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- Select one -

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CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, UMD SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND MARYLAND OPERA STUDIO PRESENT

Romeo and Juliet
Opera in Three Acts, Op. 66
Selected Scenes
Composed by Lee Hoiby

From the play by William Shakespeare adapted by Mark Shulgasser

Friday, February 15, 2013 . 7:30PM
Joseph & Alma Gildenhorn Recital Hall
SYNOPSIS

Romeo and Juliet

Act I, Scene 1: The chorus tells of the strife between two warring households, even as MONTAGUE is injured in a street brawl with a CAPULET. The heads of both households trade insults, and a confrontation between MERCUITO (a Montague) and TYBALT (a Capulet) threatens to escalate the violence further. Only the arrival of the Prince sends the brawling parties home, under a threat of banishment for anyone who would disturb the peace again.

Act I, Scene 2: ROMEO arrives after the brawl. To MERCUTIO he waxes rhapsodic about the woman he is in love with at the moment. Mercutio tells Romeo to forget her, and the arrival of a page announcing a ball gives him an idea: they’ll go to the party and see women far more beautiful that Romeo’s current flame. The only problem: it’s a Capulet party and Montagues (such as Romeo and Mercutio) are expressly not invited.

Act I, Scene 3: Preparations are underway in the Capulet household, with the Majordomo ordering the servants about. He tries to talk to LADY CAPULET, but she has a far more important conversation to hold: she must tell her daughter JULIET that the husband intended for her will be at the festivities. Juliet is taken aback by the news that she is to be married and resists the urgings of both her mother and her Nurse.

Act I, Scene 4: ROMEO and MERCUTIO arrive at the CAPULET ball, masked to hide their identities. Romeo fears no good can come of their being there and tries to tell Mercutio of a foreboding dream, but Mercutio mocks dreams as nothing but visitations by the fairy creature QUEEN MAB.

Act I, Scene 5: The party commences. Lord Capulet thinks the masked intruders are nothing more than young men out on an adventure and is reminded of his youth. Romeo and Juliet find each other in the midst of the festivities, and their love is instantaneous. Only after they have been separated do they learn that they belong to warring families. Tybalt recognizes Romeo and wants to expel him with force, but Lord Capulet forbids it in the interest of maintaining the peace.

Act I, Scene 6: In the garden behind the Capulet house, Romeo finds Juliet on her balcony. They exchange vows of love and agree that Romeo should send a messenger the next day with news of the arrangements for their marriage.

Act II, Scene 1 (not performed): Romeo seeks the help of Friar Laurence, who agrees to arrange a secret marriage between the lovers. The Friar hopes such a marriage will heal the rift between the two families.

Act II, Scene 2: MERCUTIO has news for Romeo: Tybalt has challenged him to a duel. While he waits for Romeo, Mercutio muses on the wounds that love has already dealt his friend. Romeo arrives and immediately thereafter Juliet’s Nurse, whom Tybalt taunts with bawdy jokes. He leaves, and the Nurse demands to know that Romeo’s intentions are honest. He assures her they are, and they make arrangements to meet at Friar Laurence’s cell for the wedding.

Act II, Scene 3 (not performed): Romeo and Juliet are married.

CAST:
Romeo: Brian Wallin
Juliet: Katie Baughman
Mercutio: Keith Browning
Nurse: Katherine Ann Brandt
Prince: Michael Dane
Tybalt: Patrick Kilbride
Capulet: Alec Donaldson
Lady Capulet: Madeline Cain
Montague: James Krabbendam
Lady Montague: Amanda Tittel
Majordomo: James Krabbendam
Friar: James Krabbendam
Peter: Amanda Fink

Chorus: Michael Dane, Jazmin Grollemund, Amanda Fink, Lauren-Rose King, Matt Moeller, Emily Kate Naydeck, Andrew Thomas Pardini, Erin Passmore, Yoni Rose, Amber Schwarzrock

Conductor: Michael Rossi
Director: Nick Olcott
Pianist: Michael Langlois


Approximately 80 minutes, with no intermission.

