



MERCURY OPERA ROCHESTER
PRESENTS

Don GIOVANNI

BY W. A. MOZART

FRIDAY, JANUARY 18 &
SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 2008

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presents

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's

Don Giovanni

Il dissoluto punito, ossia il Don Giovanni

Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte

Dramma giocoso in two acts

Benton Hess

Artistic Director & Conductor

Steven Daigle

Stage Director

Accompanied by the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

Harpichord Continuo by Russell Miller

Scenery Design by Mary Griswold

Lighting Design by Nic Minetor

Costume Design by Nellica Rave

Makeup & Hair Design by Elsen Associates, Inc.



There will be one 20-minute intermission.

SCENE

Seville, Spain, in the late 18th century

Act 1: a piazza; a street; the countryside; a piazza;
a ballroom in Don Giovanni's palace

Act 2: a street; a courtyard; a graveyard;
a dining room in Don Giovanni's palace

SYNOPSIS

Act I

Don Giovanni has crept into the house in disguise to seduce Donna Anna while Leporello keeps watch outside. Donna Anna chases out a masked Giovanni. The Commendatore, her father, challenges Giovanni to a duel while Donna Anna flees for help. Giovanni stabs and kills the Commendatore and escapes unrecognized. Anna returns with her fiancé, Don Ottavio, who swears to avenge the death.

Giovanni and Leporello arrive and overhear a woman who wants revenge for being spurned. Giovanni flirts with her but then recognizes her as a recent conquest, Donna Elvira, and he hurries away. Leporello tries to console Elvira with an huge list of Don Giovanni's lovers, and Elvira vows vengeance. A marriage procession with Masetto and Zerlina enters. Don Giovanni and Leporello arrive, and Giovanni wants to seduce the bride. He tries to remove the jealous Masetto by offering to host a wedding celebration at his castle. Left alone, Don Giovanni woos Zerlina. Elvira arrives to thwart his plan, followed by Ottavio and Anna who are plotting vengeance on the still unknown murderer of Anna's father. Anna, unaware that she is speaking to her attacker, pleads for Giovanni's help. Elvira returns and announces Giovanni's recent betrayal of her. Giovanni declares that Elvira is insane. Anna suddenly recognizes Giovanni as her seducer and also her father's murderer. Leporello informs Don Giovanni that all the wedding guests are in Giovanni's house, so he hurries home. Zerlina tries to pacify the jealous Masetto. He hides in order to see for himself what Zerlina will do when Giovanni arrives. Giovanni continues the seduction of Zerlina before stumbling upon Masetto. Giovanni then leads the couple to the bridal chamber. Three masked guests arrive (the disguised Elvira, Ottavio, and Anna) who plan to catch Giovanni red-handed.

Don Giovanni leads Zerlina away, while Leporello distracts Masetto. Zerlina cries for help and Masetto leaves to defend her as Leporello dashes off to warn his master. Don Giovanni tries to fool the onlookers by dragging his servant into the room with drawn sword and accuses him of seducing Zerlina. Elvira, Ottavio and Anna unmask, claiming that they now know all. The guests do not believe Giovanni's excuse and attack him, but he fights his way through the crowd and escapes.

≈ 20 Minute Intermission ≈

Act II

Leporello threatens to leave Giovanni, but the Don calms him with a peace offering of money. Wanting to seduce Elvira's maid, Giovanni persuades Leporello to exchange cloak and hat with him. Elvira comes to her window. Giovanni hides, sending Leporello out in the open dressed as Giovanni and, from his hiding place, sings a promise of repentance, expressing a desire to return to her. Elvira is convinced and descends to the street. She thinks that Leporello (still wearing his master's clothes) is actually Giovanni. Leporello leads her away and Giovanni serenades Elvira's maid on a mandolin. Masetto and his friends arrive, searching for Giovanni. Giovanni (dressed as Leporello) convinces the posse that he also wants Giovanni dead, and joins the hunt. After separating the group, Giovanni "confiscates" all the firearms and beats up the unarmed Masetto, then flees laughing. Zerlina arrives and consoles Masetto.

Leporello, still dressed as Giovanni, abandons Elvira. Ottavio arrives with Anna, consoling her. Just as Leporello is about to slip through the door, Zerlina and Masetto open it and, seeing him in his Giovanni regalia, catch him. They all surround Leporello and threaten him with death. Elvira tries to protect the man whom she thinks is Giovanni, claiming that he is her husband. The other four ignore her, and Leporello removes his cloak to reveal his true identity. In the confusion Leporello is able to escape. Ottavio is now convinced of Giovanni's guilt and swears vengeance while Elvira is furious at Giovanni for betraying her.

