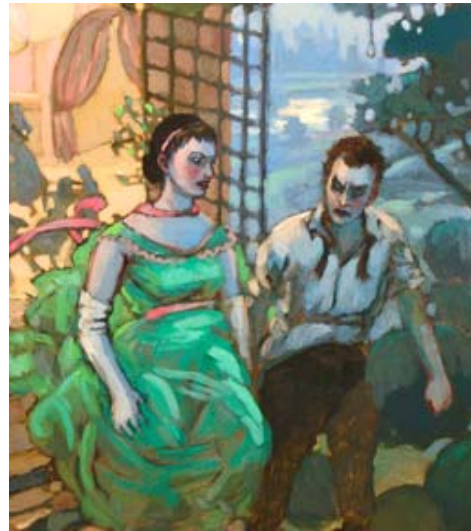


CENTRAL CITY OPERA
2009 Opera Insider

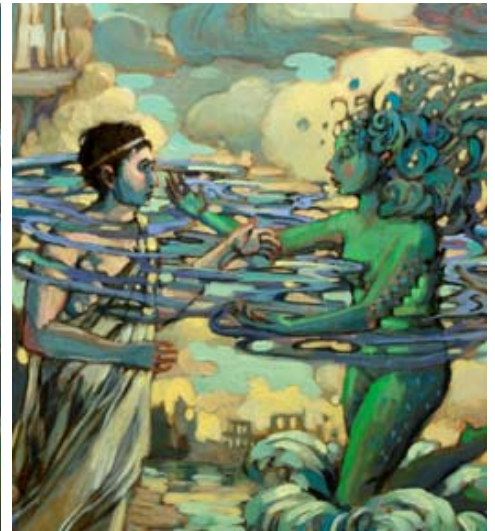
PELHAM PEARCE, GENERAL/ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Lucia di Lammermoor



A Little Night Music



Rinaldo

2009 Opera Insider compiled and written by Deborah Morrow, Deven Shaff, and Erin Joy Swank
Design by Erin Joy Swank

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Thank you!



2009 Opera Insider

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MINERS STRIKE GOLD WITH THE CENTRAL CITY OPERA HOUSE

By LeeAnn Foster

“The miners wanted the riches of life, they wanted entertainment and they wanted the best, for their daring and imagination was the stuff that makes and demands good theatre.”

-Anne Evans, Central City Opera Co-founder



Placer Miners, circa 1865. The prospectors drawn to the Gregory Diggings in search of riches first worked the surface. They panned for gold in streams, then they built sluice boxes and flumes.

As Central City Opera marks its 77th Festival this year, the company looks back to celebrate one of the most significant events in its history: the 150th anniversary of Colorado’s first and most significant lode gold discovery in Gilpin County by John Gregory in 1859. The area was soon nicknamed “the richest square mile on earth” and surface gold was quickly removed by the growing number of eager miners arriving daily. As the depths of the mines increased, so did the difficulty in extracting the gold ore. “A call went out for the best miners to come to Central City,” explains Linda Jones, president of the Gilpin County Historical Society. “The Cornish were renowned for their deep mining experience in the tin industry and arrived by the thousands due to a mining economic downturn in England. The Irish and Welsh also immigrated, but their presence was not as prominent as the Cornish. At one point, 80% of the population of southern Gilpin County was of Cornish descent.”

Jones further emphasizes “Central City Opera would not be here if not for the Cornish’s passion for music and drama. The Cornish loved their entertainment and the demand quickly outgrew the space at the city’s 450-seat Belvidere Theatre.” The citizens of Central City enthusiastically raised funds through private capital and public subscription to commission Robert Roeschlaub, the state’s first licensed architect, to build the Central City Opera House in 1878. Area Welsh and Cornish miners built the Opera House using native granite quarried from nearby hillsides. Several Central City Opera traditions that are still a part of the Festival today, including the Bell Ringer, were started by the Cornish during this period.

The 150th Gold Anniversary Celebration kicked off on Gregory Day in May and continues this summer as Gilpin County hosts a variety of family-oriented events, including the first Gilpin County Film Festival at the Opera House and Williams Stables on August 8th. The Film Festival will pay homage to the Opera House’s years as a movie house in the early 1900s. Guests will have the opportunity to view silent Tom Mix films featuring Silver Dollar Tabor and the Moffat Road as well as the Western film classic, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. Visit www.gilpin150.com for more event and festival information.

Read more about the history of Central City Opera in *Theatre of Dreams: The Glorious Central City Opera, Celebrating 75 Years*, a limited edition behind-the-scenes look at the company’s history. Copies can be found in our Boutique located inside the Teller House.



Hard-Rock Miners, 1889. Miners descended underground to work the rich lode veins. After the surface gold had played out, mine operators turned to hard-rock mining, a more expensive and labor intensive method that required dynamiting through rock to build tunnels and shafts.

What IS opera, anyway?

FIRST! Opera is all about telling a story. Take some interesting people, add in a little adventure, some love, or even some hate; put it all in an interesting place, and maybe an interesting time.

SECOND! Opera is about drama. Take the story you've chosen and put the words into dialogue for actors to say. Tell the story in a creative way, and add in some heroes, heroines, or queens and kings. Maybe a monster -- or four. Bring out the conflict in the story so everyone in the audience can feel it. Put your actors in costumes and makeup, and put them on a stage with some great scenery so they can get into their characters.

THIRD! Opera is about music. Write some fantastic music for your play. Instead of having the actors speak, have them sing...everything! When they get really happy or mad, have them sing high and loud! When they are trying to express an important emotion, let them sing something longer to show off a little. Add in an orchestra to accompany them and to help set the mood of your show.

FOURTH! Opera is about spectacle. Add a little razzle-dazzle! How about a parade? Of elephants? Or an earthquake, or a dragon! Have lots of capable people backstage to help you manage all of that. The sky (and your budget) is the limit! Add all four of these things together and you've got...



...an opera!

Opera Audience Etiquette

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO BEHAVE AT THE OPERA?

DRESS – Lots of people still like to dress up to go to the opera, although you probably can leave your white tie and gloves at home. You are going to be up pretty high in the mountains, though, so make sure you bring your jacket, just in case.

PUNCTUALITY – It's important to be on time for the opera. You don't want to disturb people by climbing over their knees to get to your seat! Besides, if you come late, it's too dark to read through your program. No fun!

DURING THE PERFORMANCE – Nope, there's no socializing with your neighbor, or with the singers. Turn off anything that rings or beeps, hold your candy-unwrapping until intermission, and no chatting (or singing along!).

APPLAUSE – This is your time to make a little noise, finally! The audience will usually applaud after the overture, at the end of each act, and sometimes if one of the singers sings a really spectacular *aria*. Show your appreciation by clapping with gusto, and shouting *Bravo!* (for a man), and *Brava!* (for a woman.) Singers really like the positive attention.

THE HISTORY OF “BRAVO!”

When exactly did people start shouting this particular word at operas? Well, it first appeared as

a cheer meaning “well done!” or “brave!” in 18th century Italian literature, and was adopted by English speaking opera audiences sometime in the 19th century when Italian opera was very popular in England. As a matter of fact, some singers would hire a *claque* (French for “applause”) to applaud their performance wildly, hopefully convincing the rest of the audience of their greatness!

THE HISTORY OF “BOO!!!”

Oh yes, there have definitely been times when opera singers have been booed, though we at the Opera Insider certainly don't recommend you try this! Showing operatic disapproval in the form of a loud “Boo!” first appeared in the 19th century, and was supposed to sound like oxen lowing. Booing at an opera is much more likely to be found in Europe, where opera-going is treated more like a sporting event. Some opera attendees, like the *loggionisti* at La Scala in Milan, are so fanatical about exactly how an opera should be sung, they've managed to boo several famous singers off stage right in the middle of an opera! In America, the singers are rarely booed, although at some of the larger opera houses, like the Metropolitan in New York, opera-goers will boo the director, set and costume designers if they don't like the way a new production looks. Yikes!



Artists take a bow in the Central City Opera/Colorado Symphony Orchestra production of *The Mikado*, 2006.

> > > LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

by Gaetano Donizetti

Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti was intrigued by an 1819 English novel by Sir Walter Scott (*The Bride of Lammermoor*) and decided to make it an opera - *Lucia di Lammermoor* (*Lucy of Lammermoor*). According to Scott, the novel was based on true events from mid-1600's Scotland. Whether true or not, the dramatic story lends itself to the bel canto style of opera, composed by Donizetti and others during the early 1800s. Bel canto means "beautiful singing" and, when describing opera, refers to extensive ornamentation of music with lots of coloratura singing, especially for the soprano. (Look up *bel canto* and *coloratura* in *Words You Should Know*, pg. 28.) *Lucia* is a tale of feuding families, star-crossed lovers and evil manipulation, set in 18th century Scotland. Poor Lucy is the innocent victim of her power-seeking brother and his cronies.

