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BRAVO

Spring 2009

The Grand Rapids
Ballet Company

ALADDIN

FEB. 28, 2009



American Ballet Theatre

ROMEO & JULIET

MARCH 13-15, 2009

CARMEN

MAY 9-17, 2009

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

MARCH 27-APRIL 4, 2009

The Michigan Opera Theatre
Children's Chorus

BRUNDIBAR

MARCH 21, 2009

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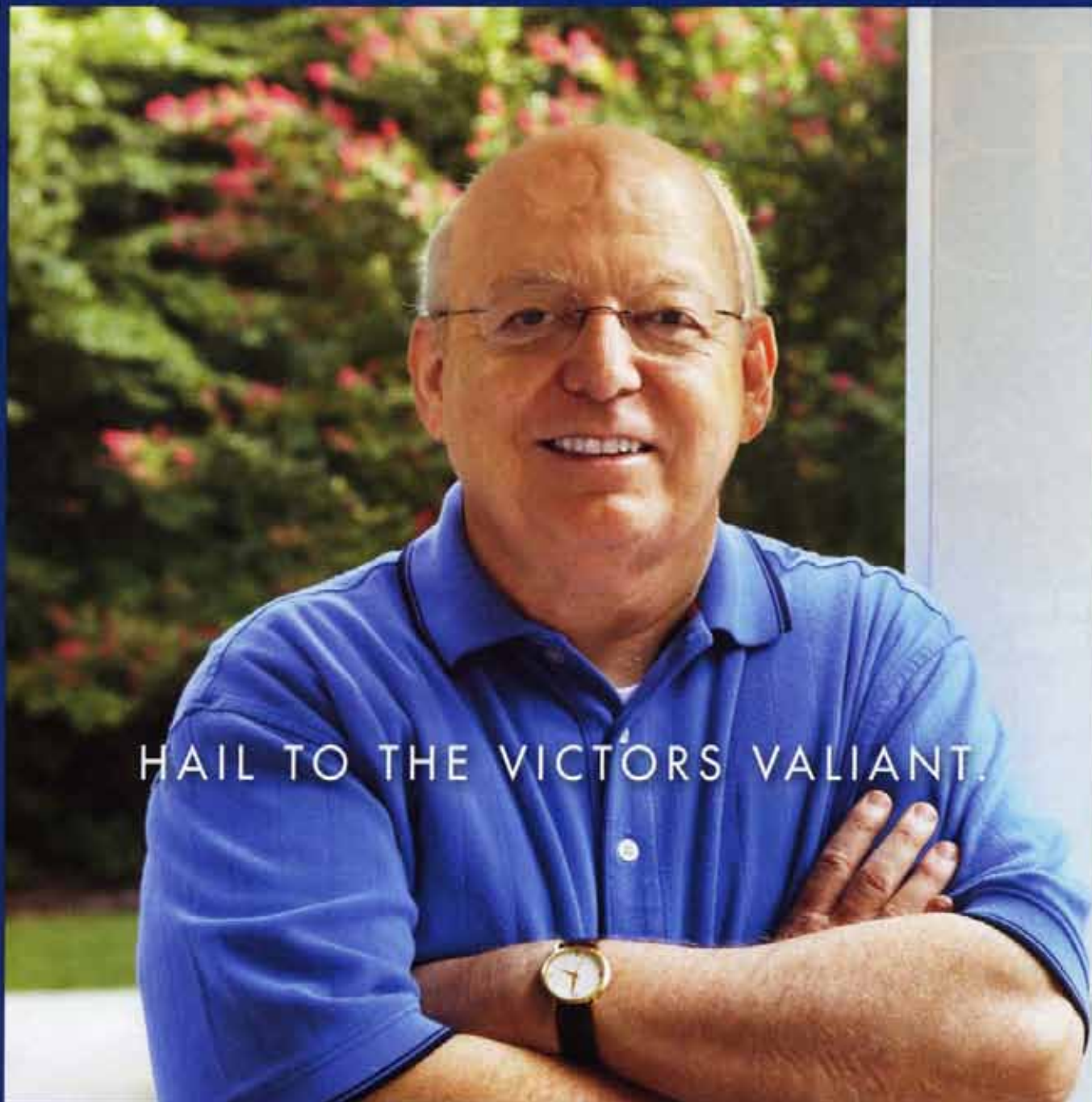


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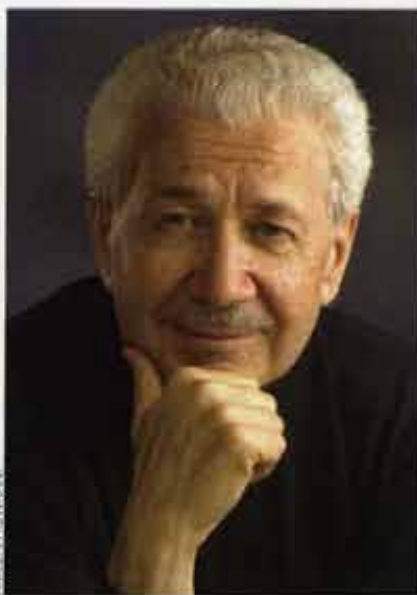
Greetings, dear friends, and welcome to Michigan Opera Theatre's 2009 spring season of opera and dance.

As we begin this season, let me take this opportunity to thank the countless individuals who make up the Michigan Opera Theatre family for your generosity. Whether you have made a donation, purchased a ticket for a performance, participated in our community outreach programs, parked in our garage, or volunteered your time on our behalf, I want you to know how deeply appreciative I am for your support.

Despite the challenging economic climate, we have assembled a season of world-class opera and dance presentations that is among the best we have yet offered. Our spring season opens with two very different but equally charming dance productions. On February 28th, the **Grand Rapids Ballet Company** will present *Aladdin* in the neighboring company's third trip to Detroit over the past three years. The Detroit Opera House is pleased to present this charming, comical, and magical production that the entire family can enjoy. And, after a two year hiatus, **American Ballet Theatre** also returns in March for their renowned production of *Romeo and Juliet*, a ballet staple performed by an American national treasure. An audience favorite performed by ABT since 1985, *Romeo and Juliet* embodies everything that is moving and beautiful about a live ballet performance.

After less than two years in existence, the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus has grown into a 50-member group of talented boys and girls. After a very successful operatic debut with last year's *The Maker of Illusions*, the MOTCC has undertaken opera on an even larger scale this year, mounting *Brundibar*, an opera written by Jewish Czech composer Hans Krasa with libretto by Adolf Hoffmeister. Performed with a live orchestra, *Brundibar* will be performed entirely by the MOTCC on the Detroit Opera House main stage with professional sets and costumes. As part of our commitment to support the efforts of the MOTCC, you will find the program notes for that opera in this very program book.

Our spring 2009 opera season is a tribute to opera classics that withstand the test of time. First, our spring opera season opens with an all-new production of the lighthearted Donizetti comedy *The Elixir of Love*. Set in Napa Valley prior to World War I, the scenery and costumes are a refreshing slice of Americana. Both returning to Michigan Opera Theatre after their highly-anticipated debuts last season, **Ailyn Perez** and **Amanda Squitieri** will alternate in the role of Adina.



One tenor making his exciting MOT debut in the role of poor and dutiful Nemorino is **Stephen Costello**, who performed the role of Christian in *Cyrano* with Opera Company of Philadelphia.

Our 2008-09 "Casualties of Love" season closes with the return of *Carmen* to the Detroit Opera House, an encore production last presented in 2001. An opera classic in every sense of the word, *Carmen* is an audience favorite for the fiery and passionate musical score

which includes "Habanera" and the "Toreador Song." The seductive gypsy Carmen will be performed alternately by **Kate Aldrich**, who performed the role in 2001, and **Kendall Gladen**, a talented, fresh young artist in the opera world. The role of Don José will be performed by alternately by **Roger Honeywell** and **William Joyner**, who will be making his MOT debut.

As you might imagine, the current economic climate has brought about unprecedented challenges for the entire cultural community, and Michigan Opera Theatre is no exception. And, while we have weathered economic slowdowns before, this one has really hit home, especially for so many of our friends and patrons. Our organization, as have the other fine non-profit arts organizations in our community, has experienced the same challenges of downsizing, while maintaining the world-class standards of opera and dance that you are accustomed to experiencing at The Detroit Opera House.

Michigan Opera Theatre has been a part of Michigan's cultural legacy for nearly 40 years, and we'd like to remain a viable part of this community and your lives. Please keep Michigan Opera Theatre in mind for your charitable, tax deductible gifts. No gift is too small — and you can be reassured that every dollar will be utilized wisely for main stage productions that you are accustomed to attending, along with our award winning learning series and community outreach programs, which we have been producing for audiences throughout the state for nearly 40 years.

Again, thank you for joining us for this exciting season of opera and dance, and enjoy the performance!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Don D'Alchies".



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GRAND RAPIDS BALLET COMPANY

ALADDIN

FEBRUARY 28, 2009

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Detroit Opera House

THE CAST

Aladdin	Alexey Kulpin
Jasmine	Dawnell Dryja
Genie	Stephen Sanford
Jafar	Arion Tanabe
Sultan	Gordon Peirce Schmidt

Act I

Jasmine's Attendants	Katie Brown, Briana Dean, Oksana Maslova
Guards	Anton Kandaurov, David Schultz, Nicholas Schultz
Market Women	Chelsea Clow, Kateryna Derechyna, Mindy Mosolygo, Amy Price, Yarinest Restrepo, Laura Schultz, Larissa Tanis, Martha Bryan, Catherine Doyle, Julia Doyle, Jennifer Swanchara
Aladdin's Sidekick	Victor Jarvis
Coffee / Oil Vendor	Terry Madden
Rug Bearers	Jesse Powers, Ben Winegar
Street Urchins	Antonio Allison, John Brenner, Chauntel Byrd, Aisha Carter, Reid Conlon, Elizabeth Ranck, Alysha Reimel, Ian Smith, John Vandevent
Cave Dwellers	Kateryna Derechyna, Mindy Mosolygo, Nicholas Schultz
Keeper of the Lamp	Attila Mosolygo
Jewels	Chelsea Clow, Yarinest Restrepo, Laura Schultz, Larissa Tanis

Vision:

Jasmine	Amy Price
Aladdin	David Schultz

Sultan's Attendants	Jesse Powers, Ben Winegar
---------------------------	---------------------------

Courtiers	Kateryna Derechyna, Mindy Mosolygo, Amy Price, Martha Bryan, Catherine Doyle, Julia Doyle, Jennifer Swanchara
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Act II

Jasmine's Friends	Katie Brown, Chelsea Clow, Briana Dean, Kateryna Derechyna, Oksana Maslova, Mindy Mosolygo, Amy Price, Yarinest Restrepo, Laura Schultz, Larissa Tanis
Guards	Anton Kandaurov, David Schultz, Nicholas Schultz
Exotic Divertissement I	Kateryna Derechyna, Nicholas Schultz
Exotic Divertissement II	Amy Price, David Schultz
Jewels	Chelsea Clow, Kateryna Derechyna, Mindy Mosolygo, Yarinest Restrepo, Laura Schultz, Larissa Tanis
Keeper of the Lamp	Attila Mosolygo

PRODUCTION STAFF

Production Manager	John Ferraro
Stage Manager	Tom Mehan
Costumer	Jamie Tinker Heeringa
Production Carpenter	Randy DeBoer
Production Properties	Stasia Savage
Production Electrician	Carlos Aguilar
Assistant Stage Manager	Margaret Nawara
Costume Assistants	Melissa Leitch, Clare Gardeski

SYNOPSIS

Act I

The ballet opens with the Sultan and his daughter Jasmine having a quarrel over whom she is to marry. Not satisfied with the choices her father makes for her, Jasmine decides to escape from the palace and explore the market, a place she has not been allowed to visit before.

At the market Aladdin, a young thief, is stealing his breakfast from the shopkeepers. Keeping the palace guards busy is a daily joy for Aladdin and he quickly outsmarts them. While playing this game Aladdin sees a beautiful new face at the market and becomes friends with her. Caught up in their new friendship they don't see the guards sneaking up on them and they are captured by Jafar, the Sultan's advisor, who has been sent to find Jasmine and caught Aladdin stealing as well.

Jafar has Jasmine taken back to the Palace, but keeps Aladdin with him. He believes Aladdin will be a useful thief to steal the magic lamp he has longed for from the Cave of Wonders. Aladdin wants nothing to do with it, but Jafar convinces him that all he wants is the lamp and Aladdin can have anything else he finds in the cave. Aladdin agrees and enters.

The cave is truly filled with wonders including beautifully jeweled statues that come to life and entice Aladdin to dance with them. Upon finishing his dance with the Jewels he meets the Keeper of the Lamp who offers the treasure to Aladdin based on his pure heart. Aladdin takes the lamp, rubs it, and in doing so a Genie of great power appears and offers Aladdin his true hearts desire for summoning him. Aladdin is not quite sure what it is that he wants. At first he is enticed by the Jewels and the prospect of a magic carpet. The Genie then shows him a vision of the girl he met at the market and illustrates for him the power true love holds. When Aladdin imagines them dancing together, he chooses that over material things. He says to the Genie "That's what I want, but first get me out of this cave, and make me a Sultan so Jasmine will love me!" In a flash the Genie does his bidding and Aladdin comes to the palace bringing gifts to Jasmine and her Father.