SETTING:
Verona, Italy, in a time of civil discord
Act II, Scene 4: Mercutio and Tybalt meet in a public square and begin to fight. Romeo attempts to stop them, but his interference allows Tybalt to deal Mercutio a mortal wound. In rage, Romeo kills Tybalt. As the heads of the two households gather, the Prince arrives and orders Romeo to leave Verona.

Act II, Scene 5 (not performed): Juliet awaits Romeo, but the Nurse arrives with news of the deaths and Romeo’s banishment. Juliet declares her intention to kill herself if she is never to see Romeo again, and the Nurse promises to find him and bring him to her.

Act II, Scene 6 (not performed): Romeo seeks help from Friar Laurence. The Nurse arrives to take Romeo to Juliet’s chamber. They agree on a plan by which Romeo is to spend the night with Juliet, then flee before dawn to Mantua, where he will wait until the Prince’s wrath has abated.

Act III, Scene 1: As dawn approaches, Romeo and Juliet are loath to part, but the Nurse arrives to say her parents are on their way to her chamber. Romeo flees, and the Capulets arrive to inform Juliet that her marriage to their chosen husband will proceed despite the recent death in the family. Juliet uses confession to Friar Laurence as an excuse to seek his help.

Act III, Scene 2 (not performed): Friar Laurence concocts a plan whereby Juliet will take a potion that makes her appear dead and will be laid to rest in the family tomb. Friar Laurence will send Romeo a letter explaining the plan, and he will return from Mantua to take Juliet away with him.

Act III, Scene 3 (not performed): On the morning intended for her wedding, the Capulets find Juliet in her bed, apparently dead. She is carried to the tomb.

Act III, Scene 4 (not performed): In Mantua, Romeo awaits some news from Juliet, and a messenger arrives. But this is not the one sent by Friar Laurence. This messenger has the news that Juliet is dead. Romeo determines that he, too, must die and obtains poison from an apothecary before setting out for Verona.

Act III, Scene 5 (not performed): Friar Laurence learns that the messenger he had sent to Romeo with the details of the plan was quarantined for fear of plague and was unable to leave Verona. Romeo therefore does not know that Juliet’s death is a sham.

Act III, Scene 6: Romeo arrives at the tomb, finds Juliet seemingly dead, and takes the poison. Juliet awakes to find her lover dead and kills herself with his dagger. The families, Friar Laurence, and the Prince all arrive too late to prevent the tragedy.

It is an irony that the most famous lovers in the English language speak French when they go to the opera. Gounod’s 1867 *Roméo et Juliette* is by far the most performed of the more than two dozen operas that have been based on Shakespeare’s play.

No lover of opera would dismiss Gounod’s glorious music. But somehow it just doesn’t seem right to hear Romeo say, “Mais quelle soudaine clarté resplendit à cette fenêtre?” We want to hear him say, “But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?”

Finally, we can. Lee Hoiby, whose 2011 death was an enormous loss to the music world, left this opera as his final gift. He and his librettist, Mark Shulgasser, found a way to marry the music of Shakespeare’s words to the poetry of Hoiby’s music. The world’s most famous star-crossed lovers can finally sing in English.

We are proud to present excerpts tonight of this beautiful piece. Time and resources haven’t allowed us to present the work in its entirety, but we trust your familiarity with the story will allow you to savor the highlights we are presenting tonight. Lee Hoiby and Mark Shulgasser’s *Romeo and Juliet* is still awaiting its world premiere, but this sneak preview tonight will give you a hint of the treasure that it is.

— Nick Olcott
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Lee Hoiby, composer, was one of America's most prominent composers for the lyric stage. Hoiby's first opera, The Scarf, was recognized as the hit of the first Spoleto (Italy) Festival. Natalia Petrovna, revised as A Month in the Country, was praised as “a supreme moment in opera.” Hoiby's setting of Tennessee Williams's Summer and Smoke was declared “the finest American opera to date.” Hoiby's last opera, a setting of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, was completed in 2003. Hoiby's operatic works also include one-act operas Something New for the Zoo and This Is the Hill Speaking, as well as the musical monologue The Italian Lesson.

