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# MY SUMMER “SÉANCE” WORKSHOP WITH STEPHEN SCHWARTZ



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This summer I had an amazing, life changing, opportunity to be in the workshop for Act 2 of *A Séance on a Wet Afternoon* with Lauren Flanigan, Kim Josephson, and many other great opera singers. The opera is being composed by Stephen Schwartz, who has also done *Wicked*, *Godspell*, and many other great works. The music was some of the most beautiful music I have ever heard. The melodies and harmonies are just breathtaking. I was honored to be singing along with such a wonderfully talented cast.

*A Séance on a Wet Afternoon* is about a medium named Myra Foster whose son died at birth. Myra had always claimed that she could see her son, Arthur, and that she could talk to him from the dead. Myra thinks that her amazing skill must be known publicly so she and Arthur try to form a plan to make her talent more widely known. So, Myra decides to kidnap a twelve-year-old girl with very wealthy parents. She and her husband, Bill, wouldn't do anything to the young girl; all they would do is send a ransom note for money. Myra and Bill plan not to spend any money; just keep the money safe. They would wait for the news press to feed on it till it was a big story and

front-page newspaper material. Then they would call up the little girl's parents and offer to hold a special Séance to help them find their little girl whose name is Adriana Clayton. The police and parents would find Adriana and the money safe and sound, completely unharmed, and Myra would be famous for finding a wealthy little girl and they would all live happily ever after. But towards the end of the plan things start to change. People change their minds and some of the choices are turned. I cannot give away the ending because then I would be a bad storyteller and I don't want that. It is such an original story it was so exciting to sing the music.

When I had tried out for this astounding workshop, I was thinking, "Oh gosh. I hope I do okay. I hope I don't make a fool out of myself." But when I found out I had gotten the part of Adriana I was amazed! I had been in operas before but I had always been a part of the chorus. It was an unforgettable opportunity to sing with Lauren and Kim. Also, to be taught by Stephen Schwartz and be a part of the creative process was a once in a lifetime experience. He is such an amazingly talented composer and lyricist – the music is very moving. Even now, I cannot stop humming and singing it under my breath.

I think this opera will catch the eye of many musical and opera lovers. If there is one person in the world who watches this for the first time knowing nothing about it and does not cry, they might have no emotion in their body at all! Opera lovers of all ages will love this production. Even some children my age or just a slight bit older (I am twelve) will be interested in this. Santa Barbara is lucky to have Opera Santa Barbara, our regional opera house, commission this wonderful, new American opera with award winning composer Stephen Schwartz. The world premier is next Fall at the recently restored Granada Theater. I know I will be in attendance opening night to see this wonderful new opera, I just hope it is on the stage as Adriana.

*Young people who wish to be involved in Opera Santa Barbara can call to get on an information list: 898-3890.*