

Opera Las Vegas



Trouble in Tahiti

Music and Libretto by Leonard Bernstein

Strawberry Fields

Music by Michael Torke, Libretto by A.R. Gurney

West Coast Premiere Performances

Saturday, 23 April, 7:30 pm

Sunday, 24 April, 3:00 pm

Nicholas J. Horn Theatre, College of Southern Nevada
Las Vegas, NV

This performance is 1 hour and 40 minutes long and is performed with one 15
minute intermission

These performances are dedicated to the loving memory of the founder of

Opera Las Vegas:

Gloria Marinacci Allen 1930 - 2021

Welcome Letter from our General Director, Jim Sohre



What a pleasure it is to mark the return of opera to the Horn Theatre for the first time in ten years! Opera Las Vegas last performed Puccini's *Tosca* in this theatre in 2012, and it is past due time to fill the hall again with soaring singing, vibrant playing, and engaging theatre.

Our Double Bill on display pairs the one act pieces, Leonard Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*, and the West Coast Premiere of Michael Torke and A.R. Gurney's *Strawberry Fields*.

Leonard Bernstein wrote *Trouble in Tahiti* in between his biggest Broadway successes, *On the Town* (1944) and *West Side Story* (1956). Michael Torke penned *Strawberry Fields* for the famed Glimmerglass Festival, where it debuted in 1999. Torke, a Las Vegas resident, is a prolific presence on the classical music scene and has been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. The composer himself suggested pairing these two operas, with their similar themes of personal reveries, and contrasting musical styles of jazz/Broadway and late 20th Century Americana.

Trouble in Tahiti has an eclectic score, laced with Bernstein's musical wit and theatrical savvy. He wrote it in between his biggest Broadway successes, *On the Town* (1944) and *West Side Story* (1956). In it, Sam and Dinah are a young married couple seeking the illusive happiness of the American Dream. To escape from their challenges and troubles, Sam suggests they momentarily "escape" to see a movie – *Trouble in Tahiti*.

The two central characters in *Strawberry Fields*, a Young Student and an Old Woman are each seeking a different musical "escape" in New York's Central Park. The man is remembering John Lennon, while others memorialize him nearby, and the lady fantasizes that she is in her subscriber's seat attending the opera. As reality intrudes, the two quickly bond, and she descends inevitably further into her illusions.

We hope you enjoy the performance, and that you will join us again for May's showings of the family friendly Bremen Town Musicians, and the return of *Tosca* in June. For more information, and to sign up for our mailing list, please visit our website: www.operalasvegas.com

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Jim Sohre". The signature is stylized with loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Cast & Company

Trouble in Tahiti

Music and Libretto by Leonard Bernstein

Time: Now

Place: Any American City, and Its Suburbs

Running Time: 40 minutes

Dinah: Erin Gonzalez

Sam: Kenneth Stavert

Trio: Marcie Ley, Albert Rudolph Lee, Douglas Carpenter

Intermission: 15 minutes

Strawberry Fields

Music by Michael Torke, Libretto by A.R. Gurney

Time: Present, Late Autumn Afternoon

Place: Central Park, the Strawberry Fields Area

Running Time: 40 Minutes

Old Lady: Marcie Ley

Student: Albert Rudolph Lee

Workman: Chase Gutierrez

Son: Kenneth Stavert

Boy: Francisco Corredor

Girl: Valentine Baron

Panhandler: Douglas Carpenter

Daughter: Claudia Affan

Nurse: Erin Gonzalez

Chorus:

Valentine Baron

Makaria Hill

Douglas Carpenter

Arianna Perroots

Francisco Corredor.

Maureen Seymour

Chase Gutierrez

Courtney Schwalbe

John Kaydukovich.

