

Scholarship: Elise Smith

As a recipient of your generosity, I am writing you this report to constitute the final requirement of my \$500 scholarship from your Los Angeles Chapter of NATS for my study at the OCARS Vocalis Academy in Rome, Italy.

This program started on June 15th and ended on July 6th, 2014. During this program in Rome, I attended Italian language classes on a daily basis. We had daily voice lessons. There was a weekly master class held and I performed in three public concerts.

This three week program was open to high school and college students and accomplished amateurs. The students came from numerous conservatories and schools of music throughout the United States. The best part of the program was the diversity not only of the students but the program was run by a faculty of internationally distinguished artists, teachers and coaches.

There were 10 students (all girls) that participated in this program. The age range of the girls that participated was from 17 years to 29 years of age. Only two of us, were high school students. The rest of the girls were college students or recent graduate students. The expectation level for this program was very high.

The Hotel Domus Pacis Torre Ross Park Hotel was a bus ride or metro ride from the heart of Rome. The rooms offered for this program were double occupancy for the students. Breakfast and lunch were provided for each day.

The three public concerts were conducted at a beautiful Church called St. Paul's within the Walls Church, located one block from Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, in the center of Rome. It was a remarkable venue.

This program gave me a memorable experience that I will never forget. My expectations that I hoped to accomplish were fulfilled. I wanted to perfect a variety of vocal techniques. I had the opportunity to work with many accomplished professors of music. They were Dubravka Zubovic, Mark Goodrich and Milena Kitic. The piano accompanists were Catherine Tibbitts and Mihee Kim. The vocal lessons and Master classes took place in an old historical 14th century chapel that was on the grounds of the hotel. The acoustics of this chapel with the sounds of the many operatic voices, heard daily throughout the hotel facility, will be something that I will always remember.

Another goal of mine, for this program, was that I wanted to learn the Italian language. I studied under the direction of Professor Vera Maniaci. Not only did we study in a classroom setting, but we went out daily into the city of Rome to use our newly acquired speaking skills. The highlight of one of these excursions was to attend a live Opera at The Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. We met some of the accom-

plished artists that were performing in the city. Another expectation for this program was that



I wanted to increase my repertoire of learned arias. This past spring, prior to my attending this program, I was assigned 5 arias.

They were:

1. S. Marchesi: La Foletta (Posa la mano sul mio core)
2. F. Gasparini: Caro Laccio, Dolce nodo
3. W. A. Mozart: In uomini, in soldati (così fan tutte)
4. G. Rossini: L'invito
5. V. Bellini: Per Pietà, Bell'idol mio.

I was asked to memorize this material and to understand the meaning of each one, and to practice on my own. The performances were scheduled on June 22nd, June 29th and July 4th.

I not only worked on these arias, but I grew in my repertoire of learned arias. Since all the girls were expected to know 5 arias, I heard and became knowledgeable of many others. I became aware of a variety of composers such as Mozart, Puccini, Gasparini, Donizetti, Donaudy, Giacomelli, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Stradella, Bononcini, Handel, and Verdi, Ardit, Catalani, and Marchesi. I became familiar with music from a variety of different historical periods of time. Also, in getting to know the different personalities of the 10 girl participants, I became aware of the variety of voices and many singing styles within the Operatic world.

My final goal for my attending OCAVA was that in educating my voice, I hoped to enhance my brain and nurture my soul...OCAVA was such an incredible program. My being in Rome for that period of time was such a beautiful experience and something that I will treasure for the rest of my life.

Again, thank you for the scholarship from your NATS Los Angeles organization that helped me fulfill this experience as one of my dreams.

Sincerely,

Elise Smith
August 1, 2014