

# THE ETUDE

O P E R A S   F O R   O U R   T I M E

**PROVOKE  
EXPOSE  
REFLECT**

with these musical portraits that  
touch on today's most important issues



**PRESSER**



**CARL FISCHER**

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# STORIES THAT NEED TO BE HEARD

Racial and religious discrimination. Gender equality. LGBTQIA+ experiences. Economic hardship. Mental health challenges. These are among some of the themes presented in this collection, which was created in response to the demand for repertoire that considers the perspectives of those who have historically been disenfranchised, and whose stories need to be heard. While these operas are especially relevant now, they are also timeless. The love, hatred, jealousy, and desire for healing that shape these stories are as old as humanity itself.

Recognizing the diverse range of programming needs and opportunities across today's opera landscape, this curated catalog includes both small scale works for intimate venues and works for large forces, fitting for the grandest stages in the world. With operas by Adolphus Hailstork, Ricky Ian Gordon, Nkeiru Okoye, and more, this pertinent guide will resonate with creators, presenters, and audience members alike, inviting us all to reflect upon our ever-changing society.

# MUSIC BOTH RELEVANT AND TIMELESS



OPERA IN TWO ACTS

# Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed That Line to Freedom

3 Sopranos, 2 Contraltos, 3 Tenors, 3 Baritones

Commissioned by the American Opera Project and premiered in 2014, *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed that Line to Freedom* is a two act opera detailing the life and development of the famed Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman. With a libretto written by Dr. Okoye herself, this work beautifully celebrates the complex life of this larger-than-life historical figure.

Composer: **Nkeiru Okoye**  
Libretto by the composer

120'

2014

Pno. 2Vln. Vla. Vlc. Cb.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

"[Okoye] spins simple Americana into the gold of art music of lasting quality... The music is irresistible, invigorating, and vivid, building to an unforgettable and thrilling conclusion. It is a great American opera."

— *Hyde Park Herald*



Commissioned by American Opera Project, 2014





## OPERA IN ONE ACT

# Joshua's Boots

4 Sopranos, 1 Mezzo-soprano, 2 Tenors, 2 Baritones,  
Male Voice, Children's Chorus

Though *Joshua's Boots* itself is fiction, the background to the story is historically accurate, and parallels documented accounts of the great migration of former slaves from the post-Civil War south to non-Confederate states. A great number settled in Kansas, where many became cowboys. The plot follows a young Black man who overcomes prejudice who overcomes obstacles to become a cowboy, earning himself a pair of new boots in the process.

Composer: **Adolphus Hailstork**  
Librettist: **Susan Kander**

55'

1999

Fl.(dbl. Picc.) Cl. Vln. Vlc. Pno. Perc. (opt.  
on stage instr: Vln. Pno.) Perc: Bass Drum,  
Cowbell, Glockenspiel, Snare Drum, Sus-  
pended Cymbal, Tambourine, Tam-Tam,  
2Tom-Toms, Whip, Woodblock

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

Commissioned by Opera Theatre of St. Louis and The Kansas City Lyric Opera, 1999

## OPERA IN ONE ACT

# Rise For Freedom

5 Sopranos, 1 Mezzo-soprano, 7 Tenors, 6 Baritones, 1 Bass,  
SATB Chorus

After buying his freedom, John P. Parker becomes a successful inventor and owner of an iron foundry in Ohio. He then concentrates on a difficult mission, becoming a conductor on the Underground Railroad and working to defeat one of his customers, a Kentucky slave owner named Sroufe, in Sroufe's attempt to recapture two of his escaped slaves.

Commissioned by Cincinnati Opera Company, 2007

Composer: **Adolphus Hailstork**  
Librettist: **David Gonzalez**

45'

2007

2(2dbl. Picc.) 0 2 2 - 0 0 0 0;  
Perc. Pno. Str.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

"This opera is destroying the Uncle Tom stereotype."

— **Dianne Tweedle, great-granddaughter of John P. Parker**

“It is to the credit of composer Ricky Ian Gordon and librettist Mark Campbell that their ‘Rappahannock County’ succeeds so remarkably both musically and emotionally: it is not unlike Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address in that, in a relatively brief time, it gets at the heart of an aspect of the collective American experience that has shaped all that has come after and, at its core, is both unique to America and unmistakably universal.”

— *Joseph Newsome, Voix des Arts*



Composer: **Ricky Ian Gordon**  
Librettist: **Mark Campbell**

85'

2011

1(d.Picc.) 1(d.E.H.) 2(d.B.Cl.) 1 - 1 1(d.  
Flgln.) 1 0; Timp. Perc. Pno.(d.Cel.) Str.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

## THEATRICAL SONG CYCLE IN TWO ACTS **Rappahannock County**

1 Soprano (African American), 1 Mezzo-soprano (Caucasian),  
1 Tenor (Caucasian), 2 Baritones (1 African American, 1 Caucasian)

This theatrical song cycle captures key emotional, sociological and historical moments in the Civil War. Much of the text was inspired by actual events and drawn from diaries, letters, and other accounts. The narrative, as it is, follows the lines of history, from secession in 1861 to defeat in 1865, and is in five parts. Although the story is set in Virginia, its themes relate broadly to the Civil War.

