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Your contribution is tax deductible and will be used to assist with high production costs involving set design and construction, costumes and concert hall rental.

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 West Circle Drive, Room 105
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1043

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim
Book by Hugh Wheeler
Suggested on a film by Ingmar Bergman
Originally Produced and Directed on Broadway by Harold Prince

Pasant Theatre, Wharton Center for the Performing Arts
April 5-6, 2013: 8pm; April 7, 2013: 3pm

This production is generously supported by a grant from the Worthington Family Foundation.
A Note from the Director

Based on the Ingmar Bergman film, Smiles of a Summer Night, A Little Night Music opened on Broadway in 1973, starring Glynis Johns (familiar as the mother in the film Mary Poppins). A more recent revival starred at first Catherine Zeta-Jones and Angela Lansbury, who were then succeeded by Bernadette Peters and Elaine Stritch.

As we anticipate the grand opening of the renovated Fairchild Theatre in the fall, we are delighted to be performing Stephen Sondheim’s legendary musical in the Pasant Theatre at Wharton Center. Sondheim set out to write a musical that is completely three-quarter time, and he succeeded, with the exception of about 20 measures of the musical score. He admits to being inspired by both Brahms’ Liebeslieder Walzer and Strauss’ Der Rosenkavalier, as well as Viennese operetta.

To amplify the theme of three-quarter time, and more specifically the waltz, the staging is a series of circles and triangles. Even when Sondheim writes a duet, the duet is always about another person. In “Liaisons,” the memory song of Madame Armfeldt, she refers to three of her lovers. Petra’s song “The Miller’s Son” also references three fantasy lovers. The great trio is “Now/Later/Soon,” in which Sondheim merges three separate songs to make one dreamy trio. If you listen to the songs individually, you can’t imagine how they would ever go together. That’s what makes genius.

In a preface to the published script by orchestrator Jonathan Tunick, he states that Sondheim originally didn’t have a dramatic reason to have the Liebeslieders in the show, but that he needed them for musical continuity. The more we looked at the function of this “Greek chorus,” the more we saw them as symbols of Love, the little voices one hears in one’s ear telling you to go forward or fall back. Therefore I saw them in a different time period than the principal players.

In keeping with the circular/triangle theme, the students are learning new techniques in the three-quarter thrust venue that is the Pasant. Ordinarily opera singers are taught to “cheat out,” a practice that involves turning one’s body towards the audience so that facial expressions can be seen and the voice can be heard. However, in this very differently shaped space, all those rules go out the window. So
MSU Opera Theatre Graduates

We salute our 2013 graduates as they make their way into the world.


Mark your calendars for next year in the brand new Fairchild Theatre!

- November 22-24, 2013
  Mozart’s delightful The Magic Flute sung in English and very suitable for children
- April 4-6, 2014
  Puccini’s beloved La Bohéme sung in Italian with English surtitles

it’s been fun to be able to face each other, and also a challenge to open up the staging so that audiences on three sides are included in the action.

MSU Opera Theatre welcomes our new Director of Orchestras, Kevin Noe, to the family. We’ve had a great and very creative time working together.

On a personal note, I’d like to thank our donors. Even in a difficult economy, you continue to support MSU Opera Theatre, and people across the country are taking note. Our Fall 2011 production of The Pirates of Penzance was recently awarded 1st place in Division III of the National Opera Association’s college production competition (divisions are decided by budget, age of students, and size of program). We also received sizable grants from the Worthington Family Foundation and the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc. Opera is an expensive business, but you obviously think it’s well worth it. Thank you so much!

The Story

Fourteen years ago (it’s now around the turn of the previous century), lawyer Fredrik Egerman and actress Desirée Armfeldt had a brief but passionate affair, producing a daughter, Fredrika, about whom Fredrik knows nothing. In the meantime, Fredrik has been widowed and 11 months ago married an 18-year-old, Anne Sorenson. And, for those 11 months, Anne has refused to relinquish her virginity, leading to an understandably frustrated Fredrik. Fredrik’s son Henrik returns from seminary, and longs for the love of his stepmother, who is a year younger than him. Henrik attempts to slake some of his frustration with the maid of the house, saucy Petra, who’s up for a bit of fun at any time. As Fredrik talks in his sleep during a nap, he murmurs the name, “Desirée,” much to Anne’s shock and chagrin.