Leporello tells Don Giovanni of his near-death experience, and Giovanni taunts him. The voice of the statue warns Giovanni that his laughter will not last beyond sunrise. Leporello reads the inscription upon the statue's base: "Vengeance here awaits my murderer." The servant trembles, but the unabashed Giovanni orders him to invite the statue to dinner. The statue nods its head and responds affirmatively.

Ottavio pressures Anna to marry him, but she thinks it inappropriate so soon after her father's death. He accuses her of being cruel, and she assures him that she loves him, and is faithful.

Giovanni revels in the luxury of a great meal and musical entertainment while Leporello serves. Elvira appears, having forgiven him, and asks that he change his life. Giovanni taunts her and then ignores her. Elvira gives up and leaves. Her scream is heard from outside as the statue has appeared as promised. An ominous knocking sounds at the door. Giovanni opens the door revealing the statue of the Commendatore. It exhorts the careless villain to repent of his wicked lifestyle, but Giovanni adamantly refuses. The statue sinks into the earth and drags Giovanni down with him. Hellfire surrounds Don Giovanni as he is carried below.

CAST

Don Giovanni , a young nobleman	Ian Greenlaw
Leporello , his servant.....	John Davies
Donna Anna , a beautiful young woman	Jill Gardner
Il Commendatore , her father.....	Won Cho
Don Ottavio , betrothed to Donna Anna	John Pickle
Donna Elvira , a lady of Burgos abandoned by Don Giovanni	Mary Elizabeth Williams
Zerlina , a pretty peasant girl.....	Quinn Patrick
Masetto , her betrothed.....	Jonathan Michie

Peasants, Villagers, Dancers, and Servants

Nicholas Gerling, Bill Hearne, Stacie Henshaw, Bob Holmes, Jason Holmes,
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Coach Accompanist & Harpsichord/Continuo.....	Russell Miller
Stage Manager	Ken Saltzman
Technical Director/Production Manager.....	Matthew Scheidt
Assistant Stage Director.....	Leah Arington
Costume Designer.....	Nellica Rave
Makeup & Hair Design	Anne Ford-Coates for Elsen Associates
Set Design	Mary Griswold
Lighting Design	Nic Minetor
Chorus Master & Assistant Conductor	David Recca
Assistant Stage Manager	Mary Beth Lowery
Assistant Costume Designer	Elizabeth Krzyzanowski
Props Assistant.....	Holley Shafer
Wardrobe Assistant.....	Claudette Hercules
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Hair Assistants	Sue Harrison & Danielle Letourneau
Make-up Assistant	Lesley Bush
Assistant Lighting Designer.....	Dan O'Donnell
Lightboard Operator.....	Jenny Kleinhenz
Supertitles.....	courtesy of Syracuse Opera, translation by Carol Dana
Supertitle Operator.....	Sophia Goluses
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This production is funded in part by grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the New York State Legislature.



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NOTES FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Vienna had liked *Le Nozze di Figaro*, but the city of Prague had adored it! According to Mozart's own letters everyone in town was humming and whistling the tunes from it. So, it seemed only natural that Prague would ask Mozart to compose an opera especially for them. The librettist Lorenzo DaPonte came up with the idea of setting a treatment of the Don Juan legend. From the beginning of his work on this opera Mozart must have been somewhat concerned with how Prague would accept this new work, because just as *Figaro* had been all sparkle and brilliance, *Don Giovanni* was dark...very, very dark. An opera that begins with an attempted rape and a murder is hardly a candidate for the term "opera buffa" (comic opera), so Mozart called it a "dramma giocoso," which loosely translated means "playful drama," and still misrepresents the story we see unfold before us. *Don Giovanni* does, indeed, have its funny moments, and Mozart is the master of chiaroscuro, the juxtaposition of light and darkness, and is capable of seeing humor in some of life's darkest moments and pathos in some of its brightest. So, Mozart continued his work on this dark comedy, and just to play it safe, tagged a brilliant and flashy D Major epilogue onto the end of the opera to bring the audience back into the light. The result was magnificent and Prague was mightily pleased. The next year, a production of *Giovanni* was planned for Vienna, but there were problems. The tenor scheduled to sing the role of Don Ottavio couldn't sing his big aria, "Il mio tesoro," very well, so Mozart replaced it with a new aria, "Dalla sua pace," inserted in the first act. For the place that "Il mio tesoro" had occupied in the second act, Mozart composed a wonderful aria for the soprano singing the role of Donna Elvira, who had complained that she didn't have as many arias as Donna Anna. Further, Mozart supplied a C Major duet for the couple singing the roles of Zerlina and Leporello, who happened to be husband and wife in real life. He also made a very interesting decision: Mozart cut the epilogue, ending the opera with Giovanni's damnation and descent into hell. I find this fascinating. Mozart was not under time constraints. He didn't have to worry about going into overtime with the orchestra; he simply decided it was better without the epilogue. In recent times singers have gotten greedy. Tenors singing Don Ottavio want to sing both arias, although Mozart never intended more than one to be performed. Sopranos want to sing Elvira's big aria, too, although including it in the second act along with the tenor aria completely throws off the architecture of the opera. Thankfully, the Zerlina/Leporello duet is rarely included...it's not really very good. For Mercury Opera's production, I have opted to return to the original Prague production, omitting those arias and ensembles Mozart supplied for specific singers in later productions. But we've also decided to omit the epilogue (an idea that some musicologists will term "unthinkable.") In doing this I think we might just be doing the *Don Giovanni* that Mozart himself might have liked to see.