Commissioned by The Virginia Arts Festival, Virginia Opera, The Modlin Center for the Arts at The University of Richmond, and Texas Performing Arts at The University of Texas at Austin, 2011



Composer: **Ulysses Kay**  
 Librettist: **Donald Dorr**

10:00

1991

2 2 2 2 - 4 3 3 0; Hp. Mand.  
 Timp. Perc. Str.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

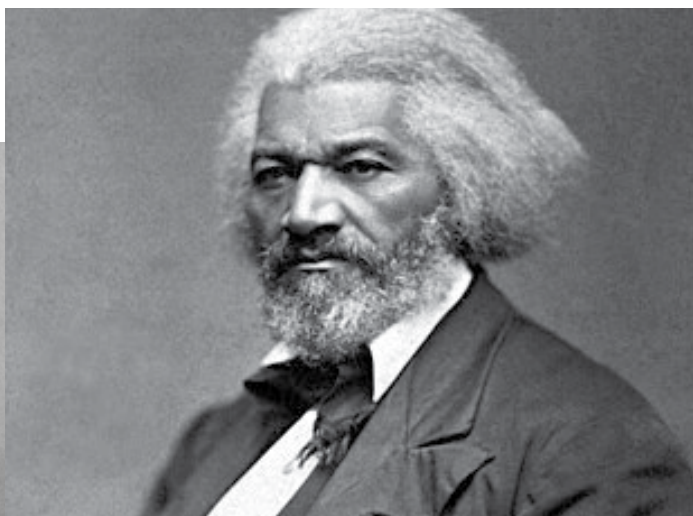
## OPERA IN THREE ACTS

# Frederick Douglass

4 Sopranos, 1 Mezzo-soprano, 4 Tenors, 2 Baritones, 1 Bass-baritone, 1 Bass; SATB chorus; Double Mixed Chorus; SSA Chorus; SA Children's Chorus

In the days following the Civil War, a venal secret cabinet seeks the destruction of the growing power of Frederick Douglass, then the Marshal of Washington, DC. Douglass is appointed to a doomed mission, presumably the acquisition of a U.S. enclave in Haiti. During his absence, his political and financial records are manipulated to his disadvantage. Douglass returns home to face his enemies and restore his reputation.

Premiered by New Jersey State Opera, 1991



## AN OPERATIC THEATERPIECE

# Paul Laurence Dunbar: Common Ground

2 Sopranos, 1 Tenor, 1 Baritone

*Paul Laurence Dunbar: Common Ground* tells the story of the first African American poet to gain national recognition. This impressionistic representation of Dunbar's work intersperses 13 of his poems throughout the dialogue to illustrate the significance of the body of work he created during his short life.

Commissioned by Dayton Opera Company, 1995

Composer: **Adolphus Hailstork**  
 Librettist: **Herbert Martin**

35'

1995

1 1 1 1 - 1 1 1 0; Timp. Perc. Str.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

OPERA IN TWO ACTS

# Intimate Apparel

Soprano (African American), Soprano (African American), Mezzo-soprano (Caucasian), Mezzo-soprano (African American), Tenor (Caucasian), Baritone (African American); Chorus: SATB (div.)



Composer: **Ricky Ian Gordon**

Librettist: **Lynn Nottage**

150'

2022

2Pno.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

Set in 1905, New York, *Intimate Apparel* tells the story of Esther, a lonely, single African-American woman who makes her living sewing beautiful corsets and ladies' undergarments. There is warm affection between her and the Orthodox Jewish man who sells fabrics to her, but any relationship between them, even a touch, is completely forbidden. Seeking love and romance, Esther eventually embarks on a letter-writing relationship with a mysterious suitor laboring on the Panama Canal. When he moves to New York they embark on an unhappy marriage, leading Esther to realize that only her self-reliance and certainty of her own worth will see her through life's challenges.

Commissioned by The Metropolitan Opera/Lincoln Center Theater/Musical Theater Commissioning Program



## SYMPHONIC ORATORIO **Men of Iron and the Golden Spike**

Solo Soprano, Solo Mezzo-soprano, Solo Tenor, Solo Baritone, Solo Bass, Solo child voice

Premiered in 2019, Zhou Long's *Men of Iron and the Golden Spike* tells the story of the building of the Golden Spike, the final piece joining the rails of the first transcontinental railroad across the United States, by Chinese American railroad workers who faced extreme discrimination and endured racism from the Central Pacific Railroad company. It is estimated that at least 1,000 workers died during construction of the Central Pacific Railroad, with most documentation of their employment destroyed by the U.S. government following completion of the project. Zhou Long honors the Chinese Americans who suffered injustice in this moving oratorio.

