

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE,
PLEASE:

Opera Las Vegas' Twenty-fourth Anniversary season features Verdi's timeless classic *La traviata*, contains four exciting West Coast Premieres, and will begin with a full-throated celebration of female contributors, with a jubilant Women Composers Festival, 23 September – 8 October 2022.

Conceived as three separate spotlight productions, the series leads off with one of the most acclaimed one act operas of recent years, *Proving Up*. In it, composer Missy Mazzoli and librettist Royce Vavrek compel you to discover the brooding heart of the American Dream. With a chilling investigation into the physical and emotional hardship of settling the West, this piece is a riveting counterpoint to the often overly glamorized backward glances.

The Homestead Act of 1862 — by which settlers, mainly west of the Mississippi River, could acquire public land they'd farmed, or "prove up" — contained an odd provision: To be considered for the land grant, the homesteads, among other requirements, had to include a glass window. Based on a true story, Ms. Mazzoli conjures aural bleakness with an uncanny, confident mixture of instrumental savagery and eerie lightness. The shadowy sound of guitars drifts through the music; chaotic refractions of hoedown fiddling occasionally explode within a landscape of jittery unease. Mazzoli's colorful, fragmentary, and evocative contemporary score perfectly complements Vavrek's terse, cogent texts.

Proving Up performs at UNLV's innovative Black Box Theatre on 23, 24, and 25 September 2022. The Festival continues the next weekend with the World Premiere of a staged workshop presentation of *Letters to Lily* by Emily Clements, an LGBTQ coming of age story that asks: How far would you go to be your true self?

This musical presentation is dramatically crafted to be bookended by a flashback, and then a real time recollection of the watershed Stonewall riots. Lily has a secret from her narrow-minded parents, one that explodes musically into expressive song. Ms. Clements is a former composition student at UNLV's School of Music. *Letters to Lily* is her first opera, which will be performed during Pride celebrations in The Center on 30 September, 1, and 2 October 2022.

The Festival concludes the following weekend, with *Bellesongs*, a recital featuring soprano Kara Grover and pianist Lois Henry performing pieces by female contributors, including the title selection by Ms. Henry, Florence Price, Fanny Mendelssohn, and Linda Lister among others. The single performance is scheduled at Southern Nevada Music on 8 October 2022.

Proving Up and *Letter to Lily* are part of Opera Las Vegas' award-winning Living Composers and Librettists Initiative, an ongoing program since April 2019 that has three times been honored with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The Initiative includes the season's other two West Coast Premieres, *A Capacity for Evil* and *Approaching Ali*.

A murderously clever whodunnit, *A Capacity for Evil* features music by Evan L. Snyder and a libretto by Snyder and John Riesen. 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 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. Spoiler alert: The culprit ultimately 'sings.' Popular entertainment venue The Space is hosting the edge-of-your-seat performances on 27, 28, and 29 January 2023.

Composer D.J. Sparr and librettists Mark Campbell and Davis Miller's *Approaching Ali* is a knockout tale about an unlikely and enduring friendship. It was inspired by the Miller's deeply personal story, *My Dinner with Ali*, and the subsequent international best seller, *The Tao of Muhammed Ali*. The poignant tale recounts how a bullied young boy in North Carolina is galvanized to overcome some traumatic childhood events when he sees the charismatic and powerful icon, Muhammed Ali on television.

More than twenty years later, as a writer on the brink of middle age, he seeks to rekindle that spirit of awe and gratitude by visiting his boyhood hero in Louisville, Kentucky. A lifelong friendship is born. *Approaching Ali* is sure to warm hearts with an uplifting message of brotherly accord with three performances at the Horn Theatre, College of Southern Nevada, 17, 18, and 19 March 2023.

The season of staged operas concludes with a large-scale production of one of the most beloved classics in the repertoire, Giuseppe Verdi and Francisco Maria Piave's immortal masterpiece, *La Traviata*, in which happy dreams of enduring love are lost to noble sacrifice.

Infused with some of the world's most beautiful and well-known music, *La Traviata* relates the story of a tragic love, played against the hypocrisy of upper-class fashionable society. As Alfredo and Violetta's relationship threatens to shame his family, his father directly appeals to her to relinquish her only chance of happiness. Violetta submits, and her act of self-sacrifice leads to her paying the ultimate price. Audiences get a chance to laugh, love and weep along with Violetta at performances of *La Traviata* at UNLV's Judy Bayley Theatre on 9 and 11 June 2023. Tissues not provided.

The Twenty-fourth Anniversary Season will also see the continuation of Opera Las Vegas' acclaimed Opera On Wheels outreach programming with stage concerts in diverse geographic locations throughout the Valley. Watch for *Voices Raised for Vets*, a song-filled paean to those who served; *Holiday on Broadway*, Seasons Greetings from the Great White Way; and the annual *Opera Legends in Black* tribute to world-famous stars who triumphed over adversity.

The popular Opera With Class events will demystify the operatic art for with in-person and virtual education features under the umbrella of *Who's Afraid of Opera?* which has reached over 20,000 students since its inception in 2016. And a family friendly opera, *Three Billy Goats Gruff* will tour to a community center or library near you to provide entertaining introduction to opera for the young of heart of all ages. The familiar stories and genuine operatic singing delight young and old alike.

Opera Las Vegas is proud to be Nevada's professional company member in Opera America, the National Center. Since 1999, the company is committed to promoting:

Enthralling Stories. Exhilarating Music. Exquisite Singing.

For more information, and to purchase tickets, please visit: www.operalalsvegas.com

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