Desirée has continued to tour as an actress for those 14 years, sending her daughter to stay with her mother, Leonora, a retired courtesan with strong opinions about the nature of love. Fredrik has arranged for theatre tickets for he and Anne to see Desirée. Anne is already somewhat suspicious, as it is not a normal name to murmur in one’s sleep. As the play proceeds, Anne becomes upset at the subject matter
and demands to return home. They obviously and noisily depart the theatre as the play has barely begun.

After escorting a tearful Anne home, Fredrik takes a walk, somehow ending up in Desirée’s “digs” as she relaxes after the performance. They talk of old times, and when talk turns to new lovers, Desirée regales Fredrik with a description of her latest, a very stupid and very married dragoon. Fredrik tries to explain how he has ended up with an 18-year old virgin after 11 months of marriage. He shyly asks Desirée if it would be possible to make love, for old time’s sake, and she lightly agrees. They are making love when a loud voice from outside demands entry. It is Count Carl-Magnus Malcolm, Desirée’s lover. He encounters Fredrik dressed in a robe that is his and he fails to understand the situation. Fredrik makes up a quick explanation, that on the way to the water closet he tripped and fell into the hip-bath, soaking his clothing. Desirée returns to the room with the wet clothing, but Carl-Magnus insists that Fredrik leave and donates his nightshirt for him to wear home.

After being with Desirée, Carl-Magnus informs his wife, Charlotte, of the evening’s events. He recalls that a school friend of Charlotte’s sister had married a Fredrik Egerman, and wants her to go tell Anne that he caught Fredrik with Desirée. Charlotte, embittered by his constant infidelity, agrees. She tells Anne that her husband was caught in a nightshirt in Desirée’s rooms. They both talk of the fickleness and cruelty of men. Meanwhile, Desirée has come for a visit to her mother’s, asking her to invite some people (meaning the Egermans) for the weekend. Her mother reluctantly agrees, and the invitation goes out. Anne is horrified, but Charlotte advises her to go and look her most youthful against the graceful age of Desirée. When Charlotte gossips to Carl-Magnus, he gets the idea that they should “drop in” for the weekend as well. As Act I closes, everyone is on their way to “A Weekend in the Country.”

As Act II begins, we are at the Armfeldt mansion in the country in the depths of the summer where the sun never sets. The Gods and Goddesses of Love weave their magic through the twilight air as the plot begins to thicken. Who will end up with whom? Is it to be a happy ending or a sad one?

We will let you find out for yourselves … as the summer night smiles …

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**MSU Opera Theatre Alumni News**

Tenor Nathaniel Peake (MM 2007) continues to set the opera world on fire with engagements at the San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Edmonton Opera, Canadian Opera Company and Palm Beach Opera. Bass Matthew Scollin (BM 2009) this year has been a young artist at the Seattle Opera and will return to the Santa Fe Opera this summer. Soprano Siân Davies (BM 2003) has sung with the New York City Opera, Grand Rapids Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre and has covered at the Metropolitan Opera and Chicago Lyric Opera. Elizabeth Toy (BM 2009) sang the title role in The Merry Widow at Indiana University. Shelby (Sievers) VanNordstrand (MM 2008) is an Assistant Professor of Voice at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, and made her debut as a soloist with the Omaha Symphony in March. She also traveled to Oman to sing in a production of La Bohème last fall. Mezzo-soprano Melody Siu-Wan Sze (DMA 2007) continues to work as an opera singer in Hong Kong in China. Last year she appeared in three opera productions, and is an adjunct teacher at the Hong Kong Baptist University. Soprano Jessie Neilson (MM 2009) will be appearing as Rosalinde in Die Fledermaus at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

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**MSU Opera Theatre Student News**

Tenor Johnathan Riesen won the Michigan District Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions in Detroit. Tenor Steven Martin won the “Young Artist Encouragement” award at the Tennessee District Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions. Soprano Hannah Stone won first prize in the Kalamazoo Bach Festival Competition for Young Artists. Soprano Audrey Lambert won first prize in the Advanced Women division of the National Association of Teachers of Singing Regional Auditions, and mezzo-soprano Katie Bethel won second prize in the Young College Division of the same competition. Baritone Harry Greenleaf will be singing the role of the Baron in La Traviata this summer at Wolf Trap Opera.
MSU Symphony Orchestra
Kevin Noe, Director of Orchestral Activities
Weimar Arancibia, Assistant Conductor

