

MARILYN HORNE

A Master Class

March 7, 2010



Proudly Present

A Master Class with Marilyn Horne

The outstanding American mezzo-soprano Marilyn (Benice) Horne's father was a strong musical influence in her life right up until his death in July of 1956. He encouraged his daughter to pursue her musical dreams and she did just that. Marilyn made her operatic debut at the age of twenty in the role of Hata in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* for the Los Angeles Guild Opera in the fall of 1954. That summer, she sang the voice of *Carmen Jones* in Oscar Hammerstein's re-creation of [Georges Bizet's](#) *Carmen*.

When her father died, Marilyn travelled to Europe in the hopes of furthering her career. She travelled to Gelsenkirchen, Germany and in 1957 joined the Gelsenkirchen Opera Company, singing such roles as Mimi in *La Bohème*, Giulietta in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Minnie, Fulvia in *Ezio*, and Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra*. Her first great career success occurred at the inauguration of Gelsenkirchen's new opera house on May 22, 1960 as Marie in [Alban Berg's](#) *Wozzeck*, a role she had not wanted to perform. It became her ticket back to the USA. Brenda Lewis, engaged to sing Marie in San Francisco, was ill and Marilyn left Gelsenkirchen to perform the role.

Because of the pregnancy with her daughter, Marilyn was forced to withdraw from a performance of Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* in New York City. As a replacement, they hired a new Spanish soprano named Montserrat Caballé, who thrilled the New York audience and became a star overnight.

Soon after the San Francisco *Wozzeck* Marilyn made her first appearance with [Joan Sutherland](#) in February 1961. In 1969, Horne teamed up with Joan Sutherland again when she performed the role of Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with the [English Chamber Orchestra](#).

She made her Covent Garden debut was in October of 1964 as Marie in *Wozzeck*. Her La Scala debut was as Jocasta in [Igor Stravinsky's](#) *Oedipus Rex* on March 13, 1969. Her Metropolitan Opera debut was as Adalgisa opposite Joan Sutherland's Norma in Bellini's *Norma*. She sang many more times at the Met, and opened the 1972-1973 season as *Carmen* on September 19, 1972. In 1984, she brought [Georg Frideric Handel's](#) *Rinaldo* to the Met, the first [G.F. Handel](#) opera ever performed there.

Marilyn Horne has been called "probably the greatest singer in the world" (Opera News, 1981). She is, without a doubt, one of the greatest mezzo-sopranos in opera history and is probably the greatest Rossini interpreter ever. She sang for over 40 years and her contributions to the opera world live on in her numerous recordings, among which is Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète*, a role she was also well known for.

Today, Marilyn Horne works as the Vocal Program Director at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara and has also set up The Marilyn Horne Foundation, which helps to support young singers.

The Carol Autorino Center for the Arts and Humanities Since opening its doors on the Saint Joseph College campus in 2001, The Carol Autorino Center for the Arts and Humanities has presented an array of programs with over 100 organizations from greater Hartford. The award winning Bruyette Athenaeum with its intimate Hoffman Auditorium has proven a comfortable and accessible venue for the 30,000 people who now attend events annually. Saint Joseph College is proud to be the home of Connecticut Concert Opera and performances which have become a signature of the Bruyette Athenaeum!

Connecticut Concert Opera, founded in 1991, gave its first performance in February 1992, Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri*. Now entering its 18th consecutive season, the company has mounted 36 productions, in original languages, with either English supertitles or a printed libretto provided to the audience. Connecticut Concert Opera's focus has been on performance of the lesser known repertoire of well-known composers. The company has performed in this auditorium annually since 2001 and its artists consider this room one of the best to sing in. Upcoming presentations of CCO include the American Opera Idol competition on July 8 and a semi-staged production of Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* on October 30. See www.connconcertopera.org.