



WHEATON COLLEGE
Opera Mainstage

PRESENTS:

Two One-Act Operas

Old Maid & The Thief by Gian Carlo Menotti

Trial by Jury by W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan

January 12, 13, 14, 15, 2022 | 7:30 p.m.

Armerding Concert Hall



WHEATON
COLLEGE
CONSERVATORY of MUSIC
For Christ & His Kingdom

Wheaton College OPERA MAINSTAGE Presents

The Old Maid and the Thief & *Trial by Jury*

Director Olivia Doig Skaff
Conductor Nyela Basney
Costume Design Cindy Moon
Lighting Design Diane Fairchild
Orchestra Ensemble Lilian Chou, *piano*
Alissa Cox, *piano*
Callan Downing, *violin*
Grace Cumbee, *violin*
Timothy Holman, *viola*
Helena Norman, *cello*
Emma Cho, *percussion*
Production Thomas Hueber
Sarah Holman

The Old Maid and the Thief

Assistant Director, Kelsie Benware

**Denotes Thursday/Saturday Performances Only*

Miss Todd..... Adelina Peretti, Joanna L. Percy/Lily Wendt*
Miss Pinkerton..... Kari Swanson/Kayla Raschke*
Laetitia..... Kayla Raschke/Kari Swanson*
Bob..... Matthew Pacheco
Radio Hour Host..... Daniel Windus
Radio Hour Production Assistant Joanna L. Percy
Foley Artist..... Kelsie Benware

Trial By Jury

Assistant Director, Bethany Wray

**Denotes Thursday/Saturday Performances Only*

Usher Felicity Roche/Raphaella Zavaglia*
Foreman Kelsie Benware/ Elizabeth Roesner*
Defendant Kevin Neace/Michael Morris*
Judge Michael Morris/Kevin Neace*
Plaintiff..... Charis Cumings/Bethany Wray*
Counsel..... Raphaella Zavaglia/Felicity Roche*
Bridesmaids Kari Swanson and Kayla Raschke
Jury Kelsie Benware, Charis Cumings*, Elisabeth Patterson, Joanna L. Percy,
Adelina Peretti, Lizzie Roesner, Bethany Wray, Lily Wendt

Crews

Props..... Joanna L. Percy, Kelsie Benware, Lizzie Roesner
Costumes..... Kari Swanson, Felicity Roche, Kayla Raschke, Charis Cumings, Lily Wendt
Sets..... Adelina Peretti, Elisabeth Patterson, Matthew Pacheco,
Kevin Neace, Michael Morris, Raphaella Zavaglia
Make Up Bethany Wray

BIOGRAPHIES

OLIVIA DOIG SKAFF, *Director*

Chicago-based soprano Olivia Doig Skaff performs a range of classical and musical theater repertoire across the midwest. Recent performance highlights include Josephine in *HMS Pinafore* (Ohio Light Opera), Zaneeta in *The Music Man* (Ohio Light Opera), Amor in *Ariane et Bacchus* (Haymarket Opera), the title role in *Patience* (Gilbert and Sullivan Company, Inc.), performing at Milwaukee's Summerfest as a resident artist with Florentine Opera, and productions with Music Theater Works, Opera Atelier, and Chicago Opera Theater. She has received awards from the American Opera Society of Chicago, the Musicians Club of Women, the Chicago Bel Canto Foundation, the Orpheus Music Competition, the Chicago Italian Cultural Center, and the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. As an educator, Olivia's teaching includes private voice lessons, musical theater classes, and directing student theater productions. She co-developed the classical art song portion of Lynx Project's education program Composition of a City, which teaches youth about the role of poetry in classical art song and hip-hop rap and aids them in writing their own music and poetry through elements of these two genres. Olivia holds degrees in voice from Wheaton College (B.M.) and Florida State University (M.M.), and is currently a D.M.A. student (ABD) at the University of Illinois.