Lucy Ashton's love for Edgar Ravenswood is not accepted by her brother Henry, who coerces her into marrying Arthur Bucklaw, a wealthy ally. Edgar returns during the wedding ceremony, driving Lucy to a desperate act.



THE CHARACTERS:

Lord Enrico (Henry) Ashton of Lammermoor – Head of the family

Lucia (Lucy) – Enrico's sister, who loves Edgardo (Edgar)

Alisa (Alice) – Lucia's companion

Edgardo (Edgar), Master of Ravenswood – Head of a rival family, who loves Lucia

Lord Arturo (Arthur) Bucklaw – Enrico's ally and the man Lucia is ordered to marry

Raimondo (Raymond Bide-the-Bent) – Chaplain of Lammermoor

Normanno (Norman) – Ashton family friend and follower of Enrico

“The sweet sound of his voice captured me.”

— Lucia (Mad Scene)

CAST

Enrico: Grant Youngblood
Raimondo: Richard Bernstein
Lucia: Lyubov Petrova
Edgardo: Vale Rideout



Conductor: John Baril
Director: Catherine Malfitano

This new production will be performed in Italian with English supertitles.

PERFORMANCE DATES:

June 27
July 1, 3, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 25, 28, 30
August 2

Opera notes - free previews 45 minutes before every performance in Williams Stables.

Nina Odescalchi Kelly Family Matinee: July 21

Meet Gaetano Donizetti

COMPOSER OF *LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR*



In 1797 Gaetano Donizetti was born into a poor family in Bergamo, Italy. As a youth he was a promising student of the priest and opera composer Simon Mayr. Even though he enjoyed early success with composition, his parents did not support his pursuit of music. Instead of continuing to argue with his parents, he enlisted in the Austrian Army in order to continue composing without directly offending them. Luckily for Donizetti, his regiment was stationed in Venice and he took part in all the musical activities of the city. In 1822, he had a significant operatic success and received an honorable discharge from the army. Soon after, his previous teacher Mayr was unable to fulfill a commission for an opera in Rome and turned over his contract to Donizetti. Following that, Donizetti would get another contact to write an opera in Naples where he became the successor to Gioachino Rossini.

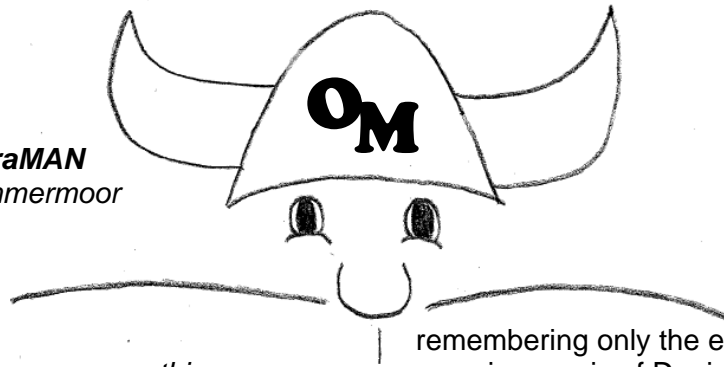
Between 1822 and 1830, Donizetti composed twenty-four more operas, but it was his thirty-first opera, *Anna Bolena* (1830) that attracted international attention and an enthusiastic group of followers. He hit his stride and continued to compose great operas - *L'elisir d'amore* (1832), *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833), and *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835). Like many of his contemporary composers, Donizetti accepted an invitation to the Théâtre Italien in Paris, and composed some of his best known operas for the Parisian stage: *La Fille du régiment* (1840), *La Favorite* (1840), and his beloved comic opera, *Don Pasquale* (1843). During his life he wrote more than 600 compositions, including 70 operas.

If *Don Pasquale* was Donizetti's comic masterpiece, *Lucia di Lammermoor* was his dramatic masterpiece. *Lucia* is a beautiful work with all the aspects of the opera showcasing the extreme beauty of the composed score. Donizetti exhibited an astonishing dramatic insight into each story he told while maintaining a melodic inventiveness. He used simple but proficient orchestration conveying an authentic and engaging performance. His scores are the foundation for the emotions and drama, brilliantly supporting each story told through his music.

After his success with *Don Pasquale*, Donizetti's life started to spiral to an end. His wife, children, and parents had all died during the 1830s and Donizetti himself suffered from cerebrospinal syphilis. The symptoms of this illness became evident in 1843 and by 1845 his condition worsened and put him in a mental hospital. He soon died in his birth town of Bergamo. It would be interesting to discover if the "mad scene" in *Lucia di Lammermoor* was in any way his own expression of the mental chaos brought on by his illness.



This issue of **Dear OperaMAN** focuses on *Lucia di Lammermoor*



Dear OperaMAN,
I am attending Lucia di Lammermoor this summer and I noticed it is a bel canto opera. What does this mean and why is Lucia di Lammermoor labeled as such? - Inquiringmind from Denver, CO

Dear Inquiringmind,
The term bel canto is Italian for “beautiful singing.” This style focuses on the beauty of sound, tone and clear melodic phrase produced by brilliant singing. *Lucia di Lammermoor* has all of these elements, plus a dramatic story with powerful emotional impact. The human voice is thought by many to be the ideal musical instrument because it is the only instrument capable of expressing the entire range of human feelings or emotions, passions, aspirations, yearnings and desires. The characters of *Lucia* demonstrate this notion as they freely sing their innermost thoughts, not only through words (though there is a great libretto for *Lucia*), but through the expression of their voices.

Dear OperaMAN,
I'm confused about recitative (see “Words you should know”). Why do the singers in Lucia di Lammermoor always sing with the orchestra, while in operas by Mozart or Handel, I can tell it is recitative when the characters sing with the harpsichord? – Newatopera from Denver, CO

Dear Newatopera,
Mozart and Handel used recitative to link together the arias, duets, and ensembles. The recitative in their operas is accompanied by harpsichord. These composers put such an emphasis on showcasing the voice, that the recitative was a chance to move the plot line and explain the story, while the arias, duets, and ensembles allowed the characters to share their emotions, not to mention showing off their abilities as singers. This contrasts with *Lucia di Lammermoor* and other later operas because the orchestra plays through the recitative sections. The recitatives in *Lucia* tend to be shorter than those by Mozart/Handel, sharing just the bare minimum of plot line and explanation of details in a conversational style that doesn't break the momentum of the opera. The audience leaves

remembering only the endless beautiful singing and amazing music of Donizetti.

Dear OperaMAN,
I was listening to Lucia di Lammermoor today and at the end of each solo, the singers just start to sing without the orchestra in this endless succession of scales and flurries of notes. What is this and what is the reason? – Operanovice from Denver, CO

Dear Operanovice,
The “endless succession of scales and flurries of notes” you are referring to is called a cadenza (from Italian meaning cadence or the conclusion of a section of music). It is an improvised or written-out ornamental section (or vocal flourish) of notes sung with a free rhythmic style. In the 19th century composers like Donizetti and Bellini began to write the cadenzas out in full. One must remember that bel canto opera is about the virtuosic abilities of the singer and a cadenza is just one more place for the singer to grab the attention of the audience and show off his or her talent.

Dear OperaMAN,
I continually hear the term “Lucia's mad scene.” What does it mean? – musicgirlz from Denver, CO

Dear musicgirlz,
When we meet Lucia at the beginning of the opera, she is a sad, vulnerable young woman. She is having difficulty recovering from the death of her mother and is tormented by visions of ghosts and spirits. Her brother, Enrico, wants her to marry Arturo, a man she does not love. She has been forbidden to marry Edgardo, the man she does love. After her forced marriage to Arturo, Lucia, in a state of overwhelming desperation, murders him. Deranged and in shock, she stumbles back to the wedding party and undergoes a series of hallucinations, then collapses and dies. This scene allows the singer to musically explore insanity and chaos, spiraling through expressions of Lucia's love for Edgardo. The mad scene is the dramatic climax of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. When watching this scene, listen for the counter voice of the flute, representing the voices Lucia hears in her unstable mind.

Character Spotlight:

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR'S ENRICO

Grant Youngblood

The *Opera Insider* caught up with Grant Youngblood, who returns this season as Enrico in *Lucia Di Lammermoor*. Here are his thoughts on the role.

You have performed the role of Enrico many times prior to this performance with Central City Opera. What is it like to do the same role for numerous companies? What does it take to make the role fresh? How do you prepare for a repeat role? How is this different from preparing a new role?

Repeating a role at different companies is one of the most exciting and fulfilling things about being an opera singer. It's great to have repeat chances with a role, and work with different directors and colleagues, to find new facets to a character. One of the things I enjoy about working at Central City Opera is the chance to spend time really rehearsing and fleshing out a part, even something I've done many times before... And the chance to do a good long run of several performances allows you to try different things dramatically and vocally.

I'd say preparing a repeat of a role is similar to preparing a new role, except you perhaps don't have to spend so much time just learning notes and rhythms... And especially in *bel canto* repertoire like *Lucia di Lammermoor* it's great to listen to your colleagues in rehearsals, and find out how the ensembles will fit together... it can be very different from one cast to the next! With a new role you're very concerned with "getting it right"... the notes and rhythms, and discovering how the role fits you vocally and dramatically. When you repeat a role, you can leave some of those concerns aside and concentrate more on the ensemble and bringing the character alive... showing the character's motivations from moment to moment, and how his history shapes his actions ... the "backstory", in other words.



