

# Stellar program predicted for Prelude to Performance

As soon as this issue of the *Amsterdam News* reaches the hands of opera buffs, I suggest that they rush to the box office of the Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College to get tickets for Martina Arroyo's *Prelude to Performance*, which runs from this Thursday through Sunday. Take my word: It will be well worth your time.

On Thursday evening, July 16, at 7:30 p.m. and again on Saturday, July 18 at 2 p.m., this company of outstanding young singers will perform Puccini's "La Boheme," fully staged with sets and costumes. The orchestra and chorus will be conducted by Gerald Steichen and will be staged by Michael Ehrman.

On Friday, July 17 at 7:30

p.m. and on Sunday, July 19 at 2 p.m., the opera of choice will be Johann Strauss' "Die Fledermaus," which is as entertaining as any Broadway musical. It will be conducted by Willie Anthony Waters and staged by Mihaela Bogdam. The cast of singing-actors will be assisted by the National Dance Institute.

Of special interest to our readers, the cast of the Friday evening performance of "Fledermaus" will include baritone Barry Robinson as Frank and soprano Alexandra Smith as Ida. He was a second-place winner in the 2008 Harlem Opera Theater Competition, and she was a finalist in the 2008 Elgin Opera Competition in Illinois.

*Prelude to Performance*, founded by the international-



ly famous operatic soprano Martina Arroyo, is considered one of the best opera training programs for young professional singers who come from the United States and elsewhere. Its annual performances have received high acclaim from major music critics.

This past Sunday evening, West Harlem Winds gave a

concert as part of the Music at St. Mary's summer series in the lovely auditorium of St. Mary's Episcopal Church on West 126th Street between Old Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue. The program included works by Adrien Barthe, Carl Nielsen and Mozart.

I was only able to hear Mozart's *Serenade in C Minor* (K. 388) for Wind Octet, which occupied the entire second half of the concert. It was given a stylish reading by oboists Megan Weiss-Marolf and Jim Ferraiuolo, clarinetists Liz Player and Christa Somers, French hornists Marshall Sealy and Deryck Clarke and bassoonist Amy Fraser and David Miller.

I missed hearing the first half of the program, which included Barthe's *Pasacaille* for Wind Quintet and Nielsen's *Quintet* (Opus 43), played by Lisa Arkis (flute), Megan Weiss-Marolf (oboe and English horn), Liz Player (clarinet), Marshall Sealy (French horn) and Amy Fraser (bassoon). A very devoted audience attended.

The next program will take place on Sunday, August 2 at 6:30 p.m. The program will include *Harp Concerto in B-Flat Major*, *Flute Quartet in D Major* by Mozart and "American" String Quartet by Dvorak. A special concert and reception has been planned for Tuesday, September 15 at 7 p.m. Mark these dates on your calendar.