

# Opera Las Vegas



## **A Capacity for Evil**

Music by Evan Snyder

Libretto by Evan Snyder and John Riesen

Based on an original story by Evan Snyder and  
John Riesen

Friday, 27 January, 7:30 pm

Saturday, 28 January 7:30 pm

Sunday, 29 January, 6:00 pm

The Space

Las Vegas, NV

This performance is 1 hours and 50 minutes long and is performed with one 20-minute intermission

# Welcome Letter from our General Director, Jim Sohre



Happy New Year! And welcome to the West Coast premiere of Evan L. Snyder and John Riesen's captivating new opera, *A Capacity for Evil*. This production marks the seventh West Coast Premiere Opera Las Vegas has staged in its innovative Living Composers and Librettists Initiative, which has been the recipient of three grants from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Composer Snyder is also co-librettist with Riesen, who set out to craft a Sherlock Holmes style whodunnit characterized by clever plotting and soaring melodies. These performances also mark the debut of the chamber orchestration, beautifully rendered by members of the Las Vegas Philharmonic.

Our next West Coast Premiere arrives at the Horn Theatre, College of Southern Nevada on 18 and 19 March with D.J. Starr, Mark Campbell, and Davis Miller's *Approaching Ali*, a heartwarming story of a true, unlikely, abiding friendship.

But before that, OLV is putting on our first Gala since 2020 with *Paris Extraordinaire* (Setting the Stage for *La Traviata*) on 25 February, a fun-filled and entertaining evening at the elegant Milano Ballroom at the M Resort and Casino. Along with our legendary Silent Auction full of unique items, guests will enjoy a mini-tribute to Andrea Boccelli, tenor Larry Wayne Morbitt (*The Phantom of the Opera*), a spirited Can-Can, a delicious repast and lip-smacking libations.

For more information, or to purchase tickets, please visit: [www.operalasvegas.com](http://www.operalasvegas.com)

But for now, there is a mystery to be solved before time runs out. Do you think you can puzzle out the murderer's identity by the stroke of midnight? We hope you enjoy *A Capacity for Evil*.

Best,

Jim Sohre, General Director

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jim Sohre'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

# Cast & Company

## **A Capacity for Evil**

Music by Evan Snyder

Libretto by Evan Snyder and John Riesen

Time: December 31, 1935 beginning just after 8 am

Place: New York City

Running Time: 1 hour and 50 minutes with one 20-minute intermission

Daniel Lewis, Famed Private Eye: John Riesen

Doyle, Daniel's Former Partner: Dylan Morrongiello

Angelica, Daniel's Fiancée: Erin Gonzalez

Captain Smith, A Captain in the NYPD: André Chiang

Murderer???

## Creative

Conductor: Joshua Horsch

Director: Linda Lister

Production Pianist: Deborah Gordillo

Stage Manager: Dena Lambert

Costume Coordinator and Designer: Abby Stroot

Lighting Designer: Catherine M. Pratt

Running Crew: Victoria Wojdan, Dean Perry

Orchestra Manager: Robert Chambers

Producer: Jim Sohre

The Space Manager: Emily Kurcan-Stephenson

# Cast & Company

Orchestra Featuring Members of the Las Vegas Philharmonic

Violin I

Kevorg Mikaelian, Concert Master

Violin II

Shakeh Ghoukasian

Viola

Hope Bowen

Cello

Andrew Smith

Bass

Paul Firak

Clarinet/Bass Clarinet

Jonathan Cannon

Saxophone

Shawna Pennock

Horn

Frank Joyce

Keyboard

Deborah Gordillo

# Our Heartfelt Thanks

Opera Las Vegas is indebted to  
Chris and Anita Murray  
for major funding support

These dear friends and generous supporters  
Were honored for their invaluable service  
At a National Trustees Awards Dinner produced by  
Opera America, the National Center in  
New York City on 21 October 2022.  
Congratulations, Chris and Anita, we wouldn't be here without you!

Special Gratitude to Our Wonderful Artist Home Hosts

Bob and Shirley Kramer  
Chris and Anita Murray  
Jeff Connaughton

# Our Heartfelt Thanks

We are deeply grateful to the Las Vegas Philharmonic for being such wonderful collaborators during the 2022-2023 season and beyond!

With additional special thanks to our valued friends:

Las Vegas Little Theatre  
Dance Department, University of Nevada Las Vegas  
Signature Theatre  
Staff at The Space  
William Schroder  
Gillen Brey

# Summary

**A Capacity for Evil** is a murderously clever whodunnit inspired by the tradition of Sherlock Holmes, this operatic detective tale is based on an original story conceived by the composer Evan L. Snyder and John Riesen, a tenor who will reprise the starring role of Daniel that he created in the work's premiere.