What do you bring to the role of Lucia's brother Enrico? Do you have siblings? Have you experienced being the leader of the family or even the leader for a group in which you have a great personal connection?

I have 3 brothers (no sisters)... So I have been "in charge" of my younger brothers sometimes. I think I can somewhat relate to the feeling of great responsibility and pressure that Enrico is feeling.

Enrico could be seen as the villain and even the instigator of the death of his own sister Lucia, her bridegroom Arturo, and eventually Edgardo. Do you agree with this statement and why? If not, how do you see Enrico?

Enrico is usually seen as the villain in this story. I don't think of him as being motivated by malevolence towards Lucia or even Edgardo. I think he had a very close relationship with his sister when they were younger. But Enrico has been placed in charge of the Ashton family, and he is constantly mindful of the political intrigues surrounding them. He feels tremendous pressure to assure the future prosperity of his family, and he feels the ONLY way to secure that future is through a political alliance with the Bucklaw clan. Therefore he must put aside his regard for Lucia's own feelings and desires, and make certain she goes through with the marriage. Discovering that she has fallen in love with the son of his family's ancestral enemy, the Ravenswoods, only adds fuel to his determination that Lucia do "the right thing", for the good of the family. In his narrow-minded focus on the political alliance, he doesn't notice Lucia's fragile mental state, until it's too late.

You have performed numerous roles with Central City Opera. Which has been your favorite and why?

I've always had a great time working at Central City, no matter what role I've been doing! Certainly my debut role there, John Procter in *The Crucible*, was a career high point for me. I especially enjoy exploring the strengths and weaknesses of different characters... the things that make them human.

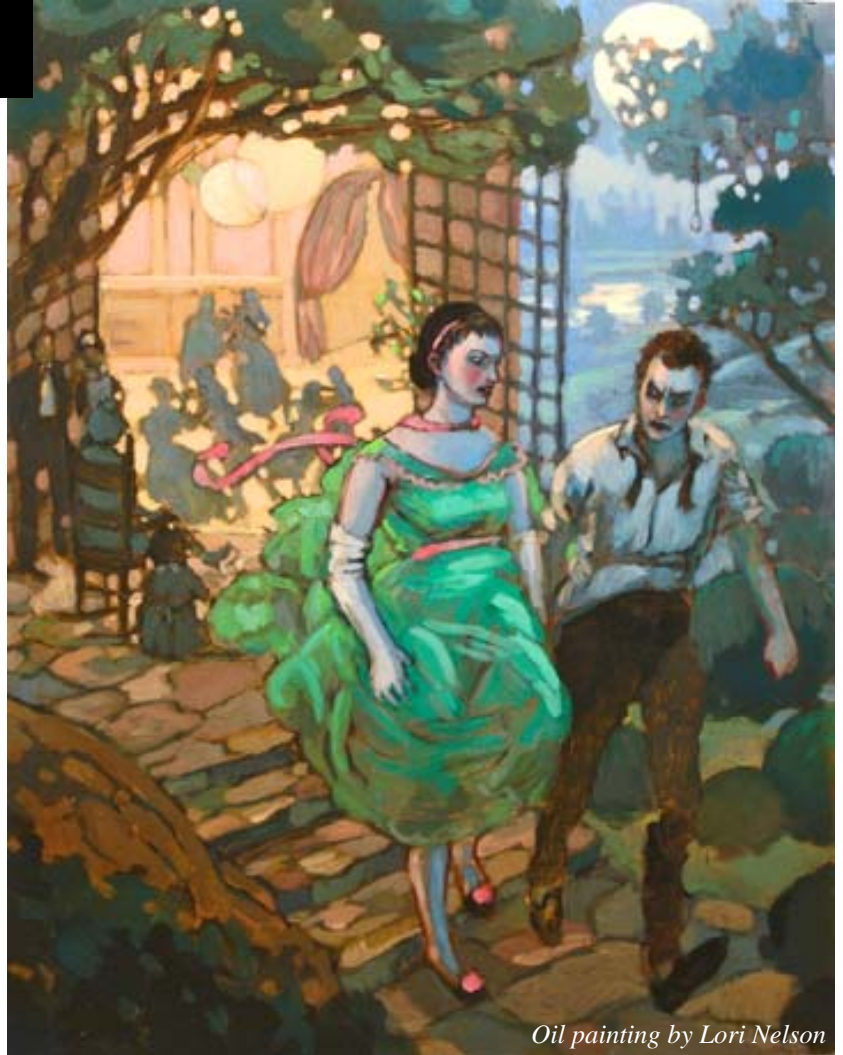
Also doing the Four Villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann* was another favorite. I always enjoy that kind of challenge!

> > > A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

by Stephen Sondheim

A Little Night Music is Stephen Sondheim's tribute to the Viennese-style operettas of 100 years ago. It's a bit too brittle and sophisticated to automatically recall those sweet and lovely cream-filled pastries, but that's Sondheim – brilliantly turning the musical theatre world on its ear while still showing his love and respect for older forms.

The title *A Little Night Music* will remind many of Mozart, but the show's direct inspiration comes from Swedish director Ingmar Bergman's film "Smiles of a Summer Night." Both the musical and the film tell a tale of constantly changing relationships between triangles and couples among the upper class in 1900 Sweden. It is midsummer and the sun adds to life's confusion by never truly setting. The question throughout is whether or not these people will finally drop their unfounded dignity or prejudice and discover their appropriate partners.



THE CHARACTERS:

Fredrik Egerman – middle aged lawyer, married to Anne; father of Henrik; former lover of Desirée;

Anne Egerman – Fredrik's very young second wife

Henrik Egerman – Fredrik's son by his first wife; a divinity student

Petra – the Egerman's maid

Desirée Armfeldt – successful actress; former lover of Fredrik, current lover of Count Carl-Magnus

Madame Armfeldt – Desirée's mother

Fredrika Armfeldt – Desirée's daughter

Count Carl-Magnus Malcolm – a military aristocrat who is Desirée's current lover

Countess Charlotte Malcolm – Carl-Magnus's patient wife

Mr. Lindquist, Mrs. Nordstrom, Mrs. Anderssen, Mr. Erlanson, Mrs. Segstrom – onlookers whom Sondheim imagined collectively as "The Liebeslieders"

*"Suddenly the jasmine starts to smell stronger, then a frog croaks —
then all the stars in Orion wink" - Madame Armfeldt*

CAST

Henrik Egerman: Matthew Giebel

Anne Egerman: Sarah Jane McMahon

Desiree Armfeldt: Sylvia McNair

Count Carl-Magnus Malcolm: Jeffrey Mattsey

Frederik Egerman: Robert Orth



Conductor: Christopher Zemliauskas

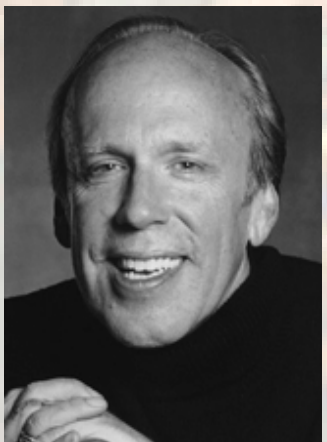
Director: Ken Cazan

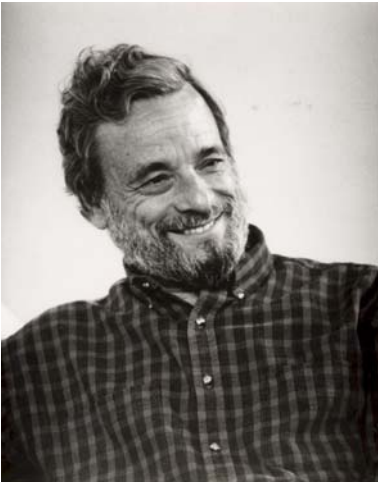
This new production will be performed in English.

PERFORMANCE DATES:

July 4, 9, 11, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 29, 31

Opera notes - free previews 45 minutes before every performance
in Williams Stables.





Meet Stephen Sondheim

COMPOSER OF *A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC*

Stephen Joshua Sondheim was born March 22, 1930 in New York City, the only child of a dress manufacturer and a fashion designer. His parents divorced when he was 10, and Sondheim and his mother moved to Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Sondheim's classmate Jimmie Hammerstein lived just 4 miles away, and the two became very good friends. Jimmie's father Oscar Hammerstein II (who co-wrote the popular musicals *The Student Prince* and *Showboat*, and would soon follow with *Oklahoma*) was a father figure to young Sondheim and provided much guidance for his musical career. Hammerstein had. Sondheim himself said "I wasn't interested in songs until I met Oscar Hammerstein, when I was 11. Before then music to me had meant 'The Happy Farmer' and 'Ase's Death,' the little piano pieces from my lessons."