Commissioned by the US-China Music Institute of Bard College Conservatory of Music

Composer: **Zhou Long**  
Librettist: **Su Wei**

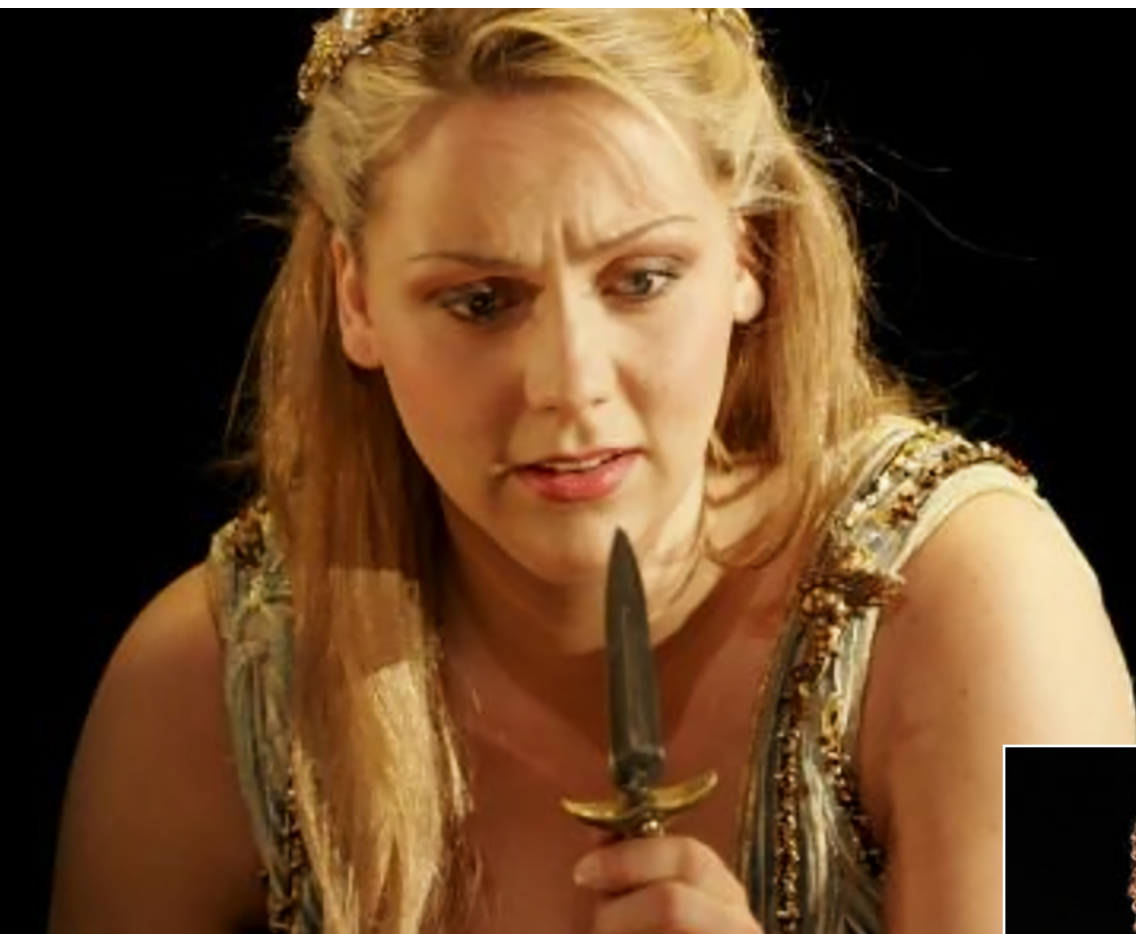
50'

2019

Solo Vcl; 3(1=Picc, 2 dbl. Picc.) 3(3=E.H.)  
3(3=B.Cl.) 3(3=Cbsn.) - 4 3 3(3=B.Tbn.) 1;  
Timp. 4Perc. Guzheng, Erhu. Hp. Str.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)





“Victoria Bond gives each character a three-dimensional role, enriched with original musical colors.”

— *Pamina Magazine*

Premiered by The Easter Festival Baden-Baden, 2019

Composer: <b>Victoria Bond</b> Librettist: <b>Barbara Zinn Krieger</b>	
120'	2019
Fl. Ob. Cl. Bsn. 2Hn. Perc. Pno. Str.	
<a href="#">CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE</a>	

## OPERA IN TWO ACTS

# Clara

1 Soprano, 2 Mezzo-sopranos, 1 Tenor, 2 Baritones,  
1 Bass-baritone, Chorus (Optional)

Inspired by parallels between Clara Schumann and the composer's own mother, pianist Jane Courtland, *Clara* details the life of Clara Schumann and her evolving relationship with her husband, composer Robert Schumann.