Daniel is a famed 1930's private eye who, with help from his partner Doyle and fiancée Angelica, works to unravel a series of grisly murders occurring on New Year's Eve. As tensions rise and the clock runs out, the bonds of friendship are tested against the dark ordeals of an imperceptible murderer. Tuneful plot complications and soaring voices are underscored by harmonically evil intent. Can these singing detectives figure things out before the unknown murderer is able to realize the full scope of his perverse aims? Someone may not be who they seem to be, but will you suss it out before the plot reveals all?

**A Capacity for Evil** was selected as a winner of the 2017 Frontiers Competition, where scenes from Act II were presented by Fort Worth Opera, as a part of their 2017 Opera Festival. The opera was premiered by Opera MODO, September 2018.

# Biographies



## **Daniel Lewis, Famed Private Eye: John Riesen**

Hailed as “every inch the hero in stature and voice” (Classical Voice North America), award-winning American tenor John Riesen is consistently impressing audiences with his "impassioned...and vibrant" voice (Opera Today). Riesen’s growing career boasts a variety of roles in which he excels and includes significant work in opera, musical theatre, studio recording and concert. He has released two studio recording albums: *What You'd Call a Dream* (2019) and *Christmas at Home* (2020), and several singles that have reached over 1.7 million streams on Spotify and Apple Music. John is also the head of Spotify promotion and PR for Emitha LLC, building an ecosystem for classical and crossover singers around the world to be heard on streaming services.

Upcoming John will perform as Younger Thomson in *Glory Denied* with Knoxville Opera (Sept) and *Opera Roanoke* (Feb 2023), and as Camille in the *Merry Widow* with Knoxville Opera (Nov). He will also be making his debut with Opera Las Vegas in his return to Evan L. Snyder's murder-mystery opera "*A Capacity for Evil*" (Jan 2023) before making his role debut as the Duke of Manuta with Intermountain Opera Bozeman's production of Verdi's *Rigoletto* (May 2023).



# Biographies



## **Doyle, Daniel's Former Partner: Dylan Morrongiello**

Known for his “agile character tenor” and “over-the-top committed” portrayals, tenor Dylan Anthony Morrongiello will embark on an exciting 2021-2022 season as he joins the rosters of the Lyric Opera of Chicago covering Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, and the Metropolitan Opera making his debut singing the Dean in *Cinderella* and covering Don Curzio and Don Basilio in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Player 2 in Brett Dean’s *Hamlet*, and Sellem in *The Rake’s Progress*. This fall, he will join Opera Las Vegas as Miles Zegner in *Proving Up*, and in the spring of 2023, he will make his company debut with Arizona Opera as Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*. Mr. Morrongiello’s recent scheduled engagements included his debut with Opera Theater of Saint Louis where he was scheduled to perform the role of Dr. Blind in *Die Fledermaus* (COVID19) and cover the roles of Elder Hayes and Little Bat in Floyd’s *Susannah* (COVID19).

# Biographies



## **Angelica, Daniel's Fiancée: Erin Gonzalez**

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



## **Captain Smith, A Captain in the NYPD: André Chiang**

Baritone André Chiang has been described as “vocally commanding” (Oregonian), “handsome of voice” (Opera News), and lauded with “let’s hear more from this singer” (Washington Post). Chiang’s recent engagements include Silvio in Pagliacci with Painted Sky Opera, Escamillo in Carmen with Mobile Opera, Dandini in La cenerentola and Masetto in Don Giovanni with Dayton Opera, the Pirate King in The Pirates of Penzance with Tulane Summer Lyric Theatre, and Schaunard in La bohème with Mississippi Opera and the Natchez Festival of Music. Highlights

include Falke in Die Fledermaus, Ford in Falstaff, Young Galileo/Salviati in Galileo Galilei, where he was commercially recorded, and Argante in Rinaldo with Portland Opera; Masetto in Don Giovanni, El Gallo in The Fantasticks with Shreveport Opera; Belcore in L’elisir d’amore with Opera Birmingham; Anthony Hope in Sweeney Todd with Virginia Opera; Charlie in Three Decembers, Sam in Trouble in Tahiti, Older Thompson in Glory Denied with Painted Sky Opera; Guglielmo in Così fan tutte with The Washington Idaho Symphony; Count Gil in Il segreto di Susanna and Schaunard in La bohème with Mobile Opera. Chiang is also a graduate of several apprenticeships, having spent summers as a Gerdine Young Artist at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and with the Glimmerglass Festival, covering Nathan Gunn as Lancelot in Camelot as well as performing the role in their Young Artist Matinee. Upcoming engagements include Gianni Schicchi in Gianni Schicchi with Opera Mississippi, Marcello in La bohème with Opera Western Reserve, Baritone Soloist in The Seasons with the Louisiana Philharmonic, Yamadori/Commissioner in Madama Butterfly with New Orleans Opera, Captain Smith in the West Coast Premiere of A Capacity for Evil with Opera Las Vegas, and Father in Fearless (workshop) with Opera Delaware.