Jasmine's Father wants to know who this Sultan is and asks Jafar to find out. Jafar recognizes him as the thief, and with the guards help steals the Magic Lamp from Aladdin's sidekick. The magic gone, Aladdin loses everything the Genie has granted him.

Act 2

In the Palace of the Sultan, Jafar has taken over control of the Genie and demands that the Sultan make Jasmine marry him. The Sultan succumbs to the power of the Lamp and begs Jasmine to wed Jafar. She will have none of it and, despite the fact that he is no longer a Sultan, dreams of Aladdin the boy in the market. Her Father sees how distraught she is and realizes the power of true love is greater than that of the lamp.

Meanwhile the Genie is miserable doing Jafar's bidding. He finds Aladdin and Jasmine together and begs for their help. Through their love for each other, Aladdin and Jasmine break the bonds that bind the Genie to Jafar. The Genie uses his magic to entertain Jasmine and Aladdin, conjuring a magical journey of exotic interludes and divertissement.

Aladdin must now recover the Lamp from Jafar and return it to the Cave of Wonders to see that the Genie remains free. He and Jasmine trick Jafar into going into the Cave, and use the Genie's power to imprison Jafar in the Lamp eternally.

Artistic Director's Statement

This is the story of a young thief who, after holding the power of the universe in his hands, gives it up for a happiness that can only come from a selfless act. It seems fitting, in light of our current economic crisis caused by greed and self interest, to be telling the tale of a young man's journey from the lure of material wealth to the ultimate noble act - freeing another from the bonds of greed and power.

Whether that was the intent of this very, very old tale we don't know, but it has become apparent in our ballet adaptation and is actually the important theme of the work. Not only does Aladdin find it within himself to free the Genie from the Lamp forever, thus finding greater happiness; but the Sultan, Jasmine's father, discovers that allowing Jasmine to follow a path not preordained by himself, is the right thing to do.

—Gordon Peirce Schmidt

Choreography by Gordon Peirce Schmidt

Staging and Direction by Gordon Peirce Schmidt and Laura Berman

Music by Alexander Borodin, Arranged by Gordon Peirce Schmidt

Scenery and Costumes Courtesy of BalletMet Columbus

Set Design by Dan Gray

Costume Design by Linda Pisano

Additional Costume Design by Jamie Tinker Heeringa

Lighting Design by Matthew Taylor

Trucking provided by the Gainey Corporation

The Grand Rapids Ballet Company is supported by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts.



GRAND RAPIDS BALLET COMPANY PROFESSIONAL DANCERS

Chelsea Clow, from Illinois, currently in her fourth season with the Company.

Kateryna Derechyna, from the Ukraine, currently in her fourth season with the Company.

Dawnell Dryja, from Detroit, currently in her seventh season with the Company.

Anton Kandaurov, from the Ukraine, currently in his first season with the Company.

Alexey Kulpin, from Russia, currently in his fourth season with the Company.

Oksana Maslova, from the Ukraine, currently in her first season with the Company.

Attila Mosolygo, from Hungary, currently in his twelfth season with the Company.

Mindy Mosolygo, from Grand Rapids, currently in her fifteenth season with the Company.

Amy Price, from Ontario, currently in her first season with the Company.

Stephen Sanford, from Indiana, currently in his eighth season with the Company.

David Schultz, from Grand Rapids, currently in his fourth season with the Company.

Laura Schultz, from Grand Rapids, currently in her sixth season with the Company.

Nicholas Schultz, from Grand Rapids, currently in his sixth season with the Company.

Arion Tanabe, from Illinois, currently in his first season with the Company.

Larissa Tanis, from Illinois, currently in her fourth season with the Company.

Yarinet Restrepo – Apprentice, from Florida, currently in her first season with the Company.

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History of the Grand Rapids Ballet Company

Celebrating its thirty-seventh season, the Grand Rapids Ballet Company (GRBC) remains committed to its mission, *to lift the human spirit through the art of dance*. A proud recipient of the ArtServe Michigan Governor's Arts Award for Outstanding Cultural Organization, Michigan's only professional ballet company has a rich history marked by steady growth, a commitment to excellence, and strong community support.

In 1971 the Company started as the Grand Rapids Civic Ballet under founding Artistic Director Sally Seven. In 1983 the Grand Rapids Civic Ballet merged with the Summerfest School of Grand Rapids, a conservatory school for development of professional dancers, and subsequently was reorganized to form the Grand Rapids Ballet Company along with the School of the Grand Rapids Ballet Company. Under the artistic direction of Chartel Arthur, GRBC moved into regional status and joined the Midwest Regional Ballet Association/Regional Dance America. During the 1993-1994 season, professional dancers were placed under contract for the first time.

Today, the professional company consists of sixteen full-time dancers; the School of the Grand Rapids Ballet Company has an enrollment of over 250 students taught by instructors from professional dance backgrounds; an additional 500 students receive free introductory classes through the award-winning "Steps in a New Direction" program; and the educational programs GRBC offers to the community are outstanding ways to foster the connection between the arts and education.

Since the appointment of Artistic Director Gordon Peirce Schmidt and Associate Artistic Director Laura Berman in 1999, the Company has seen tremendous growth and presented more than fifty new works, including the spectacular premieres of *Caught in a Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Prisoner of Zenda*, *Can-Can*, *Peter Pan*, and two incredible collaborations with Béla Fleck and the Flecktones. GRBC's performance season encompasses three main stage productions; three Dancers' Theatre Series productions; and various benefit performances and tours throughout the state



TEREZES PHOTOGRAPHY

— totaling over 60 performances per season. The Company has performed in Quebec, Canada, Lansing, Detroit, Kalamazoo, Boyne City, Cadillac, Midland, Muskegon, St. Joseph and more; and with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Grand Rapids Symphony, Opera Grand Rapids, the Jackson Symphony, Richmond Symphony, Midland Symphony, and West Shore Symphony, among others.

Through the generosity of an arts-conscious community, *The Next Step Campaign* allowed the Company to transform an old abandoned bus garage into a well-designed dance rehearsal space and school facility. Since its opening in 2000, this permanent home has allowed the Ballet to add new opportunities for the community such as the popular Dancers' Theatre Series, an expanded school schedule, and a popular field trip for students, "Escape to the Ballet," where children learn what it takes to run a professional ballet company.

Responding to the demand of the Dancers' Theatre Series and tremendous growth of the Company and School, GRBC announced another exciting \$7.5 million expansion in September 2006. *Stage 2: A Campaign for Ballet* includes the addition of a 300-seat theatre adjacent to the Company's current facility, creating the Meijer-Royce Center for Dance. The new LEED-Certified Peter Martin Wege

Theatre opened in September 2007 and houses the Company's Dancers' Theatre Series, as well as performances by the students of the School of the Grand Rapids Ballet Company. The 300-seat design keeps the intimate feel of the Dancers' Theatre Series that audiences have come to love, while also allowing access to the Series for more patrons. The space also offers expanded opportunities for educational programs and any number of new ventures the Company wishes to undertake.

Original programming, innovative choreography, and a commitment to excellence are hallmarks of the Grand Rapids Ballet Company. With artists invested in the community and a community that supports the arts, the Grand Rapids Ballet Company has created a flourishing arts center for all of Michigan, and continues to provide the highest level of excellence in dance theatre and education for all individuals.

For more information on the Grand Rapids Ballet Company, please visit www.grballet.com.

ABT

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Kevin McKenzie Artistic Director Rachel S. Moore Executive Director

Alexei Ratmansky
Artist in Residence

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MARCH 13-15, 2009

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Wes Chapman

Artistic Director, ABT II

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SYNOPSIS

ROMEO AND JULIET
Ballet in Three Acts

ACT I

Scene 1: *The market place.* The scene is Verona. Romeo, son of Montague, tries unsuccessfully to declare his love for Rosaline and is consoled by his friends Mercutio and Benvolio. As day breaks the townspeople meet in the market place and a quarrel develops between Tybalt, a nephew of Capulet, and Romeo and his friends. The Capulets and Montagues are sworn enemies and a fight soon begins. The Lords Montague and Capulet join in the fray, which is stopped by the appearance of the Prince of Verona who commands the families to end their feud.

Scene 2: *Juliet's anteroom in the Capulet house.* Juliet, playing with her nurse, is interrupted by her parents, Lord and Lady Capulet. They present her to Paris, a wealthy young nobleman who has asked for her hand in marriage.

Scene 3: *Outside the Capulet house.* Guests arrive for a ball at the Capulets' house. Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio, disguised in masks, decide to go in pursuit of Rosaline.

Scene 4: *The ballroom.* Romeo and his friends arrive at the height of the festivities. The guests watch Juliet dance. Mercutio, seeing that Romeo is entranced by her, dances to distract attention from him. Tybalt recognizes Romeo and orders him to leave, but Lord Capulet intervenes and welcomes him as a guest in his house.

Scene 5: *Outside the Capulet house.* As the guests leave the ball Lady Capulet restrains Tybalt from pursuing Romeo.

Scene 6: *Juliet's balcony.* Unable to sleep, Juliet comes out on to her balcony and is thinking of Romeo when he suddenly appears in the garden. They confess their love for each other.

Intermission

ACT II

Scene 1: *The market place.* Romeo can think only of Juliet, and as a wedding procession passes, he dreams of the day when he will marry her. In the meantime, Juliet's nurse pushes her way through the crowds in search of Romeo to give him a letter from Juliet. He reads that Juliet has consented to be his wife.

Scene 2: *The chapel.* The lovers are secretly married by Friar Laurence who hopes that their union will end the strife between the Montagues and the Capulets.

Scene 3: *The market place.* Interrupting the revelry, Tybalt fights with Mercutio and kills him. Romeo avenges the death of his friend and is exiled.

Intermission

ACT III

Scene 1: *The bedroom.* At dawn next morning the household is stirring and Romeo must go. He embraces Juliet and leaves as her parents enter with Paris. Juliet refuses to marry Paris, and hurt by her rebuff, he leaves. Juliet's parents are angry and threaten to disown her. Juliet rushes to see Friar Laurence.

Scene 2: *The chapel.* Juliet falls at the Friar's feet and begs for his help. He gives her a vial of sleeping potion that will make her fall into a death-like sleep. Her parents, believing her dead, will bury her in the family tomb. Meanwhile, Romeo, warned by Friar Laurence, will return under cover of darkness and take her away from Verona.

Scene 3: *The bedroom.* That evening Juliet agrees to marry Paris, but the next morning, when her parents arrive, they find her apparently lifeless on the bed.

Scene 4: *The Capulet family crypt.* Romeo, failing to receive the friar's message, returns to Verona stunned by grief at the news of Juliet's death. Disguised as a monk he enters the crypt and, finding Paris by Juliet's body, kills him. Believing Juliet to be dead, Romeo drinks a vial of poison. Juliet awakes and, finding Romeo dead, stabs herself.

HISTORY

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

American Ballet Theatre is recognized as one of the great dance companies in the world. Few ballet companies equal ABT for its combination of size, scope, and outreach. Recognized as a living national treasure since its founding in 1940, ABT annually tours the United States, performing for more than 600,000 people, and is the only major cultural institution to do so. It has also made more than 30 international tours to 42 countries as perhaps the most representative American ballet company and has been sponsored by the State Department of the United States on many of these engagements.

When American Ballet Theatre was launched in the Autumn of 1939, the aim was to develop a repertoire of the best ballets from the past and to encourage the creation of new works by gifted young choreographers, wherever they might be found. Under the direction of Lucia Chase and Oliver Smith from 1940 to 1980, the Company more than fulfilled that aim. The repertoire, perhaps unmatched in the history of ballet, includes all of the great full-length ballets of the nineteenth century, such as *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Giselle*, the finest works from the early part of this century, such as *Apollo*, *Les Sylphides*, *Jardin aux Lilas* and *Rodeo* and acclaimed contemporary masterpieces such as *Airs*, *Push Comes to Shove* and *Duets*. In acquiring such an extraordinary repertoire, ABT has commissioned works by all of the great choreographic geniuses of the 20th century: George Balanchine, Antony Tudor, Jerome Robbins, Agnes de Mille and Twyla Tharp, among others.

In 1980, Mikhail Baryshnikov became Artistic Director of American Ballet Theatre, succeeding Lucia Chase and Oliver Smith. Under his leadership, numerous classical ballets were staged, restaged and refurbished, and the Company experienced a strengthening and refining of the classical tradition. In 1990, Jane Hermann and Oliver Smith succeeded Baryshnikov and immediately established an agenda that was dedicated to maintaining the great traditions of the past while aggressively pursuing a vital and innovative future.

In October 1992, former American Ballet Theatre Principal Dancer Kevin McKenzie was appointed Artistic Director. McKenzie, steadfast in his vision of ABT as "American", is committed to maintaining the Company's vast repertoire, and to bringing the art of dance theater to the great stages of the world.