—Benton Hess

BIOGRAPHIES



Benton Hess, Artistic Director/Conductor

After training at the New England Conservatory as a pianist, Benton Hess served as assistant conductor for several regional opera companies before taking the podium himself in 1970 for a Boston production of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, replacing conductor James Levine on a week's notice. Since then he has conducted hundreds of performances for dozens of opera companies in America, Europe, and the Middle East. Local audiences will remember his work with the Opera Theatre of Rochester from the middle 1970s through the 1980s. Hess

has presided over many world and important regional operatic premieres and has assisted numerous composers in presenting their works: David Amram, Carlisle Floyd, Lee Hoiby, Karel Husa, Libby Larsen, Daniel Pinkham, Greg Sandow, and Conrad Susa, to name but a few. He has also served on the faculties of several prestigious institutions: Boston University, Boston Conservatory, the New England Conservatory, Mannes College of Music in New York City, the Hartt School of Music, Rutgers University, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro among them. Since 2001 Maestro Hess has been Distinguished Professor of Voice and Musical Director of Eastman Opera Theatre. As one of New York City's most respected and sought-after vocal coaches for more than twenty years, his clientele reads like a "Who's Who" in opera, from Nicolai Gedda and Eleanor Steber at the ends of their careers to Renée Fleming at the beginning of hers. Benton Hess appears regularly as conductor, pianist/accompanist, and master class clinician throughout the United States and abroad. Besides his responsibilities at Eastman and with Mercury Opera, Hess is Artistic Director of "Si parla, si canta," an Italian language program for young singers and coach/accompanists in Urbania, Italy, and conductor for the International Arts Institute in Tel Aviv, Israel. Maestro Hess conducted Mercury Opera Rochester's production of *Norma* last season in the Eastman Theatre and the wildly popular production of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* in the company's first season.



Steven Daigle, Stage Director

Steven Daigle has served as part of the artistic staff for more than 300 lyric theater productions, along with calling over 400 professional operatic performances as a production stage manager. Daigle's experience as a stage director encompasses a range of repertory for the lyric theater stage. Extensive directing credits include the complete spectrum of grand opera, light opera, and Broadway musical fare: including *Claudia Legare*, *L'Etoile*, *Sweeney Todd*, *My Fair Lady*, *Man of La Mancha*, *La Rondine*, *South Pacific*, *Susannah*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, *Il Turco in Italia*, *Così Fan Tutte*, *Transformations*,

La Bohème, *Passion*, *Suor Angelica*, *The Goblin Market*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Candide*, *Xerxes*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Albert Herring*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Patience*, *The Tender Land*, *Porgy and Bess*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *The Merry Widow*, *The Sorcerer*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Desert Song*, *The Grand Duke*, *Countess Maritza*, *The Gypsy Princess*, *Angelique*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Trouble in Tahiti*, *Christopher Sly*, *Signor Deluso*, *Riders to the Sea*, *Camelot*, and *Annie* in companies as diverse as Ohio Light Opera Company, Eastman School of Music, The Lyric of Atlanta, Oberlin Conservatory, Louisiana State University, Florida State Opera, South Georgia Opera, Columbia Theater Players, Kent State Opera Workshop, and Mercury Opera Rochester. Articles and reviews of Daigle's work have been published in *Opera News*, *Opera London*, *American Record Guide*, *Gramophone*, *Fanfare*, *Classical Singer*, and *Opera Now*. With the Ohio Light Opera Company in a variety of capacities since 1990, in 1999 he was appointed artistic director for the company. He has directed over 50 operettas and served on the artistic team in over 100 productions. As artistic director, he has produced and directed revivals of a number of traditional operettas that have been given an American premiere in their original form, and produced six historical reconstructions all of which have resulted in complete recordings. In September 2003, The Ohio Light Opera was given an Award of Achievement by Northern Ohio Live for its role in preserving operetta during the past 25 years. Mr. Daigle presently is Associate Professor and Head of Opera at the Eastman School of Music, where he has served on the faculty since 1997. Mr. Daigle directed Mercury's production of Copland's *The Tender Land* this season, last season's *Norma*, and Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore* in the company's first season.



