

SANIBEL MUSIC FESTIVAL PROGRAM NOTES

Opera Theater of Connecticut Andrew Lloyd Webber Superstar of Song and Stage

Kate A. Ford, General Director ~ Alan Mann, Artistic Director
Eric Trudel, Music Director and Piano, Carly Callahan,
Sarah Callinan, Matt Morgan, Charles Widmer, Mark Womack

Tuesday, March 24, 2020

PROGRAM

ASPECTS OF LOVE

book and music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Don Black and Charles Hart

Love Changes Everything..... Ensemble

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics
by Charles Hart, book by Andrew Lloyd
Webber and Richard Stilgoe

Think of Me.....Sarah Callinan

All I Ask of You.....Sarah Callinan, Matt Morgan

The Music of the Night.....Mark Womack

The Phantom of the Opera.....Sarah Callinan, Mark Womack

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR

music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Tim Rice

Pilate's Dream.....Mark Womack

Herod's Song.....Matt Morgan

I Don't Know How to Love Hi.....Carly Callahan
My Mind is Clearer Now.....Charles Widmer
Gethsemane.....Matt Morgan
Superstar.....Ensemble

~INTERMISSION~

EVITA

music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics and book by Tim Rice

The Lady's Got Potential.....Charles Widmer, Sarah Callinan, Carly Callahan
I'd Be Surprisingly Good for You.....Carly Callahan, Mark Womack
High Flying, Adore.....Charles Widmer
You Must Love Me.....Carly Callahan
Another Suitcase.....Sarah Callinan
Don't Cry for Me Argentina.....Carly Callahan

CATS

Music and book by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Andrew Lloyd Webber, based on the 1939 poetry collection *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* by T. S. Eliot.

Memory.....Sarah Callinan

WHISTLE DOWN THE WIND

music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, book by Andrew Lloyd Webber, Patricia Knop, and Gale Edwards, lyrics by Jim Steinman.

Whistle Down the Wind..... Charles Widmer,
Matt Morgan

SUNSET BOULEVARD

music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Christopher Hampton and Don Black

Sunset Boulevard..... Mark Womack
With One Look.....Carly Callahan

REQUIEM

music by Andrew Lloyd Webber

Pie Jesu.....Matt Morgan, Mark Womack

STARLIGHT EXPRESS

music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Richard Stilgoe

There's a Light at the End of the Tunnel.....Ensemble

About Opera Theater of Connecticut

Opera Theater of Connecticut celebrates its 35th anniversary this year! Founded in 1986, it provides professional artists with the vital opportunity to realize their talents in the practice of their crafts, provides access to the Performing Arts to a wide audience by presenting high quality productions at an affordable price, and brings the performing arts into communities not regularly serviced by performing arts companies. Our MainStage productions are fully mounted and accompanied by our orchestra of professional musicians, giving the artists (singers, musicians, designers, and support staff) the chance to expand their potential by experiencing an actual performance. By keeping the ticket prices for our high-quality, fully produced operas, low, and by being the only professional opera company that performs in the summer, we bring in an audience otherwise unreached in the state.

Our MainStage theater, Clinton's Andrews Memorial Theater, at 500 seats, provides an incredibly intimate setting for our presentations, a truly moving experience when audience and performers connect, an event rare in the larger halls in which most operas are performed. We focus our attention on the standard and appropriate repertory since it provides young singers with the roles, they will need to enter the professional marketplace. We also collaborate with other performing groups when needed, primarily incorporating dance into our productions and are proud of our multi-cultural and non-traditional casting.

Our educational outreach program, Overtures, has organized, through various school boards, parent-teacher associations, libraries, historic sites, and community and service agencies, programs that presented not only music theater pieces written for children but also scenes from classical and modern opera. We also organize projects that include the students in the actual presentation of music-theater at their schools. Our touring and concert engagements, as well as our educational programs, bring the wonderful sound of opera into communities that rarely have the chance to see and hear live performances. Even during these trying times, we have expanded the number of our presentations and have developed and deepened our audience base. To date, well over 10,000 audience members, from school children to seniors, have been to Overtures presentations and concerts.