In keeping with the Company's long-standing commitment to bringing the finest in dance to the widest international audience, ABT has recently enjoyed triumphant successes with engagements in Tokyo, London, Paris, Buenos Aires and Mexico City.

Over its 68-year history, the Company has appeared in a total of 131 cities in 42 countries. ABT has also appeared in all fifty states of the United States and embarked on its first trip to China in 2001, appearing in both Shanghai and Hong Kong.

On April 27, 2006, by an act of Congress, American Ballet Theatre became America's National Ballet Company.

Romeo and Juliet – Production History

Romeo and Juliet received its World Premiere by The Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London on February 9, 1965, danced by Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev.

Romeo and Juliet was given its American Ballet Theatre Company Premiere in Washington, D. C. at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on January 3, 1985, danced by Leslie Browne and Robert La Fosse.

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BRUNDIBAR

featuring the Michigan Opera
Theatre Children's Chorus

MARCH 21, 2009

Composer: Hans Krása
Librettist: Adolph Hoffmeister
English version by Joža Karas

Overture
Opera in two acts
no intermission

World Premiere: Terezin concentration camp,
Czechoslovakia, September 23, 1943
Sung in English
Running time: 1 hour

Conductor: Dianna Hochella
Director: Eric Einhorn
Set Design: Thaddeus Strassberger
Costume Design: Suzanne Hanna
Lighting Design: Andrew Griffin
Hair and Makeup Design: Elizabeth Geck
Assistant Director: Frannie Shepherd-Bates
Stage Manager: Nan M. Luchini



RICHARD TERMINE

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THE CAST

In order of vocal appearance

Teacher.....	Mary Lou Zieve
Annette.....	Brooke Bliznik
Joe.....	Alexander Borello
Ice Cream Woman.....	Sarah Pidgeon
Baker.....	Clare DeLamiellure
Milkmaid.....	Rachel Curtis
Policeman.....	Ryan Hurley
Brundibar.....	Maggie Malaney
Bird.....	Kayla Marie Lumpkin
Cat.....	Veronica Battersby
Dog.....	Madeline Thibault
Chorus.....	Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus

Understudies

Annette:	Olivia Motzer
Joe:	Nicholas Fuller
Ice Cream Woman:	Malaya Watson
Baker:	Ethan Anderson
Milkmaid:	Malaya Watson
Policeman:	Ethan Anderson
Brundibar:	Madeline Thibault
Bird:	Nicole Huot
Cat:	Brittany Johnson
Dog:	Kristine Overman

*Original Production by The Graduate Center, CUNY, Office of Continuing Education and Public Programs:
Thaddeus Strassberger, set designer
Mattie Ullrich, costume designer
Shawn Kaufman, lighting designer
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Brundibar Synopsis

Brundibar is the story of two children, Little Joe and Annette, who have no money to buy milk for their ailing mother. Seeing passersby giving coins to the organ grinder Brundibar, the children try to earn money by singing on the street corner. Brundibar chases them away, but a friendly Dog, Cat, and Sparrow help them round up the other children in town, who form a choir large enough to compete with the organ grinder. When Brundibar steals Little Joe's hatful of coins, the children overpower him. Little Joe succeeds in his quest to buy milk, and the children are victorious!

Brundibar History

By LAUREN MCCONNELL, PhD

The children's opera *Brundibar* has enjoyed renewed interest in recent years, in part because of the book adaptation with beautiful illustrations by Maurice Sendak that came out in 2003. *Brundibar's* performance history is as dramatic as the story it tells. The opera was written before World War II, but it became famous because of its extended run in the Terezin Concentration camp in German-occupied Czechoslovakia. As scholar Blanka Cervinkova notes "it helped make the tragic fate of the prisoners more human and bearable – both of those who played in the opera and of those who went to see the more than fifty performances of it." In a few cases, it may have saved lives as well. Though most of the young performers in *Brundibar* were transported to extermination camps where they died, some the children, especially those in leading roles, had their transports delayed. Though they still were eventually taken to camps as well, a few, such as Rudolph Freudendfeld (later Franek) and Ela Weissberger miraculously survived the war. Michigan Opera Theatre is truly honored to present this brave, charming opera and to welcome holocaust survivor Ela Weissberger, who played the role of the Cat in the original Terezin production.

Dr. Lauren McConnell is an assistant professor in the department of Communication and Dramatic Arts at Central Michigan University. Her area of scholarly interest is East European theatre and drama, particularly in Czechoslovakia. She was a Fulbright professor in the Slovak Republic in 1996, and received a Boren Graduate International Fellowship to study censorship in Czechoslovakia for a year in 2001-2002.

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Brundibar Chorus:

Ethan Anderson	Natalie Chaiken	Caroline Hofman	Kelly McGraw	Chad Schultze
Londarius Anderson	Dylan Drean	Nicole Huot	Emily Michielutti	Taylor Stark
Elena Bakaluca	Alyssa Dsouza	Brittany Johnson	Olivia Motzer	Jessica Tiffit
Breanna Betancourt	Nicholas Fuller	Jade Kitchen	Ellen O'Brien	Elizabeth Watson
Ann Marie Calvaneso	Greta Ginter	Kaylynn Lear	Christina O'Neil	Malaya Watson
Mary Grace Calvaneso	Natalie Gratsch	Sherene Levert	Kristine Overman	Lauren Wickett
Hannah Cheriyan	Emma Hintzen	Alaina Matthews	Annalise Poco	Taylor Wizner

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE CHILDREN'S CHORUS STAFF:

Suzanne Mallare Acton, *Director*
Dianna Hochella, *Asst. Director/Conductor*
Megan Landry, *Chorus Administrator*
Joseph Jackson, *Accompanist*

We would like to thank Ela Stein Weissberger for appearing as our special guest for the performances of *Brundibar*.

Ela Stein Weissberger (Special Guest): is an original *Brundibar* cast member from the Terezin concentration camp in Czechoslovakia.



A renowned speaker, lecturer and advocate, Ms. Weissberger is dedicated to traveling the world to tell

her story in honor of the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Born in Prague, she currently resides in Tappan, New York. Ms. Weissberger is one of 100 Terezin children who survived World War II. She was born to Max and Marketa Stein in 1930. In 1942, Ela, her sister, mother, grandmother and uncle were deported to Terezin for three and a half years. While there, Ela was a cast member in the children's opera *Brundibar*, and played the role of the Cat in 55 performances while at Terezin. Ela and her family were liberated on May 5, 1945, and in 1949 they moved to Israel. It was there she met and married her husband, Leopold Weissberger. Ela has two children.

Mary Lou Zieve (Teacher): has an extensive background in broadcast media and theater. Her acting experience includes leading roles with the Vanguard Theatre and Jewish Ensemble Theatre.



Her most recent appearances include performances with Second City in Detroit performing with a New York cast of "The Vagina

Monologues." Since 1955, she has been a commercial announcer, actress, spokesperson and narrator on local and national television and radio, slide, and industrial film. She was a frequent reporter for many auto shows and conventions, and was awarded a CLIO and two Golden Mike Awards (1973, 1974) for outstanding female announcer in Detroit.

Artist Profiles

Veronica Battersby (Cat) is 14 years old and attends Mercy High School. She loves singing, acting, and dancing.



This is Veronica's 2nd year with the MOTCC. Veronica has been on stage numerous times, including *Les Miserables* (Young Cosette), *Beauty and the Beast* (Chip),

Sound of Music (Louisa), *The Little Princess* (Sarah Crewe), *Meet Me in St. Louis* (Miss Duffy), and MOTCC's 2008 production of *Maker of Illusions* (Genie). She was also part of the children's chorus of *Turandot* at MOT.

Brooke Bliznik (Annette) is an 11 year old student at Hartland Farms Intermediate. She enjoys singing, acting,



writing poetry, reading, skiing, piano, and playing the clarinet. She is a member of the Livingston County Children's Choir and the 2008 MI Elementary Honors

Choir. Brooke has performed with the Howell Community Theatre, including Alice in *Alice in Wonderland*. She has sung the National Anthem at various community and professional events.

Alexander Borrello (Joe) is 13 years old and attends Our Lady of Sorrows. He loves acting, singing, dancing, and golf.



Alexander has performed in over 20 theatre productions, including *A Christmas Carol* (Tiny Tim) at the Detroit Music Hall, *Nutcracker* at the Fox Theatre. His

on-camera work consists of one feature film, a TBS movie, and an HBO pilot.

Rachel Curtis (Milkmaid) is a 12 year old at Renton Jr. High School in Huron Township. She loves theatre, dance,



singing, and reading. Rachel has been in numerous EverAfter Productions including *Seussical* (Jojo), *Peter Pan*, *Aladdin, Jr.*, *Annie, Jr.*, *Les Miserables, Jr.*, and *Willy Wonka*

and the *Chocolate Factory*. She was also in *Canton Follies I and II* with the

Destination Theatre. Rachel also has vocal and dance training.

Clare DeLamielleure (Baker) is 15 years old and a freshman at South Lyon High School. She loves to sing, act, and see



her friends in her spare time. Clare has been singing since she was 3 years old and recently played Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz* at her school.

Eric Einhorn (Director) made his MOT debut as the assistant director for *The Magic Flute* (2004) and returned



most recently for *Faust* (2005). He has recently directed *Alcina* for Wolf Trap Opera, *Orpheus in the Underworld* for Glimmerglass Opera, *The Diary of*

One Who Vanished for Gotham Chamber Opera, *Così fan Tutte* for Florida Grand Opera outreach, *Oedipus the King* for Klasikos Theater in Pittsburgh, as well as *Xerxes* for the Pittsburgh Opera. Eric has served on the directing staff of the Metropolitan Opera since 2005.

Elizabeth Geck (Wig & Makeup Designer) has been coordinating the Michigan Opera Theatre wig and make-up crew for the last five years, as well as assisting the Wig and Make-up designer for main stage opera productions. Ms. Geck has assisted with several new productions including *Aida*, *Cyrano*, *Margaret Garner* and *Pearl Fisher*. Elizabeth designed wigs and make-up for Motor City Lyric's production of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* as well as Grosse Pointe Theater's production of *West Side Story*.

Andrew Griffin (Lighting Designer) designed last years Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus production *The Maker of Illusions* and is happy to be back in Detroit. A freelance lighting designer based in Washington, DC, Andrew is the resident Assistant Lighting Designer for Michigan Opera Theatre where he has assisted on the last ten productions. When not in Detroit, Andrew designs for companies including: Toledo Opera, Olney Theatre Center, Woolly Mammoth, Synetic Theatre, Studio Theatre, Imagination Stage, the Delaware Shakespeare Festival, and Adventure Theatre where he is also a resident artist.

Suzanne Hanna (*Costume Designer*) is the Costume Director for Michigan Opera Theatre. She assisted John Pascoe



with the costume design for David DiChiera's *Cyrano*. In addition, she has served as costume designer for Michigan Opera Theatre (*Madame Cadillac*),

The New Studio Theatre (*Angels in America*, *Millenium Approaches*, *Master Class*), Performance Network (*Doubt*, *Candida*, *Boston Marriage*, *Kimberly Akimbo*, *I Am My Own Wife*), and The Motor City Lyric Opera (*Amahl and the Night Visitors*).

Dianna Hochella (*Conductor*) is the assistant director and conductor of the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's



Chorus. She is presently Director of Music at Littlefield Presbyterian Church in Dearborn, Michigan. Ms. Hochella serves as a vocal instructor for Shrine Catholic

High School in Royal Oak and has a private voice studio in Ann Arbor. As a member of the Michigan Opera Theatre Chorus, Ms. Hochella has performed on the MOT main stage productions in the world premiere of *Margaret Garner*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Les Pecheurs de Perles*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera*.

Ryan Hurley (*Policeman*) is 10 years old and attends Burton Elementary School in Huntington Woods. He plays the



piano and is beginning the saxophone. He likes to sing, dance, draw, and enjoys playing tennis and soccer. He is also on the HWAC swim team.

Ryan was a supernumerary in the World Premiere of *Cyrano* at the MOT. He attended Camp Broadway in New York at the age of 7. He has attended theatre camp at the Marquis Theatre in Northville and the Community House in Birmingham.

Kayla Marie Lumpkin (*Bird*) is 11 years old and in the sixth grade at the Cranbrook Kingswood Middle School.

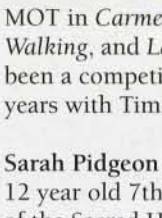


She enjoys getting lost in a good book. Kayla Marie has performed in several musicals and plays; *Sound of Music* (Marta), *Honk Jr.* (Beaky), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

(Mrs. Bucket), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Dixie), *Wizard of OZ*, *Maker of Illusions* and *Les Misérables*.

Maggie Malaney (*Brundibar*) is 14 and attends Our Lady of Sorrows School.