When Sondheim was 15 he wrote a musical about his boarding school. It received great praise from his friends and family, but his mentor Hammerstein was not as impressed. However, seeing talent in the young boy, he took time to go over the piece in detail. Hammerstein gave Sondheim several projects for homework, and as a young man, Sondheim took an apprenticeship as a *gopher*¹ on the set of Rodger & Hammerstein's *Allegro*. The musical was not as successful as some of their other pieces, but Sondheim learned quite a bit. As he said, "You learn a lot more from watching professionals fail than when they succeed. All you have to do is be close to one failure. That doesn't prevent your own failures...but you'll learn an enormous amount."

Throughout his career, things weren't easy for Sondheim. A television musical for Mary Rodgers was abandoned and his first Broadway effort *Saturday Night* was canceled when the producer died. Sondheim's mentorship with Hammerstein helped him learn from his failures rather than grow frustrated. Sondheim was approached to write the lyrics for *West Side Story* though he wanted to work on both music and lyrics for his own productions. However, Hammerstein convinced him he would benefit from the experience. With music written by composer Leonard Bernstein, *West Side Story* went on to win several Tony Awards (and Academy Awards for the film), though Sondheim himself never received much credit. When the Broadway-bound *Gypsy* began production, Sondheim was initially chosen to write it. Leading lady Ethel Merman (who had already gained great fame for her roles in *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Anything Goes*) requested someone with more experience than Sondheim, so Jule Styne was brought in to write the music, and Sondheim was asked to write the lyrics. Again, Sondheim wasn't sure if he wanted to do only half of the writing, but this time Hammerstein told him it would be great experience to learn to write for a "star."

Finally in 1962 Sondheim wrote music and lyrics for his own Broadway musical, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. While the show won several Tony awards, Sondheim did not receive even a nomination for his *score*.² In the 1970s, Sondheim gained popularity with his "concept musicals" *Company* and *Follies*, which concentrated more on getting to know the characters in the musical, rather than following a specific plot. Hammerstein had taught Sondheim that plot (or storyline) development was an important part of any musical, and in *A Little Night Music* Sondheim really began to shine, with a story following the romantic intertwining of several upperclass families. It won the Tony Award for Best Musical as well as Best Score.

Sondheim's other musicals include *Sunday in the Park with George* based on a painting by Georges Seurat and *Into the Woods* which combines the stories of several familiar fairytales. *Saturday Night* which had been abandoned in the 1950s, was finally produced in 1997 on Broadway, and a film version of *Sweeney Todd* starring Johnny Depp was released in 2007. Sondheim has currently received more Tony Awards than any other composer, and during the 2008 Tony Awards he was given a special Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to the Broadway theatre community.

¹On a theatre or movie set, a *gopher* is someone who is assigned to "go for" small necessary jobs, like bringing coffee or water to the designers.

²A *score* is the name given to the music and lyrics of a Broadway musical. To be eligible for the Tony Award for Best Original Score, which Sondheim has won six times, a score must be written specifically for the theatre and must be original.

So what IS the difference between an opera, an operetta, and a musical?



If you ask ten different people, you'll probably get ten different answers. This is a tricky question because not all musicals are alike, just as all operas are not alike. One thing we can (probably) all agree on is that operas, operettas and musicals all have people onstage, singing while they tell us a story.

An opera is usually done completely through music, with singers accompanied by a large orchestra. An operetta is often called "light opera" – the singing and orchestrations are often similar to opera, but the story usually is quite funny with a happy ending. Characters in an operetta often poke light-hearted fun at each other, not in a mean-spirited way. There are also many "patter songs" in operetta – think of these quick-paced songs as an early version of rap music filled with tongue twisters. A musical is similar to both opera and operetta, though there is often much more dialogue in a musical. Musical theatre performers are usually referred to as "actors" rather than "singers," and can even be a "triple threat" if they dance well too.

A big difference in musicals and operas is how you hear the sounds and how they are produced. Opera singers are classically-trained to make their voices project loudly, making sure they can be heard (without hurting themselves) over a large orchestra and all the way to the back of a large opera house. Just as an athlete has to practice and strengthen his muscles to do well in sports, opera singers work on vocal exercises to strengthen all the muscles required to produce this sound.

Musical theatre actors are often assisted by the use of microphones, so you don't hear as many classically-trained voices in musicals. One reason is because the actors might be using more energy to dance so that they can't sing as loudly. However, more often the microphones are needed because of the instruments used. Musical theatre tends to use music that is more like the common music of the day, and these days the radios are filled with the sounds of electric guitars and keyboards or synthesizers. You rarely hear these instruments in an opera orchestra. Their sound is amplified through speakers and human voices just can't compete without their own electronic amplification or microphones. While the setting for the musical *The Phantom of the Opera* is the Paris opera house, you will most likely never hear this production in an actual opera house. It uses several pre-recorded pieces in the show, including the opening overture and much of the title number, as well as a recorded version of Christine's high note and many of the Phantom's voiceovers. This simply is not something that opera patrons are used to hearing.

However, there are many pieces of all three music types – musical, opera, and operetta – that can be performed interchangeably. It doesn't matter who is performing, or where; we know it works and we like it, and it sounds beautiful with a full classical-style orchestra beneath it. Many operas have been on Broadway – some even had their first performances there like *Porgy & Bess*. Gilbert & Sullivan's operettas have also been quite popular on Broadway, including a production of *Pirates of Penzance* starring Kevin Kline and Linda Ronstadt. Likewise, many musicals have been performed in opera houses. These tend to use more "serious music" which requires singers who have classically-trained voices, not to mention a symphonic orchestra. You probably won't hear the harsh New York accents and Broadway-belt sounds of *Guys & Dolls* on an opera stage. However, you are likely to hear musicals from composers like Stephen Sondheim (who wrote this summer's *A Little Night Music*), Kurt Weill and Leonard Bernstein. In fact, when Bernstein recorded the concert versions of both *Candide* and *West Side Story*, he used opera singers in the lead roles, and he should know what makes his music sound the best!

Sondheim himself said: "I really think that when something plays Broadway it's a musical, and when it plays in an opera house it's opera. That's it. It's the terrain, the countryside, the expectations of the audience that make it one thing or another." So, we invite you to sit back and enjoy the treat of *A Little Night Music* this summer. See if you can find songs that are similar to the patter songs of operetta, and of course enjoy the beautiful melodies, harmonies and symphonic waltzes. It fits just perfectly in our opera house.

Character Spotlight:

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC'S DESIRÉE

Sylvia McNair

As a soprano, you have often sung the role of the beautiful, innocent, sometimes tragic ingénue. Desirée is a bit older and far more "experienced" than those young ladies. How will you approach this character?

My hope is that Desirée and I are becoming one. Neither one of us was born yesterday, we have both logged a lot of miles on the Road of Life as leading ladies in the theater and as women in the world. She's smart, she's funny, she's gorgeous, she's wise, she's soft on the inside and strong on the outside. Who wouldn't want to be her, for a month at least? I adore jumping into her skin — this is a part that has been on my list of Dream Roles for years!

Desirée has a lot more dialogue than singing in A Little Night Music. Is this your first role where the singing is secondary? Is the preparation different?

Historically, opera singers have been trained to make "the voice" the primary consideration. I always resented that because acting is so much fun. Long ago, I started speaking, in a dialogue-style, the sung recitatives in operas. Approaching Poppea or Cleopatra or Susanna or Ilia or Pamina (who does have dialogue) or Anne Trulove or Tytania as an actor FIRST and as a singer second was always my goal. Sometimes my singing was less good because of it but that was a price I was willing to pay. The day and age of opera singers who can't act, singers who just stand and show off their beautiful voices, is long gone. The work the CCO Young Artists program does is proof. I LOVE to speak dialogue, for me it's a much more natural way to communicate.

My preparation of dialogue roles (no, this is not my first) is probably annoying to my friends. I bring the book everywhere I go, to lunch, to dinner, and make people read lines with me! I also search out theater directors to read and coach with.



You are on the voice faculty at Indiana University, your own alma mater and an institution well-known for producing fine singing artists. What do you enjoy most about working with emerging talent? Is it possible to identify the true "stars" of tomorrow?

You can do a lot worse in life than spend a large portion of 30 weeks a year working with people half your age! I often say like Mrs. Anna in *The King and I*: "By my students I am taught!" Teaching is certainly the best teacher — and I have so much to learn. That said, I also have 25 years of experience traveling and singing all over the world and now it's time

for me to share that with the next generation. I've got a LOT packed in my head and I want to give it away. As for identifying "stars of tomorrow", I would never presume to guess. Finding the student with the entire package of musical talent and vocal beauty who is also disciplined, focused, flexible, has inner and outer beauty, a willingness to sweat and sacrifice, a hunger to work, an eagerness to please (it's a long list of "qualifications") is rare but, yes, I do see it occasionally. Then the mother-in-me kicks in and I try to help and protect them as best I can! A VERY wise stage director (Ian Judge, from the Royal Shakespeare Company) said to me years ago: "If you want a career in the arts, you have to possess the soul of an angel and hide of a rhinoceros!"



