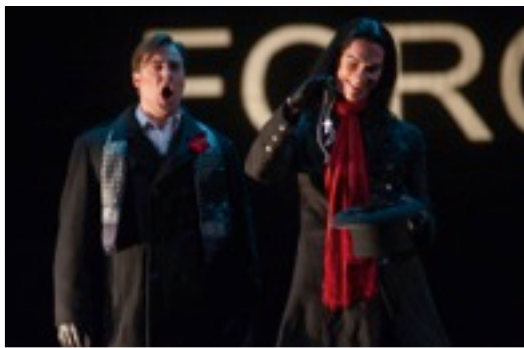


Austin  
LYRIC  
Opera  
GUILD

# LIBRETTO

## An Updated and Extraordinary *Faust*

Joe Specter



*Jonathan Boyd as Faust and Jamie Offenbach as Mephistopheles. Photo by Mark Matson. Photography*

When an opera fan learns that a beloved favorite title is going to be performed by their local company, the warm joy of the moment is often struck by a cold chill when that fan learns that the production is going to be “updated.”

Indeed, at an event earlier this spring, two dear ALO family members came to me to raise their concern that we were presenting an interpretation of *Faust* that was to be set in present day, fearing that the production was not going to resonate with our Austin audience. It’s an instinct that is easy to understand.

For many, “updated” conjures the notion of *Regietheater*—a German term meaning “director’s theater”—which essentially signifies that the hand of the stage director and his/her interpretation of the opera are felt heavily in the staging itself. Although not everyone is familiar with the word *Regietheater*, almost all are familiar with some of the traits common to such

productions—sets or costumes that are alarmingly uncharacteristic to the story, significant focus on sexual elements—but perhaps of greatest concern to some with regard to this approach is a director’s potential departure from the text and meaning of the libretto, the story of the opera itself.

In this context, I enjoy telling folks about a production of *The Magic Flute* that I sang in as a student that was set in India. All of the singing was in German (standard), with dialect in English

*Continued, Page 2*

### GUILD WINE DINNER AND AUCTION A WILD SUCCESS!

*Madeline Nash*

On the evening of February 23, the opera crowd and guests descended on the **Four Seasons** for the most exciting fund raiser of the year. Volunteers, led by event chairs **Richard Hartgrove, Scott Ballew, Susan Gatlin, and Marilyn Davis Rabkin**, worked long hours in the months leading up to this event to ensure its success and to properly honor **David Jabour** and **Twin Liquors** for years of support - not only for the opera but for non-profit organizations throughout Austin.



*Sylvia and David Jabour, our deserving honorees. Photo by Tony Spielberg*

Guests sailed through check-in staffed by ALO team members and enjoyed champagne and hors d’oeuvres while perusing tables of silent auction goodies.  
*Continued, Page 4*

**AN UPDATED AND EXTRAORDINARY *FAUST****Continued, Page 1*

(unusual, but not unheard of), all of which was pronounced with an Indian accent (uh-oh).

Inasmuch as the idea of Regietheater is applicable to a production that is updated from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the modern day, it is fair to say that Bernard Uzan's *Faust* indeed falls under the umbrella of this term. But to the extent that many associate Regietheater with a betrayal of the composer's and librettist's original intent, it was a joy to share with our audience a *Faust* which was only told more honestly and compellingly by virtue of its modern setting.

Check out the reviews!

[Austin Post](#)

[Austin Chronicle](#)

[Culture Map Austin](#)



Audience enthusiasm was evident in the Long Center at all three performances and was in large part a testament to the immediacy of the story telling that Mr. Uzan was able to achieve in his updated staging of the Faust story.

Nevertheless, at the end of the day, it is the individual performances of the singers on the stage and in the orchestra pit which determine whether any production will succeed. Without dramatic commitment and musical excellence, the greatest concept production will fall flat. Thankfully—but not luckily—we were able to enjoy the performances of a great cast of singing

actors that committed fully to the modern rendering that Mr. Uzan set out for them—supported by the artistic leadership of Maestro Buckley—which brought such a powerful conclusion to the 2012-13 Season.

I hope you enjoyed the production as much as I did, and I can't wait to share our thrilling 2013-14 Season with you!



