



Utah soprano Diana Walker, shown in 1982 when she made her Carnegie Hall debut.

Diana's a busy soprano, with concerts slated in Europe, Canada — and S.L.

You have a hard time catching up with Diana Walker these days. We found her in Kansas City, where she is spending a week before coming to Salt Lake for an Assembly Hall concert on Saturday evening at 7:30.

(Appearing on the free Temple Square series, Walker will sing music of Handel, Poulenc, and Mozart; also songs of contemporary American composers, and a sacred group. Her accompanist is Jed Moss.)

The rising young soprano, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ellis R. Walker of South Jordan, has a full slate of engagements projected for Europe, Canada and throughout the U.S. during the next year, most of which she didn't want to specify because dates and contracts are still being negotiated. Among them is a probable appearance with Utah Opera.

Walker has enjoyed considerable success during the past few years as she has pursued her career in New York City — particularly since 1982 when she was second prize winner in the Carnegie Hall International American Music Competition, with a resultant Carnegie Hall debut.

New York City Opera has featured the red-haired soprano as Leila in "The Pearl Fishers" (her debut), Micaela in "Carmen," Marsineh in "Kismet," and Adele in "Die Fledermaus." She's also sung and danced as Ninetta in Prokofiev's "Love for Three Oranges," and is scheduled for a role in Argento's new hit, "Casanova," at NYCO next season.

At Seattle Opera she made her debut singing the title role in "The Ballad of Baby Doe," and returned as "Lucia di Lammermoor." A graduate of the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music with both bachelor and master's degrees, she's been a frequent soloist with Kansas City and St. Louis groups, from school days on.

Most recently she sang Abigail in Ward's "The Crucible" with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. She swears by her principal voice teacher at the conservatory, Martha Long-

mire, and returns for refresher courses from time to time.

Perhaps her widest national exposure came last year when she appeared with the National Ballet of Canada in its highly successful new ballet, "Alice." Not as a dancer, although she's had considerable dance training; at the recommendation of composer David Del Tredici, Walker sang soprano solos in his score for the "Alice in Wonderland"-based presentation, and it's been a big success for her. Tour performances took her to the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, and the work will be repeated in Washington D.C. in March, in London in June.

A versatile musician, Walker has a special affinity for modern music, though she doesn't necessarily make a speciality of it. A favorite of Lukas Foss, last year she sang with him and the Brooklyn Philharmonic the premiere of the composer-conductor's "High Flight," a setting of a poem by a 18-year-old soldier killed in World War II. "The performance commemorated the astronauts killed in the shuttle disaster," she said.

In January she performed a concert version of Handel's "Joshua" with the Handel Festival Orchestra, at the Kennedy Center in Washington. Later this year she will sing "The Czardis Princess" by Kalman with Opera Renaissance of Baltimore. Appearances with Chattanooga Opera and the Miami Chamber Symphony, a Town Hall debut and concert with the 20th Century Consort of Washington, D.C. — such are career building blocks which may one day underpin a topflight career.

Such a career is hard to build, especially when the field is so over-crowded. Tough-mindedness and persistence beyond what most people can or will give is required. As a Walker-watcher for seven years now, I'm putting my money on Diana, whom I've never known to flinch, no matter what the discouragement or difficulty. — Dorothy Stowe