She loves Irish dancing, ballet, reading, and theatre. Maggie played the Queen in the MOTCC production of *Maker of Illusions*, and Susan in Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*. She performed with the



MOT in *Carmen*, *Turandot*, *Dead Man Walking*, and *La Bohème*. Maggie has been a competitive Irish dancer for 9 years with Tim O'Hare School of Dance.

Sarah Pidgeon (*Ice Cream Woman*) is a 12 year old 7th grader at the Academy of the Sacred Heart in Bloomfield Hills.



Sarah has studied piano for 5 years. She also enjoys cooking, drawing, fashion, and running cross-country. Sarah has appeared in several youth theater produc-

tions at the Birmingham Community House. Last summer, she participated in the Intermediate Musical Theater Production program at the Interlochen Arts Camp.

Thaddeus Strassberger (*Set Designer*) is active as both a scenic designer and director in the US and Europe. Recent



new productions include: *Orfeo Ed Euridice* (Augsburg), *La Cenerentola* (Opera Ireland/Staatstheater Wiesbaden), *La Gazzetta* (Rossini in Wildbad Festival),

Aida (Lyric Opera Of Kansas City), *The Magic Flute* (Utah Opera/Arizona Opera), *Ariadne Auf Naxos* (Wolftrap), *La Fanciulla del West* (L'Opera de Montreal) and *La Traviata* (Arizona Opera). Upcoming productions include *Hamlet* (Washington National Opera), *Le Nozze de Figaro* (Norwegian National Opera), *The Turn of the Screw* (Opera Les Azuriales) and *Les Huguenots* (Bard Summerspace).

Madeline Thibault (*Dog*) is 14 and a freshman at Regina Catholic High School in Warren. She loves singing,



acting, youth ministry, tennis, piano, and guitar. This is Madeline's second year with the MOTCC. She was also part of *Turandot* with the MOT, and has

performed in *Pirates of Penzance* (Edith) and *Iolanthe* (Iolanthe).

News from the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus

MOTCC Returns for *Carmen*

The MOTCC will return to the Detroit Opera House stage to perform as the children's chorus in MOT's main stage production of *Carmen*! This fiery and famous tale of the gypsy Carmen will run at the Detroit Opera House May 9-17, 2009.

Know a Boy or Girl Who Loves to Sing?

The Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus will hold auditions for the 2009-10 season on May 27 and May 30, 2009. Times will be announced. Contact chorus administrator, Megan Landry, for more information at mlandry@motopera.org.

SYNOPSIS

Act I

Scene 1

Nemorino, a shy and simple young man is in love with Adina, a wealthy country girl. But Adina is willful, and his offers of love are constantly rejected. Adina is seated apart from a group of townspeople reading, and Nemorino wonders how he could possibly win her love since she is so wonderful and much better than him. She has just come across the legend of the potion, which bound Tristan and Isolde with undying love and reads it aloud to amuse the others.

At this point a drum is heard, and a platoon of soldiers enters, headed by the dashing and bombastic Sergeant Belcore. Belcore at once begins to woo Adina, and in spite of his self-assurance and arrogance, she is flattered; however, to his hasty proposal of marriage she answers that she would like a little time to think it over. Nemorino, naturally, is very jealous and when everyone else leaves, he begs Adina to return his love, but in vain; she prefers to remain fancy free.

Scene 2

Dr. Dulcamara, a picturesque and loquacious quack, arrives in the town square, and, before the assembled townspeople, he sings the praises of his wonderful remedy, guaranteed to cure all ills. The naïve Nemorino is impressed and asks whether he also sells the love potion of Queen Isolde. Naturally Dulcamara obliges him, but warns him that the potion will take effect only after twenty-four hours - which will give him enough time to leave town - and that no one must know about it. Nemorino is now so pleased and sure of himself that Adina is surprised to find him in a cheerful and confident mood; he assures her that his heart will be cured within one day. In a fit of pique, she then tells Belcore that she will marry him in six days' time. Nemorino is not worried; he knows that tomorrow she will fall at his feet. But a message reaches Belcore with an order to leave town in the morning, so Adina agrees to marry him that very day. Nemorino is now desperate, but his entreaties to Adina to postpone the wedding for just one day are all in vain. She invites everyone to the marriage feast, and they all mock the distraught Nemorino.

Act II

Scene 1

The marriage feast in anticipation of the wedding is in progress and Dulcamara is among the guests. When the minister arrives, Adina hesitates to sign the marriage contract, as Nemorino is not there and her vengeance would not be complete without him. As the company goes off elsewhere, he enters and finding Dulcamara alone, asks for help. Dulcamara prescribes another dose of his remedy, but Nemorino has no [m]ore money. The doctor gives him a quarter of an hour to find it. Belcore now enters and persuades Nemorino to enlist in the army if he wants money, commenting to himself with glee that to enlist one's own rival is quite a clever stroke. Nemorino accepts in the hope of winning Adina's love before having to leave.

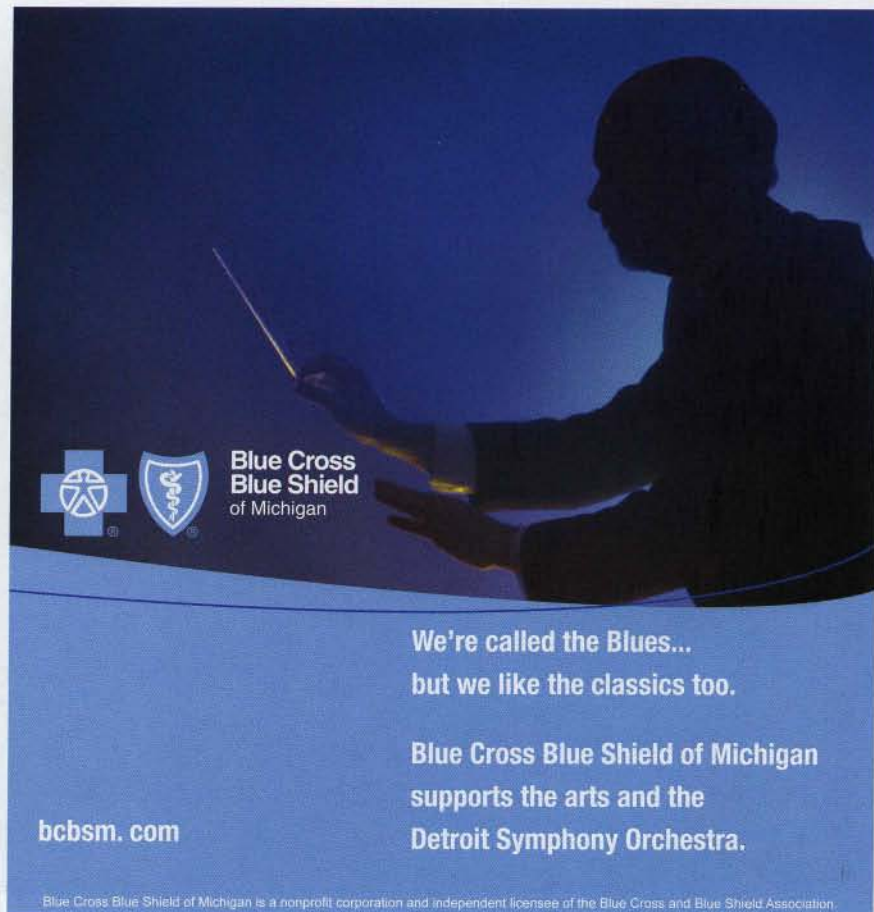
Scene 2

The news is spreading throughout the town that Nemorino's rich uncle has died, leaving him sole heir. All the local girls surround him with attention and

then Nemorino, in his simplicity, believes this to be the effect of the potion. Adina is astonished at his popularity, and so is Dulcamara, who tells her about the potion. She is deeply moved, especially when she hears that Nemorino has sold his freedom for her. She realizes that she is, in fact, in love with him. Nemorino notices that she is weakening and is delighted. When Adina comes back with the enlistment papers, which she has just bought from Belcore, she admits to Nemorino that she loves him; and when Dulcamara lets slip the news he has just heard about the inheritance, Nemorino's happiness is complete. Dulcamara, of course, attributes all this good fortune to his own magic elixir, and all the townspeople rush to buy it. Finally everyone except Belcore blesses him as he departs for the next town.

Synopsis Courtesy Opera Colorado

Synopsis partially provided by: John T. Gates, Stephen F. Austin State University School of Music.



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Donizetti and his Miracle Elixir

Photos by Matthew Staver,
courtesy Opera Colorado

By Roberto Mauro

It is generally accepted that life in the nineteenth century moved at a slower, saner pace than the e-mail, instant communication, computer-driven culture of today. However, in at least one area, that of opera composition, life was actually more stressful 150 years ago. During this era, the passion for new operas and new music was far greater than today, and composers, along with librettists were kept busy trying to fulfill the public's voracious appetite. It was into this environment that Gaetano Donizetti was born in the northern Italian town of Bergamo in 1797 – a mere six years after the death of Mozart. A series of tragedies prompted him to settle in Paris in 1838. Suffering from the effects of his exhaustive work schedule and syphilis, the musician finally went mad and had to be confined to an asylum in his native town in 1846.

Although Donizetti lived only 51 years, music seemed to literally flow from his pen. Occasionally he managed to produce more than 3 operas in a single calendar year. In total, he gave us some 70 operas – both comic and dramatic, liturgical masses and numerous chamber works. However, not everyone was impressed with Donizetti's rapid compositional skill. These staggering statistics prompted the German philosopher and Wagner disciple Heinrich Heine to remark sarcastically, "in fecundity Donizetti is surpassed only by rabbits." Donizetti's fame peaked in 1835 after the premiere of his most famous opera, *Lucia*

di Lammermoor.

The year 1835 also marked the death of Vincenzo Bellini and the retirement of Gioachino Rossini, the two composers who are synonymous with the bel canto school.

As noted above, Donizetti's compositional period was characterized as somewhat of an operatic factory. Composers and librettists were expected to churn out new compositions at an extremely rapid rate. Donizetti's fellow bel canto exponent, Rossini, also left a prodigious body of work. Future king of the Italian Operatic Mountain, Giuseppe Verdi characterized his early period as "the galley years." It was only Bellini who bucked the system, refusing to compose at such a rapid rate, leaving only ten operas.

It was precisely Donizetti's ability to whip something up quickly that brought the evergreen *Elixir of Love* into being. When another composer reneged on his commission for the Teatro alla Canobbiana, its impresario turned to Donizetti. The impresario suggested that Donizetti simply revise one of his earlier works, the composer replied, "I'm not accustomed to patching up my own works. You'll soon see that I am quite energetic enough to make you a brand new opera in 14 days. I give you my word. Now, you give me Felice Romani." Romani was a well-known librettist who had provided libretti for Bellini and also collaborated previously with Donizetti



Maria Kanyova as Adina (reading) with Opera Colorado chorus

on *Anna Bolena*. For the subject, Romani borrowed the text by Eugene Scribe from Auber's opera *Le Philtre*. This opera had been a smash hit at its 1831 Paris premiere, and would receive close to another 250 performances over the next 30 years. Romani kept the plot line intact – a village boy is duped into buying a love philter that will supposedly make him irresistible to every girl in town. Despite Donizetti's admiration for his librettist, their collaboration was not always smooth. For example, when Donizetti asked for an aria for the tenor in the 2nd act, Romani bristled, "what's the point of that rustic bumpkin coming in and whining pathetically when everything must be festive and gay?" Fortunately, Donizetti won out, for what would Italian Opera be without the ravishing aria, "Una Furtiva Lacrima"? It has been the show piece for every tenor from Caruso to Pavarotti, and is undecidedly the best known piece of the opera.

Amazingly, Donizetti met his deadline, giving us one of the world's most popular comedic operas. When told of Rossini's ability to turn out an opera in 18 days, Donizetti is said to have remarked, "Ah, yes, but then Rossini was always lazy!" The opera premiered on May 12, 1832 to unanimous high praise. Soon after, the world was drunk (as I'm sure Michigan Opera Theatre audiences will be!) on this intoxicating opera.

Roberto Mauro is the Artistic Consultant for Michigan Opera Theatre and Senior Director of Artistic Operations for Arizona Opera.