**Top:** Jan Cornelius plays a captivating Marguerite **Bottom:** The three stand-out performers of the show, Jonathan Boyd as Faust, Jan Cornelius, and Jamie Offenbach as Mephistopheles. Photos by Mark Matson Photography.

In keeping with the *Faust* theme, opera-goers donned their devilish reds at the Guild's pre-opera dinner on April 27.



**Top Left:** Amelia Bullock and Anastasia Bourgeois looked radiant during the cocktail hour. **Top Right:** Amanda and Wendi Kushner. **Middle Left:** Michelle Kelley with Jeff and Marilyn Rabkin. **Middle Right:** Harry Ullmann and Peter Schram sport coordinated shirts and bow ties. **Bottom Left:** Even the table settings adopted the red theme. **Bottom Right:** Jon Nash, Hudson Ingram, and Jamie Offenbach chat after the show. Photos by Tony Spielberg.

**DINNER AND WINE AUCTION***Continued, Page 1*

The silent auction committee, headed by chairs **Joyce Hunt** and **Jeff Rabkin**, collected items ranging from restaurant gift certificates to ACL passes, to jewelry, to wines - of course!

Guests moved into the Main Ballroom, which **Curby Conoley Tableriou** and team decorated with the Salute Bacchus theme in mind. After introductions and thanks, we enjoyed a video tribute, created by **Bill Krumpack**, for the night's honoree. I think the entire room was shocked and amazed by the impressive number of organizations that Twin Liquors supports. We are truly blessed to have such a generous person in our city!

Next, Stephen Costello came to the stage and performed for the audience. After his first piece, "Che gelida manina" from Puccini's *La Bohème*, the entire crowd was hooked. His voice filled the ballroom and his performance was truly a once-in-a-lifetime event. Much to our delight, he performed not one, but four pieces, ending with a beautiful rendition of "Au fond du temple saint" from Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers* with our own Joe Specter. Rumor has it that we will see more of this talented tenor in the future!



*General Director Joe Specter performed with Stephen Costello. Photo by Tony Spielberg.*



*Harvey Kronberg revved up the audience to bid high and bid often. Photo by Tony Spielberg.*

Guests dined on a menu selected by **Helen Baxter** of lobster bisque, herb and dijon crusted rack of lamb, cheese, and sweet strawberry vanilla crepes for dessert. The wine flowed, and everyone prepared for the main event: the live auction run by **Harvey Kronberg** and chaired by **Marcy Melanson** and **Meri Hagelberg**.

Guests weren't shy about raising paddles, and the value of items became the starting place for bids. The "wine babes" walked down a center runway carrying the item up for bid to give the audience a closer look at the goods. Certain lots caused a bidding frenzy, especially the dinners! **Graydon Parrish** hopped on

stage prior to his lot coming up for bid to make a pitch for why his dinner was going to be so much fun. I distinctly remember the word "raunchy" in his description of the fun evening to be had for the winning bid. The dinner donated by **Maestro Buckley** and **Molly Anderson** also caused quite a stir and bidding war.

The night ended with as much energy and excitement as it began. The dinner and wine auction has become *the* event of the season to attend, and with all of the new faces at this dinner, we are hopeful to grow the opera family.



**Top:** Attendees browse through the auction items upon arrival  
**Middle:** Jerry Gatlin enthusiastically bids. **Bottom-Left:** Graydon Parrish speaks about his dinner to (successfully) drive up bidding. **Bottom-Right:** Peter Martino, who donated one-of-a-kind earrings to the auction, and Jo Anne Christian prepare for dinner. Photos by Tony Spielberg, available at: <http://www.austincandidates.com/gallery/v/ALO/>



## MARCY MELANSON, CORNELIA FOSTER WOOD TO PLAY LEADING ROLES IN 2014 DINNER AND WINE AUCTION

*Paula Kothmann*

Following the resounding success of this year's Wine Dinner and Auction, ALO has already reserved the Four Seasons for February 22, 2014. Two ladies who know a lot about creating memorable events will co-chair: ALO Trustees **Marcy Melanson** and **Cornelia Foster Wood**.