Set rendering of Desirée at the local theatre in this year's production of *A Little Night Music*, as designed by Cameron Anderson.

Most classical singers are unsuccessful at “crossing over” into other musical realms, but you receive rave reviews as both a classical and a cabaret/musical theatre artist. What’s your secret?

Practice! I just refuse to quit trying and I hire a lot of experts to help me. Nothing in the world gives me more joy than singing and acting so going to "work" is going to play. It is true that after 20 years on the opera stage, I decided to stop doing that so that I could spend the next 20 years of my singing life doing musical theater productions. So far, this dream is unfolding happily — thanks in part to this CCO production of *A Little Night Music*, I hasten to add. I've also been able to do (or will soon be doing) productions of *Most Happy Fella*, *Camelot*, *The King and I*, and *Seven Deadly Sins* so my leap off the cliff didn't result in a disaster. I often say I had to LEARN how to sing opera but doing musical theater rep is like climbing back into my own skin. It feels like the music I was put on earth to sing. Cabaret is particularly enjoyable because of the nearness of your audience and being able to interact with them, eye to eye. I love that connection! I've done a lot of cabaret performances around the country but my favorites are in New York at The Algonquin and Feinstein's at the Regency. (Michael Feinstein is one of my great buddies!)

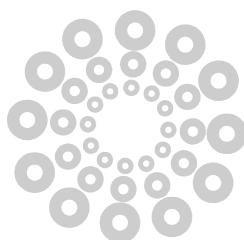


Photo by Ray Marklin

You experienced a very public bout of breast cancer. As a survivor, has your attitude about performing changed? If yes, in what way?

Cancer changes everything! Cancer was one of the best things that ever happened to me; it's shocking to read that I'm sure, but it's true. I had to face death up-close and personal 3 years ago. Twice I was given just a very short time to live. But a taste of death gave me a new hunger for life. Worse than the cancer was going through a very public divorce. I became so deeply depressed that it took something as severe as cancer to bring a "cure" for the despair. Cancer gave me clarity, cancer helped me get real, cancer made me more compassionate. I wouldn't give it back for anything.

I had 5 major surgeries, a year and a half of chemo-therapy, months of radiation and physical therapy; my body and my spirit are forever altered but I believe I am changed for the better. I give thanks every day for my life, for the ability to walk, run, eat, sleep unencumbered by needles, and especially I give thanks for every opportunity to sing! I sing every show now with the added heart and soul that cancer gave me. I sing every show with ALL of me, just in case it's my last.



> > > > RINALDO

by Georg Frederic Handel

Rinaldo is an opera from the Baroque period (approximately 1600-1750), written by one of the Baroque's most famous composers, George Frederic Handel. Most operas of that time are either based on mythological stories or historical events and are full of magic and spectacle as well as wonderful music designed to show off the human voice.

Rinaldo is set during the First Crusade of 1099 which was launched by the Pope to conquer the Saracen rulers of Jerusalem. Rinaldo, a knight of the Christian forces led by Goffredo (Godfrey of Bouillon), is betrothed to Goffredo's daughter, Almirena. Armida, a powerful sorceress, and Argante, the Saracen king of Jerusalem and Armida's lover, determine together that the knight Rinaldo must be separated from his forces or he will surely lead them to victory. Armida kidnaps Almirena, knowing that Rinaldo will go in search of her. However, try as she might, Armida's magic cannot conquer Rinaldo's love for Almirena.



THE CHARACTERS:

- Rinaldo** – Christian knight of the First Crusade; betrothed to Almirena
- Goffredo** – Captain General of the Christian armies; Almirena's father
- Almirena** – Goffredo's daughter; Rinaldo's beloved
- Argante** – Saracen king; lover of Armida
- Armida** – Sorceress; Queen of Damascus; lover of Argante
- Eustazio** – Goffredo's brother and advisor
- The Hermit/Magician** – Engaged by the Christians to vanquish Armida
- Sirens and Monsters** – Armida's magical companions

*“Dearest bride, sweet lover, where are you?
I weep for your return.” - Rinaldo*

CAST

Rinaldo: Phyllis Pancella
Goffredo: David Walker
Argante: Joshua Hopkins
Armida: Kathleen Kim
Almirena: Megan Hart



Conductor: Matthew Halls
Director: Marc Astafan

This new production will be performed in Italian with English supertitles.

PERFORMANCE DATES:
July 11, 16, 18, 22, 24, 26
Aug 1

Opera notes - free previews 45 minutes before every performance in Williams Stables.

Nina Odescalchi Kelly Family Matinee: July 28

IF IT AIN'T BAROQUE...

The first “stage” of opera, called Baroque (from the Italian word *barocco*, meaning *exuberant*), lasted from approximately 1600-1750. Those accustomed to the operas of Verdi or Puccini or even Mozart will find that Baroque opera was a rather different animal. The emphasis is upon highly ornamented arias and duets in the “da capo” style, in which the original melody returns to close the aria, though with even more elaborate detail. The focus was upon singers, not story, and a tale did not need to be sensible as long as it allowed opportunity for frequent vocal display. Other than occasional stormy passages, instrumental emphasis was upon strings and harpsichord, often echoing the singers’ phrases. A scene from a Baroque opera can begin to sound familiar even before it is finished, which gives the music a nice sense of cohesion.

Baroque opera generally gave its leading male roles to castrati, whose voices blended the high range of a woman’s voice with the power of a man. (Castrati were men who had undergone castration as young boys to keep their voices unchanged, a tradition that started in Italian church choirs during the period when women were banned from singing in public by papal decree). When such operas are performed today, these roles are usually taken by female singers in male costume, male countertenors, or sometimes transcribed into the tenor range.



George Frederic Handel

George Frederic Handel, one of the greatest of Baroque composers, was born in Germany in 1685 (the same year as two other musical giants – Johann Sebastian Bach and Domenico Scarlatti). He died in London in 1759 – 250 years ago this year. His mother encouraged his musical gifts and he was allowed to take lessons in composition and keyboard even though his father wanted him to study law. After his father died, Handel began studying law but soon abandoned it in favor of music. He had jobs as a church organist and violinist/harpsichordist in the opera orchestra in Hamburg. His first two operas, *Almira* and *Nero* were produced there in 1705.

He then began travels to Italy where he immersed himself in the music of that place and time. Opera was banned by the Pope so he found work as a sacred music composer. When the bans were relaxed, he went back to opera and produced *Rodrigo* and *Aggripina* in Italy with excellent success. In 1710 he became Kapellmeister (master of sacred music) for George, Elector of Hanover, soon to become King George I of Great Britain. London became his permanent home in 1712, but in 1711 while on a visit there, he produced *Rinaldo* – the first original Italian opera mounted in Great Britain. It was a huge success notable for its beautiful music, elaborate stage machinery and excellent singing. The cast included the singing sensations of the day, three alto castrati.

Handel became a British subject in 1727, continuing his work as a composer for both the court and for the general public. Over his lifetime Handel wrote 42 operas and managed a major opera company in London, but most people today remember him instead for his choral and orchestral works such as *The Messiah*, *Water Music* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. His operas have returned to public favor over the last 30 years thanks to support from famous singers and conductors like Marilyn Horne and Neville Marriner.

Handel was well-respected by later composers. Mozart said of him, “Handel understands effect better than any of us. When he chooses, he strikes like a thunderbolt. Beethoven thought he was, “master of all of us...the greatest composer who ever lived.”

FOCUS ON:

Marc Astafan, Director

RINALDO

This will be your first fully staged professional baroque opera, how is this different than other eras of opera? What does it require?

In some ways it's very different, but in others it's not different at all. My job as the director is to tell the story as clearly and as truthfully as possible. That's a fact no matter what era of opera you're dealing with. It's true that the music of Handel is different from later composers such as Verdi or Puccini. But what it really comes down to is the text and basic acting skills: What is the character saying and what does he or she hope to gain by saying it? If you use that as your starting point, then the rest usually falls into place.

Some would say it is difficult to make baroque opera interesting. How do you plan to make baroque opera relevant and exciting? How is Rinaldo relevant today?

Audiences need something for their eyes as well as their ears. Not only striking visuals, but action. I've always relied on my early dance training to keep things moving and to give a visual flow to the operas I direct. As for its relevance, I can't think of an opera more suited to what's going on in the world today. It's about Western Christians moving into the Middle East to try to convert Muslims. It's interesting how some things haven't changed.



Marc Astafan directs two youth performers in *Cendrillon* (2007).
Photo by Mark Kiryluk.



Rinaldo is Handel's first opera written for London audiences, though it was his sixth opera composed.

How does Rinaldo differ from the first five operas he wrote and how does it relate to the English audience?

