

## Obituary for **Grant Keihl Pulen III**



Grant died on April 5, 2020, in London, England. He was born in Kingston, Pennsylvania, on March 18, 1946. He is survived by his sister Cherie, who lives in Kansas; and by his partner of 38 years, Elaine Padmore. She was instrumental in creating this obituary for us.

Grant received his degree in Music from Florida State University and his Master of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music. He was tenor soloist in many college opera productions; was also in demand for concerts with church choirs; and worked as a voice teacher and choral director.

He was encouraged to develop a singing career abroad and moved to London where he had a scholarship for advanced studies at the National Opera Studio in the mid-1970s. He quickly established a busy freelance career singing with major opera companies and choral societies, especially Kent Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, English Music Theatre Company, the Wexford Festival, Classical Productions. The Arena productions of Aida, Carmen and Tosca took him on tour to Germany, Israel, Japan and many smaller touring companies spread around the United Kingdom. When he sang the lead tenor in a touring production of The Barber of Seville in 1981, the leading lady, Elaine Padmore was to become his life partner. Her later career in opera administration took them to Denmark for most of the 1990s where Grant enjoyed absorbing life in a different European culture, to the extent that he wrote a humorous play about it, which he both produced and performed in. Back in London, another play followed which again was produced in a well known fringe theatre.

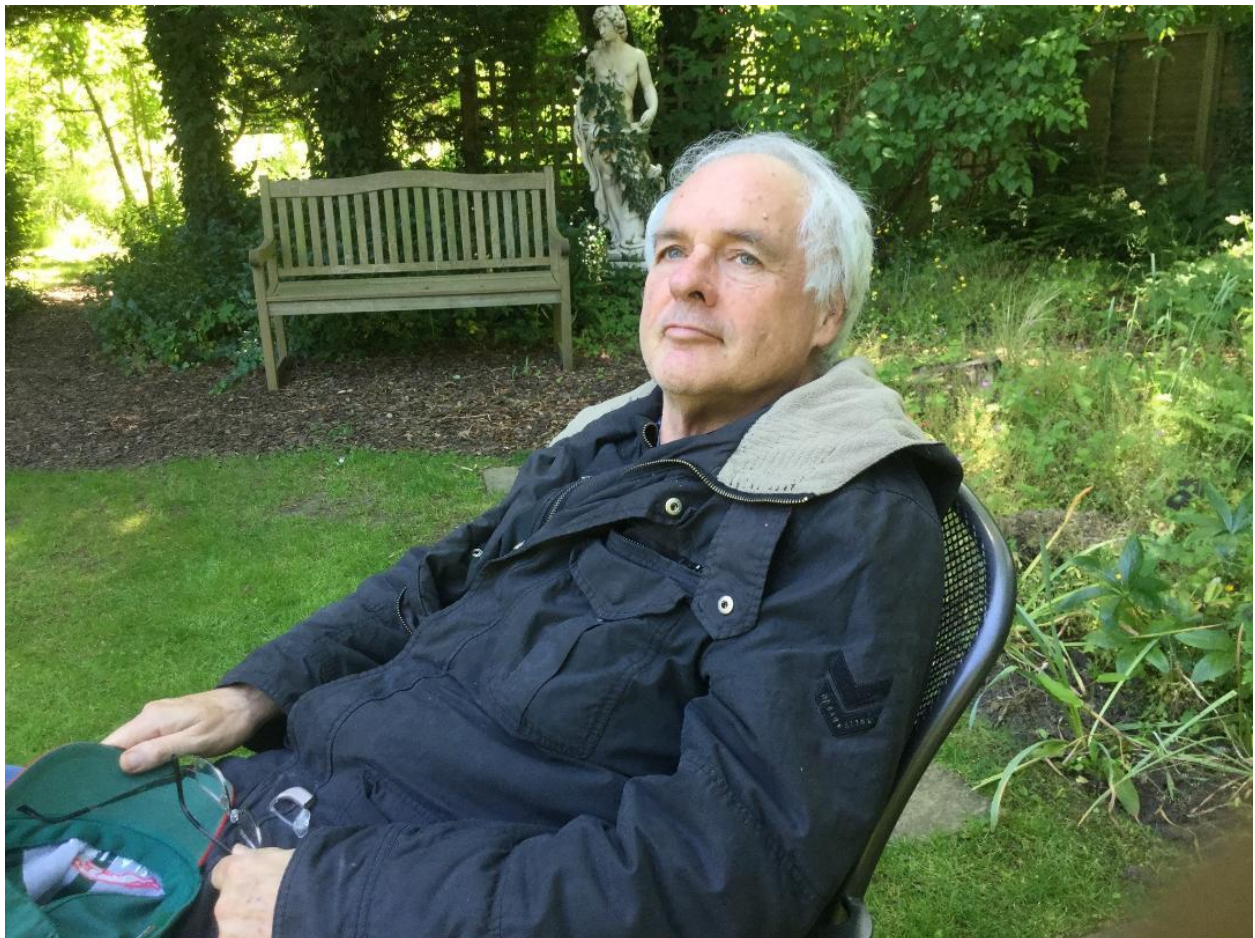
Over the years alongside his singing career he also gave lessons to aspiring rock singers, worked as a TV actor and film extra, and developed many artistic

interests and passions. He was a frequent visitor to great art galleries and auction houses. He loved watching classical ballet, attended opera festivals (Wagner was his great love, though he himself was a Mozart tenor), and made frequent visits to Spain to watch bullfights, about which he was very knowledgeable.

Return trips to St Pete Beach were on the agenda every couple of years. His mother had a house on Pass-a-Grille Beach until her death in 1989.

He visited all European countries as well as India, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Thailand and Australia.

In the last few years he developed Alzheimer's disease and spent his final months in a nursing home close to the home he had shared with Elaine and their cats. Even then he would occasionally surprise the other residents by bursting into song and could still produce a ringing top C!



Grant in 2015

Joanne Leverone found this article, dated 1979, in the St. Petersburg Times.

## Grant Pulen Jr. is beginning to realize a dream in London

By LISA GERBER  
St. Petersburg Times Staff Writer

Grant Pulen Jr. may have hit the right key — he hopes the spotlight has fallen on his operatic career.

After seven years of auditions, choral singing, small opera parts and understudy roles in London, Pulen recently got a break. He was chosen as one of 12 to participate in the National Opera Studio, a year-long intensive coaching program, organized and supported by the major British opera companies.

"We're very elite," says the 33-year-old singer, who returns this week to London to begin studies. He adds, "I want to win. I want to be successful."

Raised in St. Petersburg by musically-oriented parents, he sang in church choirs while growing up and received a music degree at Florida State University.

Pulen then headed to London, a cultural capital of the world, in hopes of making a name for himself in opera. Tall and self-confident, Pulen now speaks with a British accent.

Although London supports an active cultural community — eight major opera companies, five major symphonies, and hundreds of choral societies — standards are high and competition fierce, Pulen says.



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— Grant  
Pulen Jr.

At the age when his voice is reaching maturity, Pulen hopes his career is also.

A *London Daily Telegraph* critic described Pulen's first solo recital, billed as "The London Debut of An American Tenor," as "achieving motionless tranquility."

The singer seems to thrive on public performance: "I think the fact that people come to hear other people sing, and that the singer can get all worked up for it is a real credit to the human race."

Last year, all 12 National Opera Studio students were placed in major opera companies after finishing their term, Pulen says. He hopes to join those fortunate few in a year. If all goes well, he will have begun accomplishing his life's ambition — "to do something artistically satisfying."