Russell Miller, Coach/Accompanist & Harpsichord Continuo

Pianist Russell Miller has performed throughout the United States and abroad as a soloist, accompanist and chamber musician. Concert tours have taken him to Korea and Hong Kong with tenor Robert White, and to the former Soviet Union with cellist Stephen Kates. He has also appeared in concert with Marilyn Horne, Glenn Dicterow, Hakan Hagegard and the vocal quartet SATB. Currently Associate Professor of Vocal Coaching and Repertoire at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York,

he formerly taught collaborative piano at the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Oberlin College Conservatory, and has given master classes at numerous schools throughout the US. In recent summers, he has coached opera at the Pine Mountain Music Festival in Michigan and the "Oberlin in Italy" program in Urbana, Italy. He has also served as rehearsal pianist for the Florentine Opera of Milwaukee in productions of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and Verdi's *Aida*. A native of Los Angeles, Dr. Miller studied at the University of Southern California, the Manhattan and Juilliard Schools in New York City, and holds a doctorate from the University of Michigan, where he has since returned as a visiting teacher.



Won Cho, Commendatore

Celebrated Korean-Canadian Bass baritone Won Cho is known for the unique range and beauty of his voice as well as his outstanding acting ability. Thanks to his energetic voice and stage presence, Won Cho is in demand in both concert and operatic repertoire, appearing with many of the opera houses and orchestras in North America, Europe and his native Korea. His voice is described as "possesses the voice and presence to make himself instantly known on stage". Mr. Cho recently made his debut in Mexico as Sprecher in *Die Zauberflöte* with the Xalapa Symphony during

Carlos Miguel Prieto's final performance as music director with that orchestra. Other highlights during the 2006-2007 season were Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* with Mercury Opera of Rochester, Melchior in *Amahl & the Night Visitors* and Bach's *b minor Mass* with The Western New York Chamber Orchestra in Buffalo, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* at Southern Illinois Music Festival, *Lord Nelson Mass* in Toronto, Duruflé's *Requiem* at St. Paul's Cathedral in Buffalo, and Beethoven's *Choral Fantasia*, *Mass in C Major*, and the World Premiere of Randol Bass' *Passage Into Spirit* with Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus/Orchestra. Appearances in the 2007-2008 season include *Messiah* with Florida Orchestra and Sarasota Chorale Society, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and *Messiah* with Tampa Oratorio Society, Saint Saens' *Christmas Oratorio* with Hyde Park Methodist Church, Haydn's *The Creation* in Toronto, Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* and Benoit/Alcindoro in *La Bohème* with Mercury Opera of Rochester, NY, *Missa Solemnis* and *Lord Nelson Mass* at The Classical Music Festival in Eisenstadt, Austria. Won Cho currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Voice & Coordinator of Opera Program at University of South Florida.



John Davies, Leporello

The distinguished American bass-baritone John Davies is a ubiquitous presence on operatic stages across the United States, esteemed for his insightful and individual interpretations of the *basso buffo* roles of Donizetti, Mozart and Rossini and his accomplished characterizations in the operettas of Strauss and Sullivan, as well as his remarkable forays into the more dramatic works of Beethoven, Menotti and Floyd. Highlights of the current (2007-08) include his return to Indianapolis Opera (directing

Die Zauberflöte) and his début with the new Mercury Opera Rochester as Leporello in *Don Giovanni*. Last spring he returned to Syracuse Opera as Baron Zeta in their production of *The Merry Widow* and added yet another new rôle to his active repertoire: Captain Kadd in Peter Schickele's *The Abduction of Figaro* in a rare concert performance with the New York Chamber Orchestra. Past appearances include engagements with the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. He has appeared

in recital for the BBC Wales and recorded *The Consul* for Newport Records. He made his mainstream stage directing debut with *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for the Opera Theatre at Wildwood in 2003 and later directed Knoxville Opera's *La Fille du Régiment*. Mr. Davies takes an active interest in the performing arts for young people, spending part of each year writing, narrating and hosting educational programs for opera companies, symphony orchestras and children's museums across the United States.



