MSU OPERA THEATRE PRESENTS

The Marriage of Figaro
by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 22, 2017
8:00 p.m., Friday, March 24, 2017
8:00 p.m., Saturday, March 25, 2017
3:00 p.m., Sunday, March 26, 2017

Fairchild Theatre, MSU Auditorium Building

The 2016-2017 MSU Opera Theatre season is generously supported by
The Worthington Family Foundation
The Marriage of Figaro is sponsored by
Susan and Jack Davis

College of Music
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Since its premiere in 1786, Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* (The Marriage of Figaro) has been an enduring masterpiece. Based upon the French play by Beaumarchais, it was composed a mere two years after the play debuted and was banned at Versailles (although Marie Antoinette did play Suzanne (Susanna) at a private performance at the Petite Trianon, her personal idyll). The conflict between the noble Count and the proletarian Figaro sparked waves of controversy across eighteenth-century Europe, especially in France, so close to revolution.

Through all eras, *Figaro* remains relevant. Productions have been updated to many time periods, even a prescient Peter Sellars setting in Trump Tower in the 80s! We’ve chosen to set this production in post-World War II Europe. The deprivation of war had given way to a sort of recovery, but the vast chasm between classes still lingered.

The genius of Lorenzo da Ponte’s libretto is that he keeps the complicated action going while given each character depth and detail. Listen for the Count’s many insults to Figaro, and how Figaro ripostes each insult with an answer that proves him superior. Also watch for Susanna’s support of the Countess: socially “above” her class, and yet bound together as sympathetic women are. And when the Countess forgives the Count at the end of the opera, we are certain that she won’t forget.

In our current era of the “1%,” *Figaro* continues to shine a light on how the more things change, the more they stay the same. Regardless of the clothes we wear, we are all, tragically, human: complicated, loving, dense, simple, hating, betraying, supporting ... human.
CAST OF CHARACTERS
(in order of appearance)

Susanna, maid to the House of Almaviva
    Angela Lee/
    Catherine Goode*
Figaro, factotum to the House of Almaviva,
    Zaikuan Song
    her fiancé
    Kyle White*
Marcellina, lender of money to Figaro and
    Rachel Shaughnessy/
    hopeful of his hand in marriage
    Jenna Buck*
Bartolo, a lawyer of dubious reputation
    Tyler Frisbie
Cherubino, a young nobleman in service
    Christine Roberts/
to the House of Almaviva
    Suzanna Feldman*
Count Almaviva, a nobleman
    Brian Major/
    Nicholas Kreider*
Don Basilio, a conniving music master
    Jonathan Walker Van Kuren/
    Nicholas Hudak*
Rosina, Countess Almaviva, bride to Almaviva
    Elizabeth Dugan/
    for a mere three years
    Katie Bethel*
Antonio, gardener and Susanna’s uncle
    Gabriel Reitemeyer/
    Tyler Martin*
Don Curzio, a notary
    David Anderson/
    Jon Henrikson*
Barbarina, Antonio’s teenage daughter
    Quinn Rulison/
    Laura Broscoe*
Contadine, serving girls
    Anna Bolton, Anna Doering/
    Kalli Allen, Bailey Shepherd

Servants of the palace, local yokels: Justine Alexander, Christine
    Boddicker, Jillian Brennan, Julia Janowski, Michaela Larsen,
    Colleen Morence, Grace Reberg, Juliana Rowley, Lucille Sears,
    Noah Colandrea, Matthew Greenberg, Nathan Hartges, Eric
    Locker, Sawyer Schlarf

*March 22, 25 performances

Conductor
Daniel Beckwith
Stage Director
Melanie Helton

Act I and II will be performed back to back, with a short pause in between. Acts III and IV will also be performed consecutively, with a short pause in between.
STAFF FOR MSU OPERA THEATRE

Music Director
Producer
Scenic Design
Set Construction
Lighting Design
Costume Designer
Wig and Makeup Design
Production Stage Manager
Technical Director
Musical Preparation
Assistant Conductor
Chorus Master
Directing Intern/Production Assistant
Wig and Makeup Artist
Logo Artist
Head Electrician/Light Board Operator
Head Carpenter
Deck Carpenter
Stagehand
Surtitle Operators
Fairchild Theatre Stage Manager
Recording Services
Publicity, MSU College of Music
Budget Officer
Rehearsal Accompanist

Daniel Beckwith*
Melanie Helton
Lex Van Blommestein
Mark R. Willoughby
Brent Wrobel*
Stephanie Henderson*
Martha Ruskai*
Ashley Wright
Mark Willoughby
Daniel Beckwith*, Eelden Little
Soo Han
Chelsea Berner
Samuel Meade
Raine (Yong) Jiang
Barbara Hranilovich
Michael Wright
James Yocum
Marty Barron
Tom Rivera
Ben Maines, Nicole Cloutier
Ron Fenger
Jennifer Shangraw, Steve Boughton
Michael Sundermann
Kathleen Adams
Tammy Hoebecke
Jared Burseth

