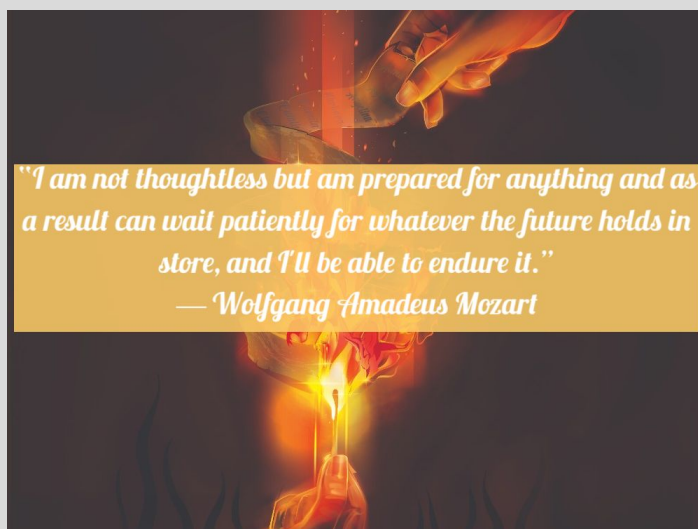




Inside Your March 2020 Newsletter:

1. Coronavirus
2. Chorus Auditions Rescheduled
3. Festival Program Tribute Ads
4. BOF Spotlight: Bass-baritone John Cheek

Regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19)



Sending light, love, and hope to you - our Berkshire Opera Festival family - during these dark and difficult times. Though the future may feel uncertain, we are **resilient** and together we will endure this challenge.

Please continue to take care of yourself and your loved ones, and know that BOF is keeping you in our thoughts until we can be reunited at our performances this August.

To read BOF's full statement on COVID-19, please [click here](#).

Chorus Auditions Rescheduled

Due to our current social distancing mandate, BOF's **Chorus Auditions** originally scheduled for April 4th have been rescheduled for **May 9th**:

BOF is holding auditions for the Berkshire Opera Festival Chorus for our Summer 2020 production of W.A. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and BOF's Fifth Anniversary Gala Concert. Auditions will be held for the following chorus sections:

- ALTOS
- TENORS
- BARITONES/BASSES

Successful applicants will be added to the Berkshire Opera Festival Chorus roster. Auditions will be held Saturday, May 9, 2020 in Great Barrington, MA. Candidates must prepare two arias or art songs, at least one of which must be in Italian. There might also be sight-reading on this audition. To apply, please send a one-page resume, or a list of previous choral experience, to BOF's Artistic Director, Brian Garman, at bgarman@BerkshireOperaFestival.org before April 29. You will be notified of your exact audition time and location no later than May 1. Please note that an audition is not guaranteed.

An accompanist will be provided for these auditions at no charge. All choristers are paid. Rehearsals will take place on selected evenings and weekends. All rehearsals and performances will take place during the month of August 2020.

2020 Season Program Tribute Ads

2020 Season Program Tribute Ads

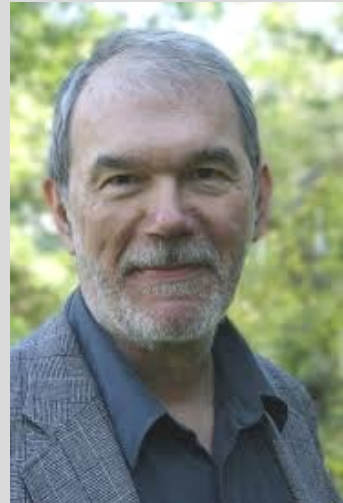
Tribute ads placed in BOF's 2020 Season Program Book are a great way to promote your group or honor a loved one, all while supporting BOF!

Ads begin at \$125
1/8 page - full page ads available

Email Lisa for details:
Landersen@BerkshireOperaFestival.org

BOF Spotlight: John Cheek

Recently, BOF Marketing Manager, Lisa Andersen, had the good fortune to sit down with five-decade singing legend and bass-baritone John Cheek, who will perform the role of the Commendatore in Berkshire Opera Festival's production of *Don Giovanni* this August. Right from the start, the depth and power of John's voice was apparent, prompting questions about how he developed his talent as an opera singer.



John, it's so great to meet you and to learn more about your upcoming role as the Commendatore in BOF's production of *Don Giovanni*.

Don Giovanni is probably the most fascinating opera that exists. The story is so real and so ambiguous, just like human beings are. You can say that Don Giovanni is the devil, but he's also an attractive fellow, you know, like, women like bad boys [laughs]. And he is a really bad boy. The story is filled with ambiguity and disturbing yet real ideas of humanity, and that's what makes it so endlessly fascinating. Mozart goes back and forth in the blink of an eye from

high drama to comedy - there is simply nothing else in opera quite like it. In one instance, they're all vowing vengeance against Giovanni, and this comes on the heels of all this carousing and carrying on in the final scene of the first act. Mozart manages to conjure up the mood with music in miraculously simple but incredibly brilliant ways.

There is the graveyard scene where Leporello is terrified and this statue starts singing, accompanied by trombones. Leporello is absolutely trembling. But Don Giovanni's reaction is, "ahhhh, this is really funny," or, at the very least, "this is kind of curious." And you get this back and forth between utter terror and Giovanni's laissez-faire attitude. And then at the end when the Commendatore comes back to life and is invited to dinner, the music changes again. It takes on this elemental power instead of a lightness that was there before. Everyone loves *Don Giovanni*.

Opera itself is such a complicated art form. Having any one element missing could throw the whole production off. You have to have a great cast, a wonderful director and a solid concept, and you have to have a really fine music director. There are so many facets that have to "click," and then all these people have to come together for a fairly brief but intense amount of time to create a show. But we are lucky; we've always had a great time working here with Berkshire Opera Festival. Jonathon Loy, BOF Co-Founder and Director of Production, and Brian Garman, BOF Co-Founder and Artistic Director, get wonderful singers, mostly young singers who are on their way up, and some of them have really gone on to reach great heights of success, so this is a truly special space to perform in.

We are excited to see BOF's presentation of this classic opera. How do you think it will differ from when you portrayed the Commendatore in the past?

Jonathon's take will undoubtedly be different from my performance, say, in 1985. Every production has its own take on it, but the music is the common thread that weaves the story. I have sung both Don Giovanni and the Commendatore over the years. The Commendatore from the production you see below with all the worms coming out was in Paris in 1985 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées with stage director Jean-Pierre Ponnelle.



John Cheek as the Commendatore in Don Giovanni, Paris at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, 1985. Photos courtesy of John Cheek.

I did three Mozart operas with Ponnelle - *Don Giovanni*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *La Clemenza di Tito*. Jean-Pierre knew all the Mozart operas in his head, not just the piano score, but the full orchestra score. He was very brusque, and he could be quite cruel, but he was also incredibly brilliant. I consider myself lucky to have worked with him. He taught me so much about being comfortable on stage, mainly because his very loud attention to detail could make you so incredibly uncomfortable in rehearsals, that by the time you got to the performance you were completely at ease.

To read the rest of this epic interview, [visit our website.](#)

**Berkshire Opera Festival's Fifth Anniversary Season
is supported by the generosity of:**



Berkshire Taconic
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Support Locally-Produced Opera in the Berkshires: [DONATE NOW](#)
Get Tickets to *Don Giovanni*: [BUY NOW](#)
Get Tickets to BOF's Fifth Anniversary Gala Concert: [BUY NOW](#)



Copyright © 2020 Berkshire Opera Festival, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).