With more than 100 songs, Hoiby is recognized for his contribution to the art song repertoire. His choral music is widely performed throughout North America and in England and includes his Christmas cantata A Hymn of the Nativity and his oratorio Galileo Galilei. Hoiby received commissions including New York City Opera, the Spoleto Festival, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Choral Arts Society of Washington and the Dorian Wind Quintet. Awards and grants include the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the Ford Foundation, the Fulbright Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Mark Shulgasser, librettist, collaborated with composer Lee Hoiby on numerous projects, notably as librettist of two Shakespearean operas, The Tempest and Romeo and Juliet. The two met in 1974 at a spiritual retreat in Phoenicia, New York. Shulgasser is an intermittent book dealer, radio producer, opera director, writer, lecturer, etc. He writes about astrology on the Web at Astrodreamer, Best American Poetry and Philosophical Ma rk Shulgasser at wkbooks@localnet.com. He lives in the western Catskills of New York and is now seeking a live-in gardener.

Michael Rossi, conductor, is quickly becoming recognized in the next generation of conductors. He was recently appointed music director of the Siena Music Festival in Italy. This summer he will conduct the festival's orchestra and a new production of Verdi's Falstaff.

Rossi made his Washington National Opera debut conducting the young artist performance of Mozart's Abduction from the Seraglio, followed by his Carnegie Hall debut conducting the premiere of Marcos Galvany's opera Oh My Son with the New England Symphonic Ensemble. Engagements during the 2012-2013 season include opening season concerts with the Charleston Symphony, his debut with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Humperdinck's Hansel and Gretel with WNO and Galvany's Oh My Son in a premiere performance at the Vatican in Rome, Italy.

Rossi made his international debut conducting Plácido Domingo and the Chinese National Opera Orchestra. He then made his Strathmore Hall debut in concert with the WNO Orchestra. Rossi graduated from WNO's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program and was awarded a fellowship to the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen in 2009 and 2010 where he studied with David Zinman, Robert Spano, Hugh Wolff and Larry Rachleff. Rossi is following the path of many conductors who began their careers first as instrumentalists. At the age of 22, he took the seat of 2nd Trumpet in the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra.

Nick Olcott, director, is the Interim Director of the Maryland Opera Studio, where his past productions include Amelia al ballo, Die Entführung aus dem Serail, Lélis d'Amore, Le nozze di Figaro, Serse, The Turn of the Screw, Così fan tutte and Die Zauberflöte. Other credits include Wolf Trap Opera (Rus tinelli/Lucrèzia and The Impresario/Viva la mamma!), Opera Cleveland (Roméo et Juliette and The Turn of the Screw), Boston Lyric Opera (The Daughter of the Regiment), the In Series (Carmen, Trouble in Tahiti and Love Potion #1), Pine Mountain Music Festival (Il matrimonio segreto), Ash Lawn Opera Festival (Don Giovanni and The Barber of Seville) and Opera Lafayette (Paisiello’s Il barbiere di Siviglia). He is the resident stage director for the Washington National Opera Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program and will stage a program of scenes from American opera with them at the Smithsonian Renwick Gallery in May. In the summer he serves as stage director for the Saarburg International Music Festival in Germany.

Michael Langlois, pianist, is a versatile artist, equally at home in solo and collaborative repertoire, with a predilection for contemporary music. Langlois performs at the University of Maryland with the student contemporary music ensemble TEMPO. In the spring, he played Messiaen’s Couleurs de la Cité Céleste with UMD’s Wind Orchestra. In summer of 2011, Langlois was awarded the fellowship in orchestral piano at the Aspen Music Festival, where he collaborated with Vasily Petrenko, Julia Fischer and Augustin Hadelich in a performance of Schnittke's Concerto Grosso No. 1. In the spring, he will perform several works by New York Philharmonic Composer-in-Residence Matthias Pintscher. Langlois holds a BM in piano performance from Indiana University, where he studied with Emile Naoumoff; he continues his studies with Rita Sloan at UMD.

