OPERASOPRANO PAMELA SOUTH TO TEACH, SING AT RMC

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BILLINGS – A soprano who sang leading roles with almost every major opera company and with opera greats Placido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti and Beverly Sills will be a guest artist and teacher at Rocky Mountain College in March.

Ms. Pamela South, whose pride in her Western heritage equals her pride in performing opera, will offer a Master Class and will perform in a recital, according to Carolyn Coefield, herself an opera singer and now a voice instructor at RMC.

The recital, to be held March 23, at 7:30 p.m., in Losekamp Hall, will include Ms. South singing duets with five RMC students. The RMC singers are Koree MacMurdie, baritone; Travis Kuehn, tenor; Janie Rife, mezzo soprano; Jacob Scharbrough, tenor; and Keli Rhea Mitchell, soprano.

Ms. South grew up in Idaho where she is proud to claim she was queen of the rodeo in her native Salmon before becoming a famous soprano performing with New York City Opera and San Francisco Opera, to name only two. She also sang with symphony orchestras. She sang with the San Francisco Pops, directed by Arthur Fiedler and with the Lincoln Center’s Mostly Mozart, directed by Gerald Schwartz.

“I think Billings will really enjoy her because she’s a friendly, outgoing person with a Western down-to-earth manner,” said Ms. Coefield.

Indeed, Ms. South, harkening to her Western roots, told the Washington Post that “All life is a country and western song. Opera is just a country and western song in a foreign language.”

Ms. South’s visit to Billings will afford local singers, as well as RMC students, the opportunity to be selected for a Master Class. There will be an audition February 24 to decide who will qualify for the Master Class, which will be held March 20, at 7:30 p.m., in Losekamp Hall. The Master Class will have participants singing arias, followed by Ms. South joining them on stage to work with them on vocal and performance technique, Ms. Coefield explained.

Both the Master Class and the recital are free and open to the public, although Ms. Coefield said donations will be solicited to replenish the Morrison Family Endowment, which supports a special artist at RMC each year.
Ms. South made her Carnegie Hall debut in 1991 in performances of Peter (P.D.Q. Bach) Schickele's dramatic oratorio, Oedipus Tex, and made a Grammy Award-winning Telarc recording of the piece with Mr. Schickele and Newton Wayland conducting the Atlanta Symphony.

In 2002 Ms. South received an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from her alma mater, University of Montana in Missoula. In 2007 she joined the voice faculty of Portland State University.

A former Salmon River Days Rodeo Queen, cheerleader, and seamstress, Ms. South resides in Portland with her daughter.

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