Note that this year's event sold out about a month before the date, so mark your calendars so that you won't be left out of the fun. ALO's own Angie Bonnici made personal calls to many, making guests feel extra special, which contributed to the success of the event.

The Wine Dinner and Auction represents a unique collaboration between the ALO Board of Trustees and Guild. It has grown steadily since its first year, when it was chaired by **Marilyn Davis Rabkin**, a Trustee and former Guild President, in collaboration with Guild VP **Susan Gatlin** and her husband, Trustee **Jerry Gatlin**. "I am very proud of the common goals achieved between the Guild and the ALO Board of Trustees," remarks Marilyn. All of these original leaders remained involved with the event this year, too, honing their skills with each incarnation and realizing increased profits.

In addition to the necessary dollars raised by the event, the Wine Dinner strengthens the "ALO Family," or loyal body of supporters so vital to the sustainability of nonprofit organizations. This year's Co-Chair **Richard Hartgrove** remarks, after heaping praise on his fellow volunteers and ALO staff, "You don't really know people until you work closely with them on a project like the wine dinner and auction and I can say without hesitation or reservation that I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know everyone on the team better and working with them was a dream."

Richard's teammate, Co-Chair **Scott Ballew**, brought energy and enthusiasm to his leadership of the many volunteers and committee chairs necessary to execute the Dinner. It's hard to say no to Scott's charisma! He,

in turn, thanks his team: "A very capable, supportive and active group of volunteers combined with ALO staff and Guild members deserve great kudos for pulling it all together. It was a splendid and magical evening."

Another Co-Chair, **Susan Gatlin**, praises the **Four Seasons Hotel** and **Westbank Flower Market** for their contributions to the event's level of excellence. Please be sure to thank these vendors for their support of ALO if you get the chance. Furthermore, even months after the event, Susan still recalls the energy of the bidding during the live auction.



*Check out the flowers and decor at the Four Seasons! Photo by Tony Spielberg.*

One of the live auction committee members, Marcy Melanson, really stood out in her efforts...so much so that she was asked to chair for 2014. Since she knows what it takes, Marcy can't help but lead a successful event. Coupled with staunch ALO supporter Cornelia Foster Wood's astute execution, the duo will surely dazzle.

This year, the Dinner attendees had a special surprise: we learned that our well-respected General Director Joe Specter also has a wonderful singing voice. We can only wonder what surprises Marcy and Cornelia have in store for us in 2014!

**FAUST ENRICHMENT EVENT***Marcia Toprac*

A fun-loving crowd of 55-60 guild members and friends attended the final guild enrichment event of the season on April 10<sup>th</sup>. The beautiful and inviting home of our hosts, **Madeline** and **Jon Nash**, set the tone for a delightful evening. As usual, our generous Guild members contributed an abundance of sweet and savory food items, once again assuring that no one left hungry.

The highlight was, of course, the discussion about *Faust* by our guest speaker, Bernard Uzan, Director of ALO's production, who engaged in a lively interchange with our other speaker, Guild member **Katharine Shields**. Mr. Uzan enlightened us all with his insights about the *Faust* story and explained his reasoning for placing the action in more modern times. He said that his inclination is generally to present an opera in its original context. However, mythical tales like the Faust's pact with the Devil are timeless, so translation to modern times can make the story accessible to a wider audience. With great humor, passion, and perhaps a bit of cynicism, Mr. Uzan revealed his views on good and evil, talked about how he got started in the business, how he works with singers, and several other topics that piqued the interest of the audience.

Many people deserve thanks for contributing to the success of the evening. We are very grateful to the Nashes for hosting the event and to Bernard Uzan and Katharine Shields for sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm for Faust and opera, in general. Thanks go to **Loretta Hughes** and **Martha Boyd** for (wo)manning the welcome table, to **Madeleine Aubry** and **Sue Hoke** for handling food set-up, **Vicky Spradling**, **Dean Dresser**, **Zoltan** and **Kathy Trizna** for bartending, and to **Reeta Wadzeck** and **Susan Gatlin** for making sure that the Nash home returned back to its original state of order and cleanliness. We are always grateful to **Twin Liquors** for supplying wine for our gatherings. Finally, I'd like to thank **Suzanne Breitbach** for being such a great partner in sharing responsibility for organizing the enrichment events this season.