In 1990, Opera Theater began *informance* lectures (Opera Talk) before each show, offering a chance to hear the director talk about the performance, composer, opera, and their place in the operatic story interspersed with humorous anecdotes. These informal and relaxed lectures are quite popular and are attended by ever-growing audiences eager to learn about opera.

Since 1989, we have provided seniors and music students with free attendance to our dress rehearsals, which has given them access to opera presentations they might not have been able to afford. These rehearsals are very well attended and have become a tradition for many seniors and senior organizations.

Opera Theater of Connecticut's Amici Vocal Competition, run by the Amici, our guild, OTC's network of volunteers, provides a competition venue and monetary awards, as well as performance opportunities to young Connecticut singers. Many winners go on to perform nationally and internationally in major opera houses, while others have benefited from participating in a competition.

For 35 years we have been building our audience support, which is now a solid base of participants, with diverse demographics, including age, economic status, and ethnicity. Inexpensive ticket prices and careful attention to repertory, casting, and production values as well as continued our use of supertitles, which provide even greater immediacy with the story for our audience, truly appeal to young audiences and new operagoers, drawing a substantial audience to our performances. Our slogan, "Experience affordable opera in an intimate setting," is more than just a catchy phrase; for Opera Theater it represents the artistic vision, as well as the history, of the company.

Kate Ford (General Director) co-founded Opera Theater of Connecticut in 1986 and has served as the company's producer and administrator and coordinated the costumes for every show since its founding, including its recent production of *L'Elisir d'Amore*. She has been involved in fund-raising and administration for various companies in New York City, including the New York Opera Repertory Theater, New York Lyric Opera, and Opera Ensemble of New York. As well as serving for fifteen years as President of The Friends of Straus Park, which produces concerts in historic Straus Park in New York City, she has been a Jenny Lind National Competition for Sopranos judge. With the Town Players in New York City,

she produced *Little Johnny Jones* and *Fiddler on the Roof* and their American Musical retrospective, *Broadway Goes to Town*. She also produced house concerts and galas such as *Opera Theater of Connecticut's* acclaimed *Wine, Women, and Song*, a luscious blending of opera with a professional wine tasting. Ms. Ford produced and costumed all the operas for *Opera Theater of Connecticut* at the *Sanibel Music Festival* for twenty years, including *Carmen*, *Eugene Onegin*, *La Bohème*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Madama Butterfly*, among others. For *Mississippi Opera*, she costumed their production of *Gianni Schicchi/I Pagliacci*. Recent OTC productions include *Romeo and Juliet*, *In Music and In Verse*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Tosca*, and last summer's *L'Elisir d'Amore*. She also costumed *Sarah Meneely-Kyder's* *Letter from Italy* at the *Bushnell Center*. Upcoming productions include, as part of OTC's 35th anniversary celebrations, *Andrew Lloyd Webber: Superstar of Song and Stage* at the *Sanibel Music Festival* and *Verdi's La Traviata* next summer at the *Andrews Memorial Theater*.

Alan Mann, Artistic Director of *Opera Theater of Connecticut*, is also Executive Director of the *Hartford Chorale*. His work in professional theater and opera has taken him from *New York's Lincoln Center*, *London's West End*, *Edinburgh Festival*, and *Stratford (Ontario) Shakespeare Festival* to the *Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy* and *New York's Broadway*. His directing assignments span traditional opera, contemporary opera, comic opera, musical theater, and classic and modern theater for, among others, *Mississippi Opera*, *Opera Theater of Connecticut*, *Sanibel Music Festival*, *Hartford Opera Theater*, *Center for Contemporary Opera*, *Opera Pacific*, *Opera New England*, *Gold Coast Opera*, *Connecticut Lyric Opera*, *Stratford Festival (Ontario)*, *Il Piccolo Teatro dell'Opera*, *Berkshire Opera*, *Village Light Opera*, and *Jersey Lyric Opera*.