Barry Banks as Nemorino

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CARMEN


MAY 9-17, 2009

Composer: Georges Bizet
Librettist: Henri Meilhac & Ludovic Halévy

Opera in three acts
World Premiere: Paris, France, March 3, 1875
Sung in French with English supertitle translations
Running time: 3 hours, 15 minutes

Conductor: Mark Flint
Director: Ron Daniels
Chorus Master: Suzanne Mallare Acton
Set Design: Riccardo Hernandez
Costume Design: Constance Hoffman
Lighting Design: Jim Ingalls
Associate Lighting Designer: Kendall Smith
Choreographer: Lili Del Castillo
Hair and Makeup Design: Sarah Hatten
Assistant Director: Jonathon Loy
Stage Manager: Ken Saltzman
Supertitles: Roberto Mauro

Carmen is a co-production of Michigan Opera Theatre
and Houston Grand Opera

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THE CAST

In order of vocal appearance

Moralés	Wes Mason
Micaëla	Janinah Burnett
Don José ...	Roger Honeywell (9, 13, 16) William Joyner (10, 15, 17)
Zuniga	Stephen Lusmann
Carmen	Kate Aldrich (9, 13, 16) Kendall Gladen (10, 15, 17)*
Frasquita	See Program Insert
Mercédès	Lisa Agazzi*
Escamillo	Homero Velho*
Le Dancaïro	Wes Mason
Le Remendado	See Program Insert

*Michigan Opera Theatre debut

The last Michigan Opera Theatre production of *Carmen* was October 13-21, 2001

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

In a square in Seville, townspeople and soldiers relax in the sun. A pretty country girl, Micaëla, comes in looking for her sweetheart, Corporal Don José; an officer, Moralés, tells her José will be there later, and she leaves. As the guard is changed, a band of children parade around, imitating the soldiers ("Avec la grande montante") whose number now includes José. To the sound of the noon bell, girls from the nearby cigarette factory wander in to smoke and chat, as passersby look on in fascination ("Dans l'air"). Carmen enters last, flirting, joking and explaining her philosophy of life: Love is a wild bird that cannot be tamed (Habañera: "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle"). José sits apart, sullen and distracted. Drawn by his indifference, Carmen tosses him a flower as the work bell calls the girls back. The square grows quiet, and Micaëla returns to give José news of his mother ("Parle-moi de ma mère"). No sooner has she left than a disturbance is heard in the factory; Carmen is involved in a fight, and the girls run out arguing over who started it. Captain Zuniga orders José to arrest Carmen, but she resists their questions with brazen nonchalance. Her wrists bound, she sings "to herself" about the rendezvous she might arrange with José (Sequidilla: "Prés des ramparts de Séville"). Falling under her spell, he loosens her bonds. The crowd returns to see Carmen led to prison, roaring with delight when she escapes; José is arrested for letting her get away.

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ACT II

A month later, at Pastia's Inn, Carmen joins her companions in a gypsy song ("Les tringles des sistres tintaient") and exerts her charms on the matador Escamillo, who boasts of his exploits in the arena ("Votre toast"). When the inn closes, Carmen tells four friends – Frasquita, Mercédès, Dancaïro, Remendado – that love for José keeps her from going along on their next smuggling trip (quintet: "Nous avons en te[insert hat over first e]te une affaire"). They laugh at her, then hide as José is heard approaching. Carmen sings and dances for him, but a bugle is heard sounding the retreat, and he starts to return to his barracks. This angers her, and he pauses to show her the flower she threw at him, telling gwhat it meant to him in prison ("Le fleur que tu m'avais jetée"). She invites him to join her wild mountain life, but he refuses. Suddnly, Zuniga breaks in, provoking an attack by José. Carmen calls the gypsies, who seize Zuniga. José is now forced to join the outlaws.

ACT III


In their mountain hideout, the smugglers congratulate themselves on their successful career, but José is unhappy in their midst. Carmen finds his homesickness tiresome and busies herself with her friends in telling their fortunes at cards. Frasquita sees an ardent lover, Mercedes a

wealthy husband and Carmen only death ("En vain pour éviter"). The gypsies leave, and Micaëla enters in search of José ("Je dis que rien ne m'épouvant"). A shot rings out, and she flees. It was José's gun, aimed at Escamillo, who has come looking for Carmen. The two start to fight with knives and are separated by the gypsies; Escamillo invites them all to his next bullfight and leaves after insulting José, whose jealousy is reaching dangerous bounds. Remendado brings in Micaëla, and she begs José to return home. Carmen, tired as she is of him, agrees, but he knows what's on her mind and vows to find her after he has seen his mother.

ACT IV


In Seville's Plaza de Toros, the crowd gathers for the bullfight, hailing Escamillo. Carmen is with him and assures him of her love; she waits in the square, though her girlfriends warn that José has been seen prowling around, looking desperate. Carmen is a fatalist; she knows she must face José eventually. Sure enough, he enters ("C'est toi?" "C'est moi!"), demanding that she give up Escamillo. But she and José are finished, she says, tossing his ring in his face, as the crowd is heard cheering for Escamillo. When Carmen tries to run past José into the arena, he stabs her, falling in despair by her body.

Courtesy of Opera News



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BRAVO 23

Notes on *Carmen* from Director Ron Daniels

The question that immediately springs to mind on thinking about *Carmen* is why is a platoon of soldiers stationed near a cigar factory in the heart of the industrial district of Sevilla? This is no remote border outpost and no foreign invasion is expected. There is no terrorist alert. Why, then, are the soldiers there, instead



Daniels

of confronting some enemy on foreign soil?

The answer perhaps lies in *Carmen*, the original novel by Prosper Mérimée on which the Georges Bizet's opera is based.

In the novel, we learn that in the large factory "four or five hundred women work in the manufacture of cigars and men are not permitted to enter the building because, in the intolerable heat the women, especially the young ones, work in a state of undress." What's more, in the previous chapter of the novel Mérimée has already described how, when the *angelus* strikes, the young working class women take off their clothes and go down to the Guadalquivir River to bathe while high above them, on the quay side, men gather to stare with bulging eyes at the naked bathers...

In the opera, of course, the women come out of the hot factory into the fresh air to smoke — and it's worth remembering that for a Victorian man, a woman smoking a cigarette was a sure sign of her questionable morality! — and to sing about love, not as the mainstay of stable marriage, but of a love as transient and as insubstantial as the smoke that rises from their cigarettes. Not exactly the foundation upon which respectable, bourgeois society is built.

What a wonderful image! Young bucks from as far away as Paris, M. Mérimée's hero among them, gaping in awe at the nearly naked, cigarette smoking women!

Could this be why the soldiers are stationed near the factory — to prevent a possible breach of the peace by keeping these excitable, lusty young men at bay and at a safe distance from so many tempting young women?

Perhaps. However, these are not prim, proper, refined young ladies who delicately sip tea in elegant, cosmopolitan drawing rooms. They are strong, uninhibited women who earn their living by the sweat of their labor and who, because they are financially independent, can claim as much freedom as their male counterparts. They are an unruly, combustible work force that could strike at any moment, endangering production, or become, as in fact in the opera they do become, violent and create a riot!

And then of course, there's *la Carmencita*, the beautiful, sensuous, and fearless gypsy, not



Lili del Castillo in *Carmen*



Irina Mishura as *Carmen* in Michigan Opera Theatre's 2001 production.

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to be trusted, who scoffs at authority and is ready to pick a quarrel with her fellow workers if she feels in any way slighted. As lethal with her tongue as she is with a *navaja* — she draws an X in blood on the face of her adversary — she is the ultimate outsider, who meditates on the elusive, turbulent nature of love and her own affections — “love is a bird that cannot be caged...love is a gypsy child who knows no law”!

One look at Carmen and Don José is doomed. The title Don means he is an aristocrat — he calls himself a “vieux

Chrétien” because his is an ancient, impoverished Christian family of landowners that predates the invasion of Spain by the Moors. Though he was destined for the priesthood, he is no limp wristed effete, but a man prone to violence, having killed a companion over a friendly game of *paume*. Impulsive and insanely jealous, he cannot fathom or tolerate the freedom that Carmen claims for herself.

The gypsy and the aristocrat. *Chien et loup ne font pas longtemps bon ménage*. The dog and the wolf do not live together

long. The gypsy Carmen is the quintessential free spirit, for whom love is an exhilarating adventure and who prizes her freedom above life itself.

On the other hand, the aristocrat Don José wants to have and to hold all for himself — and if he cannot possess her, he will make her eternally his own by taking her life.

We can imagine the creator of these extraordinary

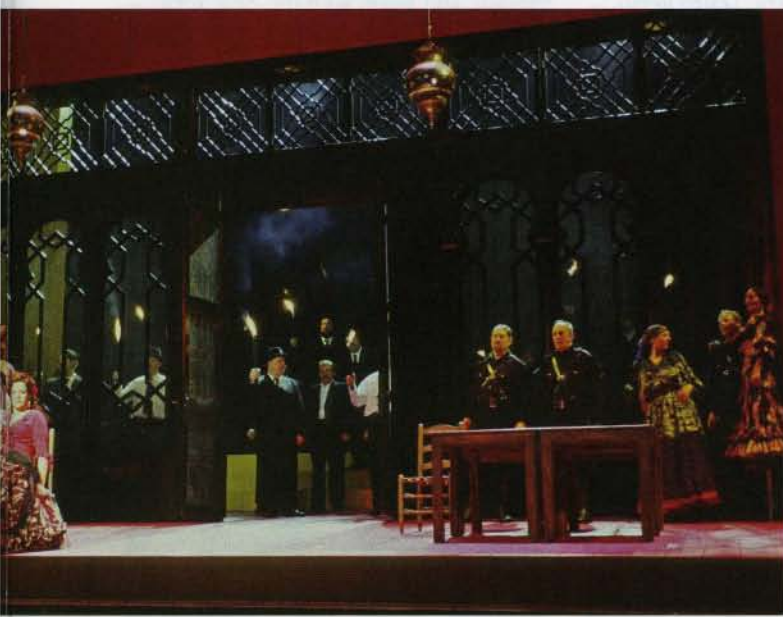
characters, Prosper Mérimée himself, perhaps, (with Georges Bizet following in his footsteps some years later) and many other Parisian gentlemen, leaving the chilly banks of the Seine, heading southwards to warmer climes and the stunning sight of the naked women bathing in the Guadalquivir. Exchanging for a moment — in the imagination, at least — their bourgeois respectability for a life of daring adventure and sensual bliss in the company of cigarette smoking girls, freedom loving smugglers and death defying bullfighters. Imagining themselves seduced by the exotic gypsy, the “strange and savage” witch with her magically scented flowers and irresistible, devilish charms, a woman to be had but never possessed. Knowing all the time that this elusive dream would be almost too much to bear, and would inevitably come to a tragic end.

And as we watch and listen to the opera, we also travel towards the bright, warm colors of the South and we too share in the vision of beauty as the scantily clad women pour out of the cigar factory. Like Don José, we too are seduced by the beguiling Carmen, though she warns us that her love cannot be trusted. And when indeed her love starts slipping away, we share in Don José’s increasing despair and finally, as the knife plunges into her heart, in his sense of devastation and loss.

And I wonder if, beyond the glorious music which is so familiar to us but still always takes our breath away, one of the reasons we feel so attracted to the opera is because these two mythic characters, Carmen and Don José, somehow embody conflicting tendencies within each one of us — our dream of riding forever on horseback over fields and mountains, free from the travails of our humdrum daily lives, as well as our realization that this freedom is, sadly, utterly impossible.

By Ron Daniels

Photos: Mark Mancinelli



Michigan Opera Theatre's 2001 production of *Carmen*

Artist Profiles

SUZANNE MALLARE ACTON

Chorus Master, *The Elixir of Love*,
Carmen

As MOT's long term Assistant Music Director and Chorus Master, Suzanne Mallare Acton has prepared the adult and children choruses for more than 125



productions. She is the Director of Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus and also serves as the company resident conductor. For MOT, conducting

credits include *West Side Story*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Music Man*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *Die Fledermaus*, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, *La Bohème*, *The Tender Land*, and *La Traviata*. Additional conducting credits include *My Fair Lady* and *La Traviata* for Dayton Opera, *The Merry Widow* and *Madama Butterfly* for Artpark, and *Tosca* for Augusta Opera. As guest conductor, Ms. Acton has worked with the Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra, The Auditorium Theatre, Lexington Bach Festival Orchestra, and the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra.

LISA AGAZZI

Mercedès, *Carmen*

American Mezzo-Soprano Lisa Agazzi makes her Michigan Opera Theatre debut in the role of Mercedès in *Carmen*, a role



she has also sung with San Diego Opera, Utah Opera and Musica Riva Festival in Italy. She most recently sang the role of Feodor in *Boris Godunov* opposite

Ferruccio Furlanetto and the Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, both with San Diego Opera. She won first place and the Audience Choice Award in the San Diego District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and a Borsa di Studio Award in the Riccardo Zandonai International Opera Competition. A Metro Detroit native, she is active as a soloist here, most recently singing a solo concert including *Les Nuits d'été* at the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts with the Warren Symphony Orchestra.

KATE ALDRICH

Carmen, *Carmen* (9, 13, 16)

American mezzo-soprano Kate Aldrich made her Michigan Opera Theatre debut in 2001, performing in both *Falstaff* and



the title role in *Carmen*. She is rapidly earning international recognition as one of today's leading vocal artists, and has been heard at leading theaters throughout

the world including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Salzburg Festival, Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, the Hamburg State Opera, Teatro Regio of Torino, Los Angeles Opera, L'Opera de Montreal, the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Duesseldorf, Teatro Sao Carlos in Lisbon, New York City Opera, and many more. Recent engagements include Theatre du Capitole as Giulietta in Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, her first Verdi Requiem at the Sanxay Soirees Lyrique, *La Pulcinella* in the Montpellier Festival with Daniele Gatti, and Adalgisa in *Norma* with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal. Upcoming engagements include the title role in *Carmen* with Deutsche Oper Berlin, Lenore in *La Favorite* in Spain and Oktavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* with Opera Marseille.

