

DOENOTES, Vol.5

November 25, 2007

The DoeHEAD website has seen
more than 8,000 home page visits
since our *Doenotes*, Vol. 4
in November of last year.

However, as my web savvy friends say, that's just the
tip of the iceberg, since most visits to the site
come through search engines like Google
and go to internal pages, rather than to the home page.

**After the 50th anniversary in 2006, 2007 was somewhat more subdued DOEHEAD year.
There were highlights, nevertheless.**

PERFORMANCE INFO

We're aware of at least three *Baby Doe* productions that took place in 2007: the annual Labor Day weekend return of the Tabors to the Tabor Opera House in Leadville, a production at Texas Tech in Lubbock, Texas near the end of March, followed, a week later, by a joint production of Greensboro College and the Univ. of North Carolina Greensboro Opera Theatre. We had a chance to catch the latter, warmly performed when both of the Greensboro campuses were in full flowering spring glory. That alone was worth the trip from the cold north.

Speaking of the cold north, the next *Baby Doe* production will mark the first time that the opera has been fully-staged (though not the first time it's been performed) in Canada. The Calgary Opera will present three performances, on January 26th and 30th, and February 1st of 2008. DoeHEADS Leyna Gabriele and yours truly will present a symposium in the Southern Alberta Jubilee Theatre on the afternoon of the premiere. Ticket information is scrolling on the babydoe.org homepage. (For the record: there was a very respectable workshop performance directed by Jose Hernandez at the Robert Gill Theatre at the U. of Toronto in 2003.)

And speaking of Leyna Gabriele, she is the center of attention in a delightful feature article in the latest *Opera News* (December '07) written by DoeHEAD Rebecca Paller. The article is a well-deserved homage to the fabled Manhattan supper club that was started by Leyna's late husband Vito Pisa. *Chez Vito* became a "a hangout for opera singers," among other storied clientele. Find out how Placido Domingo practically burned the place down.

You may remember our calling your attention to the opulent Willard InterContinental Hotel event in October 2006. That was where the apprentices of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artists program of the Washington National Opera performed excerpts from *The Ballad of Baby Doe*,

on the very spot where Horace and Baby were lavishly wedded in 1883. Well, video highlights, including the entire “wedding scene,” from that delicious, sold-out afternoon are now viewable from the Washington D.C. page on the website <http://www.babydoe.org/willard.htm>. Click on the HERE button near the center of the page.

HOT OFF THE PRESSES

Judy Nolte Temple, Associate Professor of Women’s Studies and English at the Univ. of Arizona, has just brought us *Baby Doe Tabor: The Madwoman in the Cabin* (Univ. of Oklahoma Press), covering what she and others refer to as Act III of the opera. It’s a formidable new addition to Baby Doe scholarship and even includes a reference (he said blushing) to the “Doe heads” and their website.

Incidentally, Ms. Temple joined a number of DoeHEADS at the recent (Oct.) Western History Association conference in Oklahoma City for a panel entitled “Making Biography Live (Stories of ‘Baby Doe’ Tabor).” The discussion, chaired by “Dr. Colorado” Tom Noel, also included babydoe.org contributor Jim Metz, of Oshkosh, Colorado Historian Debra Faulkner of Denver, and Tabor biographer Duane Smith of Durango.

Other books that have recently caught our attention include:

--a new printing of the 1942 *To The Pike’s Peak Gold Fields, 1859*, edited by noted historian LeRoy R. Hafen (Univ. of Nebraska Press) provides diary accounts of settlers who took various of the overland routes from eastern Kansas to what is now Colorado. 1859 is the same year that Horace, Augusta and Maxcy made their epic trek through the same territory.

--a recent hardback volume about Colorado’s opera houses is the amazingly thorough *High Drama: Colorado’s Historic Theatres* by Daniel & Beth R. Barrett (Western Reflections Publishing Company, Montrose, Colorado). It includes material on both Tabor Opera Houses, not to mention an entire chapter on Central City’s. Tabor’s partner Billy Bush and Baby Doe’s sibling Peter McCourt figure prominently, as well, as befits their significance in the state’s early theatrical scene.

--another item examining the career of playwright Carl Zuckmayer (he of *Das Leben des H.A.W. Tabor*) is a volume by William Grange, *Partnership in the German Theatre: Zuckmayer and Hilpert, 1925-1961*, published as Vol. 43 of *Studies in Modern German Literature* (Peter Lang, New York). Hilpert directed many of Zuckmayer’s successful plays.

OTHER ADDITIONS TO THE WEBSITE

Be sure to check out the two new audio items on the Baby Doe page <http://www.babydoe.org/babydoe.htm>: the “Baby Doe” song by folk singers (Frances) Archer and (Beverly) Gile and *a whole nother* “The Ballad of Baby Doe” by Marijohn Wilkin and John D. Loudermilk (who also wrote the 1959 hit “Waterloo”), sung by Cajun/country star Jimmy Newman.

A special treat is an audio clip of the opera's "wedding scene" aria "Gold is a Fine Thing," sung by Leyna Gabriele and taken from a live recording done at the Central City Opera House in 1956. <http://www.babydoe.org/gabriele.htm> Hear it by scrolling to the bottom of Leyna's page and clicking on "Here".

The upcoming Calgary production reminds us that *Baby Doe* has seldom been performed outside of the United States (i.e. only in Berlin, Bielefeld and Gelsenkirchen in Germany, in Belgrade in the former Yugoslavia, and twice in Britain). Thanks to DoeHEAD Peter Stanford we can enjoy a host of items from the 1996 University College London production, including pictures and reviews. <http://www.babydoe.org/britain.htm>

Take a gander at the bizarre little YouTube "morality play" puppet show about Horace, Baby Doe and Augusta on the Horace page <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmxICQRcJxs>. Surprisingly, it gets much of the story right, with some obvious exceptions.

And finally, we are honored and delighted to be able to include the latest pictures of Horace and Augusta's descendants, including Maxcy Bagland and his new brother Gaspard, and their mother Karen. <http://www.babydoe.org/french.htm> Go to the bottom of the page.

Hope your holidays are happy.

Dave Kanzeg
Cleveland

Home Page Hits:

January 2004: 15,000
September 2004: 20,000
February 2006: 35,000
October 2006: 46,000
November 2007: 53,000