NYELA BASNEY, *Conductor*

Founder and director of Orvieto Musica, Inc., conductor Nyela Basney received critical acclaim for her 2011 debut with Light Opera Works: “. . . the glorious sound coming from the large orchestra under the baton of Nyela Basney combine[d] to give [this production] fiery intensity. . .” (Chicago Sun-Times).

She has led performances with the American Symphony Orchestra, the Toledo Symphony, Virginia Symphony, Rochester (NY) Philharmonic, the Sarajevo Philharmonic, the Shreveport Symphony Orchestra (over 120 performances), Operafestival di Roma, Lyric Stage in Dallas, and with other professional orchestras throughout Europe, the United States and at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Miss Basney also served as cover conductor for Andrew Litton and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and for John Nelson and the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center.

As an opera conductor she has conducted over 25 full productions also serving as Associate Conductor with El Paso Opera and as Assistant Conductor and Chorusmaster for nineteen productions with the New York Grand Opera under the tutelage of Vincent LaSelva. She has collaborated with Renée Fleming (as pianist and as conductor), and with guest concertmaster of the La Scala Orchestra Alessandro Cervo (as pianist and as conductor).

Maestro Basney established Trusted Alliance Masterclass (The Synergy of Singer and Conductor) in 2017 for which she has given live and virtual master classes in New York, Los Angeles, Denver and Chicago, and at universities and young artist programs.

She attended the Eastman School of Music, receiving her undergraduate and graduate degrees with highest distinction.

CINDY MOON, *Costume Designer*

Cindy Moon is a Chicago-based freelance costume designer, originally from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. She holds an MFA in Costume Design and Technology from Virginia Tech, with a BFA in Fiber Arts from the Maryland Institute College of Art. She enjoys merging her fiber arts background, including textile and experimental fashion design, with her costuming to further explore the characters on stage. Her recent design work includes *Million Dollar Quartet* (Tuacahn Center for the Arts), *4000 Days* (PrideArts), *Twelfth Night* (Midsommer Flight), and assistant designer for *Legally Blonde* (Metropolis Performing Arts Centre). She is the resident costume designer at Niles West Theatre. More of her work can be seen at www.cindymooncostu.me.

DIANE FAIRCHILD, *Lighting Designer*

Diane D. Fairchild is a regional freelance lighting designer based in the Chicago area. She holds an MFA in Lighting Design from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and a BFA in Design and Technology for the Theater from Wright State University in her hometown of Dayton, Ohio. While in New York, Ms. Fairchild designed at The Juilliard School, Dixon Place, New Georges, NYU's Experimental Theatre Wing, Joyce Soho, and several NYC Fringe Festival productions. In 2003, she moved to Chicago and dove into its rich theater scene. Chicago area credits include work with Lifeline (ensemble), Rivendell (ensemble), Raven, Teatro Vista, Babes with Blades, the side project, Wilmette Parks District, Citadel, Erasing the Distance, Grant Community High School, Ovation Theater, Momenta, Academy of Movement and Music, Theater Wit, Wheaton College, Piven, Boho (artistic affiliate), Next, Northlight, Court, Sideshow, and Victory Gardens. Regional credits include work with Intiman, Trinity Rep, Michigan Shakespeare Festival, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Boise Contemporary Theatre, First Stage (Tysons Corner), and City Theatre. Her excellence in design has earned her nominations for Jeff, Broadway World Chicago, Wilde, and Midwest/Chicago Emmy Awards. Diane lives in Evanston with her husband, two children, and their very adventurous tortoise.

DIRECTORS NOTES

The Old Maid and the Thief by Italian-American composer Gian Carlo Menotti was one of the first operas composed specifically for radio and was initially broadcast on April 22, 1939. Inspired by time spent with Samuel Barber's family in West Chester, Pennsylvania, Menotti sought to depict the secrets that can lie hidden behind the idyllic facade of small-town America. The opera, which Menotti labels a "grotesque comedy," considers the lengths to which two women will go to maintain both the company of a man and the appearance of respectability. The older, reputable Miss Todd and her maid Laetitia are faced with a dilemma when they let in a handsome traveler, Bob, who they come to believe is a runaway convict. Motivated by both a desire for Bob to stay and fear that the town will find out about their untrustworthy guest, Miss Todd and Laetitia weave a web of lies and thievery in which they find themselves increasingly ensnared. Of the opera's leading women, Menotti wrote "Women, to fascinate men, must not be too good. I'm celebrating the wickedness of women." Menotti's opera highlights many facets of gender and class found in 1930s small town America, including moments which may have been received as comedic by Menotti's contemporaries but serve better as historical insight for the 21st Century viewer. This production explores the opera's original context as a 1930s radio show.