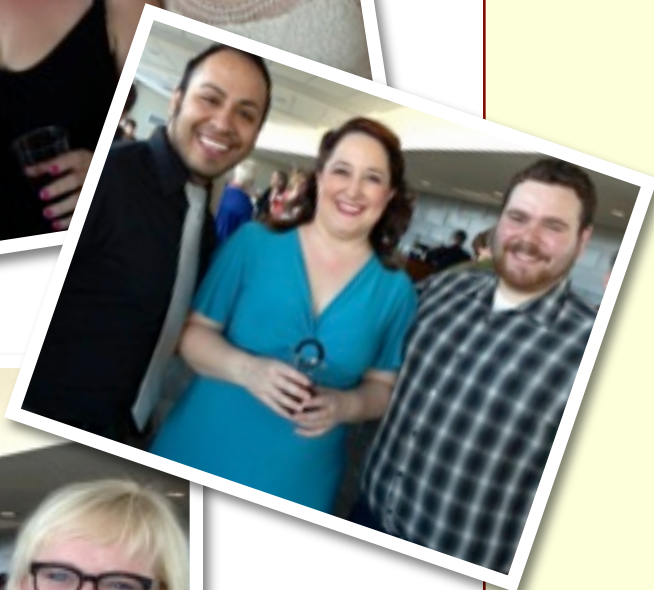
*Gretchen Woellner, Carol Logan, and Madeline Nash anticipate the lively discussion between Katharine Shields and Bernard Uzan. Photo by Jon Nash.*



*Jo Carol Snowden was teased by Bernard Uzan as part of his explanation of the opera. Photo by Warren Nogle.*

**SHOUT OUTS AND THANK YOU’S**

The list of volunteers and hard working individuals who make the Guild a success is much too long to name. However, there are a few Shout Outs and Thank You’s that we’d like to share:



*Cast and crew celebrated the end of the season at the Guild-sponsored fete following the final performance of Faust. Photos by Carol Logan.*

For the second year in a row immediately after the final act of the final season production, the Guild has honored members of the chorus, orchestra and crew for sharing their talents so effectively to help create our wonderful productions. After honoring the chorus and orchestra separately in the past, the combined reception provides a finale to the season and allows Maestro Richard Buckley and General Director Joe Spector to congratulate these important groups for their work. Music Administrator Elden Little told volunteers that the orchestra members expressed their appreciation for last year’s event throughout the season; we’re confident this season’s party will get the same good press and generate the same good will as last years!

Guild volunteers providing food items for the buffet include **Paul Schoenfield** and **Jean LeFebvre**, **Polly Barbaro**, **Lissa Anderson**, **Madeline Nash**, **Paula Damore**, **Laura Gutierrez-Witt**, **Madeleine Aubry**, **Suzanne Breitbach**, **Jan Moody**, **Craig and Peggy Kuglen**, **Paula Kothmann**, **Diane Ingram**, **Sue Hoke**, **Jo Anne Christian**, **Susan Gatlin**, **Cindy Stone**, **Katharine Shields**, and **Fran Langfitt**.

Guild volunteers have only the length of the last act to re-set the Kodosky Lounge for the reception. This year’s quick change was made possible by **Carol Logan**, **Paula Kothmann**, **Hal Hall**, **Sue Hoke**, **Jan Moody**, **Paul Schoenfield** and **Jean LeFebvre**, **Rosy and John Moore** (who served as our greeters, too), **Laura Gutierrez-Witt**, and **Fran Langfitt**. Thanks to all.

- Fran Langfitt



Thank you, **Vicky Spradling**, for organizing the boutique fire sale. This was quite an undertaking!

- Paula Kothmann

**Monica Eckols** and **Paula Damore** continue to create magical pre-opera dinners. Thank you for all of your hard work.

- Angie Bonnici

**Sue Hoke** has been an amazing volunteer at the boutique and with the cast party. Thank you, Sue!

- Paula Kothmann



**Top:** Carol Logan and Jonathan Boyd enjoy the post-production party. **Bottom:** Jean LeFebvre, Paul Schoenfield, and Laura Gutierrez-Witt were among the Guild volunteers at the event following the final performance. Photos by Carol Logan.