Mr. Mann is also a renowned guest speaker, known for his *Opera Talks* — a series of informal, informative talks on operas and composers. He has also served as *Master of Ceremonies* for numerous concerts, punctuating them with interesting anecdotes and sharing his witty insights and knowledge of the “human” side of opera with the audience.

Mr. Mann frequently serves as a judge for various competitions, including the *Jenny Lind National Competition for Sopranos*, *Connecticut Opera Guild's National Vocal Competition*, *San Antonio Opera Competition*, and

Opera Theater of Connecticut's Vocal Competition, as well as the English-Speaking Union's Shakespeare Competition.

He received degrees in directing from The Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in London in a two-year program designed especially for him. He also studied set design under Chris Hewitt and lighting design with Richard Pilbrow and Molly Friedel. While General and Artistic Director of Mississippi Opera, he produced *An Evening with Renée Fleming* and the ground-breaking production of *The Gospel at Colonus*. Other recent directing engagements include two different productions of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Suor Angelica*, and Verdi's *Falstaff*. He directed and designed Sarah Meneely-Kyder's oratorio *Letter from Italy, 1944* at the Bushnell Center, directed and designed Adamo's *Little Women* for Hartford Opera Theater, and Gounod's *Faust* and Viktor Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* for Connecticut Lyric Opera; recently he directed and designed *Romeo and Juliet*, *In Music and In Verse*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Tosca*, as well as last summer's *L'Elisir d'Amore*. Upcoming productions include, as part of OTC's 35th

anniversary celebrations, Andrew Lloyd Webber: *Superstar of Song and Stage* at the Sanibel Music Festival and Verdi's *La Traviata* next summer at the Andrews Memorial Theater. Mr. Mann also directed and designed Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* for Connecticut Lyric Opera this February.

Eric Trudel, a native of Québec, Canada, graduated with top honors from the Québec Conservatory of Music. He won the prestigious Prix d'Europe Competition, which enabled him to study privately with pianists Garrick Ohlsson, Jean-Claude Penner, Marc Durand, and Louis Lortie. He has taught and performed extensively throughout Canada, Italy, Germany, Austria, Japan, Korea, Spain, and the United States. His New York City credits include recitals at Weil Recital Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Hall, and 92nd Street Y. While pursuing an active career as a pianist, he took conducting lessons from Raffi Armenian and Ronald Zollman. Mr. Trudel has worked as a pianist, coach, and/or conductor with many organizations, including the Montreal International Piano Festival, Banff Center Festival for the Arts, L'Opéra de Montréal, Connecticut Grand Opera, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, OK MOZART Festival, Pro Arte Singers, and Stamford Chorale. He is also Music Director of First Congregational Church in Watertown, Connecticut, and pianist for the Tremont and Emanu-El Synagogue in Scarsdale, New York.

His faculty appointments include the Banff Centre for the Performing Arts, Conservatoire de Musique du Québec in Trois-Rivières, Montréal Opera's Atelier Lyrique, Université du Québec à Montréal, Yale University's School of Music, and Western Connecticut State University. He currently is on faculty at University of Hartford's Hartt School of Music and Southern Connecticut State University.

His long association with the CBC includes numerous television and radio performances as a soloist, chamber musician, and accompanist. On CD, he can be heard on the CBC, Star, and Naxos labels. In 2005, he was involved in the recording of the complete songs of Charles Ives for Naxos.

In 2008, the national publication Classical Singer Magazine chose Eric Trudel as "Vocal Coach of the Year," a crowning acknowledgement of his many years of collaborative work with opera singers. In the opera field, he has recently conducted productions of Carmen, Dialogues des Carmélites, Street Scene, Suor Angelica, Les Mamelles de Tirésias, and Peter Grimes.

Eric Trudel is resident pianist for the Wall Street Chamber Players, a group of first chair musicians from the New Haven Symphony and other orchestras who have been performing in their own subscription series throughout Connecticut for the past 35 years.