London was and is a great theater city. Handel was influenced by this as he entered a new phase of his career when he moved there. In the earlier operas he often used music composed for other non-operatic genres such as oratorio. Because of this it could be said that the earlier operas didn't work because they were less dramatically cohesive. The music for *Rinaldo* is very character specific and that's why it was successful on the operatic stage. Most of the music composed for those earlier operas doesn't even exist today, which says a lot. He was also still finding his way into the art form. A lot of Verdi's early operas aren't very good either!

The first performance of Rinaldo was said to be "thunder and lightning, illuminations and fire-works." How will you handle (no pun intended) the dramatic effects of the score and the magical special effects of the story?

Luckily I have a very talented design team; that certainly helps. And it seems that a lot of the operas that I've already directed have led me to this one. *The Magic Flute*, *La Calisto*, *Cinderella*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Don Giovanni* all have theatrical "magic" and special effects. *Rinaldo* has wonderful moments of spectacle and we're still using many of the ideas that first began with Baroque Opera production, but with a 21st Century twist. There's everything from flying to a scene that takes place in the water!

Character Spotlight:

RINALDO'S ARMIDA

Kathleen Kim

Armida in Rinaldo will be your first major baroque role. Will you approach Handel differently than Mozart or Donizetti? In what ways?

Preparing Armida is not much different than preparing for other roles except that Handel requires additional attentions like adding ornaments for da capo arias (see *If It Ain't Baroque*, pg. 18) and working on recitatives (see *Words You Should Know* – pg.27). I am spending a lot of time working on the text.

You are a young singer whose career is really taking off. What advice do you have for other aspiring young artists?

Practice! Practice! Practice! Always be ready for any opportunity. That moment could be a life changing event! Be patient and don't give up!

You are a physically small person. What are the advantages or disadvantages of your size on stage?

Yes. I am a small person but I don't think about how small I am on stage. If I really become the character I believe that I can fill the stage with drama and music through my singing and acting. That is my job, so that when the audience is leaving the theater, they won't think about how small I am but how wonderful the opera was.



Live opera productions can have unpredictable events; artists making musical mistakes, costume malfunctions, scenery falling, props misplaced, etc. Would you share a favorite on-stage moment with our readers?

When I was doing Blonde in *The Abduction from Seraglio*, in the scene with Osmin and Blonde, the props were forks, knives, plates and tray. Blonde threatens Osmin with knife and fork and the scene ends with Blonde hitting Osmin with the tray. At the last performance I noticed that we didn't have the props on stage. The crew forgot to put the tray set out. I was panicking. We just had to improvise the whole scene without the props. But after the show a friend who was in the audience told me that she didn't notice anything wrong. So I guess we did a good job making the scene work! Anything can happen on stage.



Two costume sketches for Armida in this summer's production of *Rinaldo* as designed by Sara Jean Tosetti

FOCUS ON:

Thomas Getty, Assistant Conductor & Supertitlist 2009 FESTIVAL



Tom, you seem to be everywhere in Central City, doing a variety of things. Take us through a typical summer day for you.

Usually the day begins with LOTS of coffee, and I'm usually working on supertitle translations early in the morning while the apprentices are in Diction and Combat classes. Sometimes before classes begin I have coachings [*helping singers with diction and musical style*] for Opera Scenes or [*the opera*] *The Face On The Barroom Floor*. Next is Movement class [*apprentice and studio artists attend this class daily – sometimes dance, sometimes exercise*], which takes a little over an hour. The coffee becomes highly necessary here so I can access all the tunes that go rattling around inside my brain - I never know exactly what's going to come out, especially at the beginning. Lunch usually happens right after that, followed by an afternoon of Opera Scenes and *Face* coachings, or on performance days, I run down the hill to Williams Stables for a Scenes run-through before we perform. For matinee opera performances, I usually run right to the theater and set up the sponsor titles and run them on automatic while I grab lunch. Then about ten minutes before the show, I get to the theater and to my chair at the computer backstage and run the titles for the show. On non-performance evenings, if the apprentices are not in rehearsal, I'm coaching or rehearsing *Face*. On performance evenings, I switch the titles out for the next show, run them, and then on the nights when Apres-opera is scheduled, RUN down the hill to the Teller House and play for a few singers for the next couple of hours. On those days, I'm basically on the run from 9 to midnight. Yeah, it's a lot



of running around - no wonder I'm in such great shape by the end of the season!

One of your many jobs for Central City Opera is to make and run the supertitles that are read above the stage. What goes into creating those and how much time does it take?

I'm usually working on multiple sets of titles at the same time, so it takes awhile, and sometimes I have to steal time to do them. All in all, I start in September, after giving myself a little break from the last season, and do a few hours of translation [*from the original language into English*] here and there, first one opera scene, then one from another opera - whatever I feel like. If things go well and I'm really into it, I can have a first draft ready in a few weeks. *Lucia di Lammermoor* I know pretty well, so that took a little less time than *Rinaldo*, where the poetry is rather dense. After the first drafts are done, it's always good to get away from them for awhile and come back to them. The object at that point is to get the titles to "speak" so they make sense to the audience. I go through the whole translation, and change anything that sounds awkward - it frequently winds up reading like a play script. The stage directors like to look them over, too, and provide suggestions for changes, right up until the final dress is over. So it's typical for a set of titles not to be considered finished until the final performance is through. The entire process, with stops and starts, takes anywhere from a month to a year.

What is one of your favorite memories from your time in Central City?

There are SO many wonderful memories from over the years, it's hard to pinpoint just one. Some of my favorites come from the Apres-opera nights, when anything can happen, and sometimes does. Last year, doing "The Cell Block Tango" with the West Side Story ladies was a real treat. I also remember accompanying a tenor one year on "Celeste Aida" while he pounded away on an African drum - and it WORKED! However, the best memory of all is having worked and performed with the most talented young singers on the planet, and later watching their careers take shape and cheering them on to success. That's what keeps me coming back year after year.



WRITE YOUR OWN LIBRETTO

Where does your story take place?

How many characters are in your opera?

What are the names of your characters?

What is the conflict of the story?

What is the resolution of the story?



INSIDE THE DESIGNS

What goes into designing an opera?

When you go to an opera, you may walk out of a theatre humming the tune of a rousing chorus or the leading lady's famous *aria* (look up *aria* in "Words You Should Know" on page 27). Just as likely, you also thought, "Oh, I loved that dress!" or "The scenery was just amazing!" So what exactly goes into designing the costumes, scenery, and lighting of an opera?

First, the design helps the audience set the scene and figure out where it takes place. Are we in a forest, on a seashore, or in a room of a castle? What time period are we in? Are the singers walking around with cellphones or are they fighting each other with swords? All of these answers help the audience understand where and when the action is taking place. But let's go a little further.

Think about Cinderella and her clothing. She's the same person no matter what she's wearing, but in the beginning of the story she's dressed in rags. Her stepsisters and stepmother don't think much higher of her than the dust she's sweeping. But when Cinderella is dressed in a beautiful ballgown her family doesn't recognize her – she must be someone very important and rich. Cinderella didn't change, but other people changed the way they thought of her just by the clothes she was wearing. Costume designers help guide the audience in the same way by how they design the singers' clothes.



Lucia and Edgardo vow their eternal love for each other on the blue tartan of his clan. Design rendering for this summer's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Costume Designer Terese Wadden, Set Designer Wilson Chin.



Design rendering for this summer's *A Little Night Music*. Set Designer Cameron Anderson.

takes place in Sweden, which is so far north that sometimes in the summer the sun never actually quite sets. This feeling of "perpetual sunset" can really play games with the mind, since there never is a true sense of day or night. The designers of our production are playing with this concept of light quite a bit. There are large circular set pieces – which could represent the sun or the moon – and there will be a lot of use of shadow and light. See if you notice how the lighting changes the mood of the scene as you're watching. If it's a dark scene, is someone "sneaking around"? And if the scene is really bright and vivid, are the people onstage having a good time?

And finally, many times the designers of an opera can enjoy creating something strange and unrealistic, and let their imaginations go wild. The world of *Rinaldo* is filled with supernatural people and places – things that don't exist in real life. The designers can dream up whatever they like to bring these characters and settings alive. *Rinaldo* has a sorceress, *sirens*² who live in the sea, and a chariot pulled by a dragon. Just think of all the different versions you could make up!

The choice of color may also help the audience follow along. In this summer's production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, pay close attention to the colors of the main characters. Lucia and her brother Enrico wear the family *tartan*¹ of green. When Lucia and Edgardo pledge their eternal love for each other, they do so on the blue tartan of Edgardo's Ravenswood clan. When Lucia marries Arturo instead of Edgardo, she wears a dress of red, showing her new alliance with Arturo's clan. The change of color helps the audience follow Lucia's change of heart.