Jill Gardner, Donna Anna

Soprano Jill Gardner is emerging as one of today's young singing actresses of exceptional promise. Noted for her "effortlessly produced, rich voice" (*Opera News*), the *Syracuse Post-Standard* recently states of her performance in *The Merry Widow* that "Jill Gardner's Hanna, the title character, stood head and shoulders above all the rest. She is a powerhouse yet often touching soprano, who moves as if she is floating and acts with more nuance than most opera singers." In the 2007-08 season, Jill Gardner makes several company debuts including Florida Grand Opera in the role of Musetta in *La Bohème* and Boston Lyric Opera as Mimi in *La Bohème*, a role which she was recently called last-minute to cover at Lyric Opera of Chicago where she will make her debut the following season. Ms. Gardner will appear again with Mercury in the spring as Mimi in *La Bohème*. In the summer of 2008 she will debut with Hawaii Opera Theatre as Countess Charlotte Malcolm in Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*. A former member of the Young American Artists Program at Glimmerglass Opera, Ms. Gardner returned as a principal artist last summer in the role of Eurydice in *Orpheus in the Underworld*. As a Young Artist in 2006, she created the role of Madame Loiseau in the world premiere of Harke's *The Greater Good*, which was recorded by the Naxos Record Label. She has also appeared with Syracuse Opera (*The Merry Widow*), New York Opera Projects (*Susannah*), Piedmont Opera Theater (*Mimi/La Bohème*), Tri-Cities Opera (*Countess/Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Violetta/La Traviata*, *Cio-Cio San/Madama Butterfly*) and in concert with Opera Omaha, the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra and the Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra.



Ian Greenlaw, Don Giovanni

Baritone Ian Greenlaw was most recently seen as Mercutio in *Romeo et Juliette* with Atlanta Opera, Grandfather Clock/Cat in *L'enfant et les Sortilèges* with New York Philharmonic, and as the soloist in Bartok's *Cantata Profana* with the St. Louis Symphony. Additional performances include the title role in Sam Helfrich's production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Kentucky Opera and Peter in *Hansel and Gretel* at Opera Theatre of St. Louis in performances conducted by Stephen Lord. He also performed excerpts from *Die Zauberflöte* in an all-Mozart program that served as a prelude to the Opera Theatre of St. Louis's 2006 season. Upcoming he appears with the Los Angeles Philharmonic as a soloist in Britten's *War Requiem*. Later, Mr. Greenlaw will sing the role of Winston, the protagonist in Lorin Maazel's opera *1984*, for his La Scala debut. Earlier in his career, Mr. Greenlaw made his debut with the Metropolitan Opera appearing in *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Carmen* and *The Merry Widow*. A gifted concert artist and recitalist, Ian Greenlaw has performed with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Dallas Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in works such as Orff's *Carmina Burana*, the Brahms *Requiem*, Rodrigo's *Ausencias de Dulcinea*, and Britten's *War Requiem*. He is currently on the roster of the Marilyn Horne Foundation, under whose auspices he made his Carnegie Hall debut and is the recipient of numerous awards including the 2002 Richard Tucker Career Grant, a 2001 Sara Tucker Study Grant, and First Place in the Heinz Rehffuss Singing Actor Competition.



Jonathan Michie, Masetto

Baritone Jonathan Gabriel Michie is currently pursuing his Master of Music degree at the Eastman School of Music in the studio of Carol Webber. He received his Bachelor of Music degree and Performer's Certificate from Eastman in 2006. Favorite stage roles include: Fredrik in *A Little Night Music*, Moralés in *Carmen*, John Wilkes Booth in *Assassins*, Robert in *Company*, Pandolfe in *Cendrillon*, Strephon in *Iolanthe*, Elder McLean in *Susannah*, and Anthony Hope in *Sweeney Todd*. He spent the past two summers as a Young Artist with the Chautauqua Opera Company and

the summer of 2005 as a member of the Ohio Light Opera company. He has been featured in concert at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Spoleto USA Festival, and the home of Broadway's Charles Strouse. Awards include the Kurt Weill Foundation's Lotte Lenya Competition, the Four-City District of the Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions, the Charles A. Lynam Competition, the Palm Beach Opera Competition, the National Orpheus Vocal Competition, the Lotte Lehmann Foundation's American Song Award, the Liederkrantz Foundation's Reusche Lieder Award, and the Friends of Eastman Opera competition. Mr. Michie can be seen this April as Danilo in *The Merry Widow* with Eastman Opera Theatre.