Rachelle Sproul

Cast & Company

Orchestra

Violin I: Martha Gronemeier, Concertmaster

Violin II: Kevork Mikaelian

Viola: Hanna Suk

Cello: Elena Kapustina

Bass: Geoff Neuman

Flute: John McMurtery

Oboe: Stephen Caplan

Clarinet: Jay Savoy

Bassoon: Ashlea Sheridan

French Horn: Jonathan Snyder

Trumpet: Thomas Wright

Trombone: Hitomi Shoji

Percussion: Patrick Bowen

Keyboard: Deborah Gordillo

Onstage Guitar: Daniel Andaya

Production Staff

Conductor: Clinton Smith

Director: Andrew Nienaber

Stage Manager: Ana Gudiño

Assistant Stage Manager: Rachelle Sproul

Costumer: Arianmarie Moyer

Chorusmaster: Dr. Joseph Svendsen

Our Heartfelt Thanks

We are deeply grateful to the Las Vegas Philharmonic for being such wonderful collaborators during the 2021-2022 season and beyond!

Special thanks to the continuing invaluable support from Las Vegas Little Theatre for their loan of furniture, set pieces and props! Their community support is much appreciated. Check out their season and events at: www.lvlt.org

Opera Las Vegas is also grateful to the Department of Dance, University of Nevada Las Vegas of their conscientious coordination of our rehearsal venues.

And we couldn't have produced this double bill (and the West Coast Premiere of Michale Torke's Strawberry Fields) without the tireless dedication of Dean Richard Kravchak, and the resourceful staff of the Horn theatre. Thank you so very much!

And we thank you, our audience, for attending live opera.

Summary

Celebrated composer Michael Torke was himself the inspiration to pair his and librettist A.R. Gurney's tuneful one act opera *Strawberry Fields* in performance with Leonard Bernstein's short opera, *Trouble in Tahiti*.*

The Bernstein piece relates one day in the life of Sam and Dinah, trapped in an unfulfilling marriage, yet longing for love, and largely unable to communicate. By opera's end, the two show a willing, if melancholy maturity to honor their commitment to preserve the family. The jazz-infused musical vocabulary hints at the composer's Broadway scores, *West Side Story* and *Wonderful Town*.

*Strawberry Fields*** , in its West Coast premiere, refers to a locale in New York's Central Park, named after a song by late composer, Beatle John Lennon. On a warm autumn afternoon, a respectable but confused Old Lady, has wandered into the park. She sits down on a bench with great purpose, imagining that it is her seat at the opera, and that the events unfolding in the park constitute the show. A student becomes intrigued and plays along with her fantasy. When the woman's son and daughter arrive to unceremoniously spirit her away to assisted living, pretense and reality collide.

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Sole Agent: Bill Holab Music

Biographies



Albert Rudolph Lee: The Student/Trio

Tenor, Albert Rudolph Lee's performances have been described as "vocally sumptuous," "musically distinctive" and even "acrobatically agile." Having appeared with Opera Theater of Saint Louis, Palm Beach Opera, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, Philadelphia Orchestra, Saint Luke's Chamber Orchestra, and the Caramoor International Music Festival, Dr. Lee's recent performances include the tenor solo in Bruckner *Te Deum* with the Reno Chamber Orchestra, a

performance of George Walker's *Lilac's* for Tenor and Orchestra for the opening concert of the African American Art Song Alliance 20th Anniversary Conference, and performances with Cincinnati Opera. In his seventh year on the voice faculty of the University of Nevada, Reno, Dr. Lee's upcoming activities include the tenor solo in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Jackson Symphony, an appearance with Opera Las Vegas in a tribute concert to African American Opera Legends, and a feature role in the world premiere of Douglas Buchanan's opera *Bessie and Ma*.

Biographies



Kenneth Stavert: The Son/Sam

Praised for his strong “sense of theatricality,” Baritone Kenneth Stavert has performed on operatic, concert and recital stages throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. Some of his recent highlights include Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Ping in *Turandot* (Dayton Opera), Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Palm Beach Opera), Yamadori in *Madama* (Santa Fe Opera), Renato in *Un ballo in maschera*, Scarpia in *Tosca* (Opera in the Heights) and Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* (Pacific Opera Project). Kenneth’s orchestral credits include Berlioz’s *Lélio*, Fauré’s *Requiem*, Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, Handel’s *Messiah* and Mozart’s *Vesperae solennes de confessore*. He has also been a featured recitalist throughout the United States specializing in less performed English art song. Upcoming performances include *La Traviata*, *La bohème*, *Tosca* and *Into the Woods*.