Katie Baughman (Atlanta, GA), soprano, is pursuing a DMA in the Maryland Opera Studio at the University of Maryland. She is a staff chorister and soloist at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. This season, Baughman will sing the soprano solos in Bach’s Kaffee-Kantate and make her debut with TEMPO at the University of Maryland performing Harris’s Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight. Earlier this year, Baughman was heard on WABE, Atlanta’s NPR affiliate, performing the soprano solos with the Johns Creek Symphony and the Michael O’Neil Singers in their joint concert of Beethoven’s Mass in C. Previous engagements include multiple appearances with the Johns Creek Symphony, soloist with the Atlanta Community Symphony Orchestra, educational outreach through Young Audiences of Atlanta and frequent performer with Capitol City Opera (Atlanta). She was awarded the encouragement award at the Georgia District Met Auditions and was a semi-finalist in the Orpheus National Vocal Competition.
Katherine Ann Brandt (Salem, SC), Nuru, mezzo-soprano, began her career in musicals and plays. She performed roles such as Heddy La Rue in How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, Nancy/Oliver, Pheen/Playboy of the Western World and Susan/Veronica’s Room. In her undergraduate studies at Carnegie Mellon University, she focused on studies in classical music and performed roles including Marcellina/Idomeneo and La Sorellina/Le nozze di Figaro. Outside of school, Brandt premiered the chamber version of Tobias Picker’s Fantastic Mr. Fox in the starring role of Mrs. Fox with the Microscopic Opera Company. This past summer, she made her debut with The Pittsburgh Opera Theater as The Baroness/Candide, Mercedes (cover)/Carmen and Gringgerde in the world premiere of Eric Moe’s The Valkyrie Suite.

Keith Browning (Lake Spivey, GA), Mercutio, baritone, is a first-year master’s student in the Maryland Opera Studio studying with Dominic Cossa. He received his undergraduate training at Stetson University in Deland, Florida. His recent engagements include the roles of Figaro/Il barbiere di Siviglia, Schaunard/La bohème, Il Conte d’Almaviva/Le nozze di Figaro and Peter/Hänsel und Gretel. He has also performed the roles of Le Gendarme/Les marnelles de Tirasit, Wals/Threepenny Opera and Charlot/Angélique. He has been engaged at the Janiec Opera Company in Brevard, North Carolina and the Stetson Opera Theatre. Browning has been a featured soloist in works such as Handel’s Messiah, Mozart’s Requiem, Haydn’s Paukenmese and Vaughan Williams’s Mass in G Minor.

Madeline Cain (Aromas, CA), Lady Capulet, soprano, is a first-year master’s student in the Maryland Opera Studio. She graduated from the Eastman School of Music with a BM in vocal performance, where she studied under Karen Holvik and Katherine Ciesinski. Most recently she performed the role of Donna Elvira/Don Giovanni at the Opera Academy of California in San Francisco. Other roles include: la Ciesca in Puccini’s Gianni Schicchi, the Newspaper Woman in Poulenc’s Les marnelles de Tirasit and L’architecte in Charpentier’s Les arts florissants. Noted for her skill with contemporary music, Cain has performed as a soloist with the Osia New Music ensemble in Rochester, New York as well as the Marsyas Ensemble in New York City. She is thrilled to be performing with the Maryland Opera Studio.

Michael Dane (Charlotte, NC), Prince/chorus, bass, made his operatic debut with Opera Carolina as Count Paris in Gounod’s Roméo et Juliette. His success with Opera Carolina brought him back as Fiorello in Rossini’s Il barbiere di Siviglia. In Charlotte, North Carolina, Dane performed the role of Colline in Puccini’s beloved La bohème. Dane made his Italian operatic debut in the summer of 2011 as Alidoro/La Cenerentola and Monterone/Rigoletto with La Musica Lirica in Novafeltria, Italy, returning to Orfeo, Italy this past summer to perform Leporello in Don Giovanni. Dane completed his bachelor’s in voice at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. Dane is attending the University of Maryland as a member of the renowned Master’s of Opera Studio and is a student of the internationally acclaimed baritone Dominic Cossa. Throughout his adolescence, he performed regularly on the East Coast and in Europe as a concert violinist. Upcoming performances include Nettuno/Idomeneo, Colline/La bohème and Mephistopheles/Faust.