W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan's English Operetta *Trial by Jury*, also set in this production in 1930s America, depicts many similar dynamics of class and gender which are confronted and leveraged throughout the show. In the trial at hand, the plaintiff Angelina seeks compensation from her ex-fiancé Edwin for breach of promise of marriage, a promise which would have been viewed as a binding contract. Overseen by an admittedly corrupt (but nevertheless respected) judge, the two opposing sides use their charm, reasoning, good looks, emotional distress, and depraved confessions in their attempts sway the impressionable jury. Although *Trial By Jury* premiered in 1875, many aspects of the late nineteenth-century English court seen in this show could be found in American courts during the 1930s, including commonly all-male juries and laws prohibiting breach of promise of marriage. *Trial by Jury* was the first collaborative hit for Gilbert and Sullivan. The show features many of the elements for which their operettas would come to be well-known, including the patter song, operatic parody, and the gentle mocking of aristocracy and authority figures.

Old Maid and the Thief

Overture

Scene I: *Miss Todd's parlor, late afternoon* Miss Todd, Miss Pinkerton, Laetitia, Bob
Scene II: *The kitchen of Miss Todd's house, the next morning* Miss Todd, Laetitia
Scene III: *Bob's bedroom, immediately after* Laetitia, Bob, Miss Todd
Scene IV: *In the street, a few minutes later* Miss Pinkerton, Miss Todd
Scene V: *Miss Todd's parlor, immediately after* Miss Todd, Laetitia, Bob
Scene VI: *The kitchen, a week later* Laetitia
Scene VII: *In Miss Todd's parlor, immediately after* Miss Pinkerton, Miss Todd
Scene VIII: *Bob's bedroom, immediately after* Bob
Scene IX: *The parlor, immediately after* Miss Todd, Miss Pinkerton
Scene X: *In front of the liquor store, that same night* Laetitia, Miss Todd
Scene XI: *Miss Todd's parlor, the next morning* Radio Hour Host
Scene XII: *Bob's bedroom, immediately after* Miss Todd, Laetitia, Bob
Scene XIII: *Bob's bedroom, immediately after* Bob, Laetitia
Scene XIV: *Miss Todd's parlor* Miss Todd

Trial By Jury

No. 1. "Hark, the hour of ten is sounding" Usher, Jury
No. 1a. "Is this the Court of the Exchequer?" Defendant, Jury
No. 2. "When first my old, old love I knew" Defendant, Usher, Jury
No. 3. "All hail great Judge!" Judge, Usher, Jury
No. 4. "When I, good friends, was called to the bar" Judge, Jury
No. 5. "Swear thou the Jury" Counsel, Usher, Jury
No. 6. "Where is the Plaintiff?" Counsel, Usher, Plaintiff, Bridesmaids
No. 7. "Oh, never, never, never" Judge, Foreman, Plaintiff, Usher, Bridesmaids, Jury
No. 8. "May it please you, my lud!" Counsel, Plaintiff, Usher, Jury
No. 9. "That she is reeling is plain to see!" Judge, Foreman, Plaintiff, Counsel, Jury
No. 10. "Oh, gentlemen, listen, I pray" Defendant, Bridesmaids
No. 11. "That seems a reasonable proposition" Judge, Counsel, Usher, Jury
No. 12. "A nice dilemma we have here" Full Ensemble
No. 13. "I love him, I love him, with fervour unceasing" Full Ensemble
No. 14. "Oh, joy unbounded, with wealth surrounded" Full Ensemble



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