dates at end of newsletter)

Last August we presented a very informative and entertaining program, a **"Survey of Opera"** conducted and narrated by the legendary Maestro Anton Coppola. Several of you who attended this program asked us to present another opera at the beginning of December. Since the second act of *La Boheme* takes place on Christmas Eve, in celebration of the season, it seemed appropriate to produce **La Boheme**. This beloved opera which took place this past December 4<sup>th</sup> was a great artistic success and, it was also well attended. We were very happy to share with you Puccini's immortal opera performed by a superlative cast of artists, several of them from the Metropolitan Opera, and again conducted by our beloved Coppola. Several of you remarked about the Bells, or better, "The Ring of Fire" directed by Pamela Slater. I agree with you; the bells so beautifully played, created an atmosphere of magic, refinement and beauty, just right for the most spiritual season of the year. We thank Pam Slater for bringing them to us. **Also, we raised a modest sum of money, (\$500) for the Hurricane Irene disaster fund.** We hope to do better in the coming months. Thank you to our pianists/opera coaches, James Besser and Tom Getty. **BRAVO TO OUR GREAT BOHEME CAST:** Malinda Haslit, Mimi ; Michael Corvino, Marcello; Raul Melo, Rodolfo; Stefan Kirchgraper, Colline; Carlos Conde Gonzalez, Benoit Alcindoro; Daryn Zimmer, Musetta. **We salute you! Oh!.. and our waiter, Leonard Altamura! Great job Len! Continue in the role at home. 'What?' Oh, never mind!**

In 2011 we took another step forward and accepted Canada's and Italy's invitation to have the Altamura/Caruso International Voice Competition preliminaries take place in their countries. We were greeted with much respect, generosity and enthusiasm in both countries. On April 26, we auditioned 17 young artists in Recanati, Italy, in the famous Beniamino Gigli Academy. For those who are not familiar with this name, Beniamino Gigli was one of Italy's great tenors who had a long career at the Metropolitan Opera and was known in all continents. In Canada, on September 26, we auditioned another 37 young great voices. The level was high. We can say the same for New York. This past October, we held the competition Finals at the Liederkrantz Foundation of New York City where we listened to 85 young artists from 16 countries. Canada is the country that impressed us the most. An active and opera loving audience remained waiting in the concert hall from morning to late evening until the results were announced. This is a rare happening, not seen in any other country. Thank you Maestro Michel Brousseau and thank you also to the dedicated members of your organization. A word of appreciation is also extended to Sylvie Suprenant, Mayor of Sainte-Therese and Francois Cantin, Mayor of Blainville for their generous support and wholehearted cooperation. They represent what is best in leadership and vision for the Quebec region.

A very special word of appreciation to the illustrious **competition jury: USA:** Maestri, Anton Coppola, Roger Malouf, Michel Brousseau, Francisco Casanova, Camille Coppola, Stefanos Koroneos, Lewis Ehlers, Michael Fennelly, David Maiullo. **In Italy:** Nazzareno Antinori, Ermanno Beccaceci, Sabrina Trojse. **In Canada:** Maestri, Guillermo Silva Marin, Stuart Hamilton, Colette Boky, Therese Sevadjan and pianist, Jean Desmarais, last but not least, coordinator, **Dalia Mesloub.**

This past September, we were invited to the majestic Notre Dame Cathedral of Montreal where Maestro International Organization headed by founder/conductor Michel Brousseau presented a tribute to our legendary Maestro Anton Coppola. The cathedral was filled to capacity with music lovers. For the occasion, Maestro Coppola, before receiving his award, conducted the virtuoso Polish soprano, Maria Knapick in Mozart's Exultate Jubilate. Maria Knapick was nominated as "Artist in Residence" of our Company. The orchestra got a taste of Anton's conducting mastery and style. The program closed with Mozart's Requiem Mass masterfully conducted by Michel Brousseau. It was a spectacular event which will live long in the memory of all who attended. See photo below.

2011 Now we are **looking forward** to another season of great performances. There will be a **VOICE INSTITUTE** for young artists, mostly coming from Italy and Canada, to fine tune their vocal skills in "Bel Canto". To that end we have chosen **La Sonnambula** which will be fully staged by me and conducted by Michel Brousseau, founder/director of the New World Symphony Orchestra of Montreal, on July 29, 2012.

**In August**, we plan to present the Altamura Competition winners in concert version of Leoncavallo's **IPAGLIACCI** conducted by our beloved Maestro Anton Coppola, stage directed by Camille Coppola, no relation to Anton.

