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Woodinville.com**In pursuit of her passion**

by Deborah Stone
 Features Writer

Courtesy photo
 Sharon Buck

People always tell me they are constantly surprised at the wealth of talent that exists here in Woodinville, from corporate masterminds and techno wizards to Broadway-bound performers and gifted athletes.

I feel fortunate in my job that I get to search out those individuals who are doing interesting work, but have not yet fully come under the spotlight of recognition. It fascinates me to learn how these people came to the place they are in now and the choices they made along the way.

Most everyone I have spoken to has had a story to tell of a journey full of challenges in pursuit of their passion.

Sharon Buck's tale begins when she was a young girl living in Canada. At an early age, Buck was entranced with music.

She says, "I was always singing and moving to the music. It brought me such joy. I'm told that I mimicked a conductor when I was about four. I'm sure my interest in music stemmed from the fact that I was exposed to all types of musical and theatrical performances as a child. My parents took me to see everything, from the symphony to puppetry. I was very lucky."

When she was six, Buck began piano lessons and a year later, she started voice work. It soon became evident to her that she was driven to perfect her craft, but more importantly, she knew that she wanted to spend the rest of her life sharing music with others.

Her desire to pursue singing as a profession led her to study music in college, first as an undergrad at the University of Saskatchewan, where she received her bachelors degree in music and organ performance, and then later as a graduate student at Concordia University in Illinois, where she obtained a masters in church music and voice and organ performance.

Although she had been singing most of her life, the Woodinville woman's career began in earnest after her successful debut as a mezzo-soprano soloist at the Oberlin Conservatory's Baroque Performance Institute, when she received a favorable review in the Cleveland newspaper, The Plain Dealer.

Since then, she has performed everything from oratorios to moody jazz throughout Washington state and has worked as an accompanist, choir director, voice teacher and vocal coach.

"I've done just about everything in the music field," comments Buck, "to help pay the bills and to be able to keep singing because that's my passion. It's not easy to make a living as a singer and many of us who choose to go this route often have day jobs to survive."

A position as an organist/choir director at the Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Seattle first brought Buck to the Northwest, where she has made her home for the past 11 years.

Because she has been willing to sing everywhere, many times for free, she has gained

Translate



both valuable experience and exposure.

"I try to put myself out there as much as I can," explains Buck, "because when you strive to become professional, you really have to promote yourself. This in itself can be very challenging and time consuming, but it's very important for success."

Buck's perseverance has paid off and her resume is testament to her hard work and effort. It lists numerous performance engagements and recitals for a variety of groups, including the Bellevue Philharmonic, Seattle Choral Company, Bellevue Chamber Chorus, Bel Canto Northwest, Music Center of the Northwest, Ladies Musical Club, Philharmonia Northwest, Walla Walla Symphony, Yakima Symphony and the Baroque Performance Institute, among others.

In addition, she has been the recipient of several distinguished vocal awards at the Performing Arts Festival of the Eastside.

To keep herself at the top of her game, Buck tries to practice at least one hour a day and continues to study with several other local professional voice teachers and coaches.

"It's important to me that I continue to learn and to work on improving my voice, especially for opera, as that's the direction I'd like to head into for the future," says Buck. "I love the challenge of opera, of being in character, as well as the opportunity to interact with others on stage and sing in another language at the same time."

As a professional singer, it's necessary for Buck to stay healthy because illness of any kind affects her voice. She adds, "I try to get my rest, drink lots of fluids and stay away from dairy products. My body is my instrument and singing is very demanding, so I really focus on maintaining my physical energy. I'm also very aware of the need to balance all of the demands in my life."

One of Buck's favorite types of performances is the recital. She enjoys this type of singing environment because it's more personal and intimate.

Due to her experience, versatility and technical capabilities, she is able to perform a wide repertoire from American folk songs to early English baroque pieces. She also enjoys singing with symphonies, where she explains that the emphasis is less on telling a story and more on communicating a message.

"My biggest joy in singing is the ability to give from my heart and feeling that the gift I give is accepted," explains Buck. "It's the back and forth that's important to me. I feel privileged to share music with others and I hope that my singing can touch people. Music enriches my life and I do believe that it helps make the world a better place."

Buck plans to continue auditioning and performing as much as she can, while trying hard not to burn herself out in the process.

She says her goal is to "keep pushing the opera envelope" and hopefully one day, she'll sing with the Seattle Opera.

In the meantime, she's preparing to perform as the alto soloist in the Bellevue Philharmonic's upcoming performance of "Messiah" and as a soloist in the "Vivaldi Gloria" with the Greenlake 7th Day Adventist church in Seattle.

Sharon Buck teaches voice in her private studio in Woodinville and at the new Duvall Performing Arts Center.

For more information, call (425) 483-7300 or visit: www.sharonbuck.net.