Quinn Patrick, Zerlina

The young American mezzo-soprano Quinn Patrick regularly receives acclaim for the sweet purity and strength of her lyric voice enhanced by a sizzling coloratura facility combined with an engagingly sincere personality in a wide variety of operatic roles and concert repertoire spanning the centuries from Monteverdi to Mark Adamo. Highlights of the current (2007-08) season include her Syracuse Symphony debut singing *Messiah* conducted by Daniel Hege, her first appearances at the annual *Messiah Festival of the Arts* in Lindsborg (KS) and a return to Mercury Opera

Rochester as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. Last season she made her Lincoln Center debut with The National Chorale singing Copland's *In the Beginning* and Beethoven's *Symphony No 9* and her debut with the Jacksonville Symphony under Fabio Mechetti. She made her Carnegie Hall debut in Mozart's "Coronation" *Mass* and a rare performance of Brusa's *Missa Pro Defunctis* with the New England Symphonic Ensemble and performed Beppe in *L'Amico Fritz* with Mercury Opera. Recent engagements included Buffalo Philharmonic, Boulder Philharmonic, Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, Western New York Chamber Orchestra, Artpark, Ash Lawn-Highland Festival and Glimmerglass Opera. Texas native, Miss Patrick received her training at Trinity University in San Antonio and the University of Colorado at Boulder.



John Pickle, Don Ottavio

Tenor John Pickle is increasingly sought after for his "uniquely expressive" voice. He has been engaged by New York City Opera National Company, Nevada Opera, Sarasota Opera, Florentine Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Opera Grand Rapids, Toledo Opera, Opera Fort Collins, Opera Idaho and the Boise Philharmonic, Opera Southwest, Shreveport Opera, Bohème Opera of New Jersey, Center City Opera Theater, Opera at Florham, Salt Marsh Opera and Opera de las Américas in Santo Domingo. Appearances have included the following: Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Pinkerton in *Madama*

Butterfly, Pollione in *Norma*, The Duke in *Rigoletto*, Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Gérald in *Lakmé*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Camille in *The Merry Widow*, Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd*, Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, Karl Franz in *The Student Prince*, Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette*, Kaspar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Pong in *Turandot*, Judge Danforth in *The Crucible*, Sam Kaplan in *Street Scene*, Philippe in *The New Moon*, and the titular roles in *Werther* and Offenbach's *Robinson Crusoe*. Solo appearances in concert and oratorio have included Captain Dick in *Naughty Marietta*, Lieutenant Karl in *Sweethearts* with Little Orchestra Society, and with Teatro Grattacielo as Gabriello/Un Cantore in Giordano's rarely performed *La Cena delle Beffe*. The later was John's Alice Tully Hall

debut in which the New York Times described his voice as a “liquid tenor”. Future engagements include the Fourth Jew in *Salome* with Florentine Opera, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* and Sam Kaplan in *Street Scene* with Nevada Opera, Cavaradossi in *Tosca* with Opera Southwest and Opera Fort Collins, and the tenor soloist in Mozart’s *Requiem* and Schubert’s *Mass in G* with MidAmerica Productions at Carnegie Hall. Mr. Pickle is returning to Rochester after performing the role of Pollione in last season’s production of *Norma*.



Mary Elizabeth Williams, Donna Elvira

Award-winning soprano Mary Elizabeth Williams returns to Rochester this season after performing the role of Adalgisa in last season’s production of *Norma*, and as Kate Pinkerton in the inaugural season’s production of *Madama Butterfly*. Ms. Williams began the 2007-2008 season performing Leonora in *Il Trovatore* in her Kentucky Opera debut. *Opera News* said, “Verdi sopranos are in no danger of extinction if Mary Elizabeth Williams continues to progress. She is a major discovery, with a voice of luxurious, warm beauty and sensitive musicianship, outlining phrases with delicacy. Her touching interpretation made Leonora into a real human being with a character that seemed to grow out of the music.” Upcoming, she will perform Leonora in *Il Trovatore* in her Seattle Opera and Indianapolis Opera debut, as well as her Spoleto U.S.A. debut as Goddess of the Waters in *Amistad*, and Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Cilla in *Margaret Garner*. In addition, she will make her role debut as *Aida* with the Todi Music Festival, reprise the role of Serena in *Porgy and Bess* with the Fresno Grand Opera, and perform in the Intermezzo Concert series with Gregg Baker throughout Charleston, SC.

Leah Arington, Assistant Stage Director

Leah Arington is currently pursuing her Master of Music in Stage Directing at the Eastman School of Music. Leah received her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and Music Education from Eastman in 2000 and furthered her operatic studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. Leah’s performance credits include solo engagements with the Eastman Philharmonic Orchestra, Eastman Opera Theatre, Diablo Light Opera Company (Walnut Creek, CA), The G & S Musical Theatre Company (Poughkeepsie, NY) and Fourth Wall Productions (Poughkeepsie, NY). Leah enjoys spending her summer directing Theatre Arts For Kids for the Contra Costa Children’s Chorus in the San Francisco East Bay area.