BURAK BILGILI

Dulcamara, *The Elixir of Love*

Turkish bass Burak Bilgili returns to Michigan Opera Theatre to perform the role of Dulcamara in *The Elixir of Love*, after his debut in the fall 2004 season



production of *Rigoletto*. From the time of his professional operatic debut at the Teatro alla Scala in the 2002-03 season as Don Alfonso in *Lucrezia Borgia*, bass Burak

Bilgili has enjoyed a busy international schedule of engagements. He opened the 2007-2008 season as the Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Virginia Opera, followed by his debut at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino as Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino*, Don Basilio in Toronto, and Nourabad in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* at the Florida Grand Opera in Miami. Future engagements include *Il Piccolo Marat* at Teatro Gratticciolo and Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* at Grand Théâtre

JANINAH BURNETT

Micaëla, *Carmen*

Soprano Janinah Burnett made her Michigan Opera Theatre debut in the fall 2006 season as Bess in *Porgy and Bess*.



A winner of the 2008 Sullivan Foundation Award, her timeless vocal quality is evident in her poignant portrayals of signature roles, such as Micaëla in *Carmen*.

Ms. Burnett was a member of the sister group to Three Mo' Tenors entitled *Three Mo' Divas* and recently toured to Austria, Sweden, and Japan with the New York Harlem Productions company performing the roles of Clara and Bess in *Porgy and Bess*. Additionally, Ms. Burnett has performed with Ray Charles, Dr. Billy Taylor, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and at Oprah Winfrey's personal birthday celebration at the home of Maya Angelou. Upcoming engagements include Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with Opera Cleveland.

STEPHEN COSTELLO

Nemorino, *The Elixir of Love* (28, 4)

American tenor Stephen Costello makes his Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Nemorino in *The Elixir of Love* during the spring 2009 season. His recent



engagements included the role of Christian in David DiChiera's *Cyrano* at Opera Company of Philadelphia, the Duke in *Rigoletto* with Deutsche Oper Berlin, Cassio in

Otello at the Salzburg Festival with Riccardo Muti, and Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Fort Worth Opera. A graduate of the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, Mr. Costello won first prize in the 2006 George London Foundation For Singers Competition as well as first prize and audience prize in the Giargari Competition. Future projects include opening the 2009-2010 Covent Garden season, a return to the Metropolitan Opera, for the opening production of the 2011-2012 season, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with Deutsche Oper Berlin and Cincinnati Opera, and a debut with Lyric Opera of Chicago.

RON DANIELS

Stage Director, *Carmen*

Ron Daniels returns to Michigan Opera Theatre in the spring 2009 season to stage *Carmen*, after his debut with the company directing the same production



in 2001. Born in Brazil and currently residing in New York, Ron Daniels is an Honorary Associate Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company and

former Artistic Director of the RSC's The Other Place Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon, England. His work over 15 years with the RSC includes many productions of Shakespeare plays including *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, two productions of *Hamlet* as well as major new works by David Edgar, David Rudkin, Pam Gems, Paula Milne, Naomi Wallace, Stephen Poliakoff and Anthony Burgess, with whom he collaborated on an adaptation of *A Clockwork Orange*, with music specially written for the production by Bono and The Edge of U2.

LILI DEL CASTILLO

Choreographer, *Carmen*

Choreographer Lili del Castillo made her MOT debut in the 2001 production of *Carmen* and returns in 2009 in the



same role. She trained in Spain where she became a member of the Antonio Alonso Troup. After her return to the U.S., she formed her own group, Rincon

Flamenco. As its director she has appeared in venues throughout the Southwest and performed as a soloist in conjunction with other companies. She has appeared with partner Manolo Rivera in the opera *Carmen* in Orlando, New Orleans, and with the Florentine Opera. As a soloist, she has been a choreographer, dance and movement coach as well as a performer in *Carmen* and *La Traviata* with Houston Grand Opera, Opera Pacific, and Atlanta Opera. With Kentucky Opera, she partnered with Antonio Hidalgo in *Carmen* and was asked to return for their production of *La Traviata*. Other credits include performances with New Mexico Opera Theatre and Opera Northwest in Productions of *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.

MARK FLINT

Conductor, *Carmen*

Conductor Mark D. Flint returns to Michigan Opera Theatre to conduct *Carmen*, his 28th production with the company, and the opera that he



conducted in his debut with MOT in 1977. Most recently, Mr. Flint conducted the world premiere production of David DiChiera's *Cyrano*, which he also orchestrated. A

native of West Virginia, he previously served as Music Director and Principal Guest Conductor for Michigan Opera Theatre, Music Director of San Francisco Opera's Western Opera Theatre, and Artistic and Music Director of the Illinois Opera Theatre at the University of Illinois. Augusta Opera Artistic Director and Principal Conductor, he has led the majority of orchestras in world-renowned opera houses and symphonies throughout the United States and Canada.

KENDALL GLADEN

Carmen, *Carmen* (10, 15, 17)

Young American mezzo-soprano Kendall Gladen makes her Michigan Opera Theatre debut in the spring 2009



production of *Carmen*. She is quickly earning a reputation as an important young artist and has been heard throughout the United States at the Washington

National Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Sarasota Opera and Opera North. She is currently in her second year as an Adler Fellow with San Francisco Opera, where she was previously a participant in the Merola Opera Program. Recent engagements include performances of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the San Francisco Symphony in San Francisco and New York at Carnegie Hall, and a performance as Mercedes in *Carmen* with Los Angeles Opera.

SARAH HATTEN

Wig and Makeup Designer, *The Elixir of Love*, *Carmen*

Sarah Hatten returns to Michigan Opera Theatre in the spring 2009 season to design hair and makeup for *The Elixir of Love* and *Carmen*. She has recently designed wigs and makeup for Des Moines Metro Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre, and her last designs included the



fall 2008 season's *Madame Butterfly*. Previously, she has also worked as an Assistant Wig and Makeup Designer for Central City Opera, Cleveland Opera, Omaha

Opera and Nevada Opera.

CONSTANCE HOFFMAN

Costume Designer, *Carmen*

A graduate of the universities of New York and California, Constance Hoffman is Associate Professor and Head of



Costume Design at New York University; and was the recipient of the Outer Critics Circle Award in 2000.

Opera credits include *Grendel*, *Der Fliegender*

Holländer, *La Grande-Duchesse de Gerolstein* (Los Angeles); *Giulio Cesare* (Virginia, Florida); *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Minnesota); *Rigoletto* (San Francisco); *Salsipuedes*, *Carmen* (Houston); *Orphee*, *L'Etoile*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La fanciulla del West*, *Acis and Galatea* (Glimmerglass/NYCO); *The Merchant and the Pauper* (Saint Louis); *La Traviata* (Tel Aviv); *Salome* (Lithuanian Opera); *The Queen of Spades* (Bayerische Staatsoper); *Tannhäuser* (Opéra National de Paris, Tokyo Opera Nomori). Theatre credits include *The Green Bird* (Broadway); *Mr. Marmalade* (Roundabout Theatre Company); *Tiny Alice* (Second Stage); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare Theatre, Washington, Center Stage, Baltimore).

ROGER HONEYWELL

Don José, *Carmen* (9, 13, 16)

Canadian tenor Roger Honeywell made his MOT debut in the spring 2005 season in the world premiere of *Margaret*



Garner, and returns this season in the role of Don José in *Carmen*. Recently Mr. Honeywell made his debut with the Metropolitan Opera in a new production of *Doctor Atomic*,

where he reprised the role of Captain James Nolan. Other recent engagements include Macduff in *Macbeth* with Opéra de Montréal and his debut with Fort Worth Opera as Don José in *Carmen*. Following his performances in Detroit, he

will perform the role of Geoff Hammond in the world premiere of Paul Moravec's *The Letter* with the Santa Fe Opera.

JIM INGALLS

Lighting Designer, *Carmen*

Lighting designer Jim Ingalls makes his MOT debut in the spring 2009 season designing lighting for *Carmen*. For Lyric



Opera of Chicago, Mr. Ingalls has designed John Adams' *Dr. Atomic* directed by Peter Sellars; *Salome*, directed by Francesca Zambello, Metropolitan Opera;

Orfeo et Eurydice, directed by Mark Morris; *Salome*; *Les Troyens*; *War and Peace*; *The Gambler*; *Wozzeck*. For Opera Nationale de Paris, he has designed *Tristan und Isolde*, with Bill Viola video; Kaija Saariaho's *Adriana Mater* and *L'Amour de Loin*. Recent productions include: *Caroline, or Change* for Baltimore's CenterStage; *Romeo and Juliet*, *On Motifs of Shakespeare* for Mark Morris Dance Group; *Kafka on the Shore* for Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre. He frequently collaborates with Melanie Rios-Glaser and Saint Joseph Ballet in Santa Ana, CA.

DALIBOR JENIS

Belcore, *The Elixir of Love*

Slovakian baritone Dalibor Jenis made his Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* in the fall 2006 season, and returns in the spring 2009 season in the role of Belcore in *The Elixir of Love*. In the 2007-2008 Season, Mr. Jenis performed Enrico in *Lucia di*



Lammermoor at the Ópera de Oviedo in Spain, followed by performances as Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin with Jossi Wieler-Sergio Morabito and Philippe Jordan. He debuted at the Bayerische Staatsoper München in the title role of *Eugene Onegin*, which he subsequently performed in Tokyo. He returned to the Staatsoper Hamburg as Germont in *La Traviata* and performed Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut* at the Palermo Opera.

WILLIAM JOYNER

Don José, *Carmen* (10, 15, 17)

American tenor William Joyner makes his Michigan Opera Theatre debut in the



spring 2009 production of *Carmen*. A native of North Carolina, Mr. Joyner has established himself as one of the most sought after tenors on the international opera scene. Mr. Joyner has performed with more than 40 opera companies and symphony orchestras around the world, including The Washington Opera, the New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Teatro alla Scala in Milan, the Rome Opera, Opéra National de Paris, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin. Recent engagements include performances with Opera Memphis as Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Don José in *Carmen* at Austin Lyric Opera, and Arindal in *Die Feen* at Théâtre du Châtelet. In July 2009 William Joyner will create the role of Le Journaliste in the world premiere of Wainwright's *Prima Donna*.

STEPHEN LORD

Conductor, *The Elixir of Love*

Maestro Stephen Lord made his MOT conducting debut in the spring 2004 production of *The Magic Flute*, and returns to conduct the spring 2009 production of *The Elixir of Love*. Maestro Lord is continually praised for conducting both traditional and contemporary operatic works, and is currently music director for Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Recent conducting engagements this season included a production of *La Traviata* with Portland Opera, *Madama Butterfly* for Opera Colorado and *Macbeth* with Opéra de Montréal.



STEPHEN LUSMANN

Zuniga, *Carmen*

American baritone Stephen Lusmann made his Michigan Opera Theatre debut in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* in 2003. For the 2009 Spring Opera Season he returns as Zuniga in *Carmen*. During the course of his rich operatic career, Mr. Lusmann has performed more than forty leading roles, with many of the world's leading opera companies, including Oper der



Stadt Bonn, Opera de Monte Carlo, Stadtheater Luzern, Washington Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Boston Lyric Opera and Opera Carolina among others. Mr. Lusmann is an Associate Professor of Voice at the University of Michigan and is also a member of the voice faculty at the Seagle Music Colony. He can be heard on recordings of Strauss' *Der Friedenstag* on the Koch International label, *Operangala* on Tonstudio AMOS and on *E. E. Cummings: An American Circus* on Centaur Records.

WES MASON

Dancairo, Morales, *Carmen*

Baritone Wes Mason made his Michigan Opera Theatre debut as a Barbara Gibson Young Apprentice in the 2008 spring season as Perichaud in *La*



Rondine and returns this spring season as Dancairo and Morales in *Carmen*. Recently, Mr. Mason appeared as Sid in the University of Michigan's production of *Albert*

Herring as well as the title role in *Eugene Onegin*. This past summer, he returned to Seagle Music Colony for his fourth season, performing the roles of Marcello in *La Bohème*, Curly in *Oklahoma!*, Cascada in *The Merry Widow* and Harry in Ricky Ian Gordon's *Morning Star*. In May of 2010, he will appear in the starring role of Reinaldo Arenas in the world premiere of Jorge Martin's *Before Night Falls* with Fort Worth Opera. Wes, a 2008 Mid-South Regional Finalist of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, recently graduated from the University of Michigan with his Bachelor's in voice performance under Professor Stephen Lusmann.

ALLEN MOYER

Set Designer, *The Elixir of Love*

Set designer Allen Moyer is a graduate of New York University Tisch School of the Arts, and has designed numerous productions for opera and musical theater. His credits include *Street Scene* for the Williamstown Theatre Festival; *Mother Courage* for Steppenwolf; *The Abduction From The Seraglio* for Houston Grand Opera; *Miss Havisham's Fire* for Opera Theatre of St. Louis; *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Dallas Opera;



La Bohème and *The Mother of Us All* for New York City Opera and Glimmerglass Opera; *Luisa Miller* for Spoleto Festival; *Friend of The People* for Scottish Opera; *A Streetcar Named Desire* for the Gate Theatre in Dublin.

