

Donna Louise Brunσμα

June 3, 1932 - September 16, 2017

Donna L. Brunσμα

INTERLOCHEN – Donna Louise Brunσμα, age 85, of Interlochen, passed away Saturday, September 16, 2017 at her home surrounded by her dear friend, Karen.

Donna was born to Herbert and Marjorie (Nelson) Brunσμα on June 3, 1932 in Beech Grove, IN.

Donna Brunσμα began her musical training in America. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, she continued her studies at the Juilliard School of Music and The School of Sacred Music at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She later studied in both France and Italy. For many years she was a coach-accompanist in New York City, as well as organist-choirmaster in several Episcopal churches. She participated in the preparation of the initial season of the Metropolitan Opera National Company under the direction of Rise Stevens.

Ms. Brunσμα continued to work and teach in both Italy and the U.S. Since 1997 she has been a vocal coach for the “Opera Theatre of Lucca”, a summer program in Italy sponsored by the University of Cincinnati. In 1998 she was musical collaborator on the new CD recording of Gian Carlo Menotti’s “The Consul” which was recorded live at the Spoleto Festival. In the fall of 1999 she returned to Chicago for five weeks at the Lyric Opera, and also to prepare a concert of sacred music by opera composers for the Cathedral of St. James.

Vocal coach and accompanist Donna Brunσμα is renowned for her work with many of today’s international opera stars. She joined the staff of the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1978, and as an assistant conductor performed a wide variety of musical duties, including: musical coach for the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists, chorus master for the Children’s Chorus, prompter, supplementary chorus preparation, chorus master for Hugo Weisgall’s “Six Characters in Search of an Author” (released on CD by New World Records), lecturer for the Lyric’s Education Department, Chapters and Boards. In Chicago she was also Director of Music at the National Shrine of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini where she organized the concert series “Music in the Shrine”. In 1998 she produced a CD, “Christmas in the Shrine”.

In Europe Ms. Brunσμα has been an assistant conductor for the Maggio Musicale

Fiorentino in Florence, the Accademia Chigiana in Siena, The Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, and the Teatro Sao Carlos Lisbon. She has also been chef du chant at the Theatre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, and a member of the faculty at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria and in Italy at the Bel Canto Seminar in Busseto with Carlo Bergonzi, and the Villa Schifanoia Graduate School of Fine Arts in Florence, where she directed a Madrigaletto as well as collaborating with Tito Gobbi and Giulietta Simoniato in their summer workshops. As organist-choirmaster of St. Mark's English Church in Florence, she organized a citywide/international chorus that performed in many churches in Florence and surrounding Tuscan towns. She has performed extensively as an organ recitalist, especially on the historic organs in Tuscany.

She has collaborated in master classes with Renata Scottò, Regine Crispin, Alfredo Kraus, Luciano Pavarotti, Tito Gobbi, Gino Bechi, Giulietta Simoniato, Carlo Bergonzi, Paolo Montarsolo, and Hakan Hagegard. Private coaching includes some of the world's greatest singers: Salvatore Baccalini, Jerome Hines, Richard Tucker, William Warfield, Mirella Freni, Nicolai Ghiaurov, Leyla Gencer, Piero Cappuccilli, Ruggiero Raimondi, Katia Ricciarelli, Jose Carreras, Samuel Ramey, Renee Fleming, Catherine Malfitano, Rockwell Blake, Felicity Lott, Dimitri Hvorostovsky, and Sergei Leiferkuss.

Throughout her career she has maintained a relationship with the Interlochen Center for the Arts; first as a camper, then as staff accompanist and guest faculty, returning to the roots of her musical inspiration.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11:00 am on Monday, September 25, 2017 at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church with a visitation one hour prior. Fr. Anthony Citro will officiate.

Events

SEP **Visitation** 10:00AM - 11:00AM

25

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

308 Cedar Street, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

SEP **Mass of Christian Burial** 11:00AM

25

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

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Comments



“ Sadly, I only recently saw the notice of Donna's death in The American Organist magazine. I fondly remember many hours of coaching with her at Lyric Opera Center in Chicago. Thank you, Donna, for teaching me how to sing a recitative properly. Lessons I've not forgotten for 35 years!
I also remember her as a parishoner at St. James Cathedral in Chicago, where I worked. As she was also an organist who had worked with Searle, she passionately supported our music program.
She gave much to others through her time and talent. A life well lived!