Carly Callahan is a singer, actress, director, and producer based in Madison, Connecticut. Recent credits include: Ragtime in Concert (Emma Goldman), Mamma Mia! (Tonya), The Fantasticks (Bellomy), An Ivoryton Playhouse Christmas Hour with David Pittsinger and Friends, Downtown Cabaret Theatre's Phantom (Carlotta), Ivoryton Playhouse's Playhouse on the Shore (Director/Performer), Opera Theater of Connecticut's Madama Butterfly (Kate Pinkerton), Romeo and Juliet, In Verse & Music (Lady Capulet), and Die Fledermaus (Sally). Other favorites: Evita (Eva), A Little Night Music (Desiree). National tour: Victor Victoria. Regional: You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown (Sally) and Mikado (Pitti-Sing). Edinburgh Fringe: Merrily We Roll Along (Gussie). A graduate of Brown University, Carly has an extensive background in the production and marketing aspects of the performing arts and was a production associate with the original cast of The Lion King on Broadway. Carly Callahan is Managing Director of Seaview Productions, the Tony Award-winning producing firm led by Greg Nobile.

Sarah Callinan (soprano) is delighted to return to the Sanibel Music Festival. She was featured last year in both *Singing Sondheim on Sanibel* and *Star-Crossed Lovers of Opera* with Opera Theater of Connecticut. A frequent performer of opera and musical theater, some favorite roles include Despina (*Così fan tutte*) with Opera Carolina, Blondchen (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) with Arizona Opera, Rosina (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), the title role in *La Fille du Régiment* with Connecticut Concert Opera, Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Amina (*La Sonnambula*) at Salt Marsh Opera, Norina (*Don Pasquale*), and Valencienne (*The Merry Widow*) with Cape Cod Opera. She sang the role of Blondie in the “Star Trek” production of *The Abduction from the Seraglio* with Salt Marsh Opera, appeared in the Texas premiere of *The Hotel Casablanca* as Veronique with Abilene Opera, and sang the role of Marianne in *The New Moon* and Helen de Vazquez in Victor Herbert’s *Orange Blossoms* with Light Opera of New York. A recording of *Orange Blossoms* was released in 2015 on the Albany Records label. Most recently, Ms. Callinan sang Adele in *Die Fledermaus* with VOX New England at Mechanics Hall. She performed with the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra for both their annual Holiday Concert and Magically Mozart Concert in the Park series, and also sang for Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker’s inaugural ball. She is a frequent guest soloist with Dan Gabel and The Abletones (an authentic eighteen-piece big band) and is featured on their latest album, *By the Fireside*. Ms. Callinan, a native of Worcester, Massachusetts, attended the Hartt School of Music and graduated from the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music and a Performer’s Certificate in Voice. In addition to her performance schedule, she is also choral director, theater arts teacher, and private voice instructor at her alma mater, Holy Name High School.

Matt Morgan (tenor) has the distinction of making debuts at three of the four theaters at New York’s Lincoln Center. His New York debut came as Don Gomez in Weber’s *Die drei Pintos* with Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra. His New York City Opera debut occurred the same season in the world premiere of Charles Wuorinen’s *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. Following those successes, Mr. Morgan debuted with the National Chorale at Avery Fisher Hall as the tenor soloist in Handel’s *Messiah*. His Kennedy Center debut came in *Das Klagende Lied* with the Washington Chorus. Since his debuts, he has frequently returned as a principal tenor with New York City Opera and National Chorale. Upcoming engagements include appearances with *Broadway Bangkok* (in Bangkok, Thailand) as tenor soloist and lead voice instructor, a return to Crested Butte Music Festival as tenor soloist, and tenor soloist in Beethoven’s

Ninth Symphony with the University of Florida. Engagements include tenor soloist in Haydn's Lord Nelson Mass as well as concerts of opera and musical theatre favorites with the Crested Butte Performing Arts Center, Music Director for Apex Theatre's Chicago, and Vocal Director for the University of Florida's upcoming Pippin. Last season's appearances included Bernstein's Broadway with First Coast Opera, an all-Sondheim concert with the Opera Theater of Connecticut at the Sanibel Music Festival, his debut in both Haydn's Mass in Time of War and Beethoven's Chorale Fantasy with the Fort Myers Mastersingers under the baton of Paul Nadler, the United States premiere of Raval's La Resurreccion de Cristo, and a return to Apex Theatre as Music and Vocal Director for their productions of Newsies and Fun Home. Mr. Morgan recently created the leading role of Charles Drouet for the world premiere recording of Aldridge and Garfein's Sister Carrie, named one of the top five new works of 2018 by Opera News. He returned to Opera Company of Middlebury for his first Rinnucio in Gianni Schicchi.