Alec Donaldson (Winchester, VA), Capulet, tenor, is absolutely thrilled to be a part of the Maryland Opera Studio where he now studies with Dominic Cossa. He recently graduated from Baldwin-Wallace College with a degree in vocal performance. While at Baldwin-Wallace, Donaldson portrayed the role of Don Giovanni in the Mozart opera of the same name, and also played Schuarnard in Puccini’s La bohème. He also appeared as Il Conte Robinson in Oberlin in Italy’s production of Il Matrimonio Segreto by Cimarosa, and as Thomas Putnam in Chautauqua Summer Music Festival’s production of Robert Ward’s The Crucible.

Amanda Fink (Cleveland, OH), Peter/chorus, mezzo-soprano, is a second-year graduate student in the Maryland Opera Studio under the tutelage of Carmen Bahlpour. With the Maryland Opera Studio, she has covered the role of Estella in Dominic Argento’s Miss Havisham’s Fire, and performed in scenes programs as Hermione/A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Cherubino/Le nozze di Figaro, Meg/Falstaff and Ottavia/Il’incoronazione di Poppea. Most recently, Fink participated in the Castleton Artists Training Seminar, where she performed the role of Charlotte in Stephen Sondheim’s A Little Night Music. This spring, Fink will perform the role of Idamante in Mozart’s Idomeneo with the Maryland Opera Studio.

Jazmin Black Grollemund (Clover, SC), chorus, soprano, graduated from Furman University where she studied with Gail Schoemaker. While earning a BM degree in vocal performance, she had many solo opportunities in oratorio and opera. Her opera roles include Mother/Amahl and the Night Visitors (Furman Opera Theatre) and Flo/Sands of Time (Furman Opera Theatre). She spent the summer of 2009 in France as a young artist at Lyrique-en-Mer, an opera festival in the Brittany region. There, she was in the chorus of Madama Butterfly and Don Pasquale. She also toured with the festival as the soprano soloist in Rossini’s Petite Messe Solennelle. Grollemund was a finalist in the Charles A. Lynam Vocal Competition and received the Encouragement in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions South Carolina District. In April 2011, Grollemund was selected to participate in a masterclass and perform with Frederica von Stade.
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Patrick Kilbride (Hawthorn Woods, IL), basso, holds his BM from Northwestern University as a Helen Helm Nichols Endowed Scholarship recipient, and has performed with the Aspen Music Festival and Lorin Maazel’s Castleton Music Festival. Previous roles performed and covered include Beadle Bamford/Sweeney Todd, Flute/A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Aspen Opera Theater Center), Il Venditore di Canzonetta/ Il Tabarro (Maryland Opera Studio), Abe Kaplan/Street Scene, Monostatos/Die Zauberflöte, La Discorde/Le Arts Florissants, Marquis, Lathersman/The Ghosts of Versailles, Don Curzio/Le nozze di Figaro (Northwestern University), Il Venditore di Canzonetta/Il Tritto and Filchi/The Beggar’s Opera (Castleton Music Festival). He has received awards from the Bel Canto Foundation Competition and the Chicago College NATS Competition. He was a 2007 National Foundation for the Advancement in the Arts Finalist and Winner in Voice and Chicago Regional Award winner. Kilbride is also an avid composer. He studies with Gran Wilson.

Lauren-Rose King (Whitinville, MA), chorus, soprano, was praised for being “delicious to both hear and watch; with a lovely, clear voice” (Berkshire Fine Arts). King graduated in 2008 from the New England Conservatory, where she was the recipient of the William David Brohn Musical Theatre Scholarship. At NEC she performed the roles Laetitia/Old Maid and the Thief and Madame Altiere/La Divina. Recent repertoire includes Le Feu/L’enfant et les sorcières (Pocket Opera of New York), Sœur Constance/ Les dialogues des Carmélites (One World Symphony), The Desert Song (Light Opera of New York) and Yum-Yum/The Mikado (C&CR Productions). This season with MOS, she will perform the role of Queen of the Night/Die Zauberflöte, and Musetta/ La bohème. King is a second-year member of the Maryland Opera Studio and studies with Linda Mabbs.

