

Four Seasons

# BREEZE

Magazine

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## HANDBELL CHOIR

Do you know how to read music? Count (music)? Four Seasons Handbell choir could use YOU! Many of us travel (or even get sick) and we need substitutes! Can you fill in on occasion? No previous bell experience required. If you would be available on Wednesday afternoons, and willing to help, please contact Kathie Sundstrom at kathryn.buck@comcast.net or at (303) 903-6850. Looking forward to seeing you at our next concert on June 6 at 6 pm in the Ballroom. It will be a FUN evening. ~ *Kathie Sundstrom*



## OPERA CLUB

The June meeting of the Four Seasons Opera Club is June 8 at 10 am in the RCN. We will dive deeper into opera history with a showing of Claudio Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea*, written in 1643 for a ducal festival.

Poppea was the first political opera of a through line that includes Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Verdi's *Don Carlos*.

It's opera, so it is dramatic (check that – overly dramatic), ranging into histrionic and takes artistic privileges with the historical record. It's also staged with different voice types than most modern operas. The original score calls for two counter-tenors and a travesti soprano for Nero, often also sung by a counter-tenor. The male counter-tenor roles are often sung in travesti by female sopranos or mezzos.

The storyline: Nero, having ordered the execution of his mother, the Empress Agrippina, is now free to divorce Ottavia in his pursuit of the beautiful Poppea. Poppea's husband Ottone, is justifiably annoyed by Poppea's betrayal and abandonment. But is quickly given solace from Drusilla, a lady in waiting to Ottavia. (Confused yet?)

The Roman senate has been silenced by Nero's prior purges but



*Kate Lindsey and Slavka Zamencnikova as Nero and Poppea*

the philosopher, Seneca, is still influential and advises Nero against divorcing Ottavia. But Nero will have what Nero wants and he wants Poppea. An ordered assassination attempt on Seneca fails, but a subsequent request from Nero for his suicide succeeds and Seneca bleeds out in his bathtub. Ottone's attempt to murder Poppea while disguised as Drusilla also fails. Ottavia, Ottone, and Drusilla are all exiled and the field is open for

Nero to coronate Poppea as the new Empress of Rome.

In recorded history the result is different. Nero succumbed to pressure from the senate to abandon Poppea. Their romance ends with Nero kicking Poppea and her unborn child (his) to death. But in this opera of love over virtue, no bad deed gets punished and the happy couple indulge in the showcase duet of the opera.

In "Pur ti miro," the Emperor and Poppea declare their love for each other. In performances the duet scene ranges from distant and cool ("park and bark"), to lustful pawing, with restrained but highly charged eroticism along the spectrum. Regardless, Monteverdi impresses with the simple yet sublime musical line. It's certainly worth the preceding three hours to hear. Ahh, opera! ~ *Harvey Toyama, yukito@yukito.net, (951) 524-3765*

## CLASSICAL MUSIC CLUB

We are classical music lovers with an interest in sharing our love of, knowledge about, and interest in classical music. We meet on the second Thursday of each month at 7 pm in The Lodge Theater. We listen to and watch musical selections on the big screen. Each month we focus on a particular work or several selections of one composer. We also discuss current musical performances in the area. We welcome new members. Contact Steve Benoff at steve.benoff@verizon.net or (310) 413-4896. ~ *Steve Benoff*