Violins
Ana Paula Schmidt
Sinyoung Ki
Kyle Dickson
Yuna Han
Tatiana Zueva
Cathy Ellis

Viola
Brittany Nelson
Luciano Gatelli
Jonathan McNunnel

Cello
Igor Cetkovic
Michelle Cho

Bass
Adam Bernstein
Madison Moll

Flutes
Chelsea Koziatek
Karen Matsuo

Oboe
Alan Rosen

Clarinets
Cody Grabbe
Jay Gummert

Bassoon
Yeh-Chi Wang

Horns
Matthew Sedatole
Chris Newman

Trumpets
Ross Huber
Matthwe Kay

Trombone
Steven Kandow

Percussion
Zac Brunell

Harp/Celesta/Piano
Neill Campbell

Cast in order of appearance

The Gods and Goddesses of Love (or “Liebeslieder”)
Mr. Lindquist
Peter Boylan/Tyler Martin*

Mrs. Nordstrom
Tara Sue Metcalf

Mrs. Anderssen
Jenna Washburn/Schylert Sheltrown*

Mr. Erlanson
Joshua Gronlund/E. Brysien Beer*

Mrs. Segstrom
Elizabeth James/Katie Bethel*

The Mere Mortals
Fredrika Armfeldt, daughter of Desirée
Addy Sterrett/Katharine Nunn*

Madame Armfeldt,
Audrey Lambert
retired courtesan and mother of Desirée

Frid, her butler
Zachary Niedzwiecki

Henrik Egerman,
Evan Snyder/Isaac Frishman*
a seminary student and son of Fredrik

Anne Egerman,
Caite Lenahan/Jocelyn Ascherl*
Fredrik’s 18-year old wife

Petra, maid to the Egermans
Lena Miles/Jessica Glaser*

Fredrik Egerman, a lawyer of 40+ years
Adrian Sanchez/Darius Gillard*

Desirée Armfeldt,
Jacqueline King/Elizabeth Hoard*
glamorous actress of a certain age

Two actresses
Kate Hyne, Leah Brzyski

Malla, her maid
Kate Hyne

Osa, another maid
Leah Brzyski

Count Carl-Magnus Malcolm,
Harry Greenleaf/Nicholas Kreider*
a Swedish dragoon

Countess Charlotte Malcolm, his wife
Allison Yoder

*Saturday, April 5
Musical Numbers

Act I

Overture
Night Waltz
Now
Later
Soon
The Glamorous Life
Remember?
You Must Meet My Wife
Liaisons
In Praise of Women
Every Day a Little Death
A Weekend in the Country

Act II

The Sun Won’t Set
It Would Have Been Wonderful
Perpetual Anticipation
Send in the Clowns
The Miller’s Son
Finale

Staff for MSU Opera Theatre

Producer/Stage Director
Conductor
Set Design
Lighting Design
Scenic Coordinator /Technical Director
Costumes
Collaborative Piano Director
Coach/Musical Arrangements
Production Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager
Costume Mistress
Recording Services
Publicity, MSU College of Music
Budget Officer
Rehearsal Accompanists
Stage Manager, Pasant Theatre
Head Carpenter
Head Electrician
Head Audio

*MSU faculty/staff
**Guest Artist

MSU Vocal Arts Area Faculty: Richard Fracker (chair), Molly Fillmore, Melanie Helton, Harlan Jennings, Peter Lightfoot, Anne Nispel, David Rayl, Jonathan Reed, Sandra Snow

James Forger, Dean, College of Music
Kevin Noe, Director of Orchestral Activities, College of Music
Deborah Moriarty, Chair, Keyboard Area

MSU Department of Theater, Kirk Domer (Chair), Brian Dambacher
Wharton Center, Sandy Thomley, Production Manager
Rebecca Surian, Director of Development, College of Music
Mike Morgan, Assistant Director of Development, College of Music

Amy Rivard, Shawn Mahorney, Charlene Wagner, College of Music
Gary Reid, WKAR-TV

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