

Monday, May 12, 2008

Hollingsworth Award recipient to study opera in Italy

By Laura Angus, media relations assistant

Ashley Maria Bahri will travel to Italy this summer to immerse herself in Italian culture, language and Italian opera.

The OU alumna received the 2008 Hollingsworth European Study Award, and will study at the Italian Operatic Experience program in Urbania, Italy for five weeks in July and August. There she will study Italian and learn about opera while performing Giacomo Puccini's "La Bohème."

"You learn about opera scenes and playing lead roles," she said. "And you get to work with amazing teachers."

Bahri participated in the Italian Operatic Experience last summer, with financial support from her father. This year, her studies will be funded by the Hollingsworth European Study Award.

Professor of Composition Stanley Hollingsworth died in 2004 and left behind the chance for OU music students to go to Europe for a summer study program at a music school of their choice. Hollingsworth believed a similar experience early in his career changed his life.

To receive the award, applicants must be full-time OU music majors with a 3.0 GPA and at least 60 credits of classes completed. The students also must submit a detailed study plan, cost summary, reasons why they would benefit from the opportunity and a letter of recommendation from a faculty member.

Edie Diggory, applied music instructor in voice, has worked with Bahri for four years. She said Bahri was asked to come back to the program after her participation last year, which is really unusual.

"She deserves this opportunity because she has an enormous talent that she has demonstrated over and over again," Diggory said. "She has showed she is dedicated to using her talent to its fullest potential."

Diggory said Bahri will benefit from learning from new teacher and coaches during the program. It will give her the chance to learn new techniques.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for her, as it would be for any young singer," Diggory said. "You start to learn the difference between what it is to be a student and what it is to be a professional."

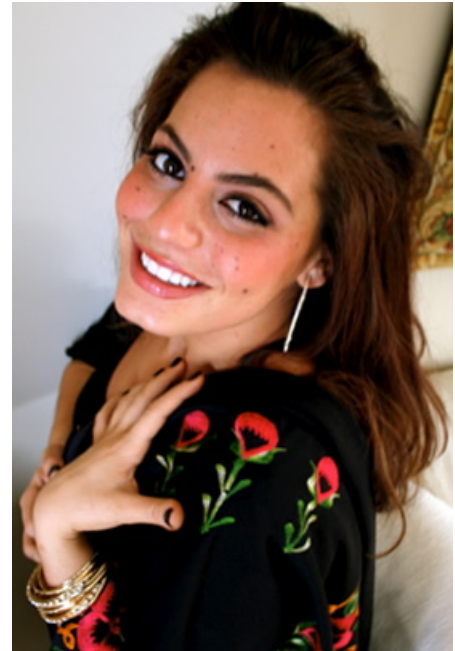
She said in order to succeed in music someone needs strong talent and a strong work ethic. "Ashley has shown that she has that," she said.

In addition to performances at OU, Bahri has performed with the Michigan Opera Theater, sang the national anthem for the Detroit Tigers games and performed on stage with Broadway touring casts.

Bahri said she has been interested in music since she was very young, and she became more serious once she came to OU and started focusing on opera. She graduated with a bachelor's in vocal performance this month. When she returns from Italy, she plans to start applying to graduate schools.

"I get to appreciate more of the language and the culture," she said. "I cannot wait. I get to be in a totally different country to learn about opera."

For more information on the Stanley Hollingsworth European Study Award, contact the **Department of Music, Theatre and Dance** at (248) 370-2030 or mtd@oakland.edu.



Ashley Maria Bahri

SUMMARY

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