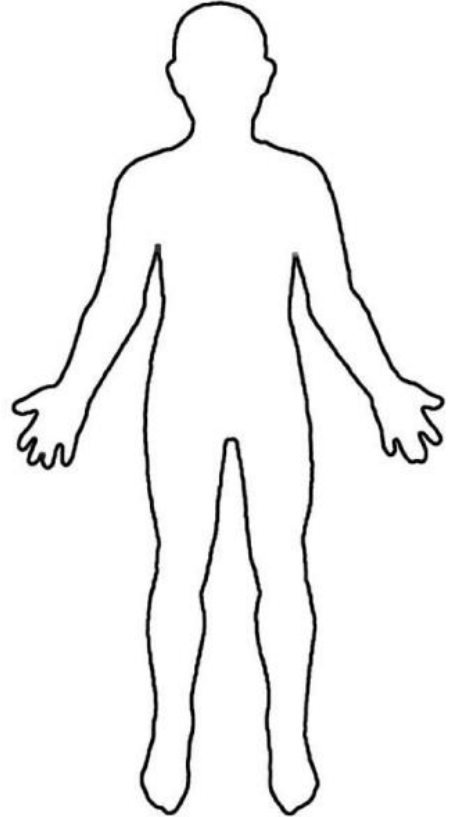
Lighting is another way the designers change the feeling of a scene, whether you are aware of it or not. *A Little Night Music*

¹Tartan – A fabric with a crisscross design, like plaid. Each Scottish clan or family has different colors and a different pattern to their tartan, which are made into kilts, sashes, and other clothing items.

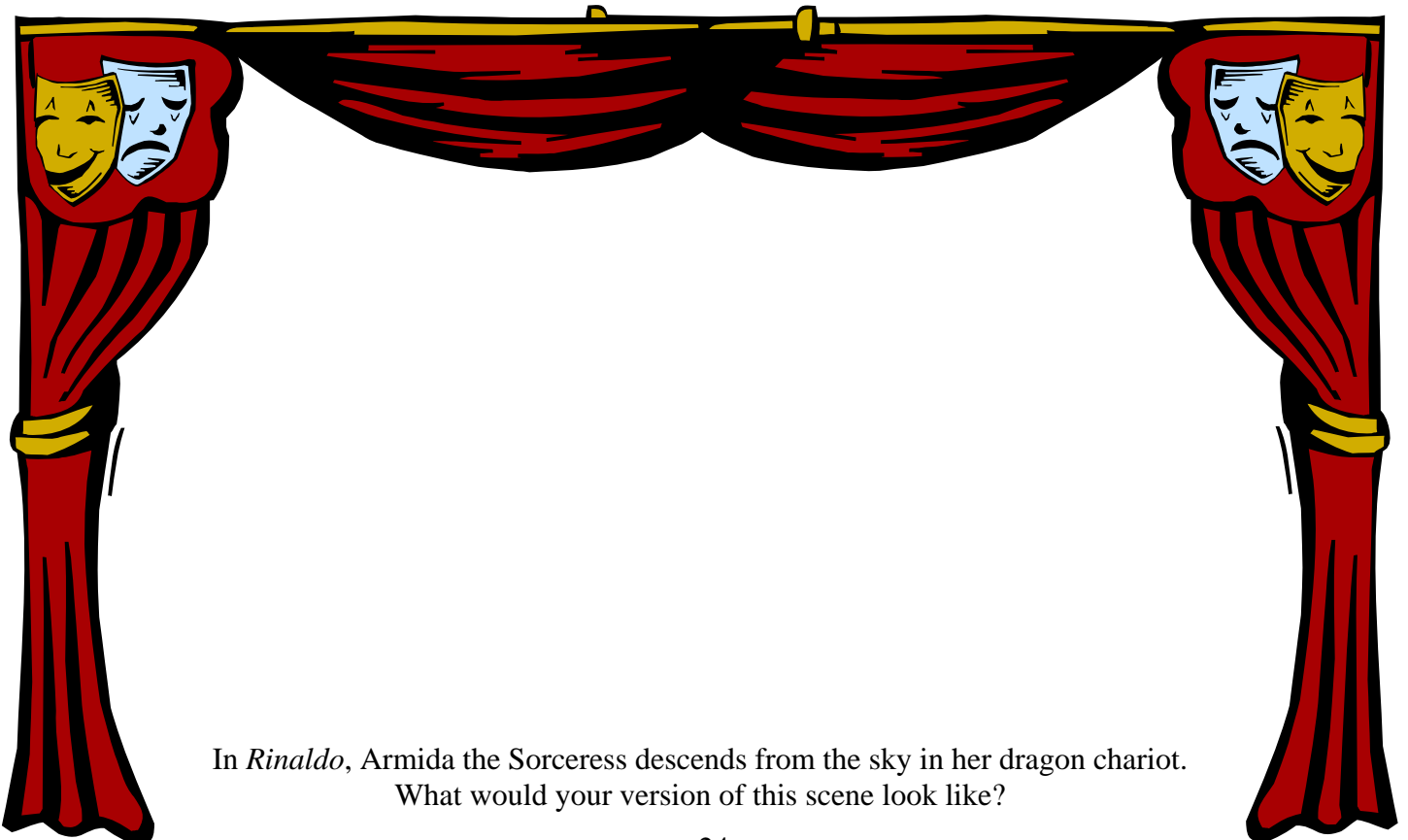
²Sirens – Mythical creatures who tempted men with their singing. They were believed to draw sailors in with their voice, only to have their boats crash on sharp shallow rocks.

HOW WOULD YOU DESIGN A SHOW?

What would your family's tartan look like?
What colors would you use and why?



How would you design the monster costume for *Rinaldo*?



In *Rinaldo*, Armida the Sorceress descends from the sky in her dragon chariot.
What would your version of this scene look like?

WHAT DID YOU THINK?

Here is your chance to be the reviewer for Central City Opera!

What did you think of the opera? Write your ideas on the posted notes.

What did you think of the costumes, set, singers, and orchestra?



Take advantage of the many

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

during the Summer Festival!

Opera Notes – Free previews before every performance at 1:50 p.m. or 7:15 p.m. in Williams Stables

Opera à la Carte – Staged opera scenes performed by members of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program on select dates at 1:15 p.m. in Williams Stables.
\$8 for tickets (\$5 for season subscribers)

The Face on the Barroom Floor – 2009 marks the 31st anniversary of this cabaret opera commissioned by Central City Opera. Performed by members of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program on select dates at 1:15 p.m.
\$8 for tickets (\$5 for season subscribers)

Salon Recitals – Solo recitals by members of the renowned Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program on select Saturdays and Sundays at 11:45 in the Teller House, includes lunch;
\$30 for lunch and performance

The Nina Odescalchi Kelly Family Matinees – Full mainstage productions presented with narration. Autographs with the artists follow the performance.

Lucia di Lammermoor – Tuesday, July 21 at 2:00 p.m.

Rinaldo – Tuesday, July 28 at 2:00 p.m.

\$10 for children ages 6-18, \$15 for accompanying adults (must be accompanied by at least one child age 6 or older)

Take a Child to the Opera – Enhance your Family Matinee experience! Enjoy lunch with opera singers before the performance and additional activities unique to Central City. Sponsored by the Central City Opera House Association Guild.

\$27 for children ages 6-18, \$32 for accompanying adults – includes opera ticket

For tickets to any of the above events visit

www.centralcityopera.org

or call the Central City Opera Box Office at 303.292.6700

Summer Performing Arts Intensive – “Rags to Riches” – July 5-19
In collaboration with Central City Opera, the Colorado Springs Conservatory offers a two-week intensive for students ages 14-19 that includes immersion studies in drama, opera and musical theater. Students ages 14-19 are in residence for 10 days in Colorado Springs and then move to Central City where they will attend Festival productions, participate in coachings and classes, and perform their own scenes program for a public audience in Williams Stables. For further information, call the Central City Opera Education & Community Programs Department at 303.331.7026 or Colorado Springs Conservatory at 719.577.4556.



Production photo from the 2008 CSC Intensive Production in Williams Stables. Photo by Erin Joy Swank

Words you should know before you go see the show

In the opera score...

The **libretto** contains all of the words of an opera. Italian for "little book," a libretto is usually shorter than the script for a play because it takes longer to sing lines than to say them, and because music is also a very important part of telling the story of an opera. The person who writes the words for an opera is often a playwright or poet and is called a **librettist**.

The **composer** writes the music for the opera. All of the music, both vocal (for singers) and orchestral (for instrumentalists) is written in the **score** with separate lines for each instrument and each singer's vocal part. The score, as a piece of music, reflects the mood, events and emotions of the characters in the story.

Characters are the people in the story. Singers perform the parts of the characters, also called **roles**.

A **synopsis** is a short written summary of the story.

The **overture** is a piece of music played by the orchestra to begin the opera. It usually, but not always, contains some of the musical themes from the opera and sets the mood for what the audience is about to see.

Recitative, pronounced re-chi-ta-TEEV, is sung dialogue that propels the action of the story. The singing is generally faster with a rhythm more like regular speech.

An **aria** is an extended musical passage sung as a solo (by one person). It is often very lyrical and accompanied by the orchestra, conveying the emotions of the character at a particular point in the story. The action usually stops while an aria is sung.

A **duet** is an extended musical passage for two singers, a **trio** is sung by three singers, a **quartet** is a piece for four singers, and so on.