## OPERA IN THREE ACTS

# Esther

2 Sopranos, 1 Contralto, 1 Countertenor, 4 Tenors,  
3 Baritones, 1 Bass; Chorus, Children's Chorus



Premiered by San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera, 1993

“... [a] powerful and  
expertly crafted music  
drama ...”

— *The New Yorker*

Composer: **Hugo Weisgall**  
Librettist: **Charles Kondek**

130'

1993

3(Picc. AltoFl.), 2(E.H.) 2(B.Cl.) 2 - 4 3 2 1;  
Timp. Perc. Hp. Str.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

Esther is made queen by the Persian king Ahasuerus. When the King's chief minister plans to kill all the Jewish people in the land in an act of vengeance, Esther reveals to the king that she is Jewish and pleads for her people. Her triumph is hard-won: Ahasuerus does not revoke the extermination edict, but, instead, allows the Jewish people to arm themselves. Their successful defense is commemorated to this day in the annual festival of Purim.



## OPERA IN THREE ACTS **Black Widow**

1 Soprano, 2 Mezzo-sopranos,  
1 Tenor, 1 Baritone

A beautiful young widow who cannot have children of her own hatches a diabolical plot that will finally provide her with the child she desires. Many lives turn to tragedy as her scheme swings into action.

Composer: **Thomas Pasatieri**  
Libretto by the composer,  
based on *Dos Madres*  
by **Miguel de Unamunoe**

120'

1972

2 2 2 2 - 2 2 2 1; Timp.  
Perc. Hp. Str.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)



Premiered by Seattle Opera, 1972





Premiered by Rochester Lyric Opera, 2017

## OPERA IN TWO ACTS

# Mrs. President

3 Sopranos, 1 Mezzo-soprano, 2 Tenors,  
1 Baritone, SATB Chorus

In 1872, Victoria Woodhull ran for President against Ulysses S. Grant on the Equal Rights Party ticket. Her platform included women's suffrage and other much-needed social reforms, but also the inflammatory issue of free love and equality between the sexes, which caused her to be branded "Mrs. Satan." Today, more than 130 years later, many of the issues addressed in the opera remain prescient.

Composer: <b>Victoria Bond</b> Librettist: <b>Hilary Bell</b>	
120'	2017
2 2 2 2 - 2 2 1 0; Timp. 2Perc. Hp. Str.	
<a href="#">CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE</a>	

"Weaving spoken and sung words, Bond's rhythms capture both language and emotion. It feels like a coffee clutch in candlelight. This work is a remarkable feat of composition. . ."

— *Clive Paget, Limelight Magazine*

## OPERA IN TWO ACTS

**Anna Karenina**

2 Sopranos, 3 Mezzo-sopranos, 1 Contralto, 2 Tenors,  
2 Baritones, 1 Bass-baritone, 5 Speaking Roles

Often cited as Leo Tolstoy's greatest novel, *Anna Karenina* tells the tale of the title character's actions leading to her ultimate self-determination. David Carlson and Colin Graham's setting pairs down the densely constructed original to its essence in order to create an ideal dramatic structure for the operatic stage. The sympathetic treatment of the characters in this rendition echoes that employed in Leo Tolstoy's epic novel through a unique and distinctive sound world.

Composer: **David Carlson**  
Librettist: **Colin Graham**  
based on the novel by Leo Tolstoy

175'

2007

3(Picc.) 2(dbl. E.H.) 2 2 - 4 3 3 1;  
Timp. 3Perc. Cel. Hp. Synth.  
Recorded sounds; Str.

2 2 2 2 - 4 2 2 0; Perc. Org. Str.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)



Commissioned by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, 2007

"[Carlson's] romantic and luxuriantly textured music, with soaring vocal writing, retains interest with an underlying tension and hint of astringency."

— *Vivien Schweitzer, The New York Times*





## OPERA IN TWO ACTS

# Three Sisters

3 Sopranos, 2 Mezzo-sopranos, 4 Tenors,  
2 Baritones, 2 Basses

Opportunity knocks for Olga, Masha, and Irina, who dream of breaking from their hum-drum existence in a small provincial Russian garrison town, but not for long. With their aspirations vanquished, and despite the depressing return of life to how it was before, the sisters still cling to their hopes for a better future.