Biographies



Marcie Ley: Old Woman/Trio

Soprano Marcie Ley has received critical acclaim for her performances across the United States and Europe.

Notable roles performed include Violetta in *La Traviata*, Contessa in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan Tutte*, Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Mimi in *La Bohème*, Liú in *Turandot*, Marguérite in *Faust*, and Nedda in *Pagliacci*, with numerous regional opera companies in the USA, and also in Europe at

The Arena di Verona in Italy, Opéra National de Montpellier in France, and in Germany with Theater Dortmund, Oper Leipzig, and the Musiktheater im Revier.

A native of Edinboro, PA, Marcie now calls Las Vegas home, and she is happily sharing her years of experience by teaching private voice lessons.

Biographies



Erin Gonzalez: Nurse/Dinah

Erin Gonzalez has performed with UNLV Opera Theater, Pacific Symphony, Sin City Opera, Florentine Opera, Martina Arroyo Foundation, Opera Las Vegas, Nevada Opera Theatre, Eastman Opera Theatre, and Opera Chapman. Role highlights include Prince Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*), Hermia (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Orfeo (*Orfeo ed Euridice*), Secretary (*The Consul*), Angelina (*La Cenerentola*), and Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*).

Winner of the 2015 and 2016 Nevada District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Friends of Eastman Opera Voice Competition and Bramledge Opera Award and Robert Kuntz Scholarship, Erin received a Bachelor in Music from Chapman University Conservatory of Music and Master in Music from Eastman School of Music.

In July and August of 2017, Erin was a member of the Opera Studio at the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria. While in attendance, she won first place in the elite Meistersinger Competition.

In April 2019, Ms. Gonzalez was named the Outstanding Graduate Student of the Year for the College of Fine Arts.

She graduated with her Doctorate in Musical Arts; Voice from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in May 2019.

Biographies



Claudia Affan: The Daughter

Claudia Affan is a second-year master's student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she is pursuing an MM in vocal performance. She holds her BM in vocal performance from Auburn University, where she studied with Dr. Matthew Hoch. Her operatic roles and scenes include Clorinda in *La Cenerentola*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, L'Eternità in *La Calisto*, Giannetta in *L'elisir d'amore*, Adina in *L'elisir d'amore*, Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Zweite Dame in *Die Zauberflöte*, Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Carolina in *Il matrimonio segreto*, Lady Saphir in *Patience*, Ānanda in Sherry Woods's *MĀRA: A Chamber Opera on Good and Evil*, and Rosie in Frank Pesci's *Royal Flush*. Affan has received awards and recognition at Alabama NATS, Southeastern Regional NATS, Las Vegas NATS, Cal-Western Regional NATS, the Vann Vocal Institute, Alabama MTNA, Southern Division MTNA, Nevada MTNA, Southwest Division MTNA, National MTNA, and Alabama Federation of Music Clubs. She has performed in master classes with David Cangelosi, Dr. Loraine Sims, Dr. Melanie Williams, Dr. Feryal Qudourah, Jennifer Larmore, Michael Sturm, Oresta Cybriwsky, Lawrence Brownlee, Dolora Zajick, and Barbara Dever. She has also performed at the International Music Festival at the American University of Sharjah and the Music by Women Festival at Mississippi University for Women. She studies voice with Dr. Linda Lister.

Biographies



Valentine Baron: The Girl

Valentine Baron, soprano, originally from France has been appearing on stages in both France and the United States. In 2014, she moved to New York to pursue a Master of Voice Performance and Pedagogy at New York University (NYU). While in New York, she made her operatic debuts as Second Lady (The Magic Flute) at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and Zerlina (Don Giovanni) at Opera America. Others performances include Gretel (Hansel und Gretel), La Fée (Cendrillon), Mlle Silberklang (Der Schauspieldirektor), Stella (La Fille du Tambour Major), Blanche de la Force (The Dialogues of the Carmelites), Eurydice (Orpheus in the Underworld) and the Vixen (The Little Cunning Vixen).

