



The National Society of Arts & Letters

President's Newsletter

January 2013

Dear and Valued NSAL Members,
Happy New Year! I wish you all a successful 2013 as you continue your good work supporting young artists.

Pittsburgh Conference May 14 – 19, 2013:

Our annual meeting is just four months away. Mark your calendars and plan to come to Pittsburgh the week of May 14 - 19, 2013. The Pittsburgh Chapter has laid on a wide variety of special venues and events that will give you a unique experience of this wonderful city. We also plan to offer an array of free workshops to teach valuable skills to help make your chapter more successful. The conference is a wonderful opportunity

to be with your NSAL friends from around the country, enjoy the creative young printmaker contestants, and to have a say in the workings of NSAL.

Do plan to stay over on Sunday because the Chapter organizers have planned a wonderful day trip to Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece houses Fallingwater and Kentuck Knob with a bonus stop at the Touchstone Center for Crafts. "The greatest personal and professional triumph of Frank Lloyd Wright's distinguished career was the country home he designed in 1935 for Liliane and Edgar J. Kaufmann. ... Fallingwater was a full flowering of Wright's mature theories of organic architecture, sharpened by new-found vitality." From: *Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater* by Carla Lind.



Pittsburgh skyline as seen from our conference hotel.

News of our Winners:

The photograph below of **Allan K. Washington**, 2012 first place musical theater winner, dancing in the role of Tommy Djilas in last summer's Glimmerglass production of *The Music Man* was featured in the December 21, 2012 issue in the *New York Times* with an article by Anthony Tommasini about colorblind casting.



Photo: Karli Cadel/Glimmerglass Festival



Ruth Albright reports that **Charnette Batey**, 2nd place 2012 Musical Theater, starred in the role of Dorothy Gale in Bloomington, Indiana's professional Cardinal Stage Company production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Here's an excerpt from the review: "Her [Charnette Batey's] singing and dancing were excellent and her character showed spunk, loyalty and vulnerability that captured everyone's heart."

Here's a link to a video featuring **Charnette** and NSAL member **George Pinney**:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH1m_OSR4qU

John Mark Giragosian, 2nd place, dance 2004, was featured in the “Dancer Spotlight” of the April/May 2012 issue of *Pointe Magazine*. Here is the article:

Dancer Spotlight: Subtlety and Style

The Joffrey Ballet’s John Mark Giragosian



By Thomas Connors

With his old-school athleticism, clean lines and compact frame, John Mark Giragosian stands out among the Joffrey Ballet’s many strong male dancers. He partners effortlessly, crisply articulating the essence of each step. In his solos, he seems more expressive than determinedly impressive, bringing color and inflection even to abstract movement.

Giragosian is not a Joffrey newcomer. Promoted from apprentice to company member by artistic director Ashley Wheater in 2008, his opportunities have grown steadily. While he has danced featured roles in *The Nutcracker*, Frederick Ashton’s *Cinderella* and Ronald Hynd’s *The Merry Widow*, Giragosian

still has untapped facets to his artistry that he may eventually be able to explore. “I see John Mark as a leading dancer,” says Wheater. “Right now he is a very strong soloist. But I see him taking on many things. Cranko’s *Romeo and Juliet* is coming back in a few seasons and definitely he should be a Mercutio. In the next few years, Twyla Tharp will do some things here, Ashley Page will do a new work here. So John Mark’s future looks incredibly bright and very interesting.”

Giragosian, like many male dancers, came to ballet through his sister. At 5, following one of her performances in his hometown of Manassas, Virginia, he jumped onstage and began dancing. When the audience started filing out, he burst into tears. Before long, Giragosian had added dance class several days a week to a roster of activities that included soccer, karate and piano. By the time he was in high school, he was studying at the Maryland Youth Ballet six days a week. He had to leave school 90 minutes early and make up the classes he missed online and at the local community college. Nonetheless, Giragosian graduated at the top of his class. Although there was a period when he dreamed of being a doctor (science was his favorite subject), Giragosian

steadily refined his classical technique, encouraged by his instructor Olivier Munoz, now a teacher at Orlando Ballet School. While he kept a tight focus, with Munoz's encouragement he experimented from time to time. Giragosian even brought a contemporary piece to the Helsinki International Ballet Competition. It was a stretch and he did not medal, but both he and Munoz remember the process as a welcome learning experience.

Giragosian admits that it's been "a journey" getting his body to feel comfortable in nonclassical pieces, even at the Joffrey. "I did Paul Taylor's *Cloven Kingdom* my first year here," he recalls. "It was the most modern thing I had done and so a lot of the steps felt like they didn't look very good. I was doing them the way I'd been told to do them, but I was thinking to myself, This looks weird."

Thoughtful and self-aware, today Giragosian, 23, has a good sense of his strengths and weaknesses. "My biggest struggle as a whole is really my line," he says. "My feet and legs don't always shape the way I want them to. When I am onstage, I'll really try to think of shaping my legs and feet. Sometimes that will make the rest of my dancing stiff. So it's a fine line for me to be able to work in a way that allows my legs and feet to be stretched to their maximum while maintaining relaxation and good form in my upper body."

Giragosian's learning curve isn't dictated solely by the studio and the stage. In January, he began working toward a degree in economics at Northwestern University. "It will be a challenge," he admits, "because I'll be going to night school and balancing that with touring, rehearsing and performing. But I want to be able to have options after my ballet career. And I really love learning."