Premiered by The Opera/Columbus, 1986

Composer: **Thomas Pasatieri**  
Librettist: **Kenward Elmslie**

Partial  
Evening

1986

2 2 2(B.Cl.) 2(Cbsn.) - 4 0 2 0;  
3Perc. Str.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)



## OPERA IN ONE ACT

# The Family Room

1 Soprano, 1 Mezzo-soprano, Actor

Two women speak of blue skies and thunderstorms, but live in a windowless room. They speak of a child and the men they love, but their only company is the sounds from upstairs. The seemingly normal life that the women talk about is revealed to be at odds with a brutal reality.

Composer: **Thomas Pasatieri**  
Librettist: **Daphne Malfitano**

75'

2011

1 1 1 1 - 1 1 1 0; Pno. Hp. Str. 5tet(or section)

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)



Commissioned by The McCarter Theatre in Princeton, NJ, 2011



## OPERA IN ONE ACT

# Maria Elena

3 Sopranos, 4 Mezzo-sopranos, 2 Tenors, 1 Baritone, 1 Bass-baritone; Small Chorus

Based on the true story of Maria Elena, this opera tells the story of a beautiful Mexican woman who falls in love with Gonzalo, a handsome criminal. Together, the pair robs men who became enamored of Maria. The police trap Maria and she is sent to prison, where she suffers a mental breakdown. Maria sees flashbacks of the men who have loved as she reflects on her life, while suffering physical, verbal, and psychological abuse at the hands of the police.

Composer: **Thomas Pasatieri**  
Libretto by the composer

90'

1983

2 1 2 1 - 2 2 2 0; Timp. Perc. Hp. Str.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