In July 2019, she gave a recital in France raising funds for research on Epilepsy. In 2022, she will sing to help the research on breast cancer. Ms. Baron is currently finishing her Doctor of Musical Arts in Voice Performance in the studio of the soprano Dr. Linda Lister.

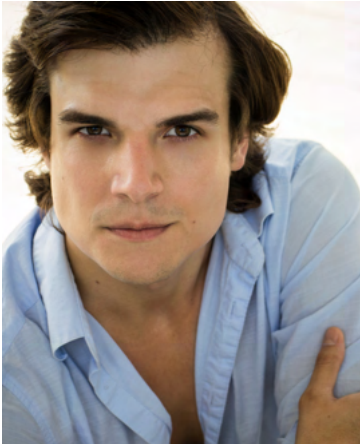
Biographies



Francisco Corredor: The Boy

Francisco Corredor is a Puerto Rican/Colombian tenor, composer, and director born and raised in New York City. His comedic and lively operatic interpretations have been praised by Opera News, The New York Times, El Diario, The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, and the Oklahoman. A former artist with Tony Bennett’s Exploring the Arts Foundation and Martina Arroyo’s Prelude to Performance, he’s performed in some of New York’s most prestigious venues including Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and Radio City Music Hall as well as abroad in France, Switzerland, Austria, and Israel. He’s also sung backup for Tony Bennett, Josh Groban, and Jennifer Hudson. As a singer songwriter, he’s performed throughout the New York piano bar scene and the famous Caveau de la Huchette in Paris, France. He is the composer and lyricist of “Happy Birthday David: The Musical!” which premiered at the People’s Improv Theater MainStage. His self produced EP, recorded in Paris as Frankie Amadeus, is currently available on music streaming platforms. Recently, he directed Vegas City Opera’s The Ring Vegas! which won “Most Innovative Production” at the 360° of Opera 2020 Awards.

Biographies



Douglas Carpenter: Panhandler/Trio

Doug, a native of Las Vegas, graduated from the Las Vegas Academy of Performing Arts and received a BM in Voice Performance from UNLV. He received a MM in Voice Performance from UCLA. As a talented classical crossover performer, Doug has won both the American Traditions Competition (2011) and the Lotte Lenya Competition (2013). He has performed principal contracts on Equity National Tours, the Broadway Stage, and numerous regional equity theatres around the country. Currently, Doug teaches voice and musical theatre at UNLV, and has a cocktail jazz duo with his wife, Rachel.

Broadway: Nick in Beautiful The Carole King Musical. National Tour: Billy in Dirty Dancing. Regional: Cable in South Pacific (Papermill Playhouse), Joey in Most Happy Fella (Goodspeed, Dallas Lyric), Lancelot in Camelot (Pasadena Playhouse), Curly in Oklahoma (Penn Shakes, FCLO), Tony in West Side Story (FCLO), Prince in Cinderella (CLOSBC), Chris in Miss Saigon (Moonlight), Gatsby in Baz(Venetian Hotel Casino), Billy in Carousel(Musical Theatre West).

Biographies



Chase Gutierrez: The Workman

Baritone, Chase Orlando Gutierrez, a Las Vegas native young artist whose personable and charismatic singing has taken him from Las Vegas to Spain. Mr. Gutierrez has performed in numerous operas throughout the years: Don Alfonso in *Così fan Tutte*, Jupiter in *Orpheus in the Underworld* (English), The Notary in *Don Pasquale*, The Notary/Buoso Donati in *Gianni Schicchi*, Thierry in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (English), Quartet Chorus of *Dido and Aeneas*, Chorus of *Pirates of Penzance*, and Chorus of *La Cenerentola*. In concert Chase has performed as the baritone soloist in *Charpentier's Te Deum*, and has sung spirituals throughout Spain and Portugal. Chase is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance at UNLV under the supervision of Dr. Alfonse Anderson. Outside of the world of opera Chase is a multimedia specialist as the onsite audio engineer and photographer in his studio.