Charlie Widmer is a young tenor based in Connecticut. In 2016, he received his Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from Western Connecticut State University. His past opera roles include Alfred in Die Fledermaus, Martin in The Tender Land, and Camille de Rosillion in The Merry Widow. Charlie also has experience with musical theater playing such roles as Danny Zuko in Grease and Tony in West Side Story. In 2017, he made his debut with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, performing as Freddy in My Fair Lady and as Benny Southstreet in Guys and Dolls. He also returned to Opera Palooza and sang in the annual event held on the New Haven Green in conjunction with Salt Marsh Opera. In the winter of 2017, he performed in An Ivoryton Playhouse Christmas Hour with David Pittsinger at the historical Ivoryton Playhouse. In 2018, he performed with Opera Theater of Connecticut at the Sanibel Festival. He then returned to Connecticut to perform in Salt Marsh Opera's commissioned work Jack and Jill and the Happening Hill as the leading role Jack. During the summer of 2018, he performed for the second year in Ivoryton Playhouse's cabaret theater series called Playhouse on the Shore as both a singer and guitarist. Last fall, Charlie sang in his first production of La Bohème as Parpignol and in the spring of 2019 he debuted in The Magic Flute as Tamino, both with Salt Marsh Opera. He has also sung with 30 Seconds to Mars at City Winery in New York, with Josh Groban at Madison Square Garden for his Bridges tour, and with Sarah Brightman at Radio City Music Hall for her Hymn tour. Charlie Widmer is also a member of two Connecticut-based acts, the

Bluegrass/Folk band On the Trail as singer and guitarist, and a Soul/Hip-Hop/Funk fusion group called Sub-Urban as lead singer.

Mark Womack (baritone), praised by Opera News as “strikingly warm and gracefully honey toned,” recently performed as Fred Graham in *Kiss me Kate* and the title role in *Eugene Onegin* with Intermountain Opera Bozeman, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with Opera Connecticut, *Carmina Burana* with the Utah, Fargo-Moorhead, and Allentown Symphonies, *Verdi Requiem* with the Las Cruces Symphony Orchestra, *Vaughan Williams’ A Sea Symphony* at Jorgensen Auditorium with the UConn Symphony, *Carl Magnus* in *A Little Night Music* with Syracuse Opera, *Marcello* in *La Bohème* with Opera Birmingham, *Danilo* in *The Merry Widow* with the Northern Lights Music Festival, and *Juan Peron* in *Evita* with Opera North. Mark is privileged to have performed both *Marcello* and *Schaunard* in the Tony Award-winning Broadway production of *La Bohème*, under the direction of Baz Luhrmann. In recent seasons, he has been heard as *Giorgio Germont* in Knoxville Opera’s *La Traviata*, *Macheath* in *The Threepenny Opera* with Amarillo Opera, *Sharpless* in *Madama Butterfly* with Sarasota Opera, *Guglielmo* in *Skylight Opera Theater’s Così fan Tutte*, *Henry Higgins* in Opera North’s *My Fair Lady*, the title role in *Don Giovanni* with both Utah Festival Opera and Anchorage Opera, *Friedrich Bhaer* in *Little Women* with Syracuse Opera, *Marcello* in *La Bohème* and *Enrico* in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, *Escamillo* in *Carmen* with Utah Festival Opera, *Count Almaviva* in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Mississippi Opera, *Lescaut* in *Manon Lescaut* with Dicapo Opera Theater, and numerous appearances with Connecticut Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, El Paso Opera, and Des Moines Metro Opera. Mark Womack is currently on faculty at the Hartt School of Theatre and Dance, University of Connecticut School of Music, and American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City.

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