Premiered by The University of Arizona, 1983



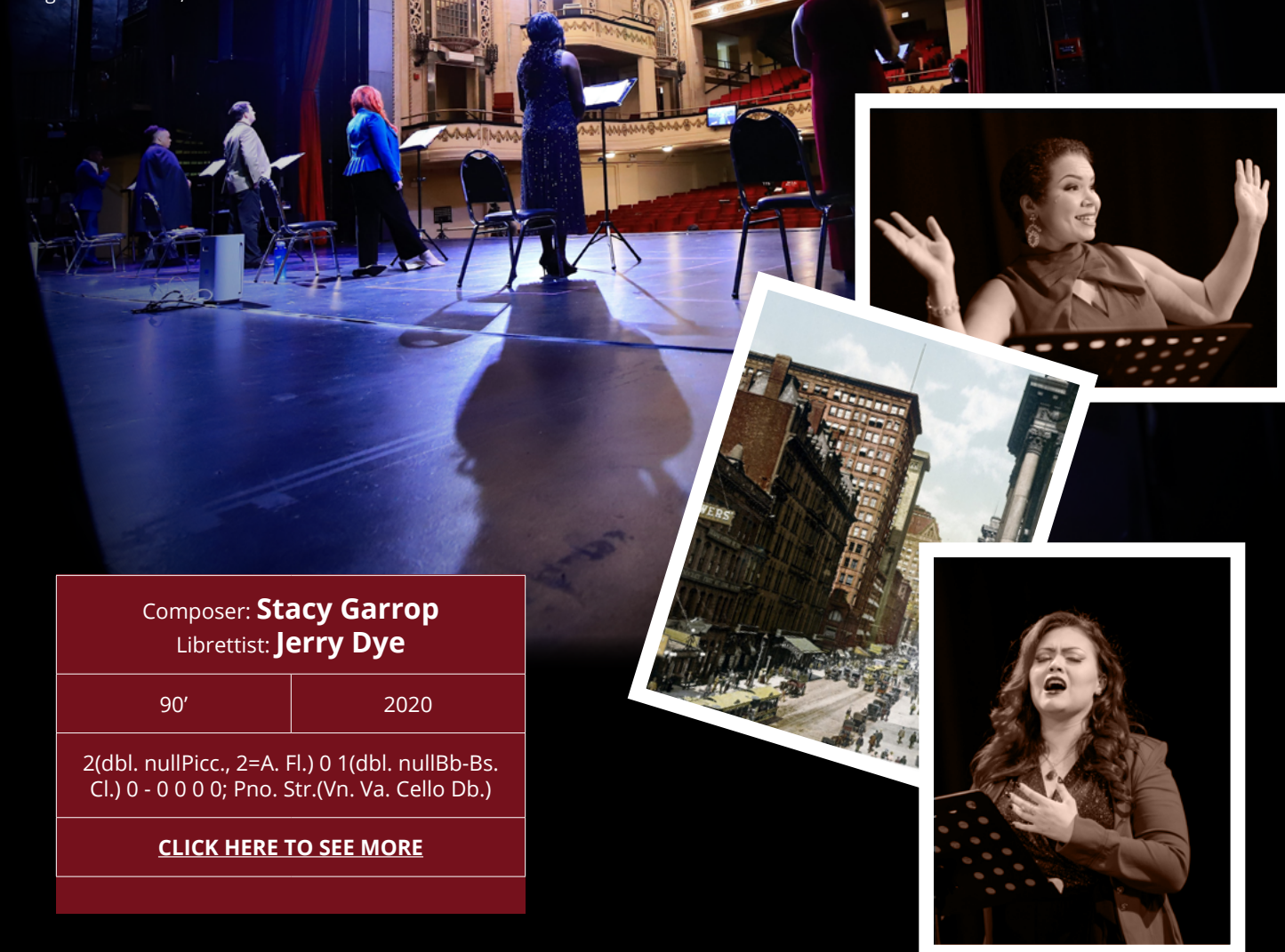
## AN OPERA IN ONE ACT

# The Transformation of Jane Doe

1 Soprano, 2 Mezzo-sopranos, 1 Tenor, 1 Baritone, 1 Bass-baritone, 2 Voices (non-speaking)

It's New Year's Eve in Chicago, 1919. Just before the stroke of midnight, an anonymous woman leaps from the rooftop of a downtown hotel. The next morning, a young reporter named Abigail lands her first, major story, uncovering the identity of this mysterious jumper. The deeper Abigail descends into the complexity of Jane Doe's story, the closer she comes to unearthing her own personal truth. *The Transformation of Jane Doe* is a gripping, powerful, and accessible noir-esque opera about truth, illusion, and one woman's journey in a rapidly changing world.

Commissioned by Chicago  
Opera Theater for the  
Vanguard Initiative, 2020



Composer: **Stacy Garrop**  
Librettist: **Jerry Dye**

90'

2020

2(dbl. nullPicc., 2=A. Fl.) 0 1(dbl. nullBb-Bs.  
Cl.) 0 - 0 0 0 0; Pno. Str.(Vn. Va. Cello Db.)

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)





## OPERA IN FIVE ACTS

## 27

1 Soprano, 1 Mezzo-soprano, 1 Tenor, 1 Baritone,  
1 Bass-baritone, singing a variety of roles

27 follows the lives of Gertrude Stein and her partner Alice B. Toklas as they host legendary salons at 27 rue de Fleurus in Paris, entertaining such illustrious guests as Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Man Ray, Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. The opera attempts to bring Ms. Stein to life through her writing, highlighting her lack of inhibition and unabashed self-expression even in the face of negative critical opinion. In creating physical representations of her and Alice, the piece also explores the ways in which the women relate to one another and the rest of the world, using the World Wars as brackets to track the evolution of their relationship as they grapple with the changes that only war, and the passing of time, can bring.

Commissioned by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, 2014

"A taut, witty and  
affecting new piece of  
lyric theatre..."

*-James Sohre, Opera Today*

Composer: <b>Ricky Ian Gordon</b> Librettist: <b>Royce Vavrek</b>	
95'	2014
2(2nd dbl. Picc.) 2(2nd dbl. E.H.) 2 2(2nd dbl. Cbsn.) AltoSax. - 2 2 2(2nd = B.Tbn.) 0; Timp. 2Perc. Hp. Pno. Str. (6.5.4.3.2)	
<a href="#">CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE</a>	



## SONG CYCLE IN ONE ACT

# Green Sneakers

1 Baritone

*Green Sneakers* is a work for solo baritone voice with string quartet from the critically acclaimed Ricky Ian Gordon. Grown from a cycle of poems dedicated to the composer's departed love, Jeffrey Michael Grossi, *Green Sneakers* is a raw and touching ode to the life he shared and the process of grief. The string quartet narrates the story as much as the baritone voice, creating a mini-opera, complete with an empty chair, employed as a prop, and a piano played by the singer at the conclusion. According to Gordon, "I suppose I wanted to end the piece with not only a lullaby, but a celebration of what we had together."

Commissioned by Vilar Performing Arts Center, 2008

Composer: **Ricky Ian Gordon**  
Libretto by the composer

60'

2008

Pno. 2Vln. Vla. Vlc.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)



# OPERA IN TWO ACTS

## The Picture of Dorian Gray

2 Sopranos, 3 Tenors, 3 Baritones, 1 Bass-Baritone

Oscar Wilde's well-known story of eternal youth is brought to the stage, with external beauty only thinly disguising the ugliness that can inhabit men's souls. Capturing the essence of the original, particularly the close relationship between Dorian and his confidante Basil, Liebermann's setting received near universal acclaim when it debuted in 1996.