Support Services is very pleased to acknowledge and extend a huge THANK YOU to **Suzanne Breitbach** for stepping up and providing a gift basket for each featured cast member! Relying on the resources of her own business as the senior account representative with Harvey-Daco in Austin and personally selecting the array of gifts, Suzanne's creations greet the featured cast on the first day of rehearsal. Thank you for your generosity, Suzanne!

- Fran Langfitt

Thank you, **Eric Brenner**. He always volunteers when asked; Boutique, Bartender, clean-up after, and always with a smile.

- Susan Gatlin

Thanks to the fantastic support from Guild volunteers, Support Services continues to extend a warm welcome to ALO's featured cast! Each cast member is welcomed upon arrival at the airport and assisted to their Austin home away from home. Meeting cast members this season were **Eric Brenner, Polly and Steve Barbaro, Laura Gutierrez-Witt, Amy Wages, Jean LeFebvre and Paul Schoenfield, Lissa Anderson, Craig and Peggy Kuglen, and Fran Langfitt.**

Polly and Steve get the high five for the most diligent search at the airport for an artist, Fran for the latest arrival, and Eric for making his artist feel most at home!

- Fran Langfitt

**OVI ANNOUNCES GRANT FOR OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS***Lissa Anderson*

Many ALO Guild members recall our docent program, which sent qualified Guild members to schools where they introduced students to our favorite art form. Now, thanks to a \$2,000 matching grant from Opera Volunteers International, we will revive that program. Many thanks go to Meredith Morrow and Elizabeth Cooper at ALO for securing this award.

Here are some highlights about the plan, excerpted from the grant application: “Beginning in its 2013–2014 Season, Austin Lyric Opera will expand its “Opera by Night” program . . . “Opera by Night” serves approximately 5,000 students (grades 5-12) and their families each year through free dress rehearsal performances. Prior to each rehearsal, ALO distributes educational packets to participating schools to prepare students for the experience of attending the opera. These packets provide cultural and historical context that can be used in a variety of subjects, including music, history, and art. . . In its first year, the program goal will be to schedule three docents’ visits at three different schools for each production’s dress rehearsal. . . [D]ocents will attend training sessions with [ALO staff to familiarize themselves with] “Opera by Night” educational materials” and other necessary information for these visits.

We look forward to coordinating with the ALO staff as we develop further plans. Stay tuned!

**Did You Know?**

Opera by Night partners with many community and educational organizations in town including:

- 1 Texas School for the Deaf
- 2 Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- 3 East Austin Public Schools (AISD)
- 4 Round Rock ISD
- 5 American Youth Works
- 6 Project Hope of Manor ISD
- 7 Austin Shelter for Women and Children
- 8 Boys and Girls Clubs of Austin
- 9 Lifeworks
- 10 Leaders Enrichment Arts Program (LEAP)

**Learn More About OVI!**

Opera Volunteers International (OVI) is a non-profit, volunteer led service organization. OVI is dedicated to stimulating interest in and growth and support of opera in communities worldwide by connecting opera support groups, individual volunteers, donors, opera company staff and others interested in expanding the future of opera. You can learn more by visiting their website at [www.operavolunteers.org](http://www.operavolunteers.org) or by visiting their facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/OperaVolunteers>.

**Incorrect Contact Info?**

Is your contact information incorrect? Please send updated information to Marcia Toprac:

[mtoprac@earthlink.net](mailto:mtoprac@earthlink.net)

**LETTER FROM THE INCOMING PRESIDENT**

Dear Fellow Guild members, prospective members, and all opera lovers,

I am excited to be the Guild president for Season 27! Over the next 12 months you will experience three of the world's most popular operas: the tragic epic tale of Verdi's powerful *Don Carlo*, the passion of *Tosca*, one of Puccini's most dramatic and memorable operas, and to round out the season we will be treated to the ALO premier of Donizetti's magical *The Elixir of Love*.