# Biographies



## Director: Linda Lister

**Linda Lister** (Director) is Professor of Music and Director of Opera at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Winner of the 2014 American Prize for Directing, she is a graduate of Vassar College, the Eastman School of Music, and the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. She has led UNLV Opera to two first place wins in the 2015 National Opera Association Collegiate Opera Scenes Competition and a second place win in NOA's 2016 Opera Production Competition. She is author of *So You Want to Sing Light Opera* and *Yoga for Singers: Freeing Your Voice and Spirit through Yoga*, and co-author of *So You Want to Sing Music by Women* and *Voice Secrets: 100 Performance Strategies for the Advanced Singer*. Also a composer, she has written three one-act operas: *Body of Art*, *State of Grace*, and *How Clear She Shines!* She sings her own compositions on the Albany Records release *Pleas to Famous Fairies*.

# Biographies



## **Conductor: Joshua Horsch**

Praised for conducting with "steady acumen and considerable aplomb" and "awesome control" (*Opera Today*), **Joshua Horsch** is an extremely versatile operatic and symphonic conductor. A two-time winner of the American Prize in Opera Conducting, Joshua serves as Music Director and Principal Conductor of Opera Las Vegas. Joshua's recent and upcoming conducting engagements include appearances with Atlanta Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Opera Orlando,

Greensboro Opera, Mobile Opera, Pacific Opera Project, Opera Las Vegas, and Tri-Cities Opera. With a diverse repertoire of over sixty operas and a broad spectrum of orchestral and choral works, Joshua has recently held positions as a conductor and pianist/coach on the music staff of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Austin Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Florida Grand Opera, North Carolina Opera, Opera Saratoga, Pensacola Opera, the Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Newport Music Festival. Joshua studied conducting and piano at the University of Colorado Boulder, the Pennsylvania State University, and Ithaca College.

# Biographies



## Composer: Evan Snyder

Throughout his diverse body of work, Evan L. Snyder is unified in his dedication to storytelling. Best known for his works for the operatic stage, Evan has been praised for his “genuine understanding of the human voice” and his “unapologetically beautiful music,” but for him, bringing stories to life through music is the center of his work. A winner of the 2017 Fort Worth Opera Frontiers Competition, his first opera, *A Capacity for Evil*, broke with conventional opera genres, telling a Holmesian detective tale on the operatic stage. The opera premiered in fall 2018, with Detroit’s Opera MODO and was

enthusiastically received by the run’s sold out audiences. Evan’s current operatic project, *The Clef of the Universe*, is a new science fiction opera, following a group of archeologist crash-landed on an alien world. An aria excerpted from the new work, “On the beach at night alone...” was previewed at Constellation Chicago as a part of the 2019 Fresh Inc Festival.

Evan’s interest in novel storytelling carries over to his work outside of opera as well. His musical portrait of a friend, *Theme Song for Dan Carty*, was originally written for the 2018 Fresh Inc Festival, and since went on to win the 2018 Detroit REVIVAL Project, as well as receiving a performance by the esteemed Fifth House Ensemble at the 2019 Red Note Festival. He has also received chamber music commissions from both Fifth House and the Lansing-based ConTempus Initiative. The latter commission resulted in his *Disappearing Landscapes*, a children’s work for mixed quartet and narrator, exploring the impact of humanity on nature, which premiered as a part of the 2018-2019 Lansing Symphony’s Family Series.

Evan is a proud graduate of Michigan State University, holding degrees in composition, music theory, and voice.

# Save the Dates

OLV Annual Gala: “Paris Extraordinaire” February 25, 2023

Approaching Ali by D.J. Sparr, Davis Miller, and Mark Campbell:  
March 18-19, 2023

La traviata by Giuseppe Verdi and Francesco Maria Piave: June  
9-11, 2023

Information and tickets available at [www.operalasvegas.com](http://www.operalasvegas.com)

# About Opera Las Vegas

Opera Las Vegas heads into 2022-23 — its 24th 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.

## **People of Opera Las Vegas**

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