An **ensemble** is an extended musical passage for four or more singers. Very often each performer in an ensemble is singing different words and different musical lines.

Choral scenes usually feature the principal and secondary cast members with the chorus. The sheer number of voices on stage is usually reserved for moments of high drama and spectacle. Dancers might also be featured in a big choral scene.

The **finale** is the last number in an act. It usually involves many singers and is very dramatic.

Supertitles or **surtitles** are the translation of the words of an opera projected above the stage at the same time the character(s) on stage is singing them. When an opera is in a different language, this helps people understand what is going on. Even if an opera is performed in English, supertitles are often used to help the audience follow the story.

Onstage and in the pit...

The **Music Director** is responsible for the interpretation of the score. The Music Director is also usually the **conductor**, who is responsible for the musical interpretation and coordination of the performance. The conductor stands at the front of the orchestra pit and uses a **baton** (a short white stick) and his/her arms and body to interpret the music, cue singers and instrumentalists and keep the beat so everybody stays together. **Maestro** (**maestra** for a woman) is the Italian word for conductor (literally "master") and is a term of great respect.

Soprano is the highest female voice. She is often the heroine of the opera and frequently, she is in love with the tenor. A star soprano is often referred to as the "Prima Donna."

Mezzo-soprano, or just mezzo, is the second highest, or middle, female voice. The mezzo sound is typically darker and warmer than the soprano. The mezzo usually plays the older female character (like the mother), a bad guy (like a witch), a seductress, or a young man or boy. When the mezzo plays a male character, she will be dressed in men's clothes, thus it is called a **pants** or **trouser role**. This convention became popular in the 17th Century as a woman's voice is stronger than a boy's voice.

Alto, also called **contralto**, is the lowest female voice. The alto often plays an old woman, who can either be wise and good or an old witch.

The **tenor** is the highest male voice and is usually the hero of the opera and generally in love with the soprano.

Baritone is the next lowest, or middle, male voice. The baritone is often a villain but can sometimes be a hero who sacrifices himself for the tenor and/or soprano. In a comedy, the baritone is usually the one pulling all kinds of pranks. The baritone is often in love with the soprano but usually loses her to the tenor.

The **bass** has the lowest male voice. He very often plays a wise old man or sometimes a comic character (**basso buffa**). **Basso profundo** describes the lowest bass voice.

Supernumeraries or "**supers**," appear on stage in costume in non-singing and non-speaking roles.

The **orchestra** is the group of instrumentalists who accompany the singers. They play under the stage in the orchestra pit where they will be less likely to overpower the singers and detract from the physical action on stage. Even though the orchestra is not on stage, the instrumentalists are equal partners with the singers in performing an opera.

The **chorus** is a group of singers who function as a unit on stage. Choruses can be for mixed voices, men only,

women only, or children. They are usually featured in crowd scenes where they can represent townspeople, soldiers, pilgrims, etc.

Dancers are often included in an opera. They are usually part of large crowd scenes but can be featured in solo roles as well. Many operas include a short ballet.

Backstage and behind the scenes...

Where do you start if you want to put on a production of an opera? Usually the General Director, Artistic Director or Music Director will pick the **repertoire**, or what operas will be performed. The performance is conceived by the **Production Team**, which consists of the Music Director/Conductor, Stage Director, Choreographer, Scene Designer, Costume Designer, Props Master, Lighting Designer and Technical Director. These people meet frequently to trade ideas and work together to ensure a cohesive interpretation of the piece from a visual, dramatic and musical standpoint.

The **Stage Director** (sometimes simply called the director) is responsible for the overall look or concept of the production. The director determines how the opera will be interpreted and tells everyone on stage when and where to move, creating "stage pictures" that enhance the story.

The **Choreographer** designs movement for the dancers and sometimes for chorus and other characters.

The **Costume Designer** designs and creates the clothes singers wear to reflect aspects of the character played by the singer and their significance in the story.

The **Scene Designer** creates the visual background and set pieces for the opera. He or she creates a small scale model of the set and detailed blueprints which serve as the "instructions" for building the set. He or she also works closely with the props master on hand props, furniture and set decoration.

The **Lighting Designer** creates a lighting plan that emphasizes the drama of the moment. Lighting design is an important visual element that contributes to the ambience of the stage setting and adds depth to the appearance of people, costumes and props on stage.

The **Technical Director** supervises everyone who is implementing the concepts of the designers. He or she works with carpenters, painters, electricians, sound designers and stagehands and oversees the building of sets and props and hanging of lights.

The **Stage Manager** coordinates the visual elements of a show during the performance. He or she is responsible for calling all the **cues** in the performance for the cast and crew. This means the stage manager warns the cast and crew when acts are about to begin and end, tells the conductor when to start, cues cast members for entrances, and follows hundreds of detailed notes in the

score to tell the crew when to change lighting, scenery, sound effects, and raise or lower the curtain.

The **Crew** (stagehands and props master) works behind the scenes and is responsible for setting up and running all of the equipment for a performance, including changing sets, placing and maintaining props, operating the lights, opening and closing the curtains, operating trap doors, sound effects, and assisting performers with costumes and makeup.

Other opera terms...

Bel canto, literally "beautiful singing," describes the musical style of an opera that is lyrical and often very flowery.

Bravo, literally "brave" or "courageous," is a form of applause when shouted by members of the audience at the end of an especially pleasing performance. Strictly speaking, bravo is for a single man, **brava** for a single woman and **bravi** for more than one performer.

Cadenza is a brilliant passage in an aria often improvised by the singer, usually in such a way as to best display his or her vocal talents. Cadenzas are virtuosic and rhythmically free.

Coloratura describes a voice that possesses unusual flexibility, able to sing many notes quickly over a wide range. This term is most often used to describe female voices, i.e. coloratura soprano or mezzo, but occasionally men will have this same ability.

The **concertmaster** or **concertmistress** is the first violinist who leads the orchestra in tuning at the beginning of each act and coordinates the strings section, deciding on the bowing so that all the bows move in unison.

Diva, literally "goddess," refers to an important female opera star. The masculine form is **divo**.

Leitmotiv, "light-mo-teef," is a short musical phrase associated with a particular character or event. These repeated musical themes can signal the entrance of a character, foreshadow an event, or help reveal what a character is feeling or thinking.

The **prima donna** is the leading female singer, or "first lady," in an opera. Because of the way opera stars have behaved in the past, it often refers to someone who is acting in a superior and demanding way. **Div**a can have the same connotation.

Tempo refers to how fast or slow the music is performed. The conductor reads the composer's markings and sets the speed of the music.

An **understudy** is someone who learns a main role in an opera in case the lead singer can't perform for some reason. This is also called a **cover**, i.e. Miss Trill is covering the role of Buttercup.

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CENTRAL CITY HISTORY AND MISCELLANY

LeeAnn Foster, program article, 2009 Festival

Theatre of Dreams: The Glorious Central City Opera Celebrating 75 Years (Central City Opera House Association, 2007)

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BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Check out the Central City Opera Education and Community Programs available during the REST of the year!

Mozart & Company, for elementary students, introduces the basics of opera – song, story, costumes and props – in arias and short vignettes. Study guide provided in advance.



Opera Alive! for 3rd through 12th grades, provides extended artist residencies for students to engage in performing and creating musical stories.



The Great Opera Mix-Up, also for elementary students, invites student participation in a mini-opera to provide a deeper acquaintance with story and character. Study guide provided in advance.



Music!Words!Opera!, a 5-day workshop for K-12 teachers intending to enroll their schools in *Opera Alive!*, prepares teachers for incorporating opera music and stories into curriculum. Free to teachers. Graduate or Continuing Education Credits available. June 29-July 3, 2009.



How the West Was Sung, for upper elementary and middle school students, establishes the historical contexts for opera as popular entertainment in the days before iPod and DVD and brings Colorado historical characters to life. Study guide provided in advance.



Opera on the Go, for all ages features arias and scenes from operas and musical theater staged with costumes, props, and musical accompaniment.



En Mis Palabras (In My Own Words), for middle and high school students. A bilingual Spanish and English opera follows a 15-year-old girl trying to balance the conflicting influences of her Mexican family cultural traditions and her peer community. Bilingual study guides provided in advance.



Opera 101, for older youth and adults, is a collaboration with Opera Colorado and Colorado Public Radio offering broadcast information about the general history and traditions of opera together with previews of the two companies' upcoming repertoire productions.

Performance Collaborations with such organizations as the Colorado Symphony, Denver Art Museum, Newman Center and the Colorado Children's Chorale are frequent additions to the Colorado art scene.



Opera in the Rockies, touring program, presents community performances and in-school programs in communities throughout the Rocky Mountain region.



Colorado Spotlight, for people of all ages, presents broadcasts of Central City Opera's Summer Opera Festival productions and special family productions over Colorado Public Radio's statewide network.

For more information visit www.centralcityopera.org and click on "Education and Community." To schedule an event or program contact the Education and Community Programs office: 303-331-7026 or education@centralcityopera.org