



## Randall Kulunis

July 3, 1954 - May 28, 2020

WORCESTER - Randall Kulunis passed away on May 28, 2020. Born and raised in Worcester, Randall came from a musical family, he heard his contralto aunt sing in Messiah at Memorial Hall as a child. Lillian had won the first N.E. Met auditions and was a Worcester celebrity, later moving to NYC and making a colorful career. Randall was also gifted, but with a powerful tenor voice. He idolized John McCormack, Mario Lanza, Richard Tucker and Luciano Pavarotti. When Randy sang Nessun Dorma for Pavarotti, Luciano exclaimed Bravo! After being honorably discharged from the U.S. Marine Corps in September 1972, Randall eventually began his studies at New England Conservatory and finished his degree at Boston Conservatory. He was contracted with Columbia Community Artists. In Nov. 1988 Randall with his brother incorporated Boston Opera Company, and Boston Opera House. This was partly in reaction to Opera Boston's Sarah Caldwell not make available her theater building on Washington St. for local opera singers, and the Lithuanian Soloists he planned to invite to Boston. Randall's dream became a desire to rebuild the Boston Opera House, even obtaining copies of the original architectural blue prints. Modeled on La Scala, Boston Opera House was on Huntington Ave. Boston's real opera house was razed by Northeastern University in 1958 to make dormitories, it was a barbaric act much like the razing of Worcester's Nortre Dame Church, or the closing of Higgins Armory Museum, or even the Taliban's destruction of the Bamyán Buddhas. What a loss, what a tragedy. In 1988 and 1989 Randall was invited to perform in Soviet Lithuania, he was the first American to perform in several closed cities. The opera houses were packed. In 1999, he informed his hosts that he, together with Sigute Trimakaite, solist from the Lithuanian State Conservatory, were going to sing in the first Palm Sunday Mass in Vilnius Cathedral since the Cathedral was changed back from a picture Museum. Randall was told he could sing, but Lithuanian Soloists were banned from performing since Vilnius churches were controlled by the Warsaw Diocese in Poland which had occupied Vilnius pre WWII, and that the Polish were planning to get Vilnius back after the Soviet Union dissolved with borders going back to occupied Vilnius status. Several hours later Randall was told he was responsible for a historic change for Lithuania, the soon to be free emerging democracy as the Polish church authorities in Warsaw relented and gave permission.

Randall's BOC invited four Lithuanian Soloists to Boston for the "Music Bridge" performances as part of the University of Massachusetts 25th anniversary of urban education. He and his guests were honored at a State House performance with resolutions from both the State Senate, and House of Representatives which among other things said: WHEREAS, IN THE WINTERS OF NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-EIGHT AND NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-NINE, TWO SONS OF MASSACHUSETTS, THE BROTHERS KULUINIS HAD THE HONOR OF BEING THE FIRST AMERICANS TO PUBLICLY PARTICIPATE WITH LITHUANIAN MUSICIANS IN OPERATIC CONCERTS IN LITHUANIAN CITIES WHICH, UNTIL THEN HAD BEEN CLOSED TO PEOPLE OF THE FREE WORLD FOR HALF A CENTURY;...

In 2000, in the BOC in conjunction with Louise Pettitt's Charminade Opera Company organized Boston's first Grand Opera Performance for the New Millennium, Bizet's Pearl Fishers. As Artistic Director of the BOC, Randall staged several operatic performances in Boston. He was asked by the Boston Chapter of the NAACP to develop a concert of the Children of War at the Strand Theater on the theme: War, Peace, love. The Children of war brought young victims of War from around the world to lecture Boston area youth how to cope in what seems to be perpetually violent neighborhoods. The BOC had a weekly cable program "Opera Without Wall" on BNN-TV in Boston that for a few years promoted the cause of opera.

Randall also performed two new operatic pieces composed by his brother Robert, "Dialogue in Dorchester - Let's Drink a Toast to JFK" about JFK's legacy, he performed at the JFK Library. The other opera was SDS New Left Notes, a love story set at Holy Cross College in 1969 during the antiwar, anti-racism college strikes. Randall's dream to jump start the opera house included renovating a recital hall in Brighton Mass. When it was ready for performances the City of Boston refused to give permits, citing neighborhood issues. The real reason was because a group of rich entrepreneurs were attempting to appropriate the trade marked name, Boston Opera House. This "Opera War" against his company created great frustration and cost. While he essentially won the battle in Superior Court, he lost his enthusiasm as he just liked to make music and sing.

Randall loved to perform and demonstrate his excellent Bel-Canto training and glorious high C's trademark of the tenor. Thus, after this bitter opera court battle, Randall retreated from being a performing artist but still continued to perform on almost yearly trips to Lithuania, especially before family and friends in the country side villages.

Randall was proud of his father's military experience in WWII, where he received the

Purple Heart at the Battle of the Bulge, and as a half-tank driver of the 4th Armored Division Mechanized Reconnaissance his unit discovered and liberated the Ohrdruf Concentration Camp part of Buchenwald, first German death camp the U.S. entered. After more fighting his unit met up with Soviet Troops at the historic Elbe River Meeting which cut the German army in half and essentially ended the War in Europe. This year marks the 75th anniversary of these mostly unremembered historic events. Randall also had deep affections for his mother Ruth, who ran Martin's Restaurant in the Island Area, and later became a hairdresser, and an elementary teacher in the Diocese of Worcester school system. She taught at St. Casmir's School until it was closed.

Randall enjoyed cooking and worked as a chef.

Randall leaves behind, his dear, and faithful companion for thirty years, Dalia Matuleviciute, his two children, John Kulunis, and Hillary Kulunis, their mother Barbara Morash and three grandchildren: Robert, Bree, and Layla. Randall also leaves behind, brother Robert and nephew Damian.

In lieu of flowers, gifts may be made to the Boston Opera Company, PO Box 150 State House, Boston 02133. Arrangements are under the care of Miles Funeral Home, 1158 Main St., Holden.

To share a memory or offer a condolence please visit "The Tribute Wall."