At a Glance:

John Mark Giragosian, Age 23

Company: The Joffrey Ballet, Training: Maryland Youth Ballet

Favorite Role: George Balanchine's *Tarantella*

Dream Role: Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*

In Memorium:

It is with great sadness that I have to report the passing of Harvey K. Smith, husband of Dorothy Lincoln-Smith, our National First Vice President. I had the privilege of meeting Harvey just a few months before he died. Even in his weakened state, it was clear this was a remarkable man, witty, intelligent, gentle, deeply caring about people. His passing is a great loss.

Those who would like to make a donation in Harvey's memory through NSAL should make out a check to the Nicholson Nielson Trust Fund. Send it to Jeanne Tassé, c/o the Nicholson Nielson Trust Fund, 100 Becker Lane, Marietta, Ohio 45750. Donations will be honored in the program at the Awards Dinner and in The Record.

Below is the obituary that appeared in the Arizona Republic newspaper.



Phoenix Boys Choir conductor Harvey K. Smith.
Photo: Paul F. Gero/The Arizona Republic

By Kerry Lenge | The Republic | Fri Dec 21, 2012

Former Phoenix Boys Choir artistic director Harvey K. Smith, who built a small community chorus into a world-class performing company, has died at age 76.

An Arizona native, Smith ran the choir for 40 seasons until retiring in 1999. He passed away Dec. 13 after a long battle with Parkinson's disease.

His list of accomplishments is long. Under his tenure, the ensemble expanded from 30 voices to 270, with five choruses ranging from the entry-level training choir to the globe-trotting touring choir. He put the organization on solid financial footing and established its current rehearsal and office facility on East Missouri Avenue. His many honors include a Governor's Arts Award and the Raymond G. Van Diest Arts Advocacy Award from the Arizona Music Educators Association.

In 1998, he conducted the choir in a recording for the Oregon Bach Festival Chorus and Orchestra; the resulting album, "Credo," won the Grammy Award for best choral performance in 2000.

"The choir would not be where it is without him," said Georg Stangelberger, who took over as artistic director after serving as deputy director of the Vienna Boys Choir.

Despite his resume, Stangelberger knew he had big shoes to fill when he came to Phoenix.

"Harvey was so gracious when I took over," he said. "He took a whole year of not being around the choir building to make it easier for me to get my roots down and take over.

He was a very kindhearted person, and he cared so much about the choir.”

More than the honors and the business successes, however, Smith will be remembered as a stern but loving teacher known as “Dr. Smith” to the 3,000 boys who passed through the choir over four decades. They include some who went on to musical careers, such as television composer Martin Davich (“ER”) and KBAQ-FM music director Sterling Beeff, but also doctors, lawyers and citizens of every stripe.

“Beyond its artistic contribution, the important thing about the Boys Choir is its teaching of teamwork, responsibility, evaluation, attentiveness, self-respect,” said Charles Bruffy, director of the Grammy-winning Phoenix Chorale, who was befriended by Smith after moving to the Valley in 1999.

“It’s the list of attributes that create a good human, and that’s what Harvey embodied, and what that taught the young men who came to sing with him. The number of lives that he has touched is innumerable. I just so sincerely will miss his smile and welcoming nature.”

News of Smith’s death sparked an outpouring of heartfelt tributes on social media. Brian Kunnari, a Peoria marketing professional who trained with the choir from 1984 to 1987, wrote:

“Yes, we sang, and sang well. But I also learned how to tie a tie. I learned how to shake a person’s hand and look them in the eye with a smile. I learned how to take care of my own things for a month on tour in Europe. I learned about friendship. I learned how to stay professional and gracious around host families. I learned that you didn’t always get your way, especially with food in France and you had to be okay with that. I learned how to work hard. I learned that you can’t be laughing during the North America world premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s ‘Requiem’ on stage and learned the hard way. I learned about respect. I learned how to be a better person.”

Smith’s widow, Dorothy Lincoln Smith, said she was overwhelmed by the outpouring of love. A singer herself, she worked with her husband throughout his career and coordinated tours and served as vocal coach. She said that “Dr. Smith” remained close with many former students until the end.

“He was so happy in his profession,” she said. “All of these kids, the boys, the parents, the alumni, have come to admire his patience, his passion.”

In addition to his wife, Smith is survived by sons Harvey Keith Smith II and Mark Russell Smith, daughters Kerstan Lincoln Ruffer and Lisa Lincoln, and seven grandchildren.

Website Housekeeping:

Adrian Lyjak is no longer serving as webmaster for our National website. If you have any changes or additions you’d like made to the present site, please contact me as my husband has been making the changes free of charge.

Currently we are working on a new site built on the WordPress platform that will allow us to make our own changes without having to depend on a code-trained webmaster. Once the new site is completed, we also will produce a template for chapters to personalize for their own local websites. If the template is ready in time, at the Pittsburgh conference, there will be a hands-on workshop to train attendees on how to create individualized chapter sites using the template.

Here's to a great 2013 with NSAL.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catriona". The script is cursive and fluid, with a small dot above the 'i'.

Catriona Tudor Eler
NSAL National President

P.S. I am leaving January 17 for a 3-week trip to India and Nepal. One of the places on the itinerary is Sanganer, a village south of Jaipur known for its hand block printing. If I can, I will bring back samples to share at the conference.