

## **Soprani Struggle**

**By Paul Turner © June 17, 2003**

Most operatic sopranos go through conservatory—four years building on talent and some technique. A shitload of money is usually dumped by sopranos with minimal scholarships.

It's fair to say that the dedicated students learn to focus and compete fiercely. Professors and other sopranos who outnumber other voice types by 8:1 constantly judge them.

Competition continues through graduate school. The lucky ones progress through internships, young artist programs, supporting roles, and on to leading roles.

The day job for the graduates is often trivial: typing, word processing, gophering—not exactly empowering.

In the real world of opera, the soprani meet the less gifted, the less musical, and non-conservatoried. It's a shock to the system. They immediately feel the tenuous ties of conservatory cohorts and a few friends.

It's rough out there for this majority. Imagine a pyramid of impossible careers. Full-fledged working sopranos in Tier-2 and above are relatively few in numbers. Compare their plight with the aspiring concertizing classical pianist, the would-be prima ballerina, sculptors, and Broadway actors.

Some soprani would like to do it all. Consider the budding diva that tells the hesitant tenor who covers a lead role that if he is not willing to sing the quartet with her, she will also do it herself.

**Ah, mortality.**