*Guest Artist

Grateful Acknowledgments
James Forger, Dean, College of Music
MSU Vocal Arts Area Faculty:
  Jane Bunnell, Marc Embree, Richard Fracker (chair), Melanie Helton, Harlan Jennings, Eelden Little, Anne Nispel, David Rayl, Jonathan Reed, Mark Rucker, Sadie Rucker, Sandra Snow
Kevin Noe, Director of Orchestral Activities, College of Music
Deborah Moriarty, Chair, Piano Area; Zhihua Tang, Collaborative Piano
MSU Department of Theatre, Kirk Domer (Chair)
Wharton Center, Sandy Thomley, Production Manager
Rebecca Surian, Director of Development, College of Music
Gregg Bloomfield, Director of Administrative Services, College of Music
Christine Babiak-Smith, Jennifer Desloover, Shawn Mahorney, Amy Rivard, Chuck Roberts, Charlene Wagner, College of Music
Albion College Department of Theatre
THE STORY

ACT I. A country estate somewhere in Europe, circa 1948. While preparing for their wedding, the valet Figaro learns from the maid Susanna that their philandering employer, Count Almaviva, has designs on her. At this the servant vows to outwit his master. Before long the scheming Bartolo enters the servants' quarters with his housekeeper, Marcellina, who wants Figaro to marry her to cancel a debt he cannot pay. After Marcellina and Susanna trade insults, the amorous page Cherubino arrives, reveling in his infatuation with all women. He hides when the Count shows up, furious because he caught Cherubino flirting with Barbarina, the gardener's daughter. The Count pursues Susanna but conceals himself when the gossiping music master Don Basilio approaches. The Count steps forward, however, when Basilio suggests that Cherubino has a crush on the Countess. Almaviva is enraged further when he discovers Cherubino in the room. Figaro returns with fellow servants, who praise the Count’s progressive reform in abolishing the droit du seigneur — the right of a noble to take a manservant's place on his wedding night. Almaviva assigns Cherubino to his regiment in Seville and leaves Figaro to cheer up the unhappy adolescent.

ACT II. In her boudoir, the Countess laments her husband’s waning love but plots to chasten him, encouraged by Figaro and Susanna. They will send Cherubino, disguised as Susanna, to a romantic assignation with the Count. Cherubino, smitten with the Countess, appears, and sings his newly-penned love song. While Susanna goes out to find a ribbon, the Count knocks at the door, furious to find it locked. Cherubino quickly hides in a closet, and the Countess admits her husband, who, when he hears a noise, is skeptical of her story that Susanna is inside the wardrobe. He takes his wife to fetch some tools with which to force the closet door. Meanwhile, Susanna, having observed everything from behind a screen, helps Cherubino out a window, then takes his place in the closet. Both Count and Countess are amazed to find her there. All seems well until the gardener, Antonio, storms in with crushed geraniums from a flower bed below the window. Figaro, who has run in to announce that the wedding is ready, pretends it was he who jumped from the window, faking a sprained ankle. Marcellina, Bartolo and Basilio burst into the room waving a court summons for Figaro, which delights the Count, as this gives him an excuse to delay the wedding.
THE STORY (CONTINUED)

ACT III. In an audience room where the wedding is to take place, Susanna leads the Count on with promises of a rendezvous in the garden. The nobleman, however, grows doubtful when he spies her conspiring with Figaro; he vows revenge. Marcellina is astonished but thrilled to discover that Figaro is in fact her long-lost natural son by Bartolo. Mother and son embrace, provoking Susanna’s anger until she too learns the truth. Finding a quiet moment, the Countess recalls her past happiness, then joins Susanna in composing a letter that invites the Count to the garden that night. Later, during the marriage ceremony of Figaro and Susanna, the bride manages to slip the note, sealed with a hatpin, to the Count, who pricks his finger, dropping the pin, which Figaro retrieves.

ACT IV. In the moonlit garden, Barbarina, after unsuccessfully trying to find the lost hatpin, tells Figaro and Marcellina about the coming assignation between the Count and Susanna. Susanna and the Countess enter, ready for their masquerade. Alone, Susanna rhapsodizes on her love for Figaro, but he, overhearing, thinks she means the Count. Susanna hides in time to see Cherubino woo the Countess — now disguised as Susanna — until Almaviva chases him away and sends his wife, who he thinks is Susanna, to an arbor, to which he follows. By now Figaro understands the joke and, joining the fun, makes exaggerated love to Susanna in her Countess disguise. The Count returns, seeing, or so he thinks, Figaro with his wife. Outraged, he calls everyone to witness his judgment, but now the real Countess appears and reveals the ruse. Grasping the truth at last, the Count begs her pardon. All are reunited, and so ends this "mad day" at the court of the Almavivas. (Synopsis from Opera News).
MSU SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Kevin Noe, Director of Orchestras
Daniel Beckwith, Conductor
* Denotes String Principal Players

