

Opera singing takes Kodiak woman to the world

by Nicole Klauss

Oct 02, 2012 | 228 views | 0 | 2 | |



A woman born and raised in Kodiak has become an international opera singer.

Soprano Rebecca Cloudy will sing in Anchorage this week in the opera "Mrs. President."

Cloudy has performed in Italy, Mexico, Costa Rica and various places across the U.S., but she credits Kodiak as the place where she got her musical start.

"Kodiak is one of the most beautiful training grounds in the world to get started in any arts, being surrounded by beauty and a high level of arts," Cloudy said.

Cloudy was introduced to opera while she was still in high school in Kodiak. As a teenager she frequently spent time at Monk's Rock Coffeehouse and Bookstore with other arts-inclined kids. One day, Father Paisius DeLucia invited some of them over for an Italian dinner and to watch opera.

"I'd never seen opera before," Cloudy said. "We watched 'La Traviata' and it was mind-blowing. After I saw that, I was just captivated."

Cloudy continued with choir at Kodiak High School and started entering singing competitions.

"I won some regional competitions in high school," Cloudy said. "That's when I started to get the idea that it could be a viable career path for me."

Cloudy has been studying opera seriously for 12 years. She graduated from Kodiak High School in 2000 and earned a degree in music in 2006.

Cloudy got her big break in 2010 with her European debut as Lucy in Gian Carlo Menotti's "The Telephone" at Teatro Sociale in Amelia, Italy. She also performed there as Kendra in "Arias and Barcarolles" by Leonard Bernstein.

She currently splits her time between Italy and Brooklyn, N.Y.

Cloudy performs a supporting role in Victoria Bond's "Mrs. President", an opera about a woman who decides to run for president in the 1800s. The story is based on a real person, Victoria Woodhull, who was the first woman to have a seat on the New York Stock Exchange and a pioneer of the women's suffrage movement. Cloudy's experience with "Mrs. President" has been different from her other opera experiences because she works directly with the composer, tailoring the role to her voice.

"It's been a really fascinating experience," Cloudy said. "It's so rare that anyone puts on opera in the modern day where the composer has written it and is always changing it. There are so many revisions, which keeps you on your toes for having to learn something and be flexible. She is able to change it into something more beautiful to go with your voice."

Cloudy performs at 8 p.m. Friday and at 4 p.m. Sunday at the Discovery Theater in Anchorage.

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