

David Lloyd - Tenor, Educator, Artistic Director

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Memorial tribute by

Ronald and Barbara Hedlund, and Dorothy Williams



David Lloyd, director of the UI opera program from 1971 to 1985, transformed a fledgling group, founded by Ludwig Zirner, into a full-scale program. Prior to coming to Illinois, Lloyd had a distinguished career as a leading tenor with the New York City Opera and as an International star at European opera festivals such as Glyndebourne, Edinburgh, and others. Benjamin Britten chose him to sing the title role in the U.S. premiere of Britten's opera, "Albert Herring."

Well known as a recitalist, Lloyd was a guest artist with the Boston Symphony 72 times, the New York Philharmonic 58 times, and Philadelphia Orchestra 48 times. He also was a soloist at the opening ceremonies of the United Nations in New York. Among his recordings are Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony" with the Boston Symphony under Serge Koussevitzky and Handel's "Messiah" with Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic (also featuring the late UI Professor William Warfield.) The popular 1956 recording is still available.



David Lloyd family archival photos with Pavarotti & Menotti



As an academic, Lloyd directed opera programs for the University of Iowa and Hunter College. He was Artistic and General Director of the Lake George Opera Festival, Glens Falls, N.Y., from 1965-1980, bringing many UI students and faculty to work there in the summer.

David Lloyd believed aspiring singers not only needed to learn roles, but also know what went on backstage. Illinois Opera Theatre students worked alongside Krannert staff on production aspects. Graduate students directed fellow singers in staged programs of opera scenes every semester. Knowing that students needed the experience of working with different directorial styles,

Lloyd invited UI faculty members to direct operas. Memorable productions were directed by Shozo Sato, Nicholas DiVirgilio, and Wendy Knight. Visiting artists included soprano Phyllis Curtin and composer Robert Ward.

Opera lovers enjoyed a full menu of productions, many of them sold out. Menotti's "Amahl and the Night Visitors" was staged for several holiday seasons. Every summer there was an opera production, which would be repeated in the fall, plus a new production in the spring - all of them interspersed with six evenings of one-act and opera scenes.

There were always "bread and butter" operas - "Carmen", "Boheme", and "Butterfly", all Mozart operas including rarities like "La Clemenza di Tito," and 20th-century works such as Britten's "Rape of Lucretia" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Stravinsky's "The Rake's Progress" and "Mavra", Hoiby's "Summer and Smoke", and Thomas Pasatieri's "Black Widow".



UI Archival Photo

In 1976, Illinois Opera Theatre staged a major coup: the Gershwin estate, which maintains tight performances control, gave IOT permission to stage the first college production of "Porgy and Bess." This was largely due to the presence of the late UI Professor William Warfield, the best known Porgy of all time. The summer and fall productions were completely sold plus five performances at Lake George. Upstate N.Y. newspapers gave Warfield rave reviews and singled out several UI students for high praise.

Lloyd believed that opportunities existed for talented well-trained singers. "With so many opera companies in the U.S. and Canada, Americans no longer need to go to Europe to await discovery," he said. IOT graduates were employed by the Metropolitan Opera, Chicago Lyric, NY City, San Francisco Opera, and many others. Students who made international careers from Lloyd's era include soprano Eric Mills, bass Eric Halfvarson, and the late tenor Jerry Hadley. David Lloyd left Illinois in 1985 to head the Juilliard American Opera Center and was for many years director of the William Matheus Sullivan Foundation which gives grants to young singers.

David Lloyd Jenkins was born in Minneapolis on Feb. 29, 1920, and enjoyed celebrating every four years -- he once sang the role of Frederick in "The Pirates of Penzance," who also was born in Leap Year. He dropped the "Jenkins" early in his career. He held a bachelor's degree from the Minneapolis College of Music, and after receiving a diploma from the Curtis Institute of Music in 1943 served during World War II as a naval aviator.

His first wife, Maria (Violinist in the Walden Quartet), predeceased him, as did a son, Timothy Cameron Lloyd. He is survived by his second wife, Barbara Wilson Lloyd; his son, David Thomas Lloyd, and a grandson.