

# City Lights presents opera classic 'Werther'

**Opera Preview**  
By JUDY SCHWARTZ

After its controversial and often shocking update of "Lucia di Lammermoor," the Royal Opera House ends its 2015-2016 season with a return to a classic production of "Werther" by Jules Massenet. This opera will be presented at City Lights Cinemas on Wednesday, July 27, at 6 p.m. with an encore performance on Saturday, July 30, at 11 a.m. Massenet's opera is based on "The Sorrows of Young Werther," written by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The novel, which is loosely autobiographical, was completed in 1774 after six weeks of intensive writing. It instantly put Goethe among the first international literary celebrities,

and is the best known of his works to the general public. The loosely autobiographical novel was so affecting that it started a wave of "copycat suicides" due to the portrayal of Werther's passionate, sensitive and suicidal nature. The action takes place in a small German town at the home of the town bailiff, a widower with two daughters, 20-year-old Charlotte and 15-year-old Sophie. It is close to Christmas and the young women are being tutored by their father to sing carols. Charlotte is engaged to a man named Albert, who happens to be away, and she will be escorted to a ball that night by a visitor — a young poet named Werther. Werther is a very romantic young man who is swept up in the beauty of the evening and his companion's allure. Following the ball, Werther

declares his love for Charlotte; he learns that Albert has returned and stoically accepts that she's promised to another, yet continues to send her a series of heartfelt letters. Following Charlotte and Albert's marriage, Werther's hopes are dashed although he secretly hopes that she will reciprocate his feelings. She later rereads his letters and admits to herself that she still has feelings for him. Passion, pain and high drama follow with Werther ultimately ending his life as he and Charlotte kiss for the first time. Outside the house, children sing Christmas songs as Werther imagines the children as angels granting him forgiveness. The novel, "The Sorrows of Young Werther," was important to the "Sturm und Drang" (storm and stress) period in German literature and is certainly typical of liter-

ature's Romantic movement. This opera contains all the elements of high romance and passionate longing. In the role of Werther is Vittorio Grigolo, an internationally known tenor whose appearances create a stirring excitement. He's known in Italy as the Little Pavarotti. The role of Charlotte is sung by Joyce DiDonato, a lyric coloratura mezzo-soprano, international star and one of the Metropolitan Opera's reigning divas. A coloratura adds elaborate ornamentation to a melody and the music is distinguished by agile runs, leaps and trills. This is another experience not to be missed. Tickets are \$15 for City Lights Cinemas members and \$19 for non-members. All programs are available for high school screenings. Visit City Lights for more information.

# KB GALLERY TO HOST ARTIST Q&A JULY 30

On Saturday, July 30, the Kenneth B Gallery will sponsor an artist question and answer session with featured artist Tamarah Phillips. Phillips was charged with producing more than 24 new paintings in less than four months for her exhibit that runs through Aug. 5. The result was a profound success and has nearly been a sell-out exhibit for the gallery. Learn about the rigors of discipline Phillips tasked herself with in order to accomplish her goals and the joys of developing a new found "creative consciousness" as a result of hard, focused work.

In addition, there may be a surprise of one or more new paintings added to the exhibit. Enjoy light hors d'oeuvres and refreshments for this session, as the artist explains how she broke through old routines and developed new painting skills. This event is scheduled from 1 to 2 p.m. The Kenneth B Gallery Art Studios is at 1458 First St. in Old Town Florence, just one block from Bay Street, next door to Lovejoy's Tea House. For more information, contact the gallery at 541-999-5875, or visit KennethBGallery.com.

# FRAA to host members quarterly meeting

Florence Regional Arts Alliance (FRAA) will be hosting its quarterly members meeting on Tuesday, July 26, at 4:30 p.m., at the FRAA Art Center, 121 Maple St. in Old Town. FRAA has more than 100 members and sponsors. "In addition to our valued members, we also welcome anyone interested in learning about the FRAA nonprofit organization to come and hear all the exciting events and opportunities planned to promote the arts in our community," said Board President Harlen Springer. Board members will provide updates. Topics on the agenda will include: results of FRAA's annual membership survey; a board member opening; new member incentives for the remainder of 2016; new youth membership offered; the results of art collaboration

with Oregon Pacific Bank; discussion of Empty Bowls design contest; as well as many upcoming events. These future events include: information on decorating a crow for the CROW fundraiser; an update on FRAA's participation on the Second Saturday Gallery Tour; "Arts in Education" program update; information on the Oktoberfest fundraiser held at the FEC on Oct. 1; and updates on Library DemArts on Oct. 8, the Holiday Arts Festival on Dec. 2 and 3, and FRAA's new involvement with the Winter Music Arts Festival held at the FEC on Jan. 14 and 15. "Input and questions from our members and guests are always welcomed, and we look forward to seeing familiar and new faces at this important meeting," said Springer. Refreshments will be served.

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