Biographies



Clinton Smith: Conductor

Clinton Smith spent his ninth summer on the music staff at **Santa Fe Opera** covering performances of the world premiere of John Corigliano's *Lord of Cries*. His 2021/2022 season includes a return to **Dayton Operato** conduct *L'elisir d'amore*, a return to **Opera Las Vegas** to conduct *Trouble In Tahiti & Strawberry Fields*, and he will join the music staff of **Sarasota Opera** as cover conductor for *Attila* and *Tosca*.

Recently, Clinton conducted Atlanta Opera's new productions of *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, *The Threepenny Opera*, and performed a virtual recital for Opera Orlando's Summer Concert Series. His 2019/20 season included debuts at Florentine Opera conducting *Le nozze di Figaro* and **Opera Birmingham** conducting *Cendrillon*. He returned to **Dayton Opera** to conduct *Cenerentola*, and **Tacoma Opera** to conduct *L'elisir d'amore*.

Mr. Smith's other recent conducting credits include *Charlie Parker's Yardbird* at **Atlanta and Arizona Operas**, *Pagliacci/Pulcinella* at Opera Orlando, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at **Dayton Opera** and the **University of Michigan**, *Le nozze di Figaro* at **Tacoma Opera**, *Alcina* at **Fargo-Moorhead Opera**, *Turandot*, *Norma*, and *Hansel und Gretel* with **Pacific Northwest Opera**, *The Mikado* for **Kentucky Opera**, and *Noah's Flood* with **Opera Las Vegas**. He has served on the music staff of **Santa Fe Opera**, **Juilliard Opera**, **Minnesota Opera**, **Atlanta Opera**, **Portland Opera**, **Kentucky Opera**, **Ash Lawn Opera**, and **Skylark Operas** and has included the preparation of over fifty operas in German, Italian, French, English, Czech, Russian, Latin, and Mandarin.

Biographies



Andrew Nienaber: Director

Andrew Nienaber is an opera stage director and the Artistic Director of Permian Basin Opera. His productions of *The Barber of Seville* for Piedmont Opera and Hubbard Hall Opera have been called "a rousing success" by the Winston-Salem Journal, and "legitimately hilarious" by Berkshire Fine Arts, and his *Elixir of Love* for Resonance Works Pittsburgh, awarded the American Prize for "Best Opera Performance of the Year", was hailed as "utterly, fabulously engaging," and "...one of the most charming entertainment experiences you can have this season..." His other directing credits include *Tosca* for l'Opera de Montreal, Opera Idaho, Opera Birmingham and Permian Basin Opera; *Rusalka* for Resonance Works Pittsburgh; *The Elixir of Love* for Opera Idaho, Permian Basin Opera and Hubbard Hall Opera; *Glory Denied* for Penn Square Music Festival; and *Don Giovanni* and *La Boheme* for Opera Idaho.

Biographies



Michael Torke, Composer (Strawberry Fields)

Michael Torke's music has been commissioned by such orchestras as The Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, and the San Francisco Symphony; by such ballet companies as New York City Ballet, Alvin Ailey, and the National Ballet of Canada; by such opera companies as the Metropolitan Opera, Théâtre du Châtelet, and the English National Opera; by such large ensembles as the London Sinfonietta, Lontano, and De Volharding; and such small ensembles as the Smith, Ying, and Amstel Quartets.

He has worked with such conductors as Simon Rattle, Kurt Mazur, Edo de Waart, and David Zinman; such choreographers as Christopher Wheeldon, James Kudelka, and Juri Kilian; and collaborated with such librettists as A. R. Gurney, Michael Korie, and Mark Campbell; and such directors as Des McAnuff, Bart Sher, and Michael Greif.

He has been commissioned by entities such as the Walt Disney Company, and Absolute Vodka; worked with such soloists as Tessa Lark, Christopher O'Reilly, and Joyce Castle; and written incidental music to such companies as The Public Theater, The Old Globe Theater, and Classic Stage Company; and been composer in residence with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Save the Dates

10, 12 June 2022:

Giacomo Puccini's **Tosca** | Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV

About Opera Las Vegas

Opera Las Vegas heads into 2021-22 — its 22nd year — of enriching the cultural landscape of Southern Nevada by strengthening our Las Vegas communities' relationship to the art of opera through accessible, engaging, and high caliber performance experiences.

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