MARTIN PAKLEDINAZ

Costume Designer, *The Elixir of Love*

A graduate of Wayne State University and the University of Michigan, Martin Pakledinaz designed the costumes for the new MOT spring 2009 production of *The Elixir of Love*.



His work in opera includes works with the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Santa Fe Opera, and Houston Grand Opera. Mr. Pakledinaz's work in dance includes an extensive collaboration with Mark Morris, and dances for such diverse choreographers as George Balanchine, Eliot Feld, Deborah Hay, Daniel Pelzig, Kent Stowell, and Lila York. Among other awards, Mr. Pakledinaz is the recipient of Tony Awards, a Drama Desk, and Obie Award.

PAUL PALAZZO

Lighting Designer, *The Elixir of Love*

A graduate of the New York University MFA program in theatrical design, Paul Palazzo has worked in opera, theatre, and ballet all over the world.



On Broadway he has been part of the lighting design team for such hit musicals as *Sunset Boulevard*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Miss Saigon*, *Big*, and *Falsettos*. He has designed lighting for the Houston Grand, Los Angeles, Portland, Minnesota, and Wolftrap Operas, in addition to numerous North American regional theatres. Recent engagements include lighting design for *The Elixir of Love* with Opera Colorado, *Nabucco* with the Dallas Opera, *Don Pasquale* with Houston Grand Opera, and *Der Rosenkavalier* with the Seattle Opera.

AILYN PÉREZ

Adina, *The Elixir of Love* (28,4)

American soprano Ailyn Pérez made her Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* during the fall 2007 opera season. A native of



Chicago, Ms. Pérez's "inner radiance combined with vocal luster" has made her one of the most promising and exciting young artists today.

Recently, Ms. Pérez appeared as Marzelline in *Fidelio* with Opera Company of Philadelphia and at the Salzburg Festival singing Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette*. This past summer, she bowed as the Four Heroines in *The Tales of Hoffmann* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Prior to this engagement, she appeared as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the Salzburg Festival on tour to Japan. Future engagements include a performance as Leila in *The Pearl Fishers* with Teatro Municipal in Santiago, Juliette in *Romeo and Juliet* with San Diego Opera, and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* at Opera Company of Philadelphia.

JAMES ROBINSON

Stage Director, *The Elixir of Love*

American stage director James Robinson makes his Michigan Opera Theatre staging debut with the spring 2009 production of *The Elixir of Love*. Regarded as one of America's most inventive and sought after directors, he has won wide acclaim for productions that range from



the standard repertory to world premieres to seldom performed works. The 2007-08 season included productions of *Abduction from the Seraglio* and *La Bohème* for Houston Grand Opera, *The Elixir of Love* for Boston Lyric Opera and his widely seen production of *Nixon in China* for Opera Colorado. Upcoming engagements include *Il Trittico* for San Francisco Opera, *Nixon in China* for The Canadian Opera Company, and *Abduction from the Seraglio* for Welsh National Opera.

AMANDA SQUITIERI

Adina, *The Elixir of Love* (27, 29)

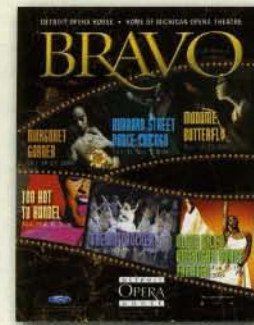
Soprano Amanda Squitieri made her Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Lisette in last season's production of *La Rondine*.



Praised for her "warm soprano" voice, "bright, ripe" sound, and "crystal-line" soprano tones, Ms. Squitieri recently made her debut with Opéra National de Paris as

Esmeralda in *The Bartered Bride*. Other recent engagements include *La Rondine* with Los Angeles Opera, *Don Giovanni* with Washington National Opera, and the New York City premiere of *What's Next?*. She also recently sang the role of Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte* at Los Angeles Opera conducted by James Conlon, and she will return to Los Angeles Opera in 2009 for the world premiere of Daniel Catan's *Il Postino* with Plácido Domingo and Rolando Villazon.

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A Landmark Year for MOT:

Learning at the Opera House Celebrates 10 Years!

News from the Michigan Opera Theatre Department of Community Programs and Learning at the Opera House

Karen V. DiChiera, Director

JOHN GRIGAITIS



Students from Opera Camp 2008

Learning at the Opera House Celebrates 10 years!

In a landmark year celebrating the 30th anniversary of the MOT Community Programs Department, another important anniversary this year includes the 10th anniversary of Learning at the Opera House.

Building on input and insights from the community, Learning at the Opera House began its groundbreaking series of summer programs over ten years ago. Community Programs Director Karen V. DiChiera developed the concept and collaborated with local leaders to form the educational project. With a group of influential Detroiters — including Frank Angelo, Harriet and Irving Berg, Dr. Wallace Peace, Martin Herman, M.L. Liebler and help from Community Programs staff, including Dolores Tobis, Mark Vondrak and “Time Out for Opera” producer Jonathan Swift — LATOH was born.

The LATOH efforts resulted in programs for all ages and abilities, including subjects that are a part of opera but not usually presented by opera companies, such as music composition, architecture, art, history, poetry, writing, decorative plaster, personal oral histories of people involved in arts and education, daytime workshops for youngsters of all ages, and college-age “pre-professionals” hoping to enter the opera field. As a result, Learning at the Opera House has created unique opportunities to allow gifted people of all ages training for a career in the arts.

Better than ever...Learning at the Opera House Returns for 2009

Learning at the Opera House is once again the place to learn this summer. Running June 22 through August 2, there are programs, classes, and workshops for everyone: children, adults, and everyone in-between. Returning Learning at the Opera House programs include the popular Create and Perform class, Operetta Workshop, poetry classes, opera lectures, architecture lectures in partnership with Preservation Wayne, and Opera Camp. This year's LATOH programs will have a Greek theme.

Returning this summer is a unique family learning program. More details on the family program and other LATOH programs will be available online at www.MichiganOpera.org.

Dreaming of a Career in Opera?

If you're in high school and dream of singing professionally, the Michigan Opera Theatre Vocal Arts Performance Intensive is a perfect opportunity to advance your pre-professional voice career. Taught by renowned vocal health professional and Department of Community Programs Singing Voice Specialist Betty Lane, the program will give a jump start to high school students with a passion for singing to prepare for voice education at the college level. The intensive will take place over five Saturdays in March and April, with a concluding student recital on Saturday, April 4. For more information, contact Betty Lane at (313) 237-3238, blane@motopera.org or visit the MOT website, www.MichiganOpera.org.

Department of Community Programs Launches New Touring Shows

The spring 2009 season includes the following exciting new programs that will travel to schools, churches, and community groups.

Footsteps to Freedom

Footsteps to Freedom chronicles the history of black Americans and the African-American experience. Students will learn about the rich legacy and many contributions of African Americans in today's society, grown out of the sounds, songs, rituals, music, dance, spoken word, and rhythms of ancient Kemet, now known as Africa.

The Pied Piper of Hamelin

Follow along with Michigan Opera Theatre's touring programs as they present the *Pied Piper of Hamelin* by Seymour Barab as the latest touring production offering. The Pied Piper of Hamelin promises the local village that he can rid the town of its rats, and in return, the town will pay him handsomely. When the town does not fulfill its promise of payment, the Pied Piper teaches the townspeople a lesson. Like the Grimm legend (only with a happy ending), children learn the value of keeping promises.

To book any touring programs for your school or group, contact Dolores Tobis at (313) 237-3429.



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JOHN GRIGAITIS

Michigan Opera Theatre Touring Programs artists Trish Shandor and Mark Vondrak in *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*.

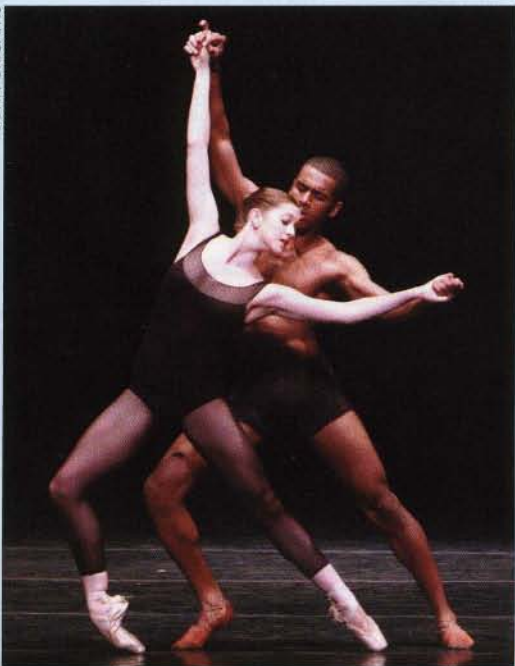
News from the Margo V. Cohen Center for Dance at the Detroit Opera House

Carol Halsted, Director

Cozy Up for a Dance Film Night

Dance lovers from all over the Detroit metro area are finding their way to the Opera House on Tuesday nights for the biggest bargain and hottest ticket in town – the Dance Film series. On Tuesday, February 24 there will be a special showing of the film “Burn the Floor” plus other clips of ballroom dance from the 20th and 21st century.

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ABT Summer Intensive 2008 students in the final performance at the Detroit Opera House

And on Tuesday March 24, our curator of films, Larry Glowczewski, has chosen the complete ballet Sylvia with choreography by Frederick Ashton and music by Leo Delibes. On April 21, there will be a special showing of excerpts from the choreography of George Balanchine to the music of Tchaikovsky. The season ends May 19 with an evening of dance in musicals – remember Busby Berkley? Come in from the cold, sip some wine and enjoy the films.

Learn from Professional Dancers at the Detroit Opera House!

Master classes with professional companies continue to be a popular and well attended event. Coming up this winter will be the Grand Rapids Ballet special ballet class for 10 – 13 year olds on Saturday February 28 at 10 a.m. followed by a master class with American Ballet Theatre on Saturday March 14 for intermediate/advanced dancers from ages 14 – adult. Classes are free with corresponding Opera House performance ticket or ticket stub. Without a ticket, the master classes are \$25 per class. For information email dance@motopera.org.

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ABT Summer Intensive dancers performing excerpts from “Swan Lake.”

Dream of Being on Stage with ABT?

The Opera House is offering a very special opportunity for dancers and actors to perform in American Ballet Theatre’s *Romeo and Juliet* as supers March 13 – 15 with rehearsals beginning March 6. For registration forms email dance@motopera.org or visit www.michiganopera.org. Imagine dancing on the same stage as David Hallberg or Gillian Murphy and see the entire performance from the stage!

Special Dance Studio Fundraising Opportunity

The Detroit Opera House launched a new fundraising program for area dance schools this past fall. For each ticket sold by the studio or school, the Opera House will send back \$10.00 to your dance studio. For example, Sherry’s Academy in Carleton, Michigan, made over \$1,000 from *Nutcracker* tickets alone! For information on this program contact Kim Curtis at (313) 237-3251.

Ballet Renaissance Now Offers Classes at the Detroit Opera House

Ballet Renaissance is now teaching weekly ballet classes at the Detroit Opera House. Classes are held on Monday and Tuesday evenings from 5:15 – 8:15. Mr. Radoslaw Kokoszka and Ms. Brianna Furnish are co-directors. Call 313-469-0694 for further information and registration.

JOHN GRIGAITIS



Students at the Detroit Opera House summer intensive, 2009. Copyright 2010, Michigan Opera Theatre

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Sharon Faulkner, Production Administrator

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Roberto Mauro, Artistic Consultant

Suzanne Mallare Acton, Assistant Music Director & Chorus Master

Diane Bredesen, Orchestra Personnel Manager

Jean Schneider, Repetiteur

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Monika Essen, Property Master & Scenic Artist

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Andrew Griffin, Asst. Lighting Designer & Asst. Technical Director

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IATSE Local #38, Stage Crew

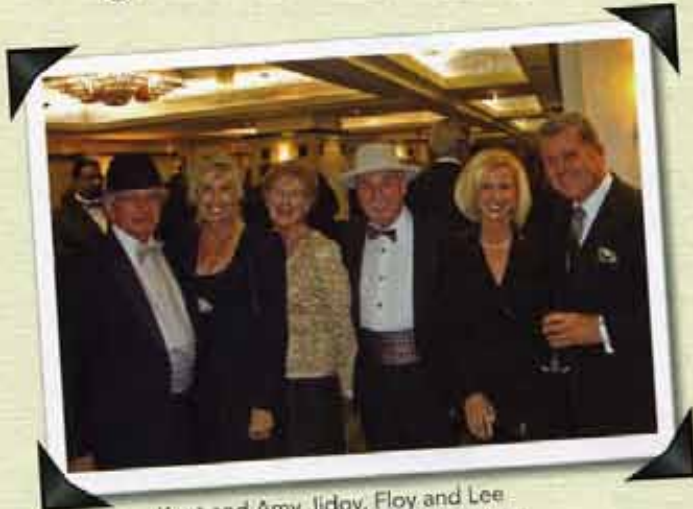
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Karen V. DiChiera and Dr. DiChiera



Opera Ball co-chair Stephanie Germack Kerzic, Dr. DiChiera, and Opera-Ball general chair Betty and Bill Brooks



Opera Ball honorees receive their gifts from general chair Betty Brooks, committee member Nora Moroun, and co-chairs Stephanie Germack Kerzic, Danielle Karmanos, and Denise Lutz.