Violin I
Austin Burket *
Alexander Casson*
Seakyung Hur
Wen-Yi Lo
Yung-Hsuan Lo
Kyle Peters

Violin II
Daniela Diaz*
Andrew Hatfield*
Ashley Heska
Saikat Karmakar
Hadiya Knight
Namjoo Oh
Yulia Orlova

Viola
Kyle Krause
Erin Lancour
Yi-Pei Lin*
Alyssa Moskowitz
Yury Ozhegov*
Isaac Sarvar

Cello
Stephanie Hong
JinHyun Kim*
Dooeun Lee
Hyojung Yoo

Flute
Alex Hoelzen
Stephania Neumann

Oboe
Alana Rosen
Aaron Woodman

Clarinet
Anastasia Bonotto
Sarah McMiche

Bassoon
Zongjie Huang
Quinton Doucet

Horn
Nicole VandenBosch
Nathan Doss

Trumpet
Eduardo Farias
Fil Starostka

Timpani
Josh Flynn

Harpsichord
Elden Little

Bass
Matt Boothe *
Billy Poulos
Daniel Beckwith, hailed as one of the most exciting conductors of his generation, has enjoyed an international career that has taken him to The Metropolitan Opera, The New York City Opera, The Lyric Opera of Chicago, The San Francisco Opera, and the opera companies of Houston, Fort Worth, Miami, Cincinnati, Cleveland, St. Louis and Utah; The Canadian Opera Company, Calgary Opera, Vancouver Opera; the UK’s Glyndebourne Festival and Opera North; Le Grand Théâtre du Genève and The Australian Opera.

Mr. Beckwith served as assistant to James Levine for six seasons at the Metropolitan Opera and was given his conducting debut with Don Giovanni in 1995 after Mr. Levine observed his conducting of a stage rehearsal. On the strength of these performances, Daniel Beckwith was engaged for several important debuts conducting the works of George Frideric Handel, both nationally (Serse, Seattle Opera) and internationally (Rinaldo, Grand Théâtre du Genève, Theodora, The Glyndebourne Festival).

A frequent partner with soprano Renée Fleming, they have performed in concert at Carnegie Hall, Spain’s Santander Festival and television appearances on Good Morning America, The View and Martha Stewart Living. He has accompanied a “who’s who” of important singers, including Benita Valente, Carol Vaness, Nancy Gustafson, Marilyn Horne, Frederica von Stade, Jennifer Larmore, Denyce Graves, Susanne Mentzer, Jerry Hadley, Ben Heppner, Richard Leech, Nathan Gunn and Samuel Ramey.


**STUDENT NEWS**

David Anderson (student of Richard Fracker), Catherine Goode (student of Melanie Helton) and Kyle White (student of Marc Embree) will all be appearing in leading roles at the Seagle Colony in the Adirondacks, NY, this summer. Catherine Goode and Nicholas Kreider (student of Richard Fracker) won Encouragement Awards at the MET Auditions in Detroit. Isaac Frishman (student of Richard Fracker) will be in the Young Artist Program of Des Moines Opera, following his professional debut as Ramiro in Opera St. Louis’ *La Cenerentola*. Steven Martin (student of Richard Fracker) will be returning to Santa Fe Opera as an apprentice this summer.
MSU OPERA THEATRE 2017 GRADUATES

ALUMNI NEWS

Jonathan Kirkland (BM 2008, student of Richard Fracker) opened in the Chicago production of *Hamilton* in the leading role of George Washington to rave reviews. Baritone Harry Greenleaf (student of Richard Fracker/Harlan Jennings) appeared to acclaim as Anthony in productions of *Sweeney Todd* at the Glimmerglass Festival, New Orleans Opera and in Europe, as well as appearing on the stage of Michigan Opera Theatre. Johnathan Riesen (BM 2014, student of Richard Fracker) continues a busy schedule of appearances in leading roles in Shreveport, Binghamton and Pensacola. Schyler Sheltrown (MM 2016, student of Melanie Helton) was awarded an Encouragement Award at the MET auditions in Detroit.

Mark Your Calendars for our 2017-2018 Season!

Engelbert Humberdinck
*Hansel and Gretel*
*Adelheid Wette, librettist*
(sung in English)
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday
November 15, 16, 17, 19
(Please notice slight change in regular schedule)

Kurt Weill’s
*Street Scene*
*Langston Hughes, librettist*
Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday
March 21, 23, 24, 25
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The 2016-17 MSU Opera Theatre season is generously funded by the Worthington Family Foundation

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Please consider how much you enjoy the Opera Theatre productions and send your check or money order made payable to Michigan State University with “MSU Opera Society – AE0605” written on the memo line. Mail your contributions to:

Opera Theatre
College of Music Advancement Office
333 W Circle Drive, Room 105
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For information about the MSU Opera Society, please contact the College of Music Advancement Office at (517) 353-9872 or e-mail Rebecca Surian at surian@msu.edu.