Anne Ford-Coates for Elsen Associates, Hair and Makeup Design

Anne Ford-Coates represents Elsen Associates, Inc., resident hair and makeup designers for numerous opera companies in North America, including; Des Moines Metro Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Opera Company of North Carolina, Opera Ontario, Syracuse Opera, Tampa Opera, Utah Opera, Washington National Opera, Wolf Trap Opera. Broadway productions include; *The Merchant of Venice*, *Jelly’s Last Jam*, *Two Trains Running*, *Angels in America*, *The Wild Party*, and *Caroline, or Change*. Off-Broadway productions include *Twelfth Night* (NYSF Central Park), *Sondheim Celebration* (Kennedy Center), *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Tanglewood), *Oedipus Plays* (Athens Festival). Educational affiliations include Eastman School of Music, Manhattan School of Music, Yale University, Carnegie Mellon University.

Mary Griswold, Set Designer

Mary Griswold makes her Mercury Opera debut with this production of *Don Giovanni*. A Rochester native based in Chicago, she has designed fifteen productions with director Steven Daigle for Eastman Opera Theatre, including *Candide*, *Così fan Tutti*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Susannah*, *La Rondine* and *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, all for the Eastman Theatre stage. For Chicago Opera Theatre she has designed *The Mother of Us All* (twice), *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Good Soldier Schweik*, *4 Saints in 3 Acts*, *Postcard From Morocco* and *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. Productions with Skylight Opera in Milwaukee include *The Mikado*, *HMS Pinafore*, *Irma La Douce* and *Side by Side by Sondheim*. In April, Ms. Griswold will design the set for *The Merry Widow* for Eastman Opera Theatre.

Nic Minetor, *Lighting Design*

Nic Minetor is a full-time lighting designer/director for theatre, film and TV. At Eastman Opera Theatre he has been resident designer for more than 40 productions, including *Candide*, *La Boheme*, *The Medium*, *The IOU Wedding*, *The Consul*, *Postcards from Morocco*, *Dialogue of the Carmelites*, *The Mother of Us All*, *Suor Angelica*, *The Breasts of Tiresias*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Falstaff*, *Passion*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Turn of the Screw*, *Patience*, *Transformations*, *Albert Herring*, *L'Elisir D'amouire*, *A Waterbird Talk*, *Tartuffe*, *Così Fan Tutte*, *Xerxes*. *Sweeney Todd*, *She Loves Me*, *The Coronation of Popea*, *Trouble in Tahiti*, *East/West*, *La Rondine*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Suzannah*, *Tartuffe*, *The Turk in Italy*, *Transformations*. Designs for Opera Theatre of Rochester include *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore*, *Faust*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Otello*. For Geva Theatre Center he has designed the lighting for *Agatha Christie's Black Coffee*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *I'm Not Rappaport*, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor*, and six years of *A Christmas Carol*. His work is also seen at NITD, SUNY Brockport, Elmira and Nazareth Colleges. He lighted the Smithsonian Institution-sponsored film of Beckett's *End Game*. This is his 6th production with Mercury Opera Rochester.

Nellica Rave, *Costume Coordinator*

Nellica Rave is pleased to be working with Mercury Opera Rochester for her sixth production. Ms. Rave has been designing costumes nation-wide for ten years. She has her MFA in Costume Design from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Projects include designing *West Side Stories* for New World Theater, *Blithe Spirit* for Pioneer Valley Summer Theater, and costume shop for the Paralympics Opening Ceremonies in 2002. She has worked locally for the JCC, Eastman Opera Theatre, RIT, Irondequoit Theatre Guild and TYKES. Ms. Rave is on the staff of Mercury Opera Rochester as the company Costume Collection Manager. She and her husband are the very proud parents of 11-month-old red-haired Raimonda.

David Recca, *Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master*

David Recca is currently pursuing a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting at the Eastman School of Music where he studies with Dr. William Weinert. He served as Chorus Master for the Eastman Opera Theater production of Bellini's *Capuleti e i Montecchi* and Lehár's *The Merry Widow*. Mr. Recca has also spent two years as Conductor of the Purchase College Chorus, where he prepared such works as Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and Beethoven's celebrated *Missa Solemnis*. While at Purchase College, SUNY, he completed the degree of Bachelor of Music in Composition and a Performer's Certificate in Vocal Coaching. He was honored to receive the Theodore Presser Scholar Award in 2004. This is Mr. Recca's second production with Mercury Opera Rochester.