Composer: **Lowell Liebermann**  
Libretto by the composer

120'

1996

2(Picc.) 2 2(B.Cl.) 2 - 2 2 1 0; Timp. Perc. Hp. Kbd. Str.; On-stage Upright Piano, Off-stage Violin

3 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 0; Timp. Perc. Hp. Str.; On-stage Upright Piano, Off-stage Violin

Full: [CLICK HERE](#) – Red. Orch.: [CLICK HERE](#)



Commissioned by L'Opera de Monte-Carlo, 1996

Certainly, no one denies that “The Picture of Dorian Gray” is an astonishing operatic debut. Like Britten, whose first opera was “Peter Grimes,” Mr. Liebermann has burst forth fully formed as a theatrical composer. In the end the drama is so compelling and the structure so taut that the question of influence pales in comparison...Above all, “The Picture of Dorian Gray” is the work of a composer who wields a virtuoso technique with self-assurance and conviction.

— *The New York Times*

## OPERA IN THREE ACTS

# The Grapes of Wrath

1 Soprano, 2 Mezzo-sopranos, 3 Tenors, 4 Baritones, 1 Bass-baritone, 1 Boy Soprano, 1 Girl Soprano; 5 featured singers (doubling various roles): Soprano, Mezzo-soprano, Tenor, Baritone, Bass; Chorus: SATB (div.)

John Steinbeck's classic tale of the Joad family's odyssey from drought-stricken Oklahoma to the illusory "green pastures" of southern California is one of the great stories of survival. Full of vibrant, three-dimensional characters, some of whom die on the way and some of whom suffer and grow on the road to the "promised land," the opera is remarkably faithful to the book. From the stirring opening chorus, "The Last Time There Was Rain," to the remarkable final scene in which Rosa, whose baby has been stillborn, nurses a dying man, this large-scale opera preserves the biblical and socially progressive underpinnings of Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning book.



Commissioned by Minnesota Opera and Utah Opera, premiered by Minnesota Opera in 2007



Composer: **Ricky Ian Gordon**

Librettist: **Michael Korie**,  
based on the novel by John Steinbeck

190'

2007

2 2 2 2 A.Sax. T.Sax - 4 3 3 (B.Tbn.) 1; Timp.  
Perc. Synth. Hp. Harmonica. Gtr. Str.

2(dbl. Picc.) 2(dbl.E.H.) 2(dbl.B.Cl., Eb Cl.)  
2(dbl.Cbsn.) A.Sax. T.Sax.(dbl.Bar.Sax.) - 4  
3 3 (B.Tbn.) 1; Timp. 2Perc. Synth. Hp. Har-  
monica. Gtr. Str.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

## PROLOGUE AND OPERA IN TWO ACTS

# Bandanna

1 Soprano, 1 Mezzo-soprano, 1 Tenor, 2 Baritones,  
2 Bass-baritones, 1 silent role, 2 Mariachi singers; SATB chorus

*Bandanna* is set in a small town on the U.S. - Mexico border during the fall of 1968. The story embraces the timeless themes of love and betrayal within the context of the Vietnam War era and the continuing struggle for survival waged by undocumented migrant workers who inhabit the "border" towns of a literal and symbolic world.

Premiered by The University  
of Texas at Austin, 1999

Composer: **Daron Aric Hagen**

Librettist: **Paul Muldoon**

118'

2007

2Fl.(1st dbl. Picc. 2nd dbl. Picc. A.Fl.) 2Ob.  
(E.H.) 3Cl.(B.Cl.) 2Bsn. - S.Sax. A.Sax. T.Sax.  
B.Sax. - 2Tpt.(Fgl.Hn.) 2Hn. Euph.(opt)  
2Tbn. Tba. 3Db.; Timp. Perc. Pno. Hp.;  
Onstage Mariachi Band

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)





## OPERA IN TWO ACTS

**Morning Star**

Composer: **Ricky Ian Gordon**  
 Librettist: **William M. Hoffman**

150'

2015

2(2 dbl. Picc.) 1(dbl. E.H.) 3(3=B.Cl., dbl. Cl.)  
 1 - 2 2 2(B.Tbn.) 0; Timp. 2Perc. Pno/Cel.  
 Str. (6.5.4.3.2)

1(dbl. nullPicc.) 0 2(2dbl. Bb-Bs. Cl.) 1 - 1 2  
 0 0; Perc. Pno. Cel. Str.(Vn.1 Vn.2 Vn.3 Va.  
 Cello Db.)

Full: [CLICK HERE](#) – Red. Orch.: [CLICK HERE](#)

4 Sopranos, 3 Mezzo-sopranos, 3 Tenors, 2 Baritones, 1 Bass-baritone,  
 1 Boy (Spoken Role), Optional Chorus

Based on Sylvia Regan's play and on parallels with the composer's own family, *Morning Star* is a deeply touching character piece about life among Jewish immigrants in New York City's Lower East Side, where the family must learn how to adapt to the country's ever-changing landscape. Hope blossoms and is dashed as the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911, World War I, and the Great Depression lead to death, divorce, and despair. Through it all, William M. Hoffman's colorful libretto and Ricky Ian Gordon's engaging score maintain charming threads of love and optimism, comedy amid tragedy, and luscious sonorities featuring a large cast of singers – in English, Yiddish, Italian, and Haitian French.