The Guild, as a group, shares the common bond of love of opera plus the desire to enrich its membership and to encourage appreciation of the art form in our community. We offer a variety of experiences to our members, all of which are organized and executed by its volunteers:

~ The Guild hosts three parties each season for its members, all geared to foster camaraderie and enhance membership experience. This is a great way for new and existing members to socialize, share ideas, and have fun.

~ Each opera is preceded by an Enrichment event, hosted at a Guild member's home. The Director and one of our knowledgeable members discuss facets of the opera, which affords a unique perspective to Guild members. Volunteers co-ordinate food, set-up/clean-up, and entertainment for all of these events.

### Join the Guild!

The purpose of the Austin Lyric Opera Guild is to encourage community involvement in the development and furtherance of the Austin Lyric Opera through volunteer service and to enrich its membership's understanding and appreciation of Opera. Click [here](#) to join the ALO Guild!

~ The three Pre-Opera Dinners each season have become profitable sell-outs, thanks to the hard-working volunteers who spend countless hours transforming the Kodosky Lounge at the Long Center into a magical wonderland.

~ Each year the Guild sponsors the acclaimed ALO Wine Dinner and Auction, the major fundraiser for ALO. Here a myriad of volunteer efforts come together to produce an event which has become one of Austin's most sought after galas. This season's Wine Dinner netted more than \$240,000, a record!

~ Guild volunteers write articles for the *Libretto*, published three times annually, which keeps Austin opera fans up-to-date and informed.

~ In addition, we are resurrecting a docent program this coming season in which we will bring opera into Austin-area classrooms, thanks to a matching grant awarded by Opera Volunteers International.

Without our volunteers these events would not happen. We hope you will take a moment and consider how you can get involved in some of these activities.

I am personally committed to getting to know each of you over the course of my presidency. Please feel free to call or e-mail me with your thoughts and questions.

Polly Barbaro



*Polly, with her husband, Steve, and pup, Gigi. Polly is taking the reigns of the Guild for the 2013-2014 season. Thank you, Polly!*

**CONTRIBUTORS**

The *Libretto* is one of the many areas where volunteers make a difference. This newsletter is edited by **Madeline Nash** and other contributors include:

**Lissa Anderson**  
**Polly Barbaro**  
**Angie Bonnici**  
**Susan Gatlin**  
**Paula Kothmann**  
**Fran Langfitt**  
**Carol Logan**  
**Mark Matson**  
**Jon Nash**  
**Warren Nogle**  
**Joe Specter**  
**Marcia Toprac**  
**and Tony Spielberg.**

**FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

*Doug and Carol Logan at the pre-opera dinner for Faust. Photo by Tony Spielberg.*

It was a very good year filled with success for the Austin Lyric Opera Guild.

We had three wonderful ‘Bad Boy’ operas (*Pagliacci*, *Figaro* and *Faust*), three wonderful membership parties (Fall, Holiday and Spring), three wonderful enrichment events with our stage directors (Garnett Bruce, Chuck Hudson and

Bernard Uzan), three wonderful opening night Dinners and one spectacular wine dinner!

Our fundraising events brought in over \$270,000 for the Opera – a very important and helpful amount for our beloved art form.

We have courted new Guild members and brought in candidates to take on leadership positions. We won an Opera Volunteers International Grant and are re-establishing a docent program for next year which will provide additional outreach into the community. We’ve worked hand-in-glove with Joe Specter and the fabulous ALO Staff.

It was a very good year. And I’m not just quoting Frank Sinatra. It has been a pleasure working with the amazing volunteers and Guild family, and I know **Polly Barbaro** will be an amazing leader as we enter the new season!

See you at the Opera.

Carol Angela Logan, ALO Guild President Season 26,  
[cloganster@gmail.com](mailto:cloganster@gmail.com), 512 796 6703.

**Calendar**

**November 16, 21, 24, 2013**

Verdi’s *Don Carlo*  
 Long Center

**January 30, February 1, 2, 2014**

Puccini’s *Tosca*  
 Long Center

**February 22, 2014**

Dinner and Wine Auction  
 Four Seasons Hotel Austin

**May 1, 3, 4, 2014**

Donizetti’s *Elixir of Love*  
 Long Center

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