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Photos by John Grigaitis

Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra

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Charlotte Merckerson,
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Laura Leigh Roelofs, Assistant
Concertmaster+
Velda Kelly+
Bryan Johnston+
Andrew Wu+
Beth Kirton+
Molly Hughes+
Kevin Filewych+

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Victoria Haltom*+
Brooke Hoplamazian+
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Derek Weller*+
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Flute

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Laura Larson+

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Sally Pituch+
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Clarinet

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September 1, 2008 to January 16, 2009

In Honor of Maggie

Allesee's Birthday
Carol Halsted
Ellen D. Kahn
Mary & Charlie Parkhill

In Honor of Mr. Dennis Burns & Mr. John Tyminski's Wedding

Dr. Jeffrey Tranchida & Mr. Noel Baril

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In Honor of Dr. David DiChiera receiving the Neal Shine Award for Exemplary Regional Leadership

Barbara Frankel & Ron Michalak

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Mrs. Denise Lutz

In Honor of Mr. Paul Ewing

2008 Michigan Questers
Fall Convention, John W. Hunter Chapter

In Honor of Mr. Ira Harris' Special Birthday

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Allesee Dance and Opera Resource Library Going Online in June 2009!

Michigan Opera Theatre is pleased to announce that the Allesee Dance and Opera Resource Library is going digital! Starting in June 2009, the library will be offering its catalog to the public, including books, scores, CDs, videos, and hundreds of unique items from the history of MOT productions. From reviews of thirty years of performances, to photographs, to an immense recording collection, MOT is proud to offer this unique resource to the public. All library and historical items will be easily searchable using an innovative new search system specifically developed for Michigan Opera Theatre by Wayne State University Intern Paul Gallagher.

With assistance from the Wayne State University Library and Information Science Program, the

library is currently cataloging and digitizing the MOT archives, both helping to preserve the history of dance and opera in Michigan, and providing a unique training experience for a large, talented group of WSU Library Interns. Archivist and library director Dr. Tim Lentz says, "In bringing the Allesee Library to life over these last two and a half years, we have been thrilled to preserve history, support MOT and create this Dance and Opera Resource Library, as well as help educate WSU Library's next generation of information



Dr. Tim Lentz and Paul Gallagher in the Allesee Dance and Opera Resource Library

professionals."

Keep an eye on the MOT website (www.MichiganOpera.org), starting in June, for a "Library/Archive" tab. Please contact Dr. Tim Lentz, Archivist & Administrative Assistant for the Ford Center for Arts and Learning for more information: tlentz@motopera.org.

JOHN GRIGALITIS

Michigan Opera Theatre and the Detroit Opera House present two of the finest and most diverse opera and dance series in the country. Such an achievement requires many voices and many willing hands helping out behind the scenes. The talented, giving hands of each volunteer has a significant impact on the overall operation of the company. We all thank you for your dedication and support! We thank them for their extraordinary gifts of talent and time that help to make Michigan Opera Theatre a success year after year.

MOTVA Executive Committee

Steven Marlette, President
Nancy Moore, Secretary
John McMullin, Treasurer
Judith Slotkin, Past President
Dodie David, Past President
Gloria Clark, Past President
Betty Brooks, Past President

MOTVA Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

Melinda Anderson, Young Professionals, BravoBravo! Liason
Helen Arnoldi-Rowe, Divas/Divos
Gwen Bowlby, Publicity & Development
Gloria Clark, Dodie David, Opera League
Danielle DeFauw, Boutique
Annette DeLorenzo, Dance Council
Kevin Dennis, Technology
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2008 OPERATORS

Helen Arnoldi-Rowe
Gloria Clark
Dodie David
Marianne Endicott
Alan Israel
Steven & Jennifer Marlette
Robert Martin
Dr. John Novak
Eva Powers
Anthony Ruda
Mark & Elaine Schonberger
Carole Tibbitts

Volunteers

Greetings from the Michigan Opera Theatre Volunteer Association!

Over the past year, we have accomplished great things with the assistance of the many dedicated volunteer members who make up our association. As we celebrate our 15th year, the members of MOTVA continue to provide service, education and advocacy in support of Michigan Opera Theatre.

Like many of you, I was first introduced to staged opera and dance productions locally through Michigan Opera Theatre. Over the years, I have come to appreciate the many volunteers required to bring these world-class performances to life. In short, volunteers are the heart of Michigan Opera Theatre. There isn't a better way to perpetuate Detroit's opera and dance scene than by engaging in one of our many volunteer groups.

Your tax-deductible membership entitles you to participate in as many of the individual volunteer groups as you wish. In these difficult economic times, Michigan Opera Theatre truly appreciates the support of its volunteer members who help to make each season a success.

If you would like to join our organization, please complete the membership form and return it along with your dues. We will contact you and get you engaged in the groups of your choice.

We look forward to working with you and thank you for your interest and involvement in the Michigan Opera Theatre Volunteer Association.



Steven Marlette
President
MOTVA

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

Sandra Tift

Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus volunteer Sandra Tift is a committed hard-working parent and a true asset to the MOTCC. She was committed from the very beginning to helping the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus get off the ground.

Sandra has served as the Committee Chair for both the fundraising and uniform/spiritwear committees for both the past two seasons. She helped raise funds for the chorus during the Winter Fantasy silent auction for the past two years, found donors (both monetary and in-kind), helped design the MOTCC logo and spirit wear, sized for and ordered blazers and spirit wear several times, distributed and collected blazers, and performed any other necessary tasks asked of her.

Sandra manages meetings with both committees almost every week, all without needing any direction from the MOTCC staff.

"Sandra is a real team worker!" says MOTCC Director Suzanne Acton. "She understands what needs to be done, and how to accomplish it."

The MOTCC staff, along with all of us at Michigan Opera Theatre, thank Sandra for her hard work! Bravo!



For more information on one of the many ways to volunteer at Michigan Opera Theatre, please contact Kathi Kucharski at (313) 237-3433 or email kkucharski@motopera.org.

MOTVA Soirée Hosts

Joanne Danto & Arnold Weingarden
Susan & John Entenman
Deborah Meade

Dr. Ali Moiin & Dr. William Kupsky
Gloria & Stanley Nycek

Endow Your Gift and Build the MOT Endowment Fund!

What does endowing your gift mean? It means to make your gift last forever.

For example, take an annual gift of \$1,500. How much would it take to endow the gift so that a charitable organization could receive that amount indefinitely? Since the majority of nonprofits have a policy for spending endowment income at about 5% annually, simply divide the annual gift amount of \$1,500 by 5% and you get \$30,000. Consequently, making an endowment gift of \$30,000 can continue the \$1,500 annual gift indefinitely. Give twenty times the amount of your annual contribution today, and you will have a perpetual gift endowment. In other words, give a little now and make the gift last forever.

In a weakened economy and harsh economic times, we are more conscious and diligent than ever in our efforts to raise endowment funds and hope that you will continue to support us with your generosity. It's a way for you to play a special part in perpetuating a cause that means a lot to you and will

provide a steady, dependable source of income to Michigan Opera Theatre. With a significant endowment, MOT will be able to expand its repertoire, develop new productions, fund the Ford Center for Arts and Learning programs, and continue its rich tradition of featuring minority artists. In addition, as this fund grows, we will be able to receive larger annual distributions to help with our general operations. Consequently, you help us ensure the future and support the present at the same time with your gifts.

You may contribute to the Unrestricted General Endowment Fund at MOT at any level, or set up a specific Named Endowment Fund for the purpose of your choice. Setting up an endowment could be the most farsighted and enduring act of your lifetime!

If you have questions about estate planning, planned giving and endowment, please do not hesitate to call Kim-Lan Trinh, Associate Director, Planned Giving and Major Gifts, at (313) 237-3408 or email her at ktrinh@motopera.org.

Announce "I was here" while you're still here.

Making a gift to the endowment of the Michigan Opera Theatre is a way of leaving an indelible imprint. Find out more by calling Kim-Lan Trinh of the Michigan Opera Theatre at 313.237.3408.

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General Information

PHOTOGRAPHY, RECORDING & COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES

Unauthorized cameras and recording devices are not allowed inside the lobby or theater at any time. The taking of photographs of the theater or any performance is strictly prohibited. As a courtesy to our guests, we ask that all paging devices, cellular telephones and alarm watches be switched to silent mode prior to the start of all performances.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Doctors and parents are advised to leave their seat location (located on ticket) and our emergency number, (313) 237-3257, with the service or sitter in case of an emergency. Please observe the lighted exit signs located throughout the theater. In event of fire or similar emergency, please remain calm and walk – do not run – to the nearest exit. Our ushers are trained to lead you out of the building safely. A trained Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) is onsite during most events. Please see an usher or staff member to contact the EMT.

RESTROOMS

Ladies' restrooms are located off the Ford Lobby (Broadway Street entrance), down the stairs and also on the third floor (Madison Street entrance) – please press "3R" on the elevator to reach this facility. Gentlemen's restrooms are located under the Grand Staircase and also in the third floor (Broadway Street side) – please press "3" on the elevator to reach this facility. Please note: All third floor restrooms are wheelchair accessible. A unisex, wheelchair accessible restroom is located in the Cadillac Opera Café.

NO SMOKING

The Detroit Opera House is a smoke-free facility. Ash receptacles are provided on the exterior of all entry doors for those who wish to smoke.

USHERS

Ushers are stationed at the top of each aisle. If you have a question or concern, please inform an usher, and they will contact management. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer usher, please call the usher hotline at (313) 237-3253.

LATE SEATING

Latecomers will be seated only during an appropriate pause in the program. Late seating policies are at the discretion of the production, not opera house management.

LOST & FOUND

Lost and Found is located in the Safety and Security Department. Please see an usher if you have misplaced an article, or call (313) 961-3500 if you have already left the theater. Items will be held in Lost and Found for 30 days.

PARKING

The Detroit Opera House Parking Center, located next to the Detroit Opera House, is now open. This new state-of-the-art facility is reserved specifically for Detroit Opera House patrons during regularly-scheduled performances. Entrances and exits are located on both John R. Street and Grand River Ave. for added convenience. Prepaid parking is available. Call (313) 237-SING (7464) for more information.

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessible seating locations for patrons in wheelchairs are located in all price ranges on the orchestra level. When inquiring about tickets, please ask about these locations if you require special accommodations.

Assisted Listening Devices are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please see an usher to request this service, or visit the Guest Services desk located in the Vincent Lobby (Madison Street entrance). Although this is a complimentary service, we will request to hold a piece of personal identification while you are using the device. Please contact the ticket office at (313) 237-SING (7464), should you desire special consideration.

CHILDREN

Children are welcome. However, all guests, regardless of age, are required to hold a ticket. Babes in arms are not permitted.

ATM

A National City ATM is available 24/7 inside the Parking Center.

SERVICES

Concessions stands are located on all levels. Please note that food and drinks are not allowed in the auditorium at any time. Coat Check is located at the Guest Services desk, in the Vincent Lobby (Madison Street side). Cost is \$2.00 per coat. Please note that the Detroit Opera House does not accept responsibility for any personal articles that are not checked at the coat check.

CONCEALED WEAPONS

Be advised that, for purposes of Michigan Compiled Laws, Section 28.425o(1)(f), this is an entertainment facility which has a seating capacity of more than 2,500 individuals. It is therefore against the law to carry a concealed weapon on the premises.

RENTAL INFORMATION

The Detroit Opera House is available for rent by your organization. Please call (313) 961-3500, and ask to be directed to the Special Events Department.

TICKET INFORMATION

The Detroit Opera House ticket office hours are as follows: Non-performance weeks – Monday-Friday 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Performance days – 10:00 a.m. through the first intermission of the evening's performance, except Saturdays and Sundays, when the ticket office will open two hours prior to curtain time. Tickets for all public events at the Detroit Opera House are also available through all TicketMaster outlets, by phone at (248) 645-6666, or at www.TicketMaster.com.

DETROIT OPERA HOUSE TOURS

Come join the Opera House Ambassadors for a backstage tour of the Detroit Opera House. Learn about the history of the Opera House and its restoration. Meet the people behind the scenes, tour the stage and see how it operates. Tours are \$10.00 per person. For more information, please call (313) 237-3407, or visit www.MichiganOpera.org.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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Michigan Opera Theatre..	(313) 961-3500
General Information.....	(313) 961-3500
Lost and Found.....	(313) 961-3500
Ticket Office.....	(313) 237-SING (7464)
Usher Hotline.....	(313) 237-3253
Theater Rental Information.....	(313) 961-3500
Detroit Opera House Fax.	(313) 237-3412
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