Robert Hovencamp
Los Angeles, California



Robert Hovencamp - January 10, 2018 at 07:10 PM

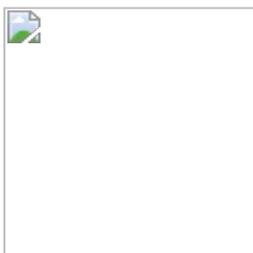


“ I found out about Donna passing a month too late. I can't believe she is gone. I thought we would have her around for another ten years. Rest In Peace my good friend .

John Malnar - October 14, 2017 at 11:36 PM



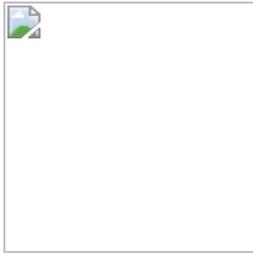
“ 1 file added to the album Funeral Mass



Homily Version - September 28, 2017 at 06:13 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Funeral Mass



Funeral Mass - September 28, 2017 at 06:12 PM



“ I worked with Donna as a member of the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists, and I never failed to learn something new from her in every encounter. She was exacting in her requirements - and rightly so - but she had a sense of humor, too. I've carried her lessons through my careers as both a singer and a writer about music, and will always be grateful to her. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Bryan Miller - September 21, 2017 at 02:24 PM



“ Donna was always a joy to bump into at the Interlochen Post Office and around the ICA Campus. She was full of wisdom and love. She will be missed.

La Rideout - September 20, 2017 at 01:48 PM



“ Donna J Brunisma lit a candle in memory of Donna Louise Brunisma



Donna J Brunisma - September 19, 2017 at 02:59 PM



“ How do I put a lifetime of Memories into a few words, memories from New York, Florence, Paris, and Chicago. Donna and I were close friends for nearly 60 years. In recent years, we talked weekly on the phone. Donna was a superb musician, in both the opera world and in church music. Many people greatly benefitted from her great talent. I am so very grateful that our paths crossed when we were young and thus, our friendship spanned so very many years. With your death, Donna, a large part of me is gone. Rest in peace, dear friend. Ralph

Ralph Kneeream - September 17, 2017 at 05:20 PM



“ Sorry for your loss Ralph, Donna was a friend to many at Immaculate Conception Church and Interlochen Music Academy.

James Hayden - September 18, 2017 at 12:43 AM



“ I joined the Lyric Opera music staff rather late in Donna's time there. We did work on several operas together. I will always remember her smiling presence and her singular devotion to the young singers in the Ryan Opera Center. Rest in peace dear colleague. Elizabeth Buccheri

Elizabeth Buccheri - September 19, 2017 at 02:49 PM



“ We here in Indiana are still stunned and in shock! We thought Donna would take on this opponent and conquer it as she had in the past.

We will cherish the memories and her music until we join her on the other side.

Donna J Brunisma - September 19, 2017 at 03:03 PM



“ My wife Pat and I knew Donna for many years. She was largely responsible for my joining Lyric Opera of Chicago, where I worked for almost 35 years. She was a fabulous musician and a faithful supporter of young singers here and in her beloved Italy. Donna will be greatly missed by the many artists she has helped over the years. Rest in peace, dear Donna!

Philip Morehead - September 19, 2017 at 03:45 PM



“ I have been going over so many Donna memories in my mind in the last few days. Donna was a tough, exacting coach with a soft side. She was one of my touchstones at the beginning of my career and heck - if I do anything right - I give her credit for that. Rest well, dear lady. We'll miss you and try to remember all you endeavored to teach us. XOXO

Buffy - September 19, 2017 at 04:03 PM



“ Donna's spirit and teachings remain with me. Her exactitude and humor spring to mind. I loved working with her and, I think, she enjoyed working with me. I will miss her but I hope to honor her legacy with my teaching and performing.

Andrew Stuckey - September 19, 2017 at 10:20 PM



“ Donna was a huge ray of sunshine ---always !! Not only was she a brilliant coach and musician....but she was also a tremendous human being. I was so fortunate to have been able to work with her and know her. The world has lost a beautiful soul .