**As you can well imagine**, these programs require much planning, energy and funds. In the 12 years we have been in operation, we have never had a fund raiser. Times have changed, and now we need a little help from you so that we can continue to bring the very best possible in cultural programs. Several members and volunteers of our appreciative audience are in the process of forming a steering committee, to plan a **kickoff luncheon on April 15<sup>th</sup>**. A month later, on May 20, 2012 they will produce a fund raising dinner. The funds will be used to produce the programs of the next Summer Festival. We hope to see many of you at this kickoff luncheon. **The cost is \$18 per person**. We welcome your comments and ideas so that we can better plan a satisfactory performance season for everyone. The Gala event will begin at 1:00 pm with a cocktail hour and a silent auction, followed by dinner and a great performance by our Altamura Competition Winners and guest artists from the Metropolitan Opera. The catering will be offered by BrandyWine Restaurant of Windham. The proprietor, Mr. Luis Caracciolo, is a long time friend and is giving us a great deal. The food is excellent and abundant. Details will be discussed and later communicated to all of you. **Many hands make light work**. You will have fulfilling satisfaction of belonging to a culture loving family who will add to your enjoyment. Nothing is more satisfying than sharing bread, music, wine and excellence of performance with loving, interesting, peaceful and fun loving friends.

**Here are the dates:** **Kick/off luncheon**, Sunday, April 15, 2011, 12:30 pm, \$18 p/p  
**Fund Raising Gala**, Sunday, May 20, 1 pm, ticket to be decided at luncheon in April.

A warm and sincere thank you to all and fervent wishes for a Blessed Christmas and Wonderful New Year.

Leonard and Carmella Altamura

Founders, [www.altocanto.org](http://www.altocanto.org) e-mail, [icpains@optonline.net](mailto:icpains@optonline.net)

Altamura Center for Arts and Cultures

201-863-8724, until April 2012



**Maestro Anton Coppola** receives tribute in Canada, at the Notre Dame Cathedral of Montreal, by Maestro International and the New World Symphony Orchestra conducted by founder/director, Michel Brousseau.

**A special word of appreciation to friends** from New Jersey who continue to help even though our work takes place in a different state:

Mr. and Mrs. John Aresta, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Panepinto, Dr. and Mrs. M. Shaari, Counsellor Libero Marotta, Howard Katz, Mr. and Mrs. John Graziano, Societa

Unita of Union City, Gina Lia, Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Casely, Dr. Anca Popa, Dr. and Mrs. Michael Altamura, Dr. and Mrs. Carmelo Milazzo, Sandy Lansky and Mario Irizaray. Thank you for driving the many extra miles to support us.

**There is ONE in Whom we all live, move and have our being, Who sees all and surely will richly reciprocate your kindness.**

We like to hear from you. Your comments sent to [icpains@optonline.net](mailto:icpains@optonline.net) will be posted on our highly visited website, [www.altocanto.org](http://www.altocanto.org) - 506,600 visitors

**Our volunteers** - May the **PRESENCE** linger in your spirit and hearts throughout the year so that you may be **comforted** and **blessed** at all times. Lola Migliaccio, Marie Trotta, Linda Mascari, Linda Edmondson, and the great Helen Bagniewska, Jacky Schiffer. **Thank you from our heart.**

**Reservations: 518-622-0070 Or 201-863-8724**

***In pre-concert, Young Artists in Concert from Summer Institute (Bel Canto Works)***

Also In- pre-concert from Italy, pianist, **Laura Nocchiero** in Chopin's

NOTTURNO OP. 37 N. 1; BALLATA OP. 47 N. 3; NOTTURNO OP. 55 N. 1; IMPROVVISO - FANTASIA

***La Sonnambula, by V. Bellini, (The Sleep Walker) Sunday, July 29, 2:30***

**Sat, August 25, 2012, 2pm**

***Light Up the Sky***, A Comedy in three acts by Moss Hart. Directed by Alexander Harrington

With an all professional cast of actors and special appearance by Founder/Soprano Carmella Altamura in the role of Stella

**Sunday, August 26, 2 pm, Part II**, "A Survey of Opera" with narrative by Anton Coppola and performance of Verismo opera, ***IPagliacci***, by Ruggero Leoncavallo, stage directed by Camille Coppola. Program is subject to change.



**Encounters with the Masters, the passing down of unwritten Opera and Bel Canto traditions to a new generation of artists in the Altamura Summer Institute's Young Artists in Concert Part I**

Produced by Inter-Cities Performing Arts, **on July 29, 2012, 2:30 pm**,

With a cast of finalists and winners from the **Altamura/Caruso International Voice Competition**

More on, [www.altocanto.org](http://www.altocanto.org) [icpains@optonline.net](mailto:icpains@optonline.net)

**Donations are appreciated, F.D.I. # 222-879-137**