



**Susan Sevier, contralto**, recently appeared as Erda in the Washington National Wagner Society's "Evenings in Bayreuth" series and as "The Witch" in Humperdinck's HANSEL & GRETEL with the Maryland Opera Society and last summer made her debut in Rome, Italy, this summer as Marcellina in Mozart's LE NOZZE DI FIGARO at the Tuscia Opera Festival. Previously she appeared as Amneris in Verdi's AIDA in Bourgas, Bulgaria, where made her European stage debut as Olga in the Bourgas Philharmonic and Opera Society's production of Tchaikovsky's EUGENE ONEGIN. She also appeared as "Dritte Dame" in that company's production of DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE. Equally at home in opera, oratorio, and theatrical musicals, with repertoire from Wagner to Sondheim, Ms. Sevier received acclaim for her performances in the Opera Bel Canto production of Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle (Washington Post critic dubbed her performance of the "Agnus Dei" as "eloquent"). Previously, she sang in the Washington premiere of Rossini's original scoring of the Petite Messe Solennelle conducted by Maestro Sparacino for Opera Camerata of Washington and received good reviews for her performances in the company's series Masters of the Bel Canto. She has performed extensively with the Opera Bel Canto of Washington,

Ms. Sevier appeared at the Ashlawn Summer Festival as the Second Lady in DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE and Bloody Mary in SOUTH PACIFIC. Baltimore appearances include Maurya in Ralph Vaughn-Williams's RIDERS TO THE SEA, the Third Lady in Mozart's DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE and as Florence Pike in Britten's *Albert Herring*, with the Peabody Opera; as and as Frau Peachum in the Brecht/Weill THREE PENNY OPERA at the Theatre Project in Baltimore, for which Baltimore's City Paper review cited her "excellent performance". She made her debut at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall in Baltimore as Rosswisse in a performance of Act III of DIE WALKURE, featuring James Morris as Wotan and Christine Brewer as Brunhilde.

The contralto appeared as Fricka and Erda in the West Side Opera Company (New York) production of Wagner's DAS RHEINGOLD. She appeared with New York's DiCapo Opera Theater as Suzuki in Puccini's MADAMA BUTTERFLY. Other roles include Zita in Puccini's *GIANNI SCHICCHI* and La Zia Principessa in Puccini's SUOR ANGELICA, as well as Flosshilde in Wagner's GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG at the Shaker Mountain Music Festival with the Albany Symphony Orchestra..

Ms. Sevier is currently a student in the studio of Sharon Christman at the Catholic University of America. Upcoming appearances include Scarlatti's STABAT MATER on the Calvary Presents! Series, and appearances at the Musica Festa Perugia in Perugia, Italy.



**Cheryl Branham, Conductor**, has been a fixture in the Washington arts community since 2000. For four seasons, she served as Assistant Conductor of The Washington Chorus (TWC) with Robert Shafer. In that role, she conducted the 200-voice chorus on the Kennedy Center Concert Hall stage and prepared the chorus for engagements with the National Symphony Orchestra. She directed TWC's Outreach Singers, she conducted concerts throughout the Metropolitan DC area in venues ranging from hospitals, hospices, nursing homes and retirement communities to the National Cathedral, Willard Hotel, ambassador residences and embassies.

Currently, she is Director of Music at the historic Calvary Baptist Church in Washington's Penn Quarter. Prior to assuming that, she served as staff conductor at St. Luke Catholic Church in McLean, Virginia, working with Director of Music and Liturgy, Paul Skevington. She continues to enjoy guest conducting opportunities with the St. Luke Choir and Chamber Orchestra, both in concert and for the ever popular *Messiah* Sing Along events, held twice yearly during the seasons of Advent and Easter.

Cheryl holds degrees in conducting and in piano performance from Boston University, the University of Maryland and Furman University. Her primary choral conducting teachers include Ann Howard Jones and Bingham Vick. She sang and studied on several occasions with the late Robert Shaw. For the past three seasons, she has studied orchestral conducting with John Farrer, Daniel Lewis and Donald Thulean at the California Conducting Institute.

Currently on faculty at the Holton-Arms School in Bethesda, Maryland, she also works as pianist and Education Coordinator for the Prince George's Philharmonic with Music Director Charles Ellis.

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*We welcome you to today's performance at Calvary Baptist Church. Calvary Presents! is a performance series devoted to musical and performance excellence as an out-picturing of faith, and is supported by the ministry at Calvary Baptist Church. We at Calvary Baptist are an ecumenical, Multi-racial, multi-ethnic Christian body that reaches out to the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ. To that end we strive to be welcoming, responsive, trusting and prayerful in everything we do. And we are so happy you joined us today.*