James Krobbedam (Chattanooga, TN), Montagues/Marjordomo/Friar, bass, is in his first year as a member of the Maryland Opera Studio. Roles performed include Sarastro/Die Zauberflöte and Dr. Dulcamara/ L’elisir d’amore, both with Bel Cantanti Summer Opera Festival, as well as Ser Amantino di Nicolao and Maestro Spinelloccio/Gianni Schicchi. While pursuing his bachelor’s degree at the University of Maryland, he appeared in the choruses of Il tabarro, Amelia al ballo, Eugene Onegin, Florencia en el Amazonas, Shadowboxer and Il barbiere di Siviglia. Other chorus work includes Carmen, I Capuleti e Montecchi and I Pagliacci. Krobbedam is a student of Carmen Balthrop.

Matt Moeller (Austin, TX), chorus, baritone, holds bachelor’s degrees in music education and vocal performance from Louisiana State University. Most recently he performed the title role in Don Giovanni with the Seagle Music Colony. Other operatic credits include Count Almaviva/Le nozze di Figaro, Mercutio/Romeo et Juliette, Mr. Lindquist/ A Little Night Music, Junius/The Rape of Lucretia, Toymaker/Toy Shop, Dr. Dulcamara/L’elisir d’amore, Dapertutto & Lindoro/Les Contes d’Hoffmann, Bettolo/Gianni Schicchi and Gideon March/Little Women. He is currently a second-year master’s student in the Maryland Opera Studio. Upcoming engagements in the Opera Studio include Marcello/Schaunard in La bohème. He has worked with Des Moines Metro Opera, Seagle Music Colony, the Janiec Opera Company, LSTU Opera and Spotlight on Opera and recently won an Encouragement Award at the Arkansas District of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. He studies with Dominic Cossa.

Emily Kate Naydeck (Pittsburgh, PA), chorus, soprano, is a second-year graduate student in the Maryland Opera Studio studying with Linda Mabbs. She received her BM in vocal performance at Ithaca College. Most recent credits include Pamina/Papageno/Die Zauberflöte (MOS), Young Miss Havisham/Miss Havishami Fire (MOS), Pearl from selected scenes of the New Works Reading 3 (MOS), The Rose/The Little Prince (Ithaca College) and choruses of Amelia al ballo (MOS), Il tabarro (MOS) and Don Giovanni (Sieur DuLuth Opera). As an apprentice with Caramoor’s Bel Canto Young Artist Program this past summer, Naydeck performed selected concerts as well as choruses in Rosini’s Ciro in babilonia and Mendelssohn’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Upcoming engagements include the role of Ilia in Idomeneo with the Maryland Opera Studio and 1st Spirit/Die Zauberflöte and Young Artist with Opera New Jersey this summer.

Andrew Thomas Pardini (Modesto, CA) chorus, baritone, is a second year member of the Maryland Opera Studio, pursuing an M.M. in Opera Performance, studying with Dominic Cossa and François Loup. Pardini graduated from the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music with a B.M. in Vocal Performance. Past roles include Papageno/Die Zauberflöte, Gianni Schicchi/Gianni Schicchi, Aeneas/ Dido and Aeneas, Maestro Spinelloccio/Gianni Schicchi, Brighella (cover)/Das Liebesverbot, Don Perlimplin/The Love of Don Perlimplin, Marullo/Rigoletto, Schaunard/La bohème and Un ballo in maschera. Roles at Maryland include Papageno & Head Priest/Die Zauberflöte, Ottilick & Pumblechook/Miss Havishami Fire, A Man with a Shoe Sample Kit (cover)/Postcard from Morocco, Il marito (cover)/Amelia al ballo and Andreas Baader/The Last Act of Revolution. Upcoming engagements include Marcello & Schaunard/La bohème at the Maryland Opera Studio and Leopoldo/Don Giovanni at Hub Opera Ensemble. This summer, Pardini will be an Apprentice Singer at Ash Loun Opera, covering the role of Jigger Craigin/Carnival. Pardini dedicates his every operatic pursuit, with love and admiration, to the memory of his voice teacher and mentor, Maestro Erik Buck Townsend.

