

Tribal member Marie Landreth earns her doctorate in musical arts

'Accident-prone soprano' teaching in Vienna, Austria

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Tribal member Marie Landreth is e-mailing from Vienna.

The Tribe's newly minted Doctor of Musical Arts in Voice Performance from the University of Oregon lives and works in the Austrian capital.

It is a world that, she writes, is filled with singing and teaching, and where she has made a career starting in 1988 on the wings of a one-year Rotary Scholarship. Now, with the help of the Tribe, she has earned her doctorate.

"Vienna has been voted many times of being the most wonderful city to live in the world," she writes. "The city is beautiful and the parks are breathtaking."

I believe about 50 percent of Vienna is green; one of the greenest cities in the world. There are numerous concerts to attend every day and the performance opportunities are many."

Her e-mail says that she has to pick up her husband at the hospital. Dr. Doremus Scudder, also an international singer, had broken his leg. And then she has a concert that night. The everyday mixes with her otherwise dreamlike life.

Landreth may now be a world-renowned classically trained singer, but she was born and raised in Redmond, where her mother (Tribal Elder Anna Landreth), father (Clifford), sister (Tribal member Estelle McCafferty), brother-in-law (Raymond McCafferty) and their children still live. And where her heart remains.

"I grew up in a highly religious and musical family," she writes. "My mother can play about any instrument she touches and my sister is an excellent pianist and organist as well as a wonderful singer. I even remember my father playing hymns on the organ on Sundays before church."

Landreth's own first performance came at the age of 6 in church, singing, "Jesus Loves Me." Her sister's first performance, also at about that age, brought forth, "All Things Are Poppable." (She could not correctly pronounce the word "possible," Landreth remembers.)

At Redmond High School, she "was involved in about every musical group available." She graduated third in her class and studied for two years at Central Oregon Community College.

"A couple of instructors reported that I did everything besides clean the music school's floor," she writes.

She continued her education at the University of Oregon, where she was voted the music graduate student of the year before receiving a bachelor of arts degree in Music Education and Vocal Performance.



Marie Landreth

She made her professional debut at age 21 with the Eugene Opera as the Queen of the Night in Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute."

"I was to appear on the stage in a tulip that opened as it was growing from the stage floor and after this flower had opened, I was to sing my first aria to the character Tamino. As the flower was growing and opening, something happened and the flower bloom tipped over and threw me out onto the stage of the Eugene Hult Center.

"I sang my first aria lying on the stage, then limped off into the wings of the stage and was rushed to the hospital. When the doctor came into the room, I was crying. He asked me 'What happened to you my dear?' I replied, 'I fell out of a big flower!'"

"For a moment, I believe he thought that I was in the wrong hospital and should be brought to one that could handle my mental problem. However, he soon came to understand that I was an opera singer in the middle of an opera production."

In subsequent years, she performed across the Northwest in various operas and performances and, unfortunately, her opening accident was only the first in "a large line of performances" where a new accident of some kind punctuated her performance.

She has become known as "the accident-prone soprano," she writes.

In 1986, she began teaching voice at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, where she met her husband-to-be.

In 1988, she received that Rotary Scholarship to study in Vienna for one year, and the scholarship was extended to two years.

"I studied music at the prestigious Vienna Academy and began my European career. For 15 years, I traveled throughout the world singing.

I appeared in Austria, Spain, Japan, Italy, Germany, Poland,

Canada, most states in America, and other countries."

Landreth and her husband traveled professionally during these 15 years.

"After being apart too much, we decided to settle in Vienna," Landreth writes, and together they started a concert series, "Imperial Concerts."

"We hired and trained about 60 musicians. That was our pool to assure that we could present two concerts a day, 365 days a year.

After about four years of being music director of this series, in which I performed as soloist 12 times every month, I decided to begin my teaching career and continue my formal education."

She received a position as a vocal instructor in Vienna's Performing Center Austria and started studying at the University of Oregon winter and summer terms.

"At first, I thought that I would not be able to continue the education, for the cost was far too great for me to afford.

I applied for a scholarship from Grand Ronde and much to my excitement was awarded this gift. Without this financial aid, it would have not been possible to receive the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

"It took six-and-a-half long years to fulfill my dream of receiving the title, 'Doctor Landreth.'"

During this time, she worked "very closely" with the "wonderful" Grand Ronde Education team. She expressed thanks to Competi-

tive Scholarship Program Director Luhui Whitebear, Part-Time College Program Director John Harp and Tribal member and Education Division Manager April Campbell.

"They were extremely helpful and supportive," Landreth writes. "I would like to thank them publicly for all of their advice and encouragement they supplied me with during these last difficult years."

At 49, Landreth has just been named to the music director position for next year in the conservatory where she teaches in Vienna.

"I will be responsible for the students' overall education in music and theater. I must oversee a faculty of about 25 members and assure that the education is top-notch." In short, she writes, "I plan to stay in Vienna for a while longer."

However, if a wonderful music position opens in the United States, she said she could be tempted to apply. The pull of home is still strong in Landreth.

"Although I love Vienna, I will be home with my mother and father as much as possible. My father is 93 and my mother will be 84 in July. I plan to be with them for a couple of months every summer and for a month or more every winter.

"I am very close to my sister, Estelle, and brother-in-law, Raymond McCafferty, and their children. To be able to be a large part of their lives is extremely important for me and is my top priority. I thank God that He has given me such a wonderful and loving family and a marvelous husband." ■

Bidding adieu



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Karen Larsen was presented with a Tribal logo blanket during her farewell party at the Adult Education Building on Friday, May 29. Larsen retired from the Natural Resources Department as a senior administrative assistant after working there for almost 16 years. June 1 would have been her 16-year anniversary. Standing next to Larsen is Tribal Council member Valorie Sheker, who presented the blanket to her.