Ken Saltzman, *Stage Manager*

Ken Saltzman comes "home" to Rochester directly from stage managing his 8th Yuletide Celebration with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Earlier this year, Ken stage managed *Turandot*, *Romeo et Juliette*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and his 2nd world premiere opera, *Cyrano*, with Michigan Opera Theatre, and was asked at the last minute to stage manage a benefit concert given by Jessye Norman. Ken has worked with opera companies in cities that include Philadelphia, Atlanta, Honolulu, Tucson/Phoenix, Indianapolis, Dayton and Memphis. Upcoming engagements include Michigan Opera Theatre's *La Sonnambula*, *La Traviata* and the return to Detroit of MOT's world premiere, *Margaret Garner* starring Denyce Graves, which Ken will then bring to Chicago. Ken and his partner, Duane Prill, make their home on Lamoka Lake in the Finger Lakes region.

Matthew Scheidt, *Technical Director/Production Manager*

A native of Rochester, Matthew Scheidt has been building scenery and working in production management for Eastman Opera Theatre for the last seven years. He has worked in the local theatre scene of over 15 years as stagehand and audio engineer. Matt has also built the sets for Mercury Opera Rochester's productions of *L'Amico Fritz*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Abduction from the Seraglio*, and *The Tender Land*.



Continuing its third season of both diverse and popular operas, education programs, and community outreach, Mercury Opera Rochester is the newest addition to this area's rich musical community. Uniting all of the previously independent opera-related organization, the first two seasons, were very popular with the audience and critics alike.

The primary mission of Mercury Opera Rochester is to produce professional opera for a growing, appreciative audience, utilizing the following principles:

- Uphold high artistic standards in all endeavors.
- Maintain fiscal responsibility.
- Educate present and future audiences. We want people to enjoy and appreciate opera. This includes adult education and fun events as well as structured programs in schools and colleges.
- Provide performance opportunities for local singers – professional, emerging, and avocational.
- Collaborate with other like-minded organizations in the area.

For more information about Mercury Opera and our upcoming performances, call 585-473-6567 or check our in-depth website at www.mercuryoperarochester.org. We keep patrons informed of our projects via mail and email. If you would like to be added to our private mailing list or would like to receive our newsletter, please let us know.

Co-Artistic Directors:

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Staff:

Kristen Kessler, *Executive Director*

Lynn Zicari, *Operations Manager*

Nellica Rave, *Costume Collection Manager*

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WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Thank you to all our patrons and supporters as we continue our third season! Community response has exceeded our expectations, as more people have seen live professional opera here than in a long time. Because of the outpouring of enthusiasm and support, we accomplished our twin goals: to meet high artistic standards while maintaining strict fiscal responsibility. We've proven to ourselves and the community that there can be a future for professional opera in Rochester! But opera productions are very expensive (think sets, costumes, singers, orchestra, theatre, stage hands....the list goes on and on.) Your ticket price covers less than half of our costs. We need your help to continue to make the vision of Mercury Opera Rochester a reality. If you enjoy our performance and agree with our goals, please support our future. Consider a donation to continue professional opera performances and to reach out to future opera lovers in Rochester. Tax-deductible donations are gratefully accepted by Mercury Opera Rochester, 26 Gibbs Street, Rochester, NY, 14604, and on our website at www.mercuryoperarochester.org.

Future Events

Performances

***La Bohème* by Giacomo Puccini**

Friday, June 6 and Saturday, June 7 at 8 PM, Eastman Theatre

The time-honored tale of poor artists and their loves. Conducted by Gerard Floriano and directed by Michael Ehrman. Tickets are \$75, \$60, \$45, and \$25, (student tickets are \$15) available from the RPO Box Office at 108 East Ave, by phone at (585) 454-2100, online at www.rpo.org, at Wegmans, and at the door. (Some convenience fees may apply.)

“Scene & Heard”

Sunday, March 30 at 3:30 PM, Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Fairport

Opera ensembles and choruses performed by the Chorus of Mercury Opera Rochester. Free admission, donations accepted.

Guild Activities

Lectures at the Brighton Library (Mondays, 7 PM) – call 223-9091 to reserve a seat

January 21 – Favorite Operatic Ensembles

January 28 – The Operatic Chorus

February 4 – Verdi's Orchestra

February 11 – Puccini's *La Bohème*

Lecture at the Penfield Library (Sunday, 7 PM) – call 340-8720 to reserve a seat

March 2 – The Voices of the Opera

Beat the Blahs video showings with lectures at Temple B'rith Kodesh (Sundays, 1 PM)

– call 334-2323 for more information

January 27 – Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*

February 3 – Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*

Opera Tours to Syracuse Opera – call 586-2274 for more information

March 9 – Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*

April 27 – Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* and Menotti's *The Medium*

Dinner and Met Telecast – call 334-2323 for more information

March 22 – *Tristan and Isolde*



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