Erin Passmore (Edmonton, Canada), chorus, mezzo-soprano, is in her final year of a Masters degree at the University of Maryland as a member of the Maryland Opera Studio where she studies with Delores Ziegler. In 2008, Erin received her Bachelor of Music from the University of Alberta and was the recipient of the Johann Strauss Scholarship allowing her to study in Austria at the Franz Schubert Institute and the Mozarteum University. With the University of Alberta Opera, she performed the roles of Arsamenes/Serse and Hansel/Hansel and Gretel. In 2011, Passmore made her orchestral debut with the University of Maryland Wind orchestra singing Tommasini’s Three Spanish Songs. Past roles include Mauruya/Riders to the Sea with Halifax Summer Opera and Marcellina/Le nozze di Figaro with Vancouver Summer Opera Studio.
Thanks to the support of the School of Music and the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, the Maryland Opera Studio has been able to make the exploration of new operas a central part of our mission. Over the last ten years, we have offered a dozen readings of new works, as well as full productions of three commissioned operas (Frank Proto/John Chenault’s Shadowboxer, John Musto/Mark Campbell’s Later the Same Evening, and Robert Convery/Kathleen Cail’s Clara). We are deeply indebted to the School and the Center for making this possible.

“We have a responsibility in our Opera Studio and training program to prepare our singers to master the standard repertoire. “But we also have an obligation to offer our students opportunities to study the contemporary repertoire, to participate in the creation of a new opera and to explore the musical language that our composers are using now.

“We must never ignore the contemporary and modern repertoire or the emerging young composers. Having live composers and librettists present, of course, gives the singers the opportunity to work with living creators and so understand how the operas are constructed. Such insights can only enhance their understanding of the classical repertoire.”

— Leon Major, founder of the Maryland Opera Studio

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Yoni Rose (Baltimore, MD), chorus, spent this past summer as a studio artist at Wolf Trap Opera, where he sang in the choruses of Don Giovanni and The Rake’s Progress, and was a soloist in The Composer’s Progress. As a first-year member of the Maryland Opera Studio, Rose covered Mr. Owen in Postcard from Morocco and Bentley Drummle in Miss Haritshami’s Fire. In the summer of 2011, Rose was a young artist at the Glimmerglass Festival, where he covered Giasone and was in the chorus of Msida, chorus of Annie Get Your Gun and covered the role of Sheldon/Later the Same Evening. Rose made his professional debut in the role of Norman/Lucy of Lammermoor (Opera Vivente). Rose also appeared in two seasons with the Janiec Opera Company. Rose was a 2010 Washington DC district winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and performed at the Kennedy Center. Rose is in the Maryland Opera Studio at the University of Maryland pursuing a MM in opera studying with Gran Wilson. This year at MOS, Rose will be singing Tamino in Die Zauberflöte and Rodolfo in La bohème. This summer, Rose will be an apprentice artist at the Santa Fe Opera, where he will sing The Barber of Seville.

Amber Schwarzrock (Frazee, MN), chorus, started her musical career as a country music singer. Schwarzrock attended the University Latina in Costa Rica, Westminster Choir College, and spent a year in Switzerland studying French. Schwarzrock completed her BM degree at the Peabody Conservatory of Music. Schwarzrock is a second-year graduate student under the tutelage of Linda Mabbs. She and her husband, Kristofer, have two children, Trysten and Leila.

Amanda Tittle (Memphis, TN), Lady Montague, mezzo-soprano, is in her first year with the Maryland Opera Studio. She is excited to be studying with the fabulous Delores Ziegler. Tittle received her bachelor of music from The University of Tennessee where she studied with Lorraine DiSimone, and took part in several productions, including La Traviata with Knoxville Opera, and Le nozze di Figaro, Albert Herring and The Crucible with University of Tennessee Opera Theater.

Brian Wallin (New Brighton, MN), Romeo, tenor, spent the past summer as a member of the Janiec Opera Company at the Brevard Music Center in North Carolina. There he performed the roles of Chevalier de la Force/Dialogues of the Carmélites and Parpignol/La bohème as well as performing in the chorus of Il barbiere di Siviglia and H.M.S. Pinafore. This fall he performed the role of 2nd Priest/1st Man in Armor in HUB Opera Ensemble’s production of Die Zauberflöte. He was also a participant in the 2010 Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival where he performed scenes as Ferrando/Coi fan tutte, Tony/West Side Story and Little Bat/Susannah. Wallin received his BM degree in vocal performance from the University of Maryland in 2012. He is now a first-year graduate student in the Maryland Opera Studio and is a student of Gran Wilson.
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