Nancy Gustafson - September 20, 2017 at 09:18 PM



“ I first met Donna Brunisma in 1971 when she was the pianist for the oboe class of Lothar Faber at the Accademia Chigiana di Siena. She accompanied all of the oboe class in the saggio in the main concert hall for several years. A repertoire from the Baroque to the most recent contemporary compositions. Donna and I became very close personal friends for more than forty years. We played our final recital together for multiple oboes, piano and organ at the Cabrini Chapel in Chicago in Spring of 2015. She was much beloved by the many international oboists who passed through Lothar Faber's class (he was Principal Oboe Soloist of the Cologne Radio Orchestra). Our concerts together included Cetona, Florence, Pienza, Sina Lunga, and Lucia, where I first met Maestro Bruno Bartoletti, who was in the audience because of Donna. It was always a joy to work with her extensive knowledge of repertoire, particularly that repertoire which was closely associated with the great composers of opera.

Patricia Morehead

Patricia Morehead - September 21, 2017 at 11:34 PM



“ Donna, you will remain in the hearts and minds and memories of all who knew you and worked with you over many joyous years dedicated to serving the cause of music. Your energetic devotion to musicians and many avenues of musical activity inspired many who worked and performed with you. What a wonderful life Donna lived, sharing her love for music with the gift of sharing her incredible talents with everyone she came in contact with and spreading the joy that comes in a life lived for God, family, music, and all musicians who benefitted from her grace, her wit, and unending devotion to the art she loved so dearly. God bless you and thank you for your love, devotion, and dedication from all who shared your love and passion for music. John Kula, organist, Divine Word Chapel, Techny

John Kula - September 22, 2017 at 09:51 AM



“ To all of Donna's precious friends, students and colleagues, thank you sincerely for attending her funeral mass and/or for thoughtfully celebrating her life with beautiful flowers!

Thank you Eric for sending the funeral mass register, we hope to acknowledge all floral memorials soon. We have some addresses, but will diligently work to obtain the rest.

Donna Louise was amazing and a stickler. so I need to get this right! A debt of gratitude to Donna's very close circle of friends that were her advocates, confidantes, true, loyal friends in her hours of need.

Thank you Everyone! You were loved!

Three weeks tomorrow morning, I try to imagine Donna on a beautiful journey to a far, better place!

Donna Jean Brunisma
Indianapolis, Indiana
dbrunisma@yahoo.com
October 06th, 2017

Ralph,
and mind forever!

Thank you Ralph, remember, Donna lives in your heart, memory

Irene Monnet
John Thompson Brown - Thank you!

Peter Wiggins - Thank you Peter!

Peter Wiggins The Interlochen Center for the Arts Music Department! Thank you Peter!
She lives!

Austin and Carlton - Thank you, I do not have an address!

Beverley Rinaldi - Thank You Beverly!

Bob Krause - Thank you Bob for your love!

Father Ted- Thank you!

Bill and Vicky Ploplis - Thank you Bill!

Thank you Vicky!

Donna - October 06, 2017 at 04:56 PM



“ I can't believe it has been 3 years, it seems like she is just away, in her beloved Italy.

Thanks again everyone, remembering on this the anniversary of Donna's indomitable spirit slipping from a failing earth suit to the next realm that Our Donna Louise lives on FOREVER in our wonderful memories! I suspect the organ music in Heaven is now over the top!!! Literally out of this world, one might say!

Nicole and Ron Gentry have taken Donna's former home in Interlochen and transformed it into a sanctuary, a place of inspiration for parents of students, teachers and whosoever will! Donna and music live on forever, if you are in Michigan, recommend a night or two at Donna's Place, outstanding!

Donna had a wonderful circle of close friends, Karen, Susanne, Ron and Nicole and many more, thank you all! She may have never told you but she loved you Ila!

Thanks a million to the beloved friends of Donna Louise Brunσμα 🙏

Donna Brunσμα - September 16, 2019 at 05:56 AM



“ Correction to prior post, sadly it has been 2 years not three since Donna departed; however, it seems to me like an eternity. When the landline rings, thought to self, it's Donna calling, she always checked in on the weekend. At any rate, two years or three, gone too soon, but fondly remembered!

Donna Brunσμα - September 16, 2019 at 06:33 AM