Commissioned by Cincinnati Opera, 2015

## OPERA IN THREE ACTS

**Sacco and Vanzetti**

2 Sopranos, 1 Mezzo-soprano, 3 Tenors, 3 Baritones, 1 Bass, with doublings

Composer: **Marc Blitzstein,  
 and Leonard Lehrman**  
 Librettist: **Marc Blitzstein**

180'

2022

2(dbl. Picc.) 2(E.H.) 2(Cl.1 dbl. E-flat Cl., Al-  
 toSax.; Cl.2 dbl. Ten.Sax.) 2(dbl. Cbsn.) - 2 2  
 2(Tbn.2 dbl. Tu.) 0; 3Perc. Pno. Accord. Str.

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Begun by Marc Blitzstein and completed by Leonard Lehrman, *Sacco and Vanzetti* tells the story of the notorious 1920 trial and execution of Italian immigrants Nicola Sacco and Bartholomeo Vanzetti for a robbery and murder they did not commit.



Premiered by The After Dinner Opera Company, 2022





OPERA IN TWO ACTS

# The Garden of the Finzi-Continis

4 Sopranos, 1 Mezzo-soprano, 4 Tenors, 3 Baritones, 1 Bass-baritone; Chorus: 3 Trebles and 3 Basses

With a text by Michael Korie and based on Giorgio Bassani's acclaimed 1962 novel of the same name, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* takes place in Ferrara, Italy on the cusp of World War Two. It tells the story of Giorgio, a working-class Italian-Jewish youth, and his relationship with a wealthy Italian-Jewish family, the Finzi-Continis, who, even as Italy forms an alliance with Germany and begins enforcing anti-Semitic laws, cling to the belief that they will be invulnerable to the impending devastation. Through the storyteller's recollections, members of the Jewish community of Ferrara and across Italy who perished in the Holocaust are immortalized, the certitude of their existence woven into the fabric of recorded history through written word.

Composer: **Ricky Ian Gordon**

Librettist: **Michael Korie**

150'

2022

1(dbl. Picc.) 1(dbl. E.H.) 1 1 - 1 1 1(1=B.Tbn.)  
0; 1Perc. Pno.(dbl. Cel.) Str.(Vln.1 Vln.2  
Vln.3 Vla. Vcl. Cb.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene/NYC Opera



Operas for Our Time



Composer: **Ricky Ian Gordon**  
 Librettist: **Frank Bidart**

76'

2019

2Vln. Vla. Vlc. Cb., C. Bell, Pno.

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## OPERA IN ONE ACT

# Ellen West

1 Soprano, 1 Baritone

A remarkable operatic poem written for an intimate instrumentation, *Ellen West* plunges into the emotional, psychological, and physical challenges of a woman struggling with perceptions of her body, her relationship with food, and the world closing in around her. Inspired by one of the earliest cases of existential analysis, poet Frank Bidart and composer Ricky Ian Gordon examine the lives of psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger and his patient, Ellen West. Bidart's poem, which serves as the opera's libretto, juxtaposes the clinical observations of Binswanger with fictitious entries of Ellen's journals, illuminating a psychological portrait of a woman at war with her body.

Commissioned by the Beth Morrison Projects and Opera Saratoga, 2019



## OPERA IN ONE ACT

# The Trial of Mary Lincoln

1 Soprano, 2 Mezzo-sopranos, 1 Contralto, 6 Baritones,  
8 Solo Voices (4 Female, 4 Male)

Based on the insanity trial of President Abraham Lincoln's widow 10 years after his death, *The Trial of Mary Lincoln* explores the tragic events that underlie Mary's disturbed state, as well as the personality traits deemed undesirable that often placed her in conflict with her husband, her inmates, and her society.

Composer: **Thomas Pasatieri**  
 Librettist: **Anne Howard Bailey**

60'

1972

3 2 2(B.Cl.) 2(Cbsn.) - 2 1 1 0; Timp. Perc.  
Pno. Hp. Str.
[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)


Commissioned by the National Educational Television, 1972

## OPERA IN ONE ACT

# The Tibetan Book of the Dead

2 Sopranos, 2 Mezzo-sopranos, 2 Tenors, 1 Baritone, 1 Bass

Based on the ancient Buddhist text of the same name and written for the composer's partner Jeffrey Michael Grossi in 1996 as he was dying of AIDS, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* intends to lead us through the stages we experience after death and our transition into the next life; during the last years of Grossi's life, Gordon read to him from *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* as a way of aiding him in his journey. The opera is at once a ritual, an oratorio in 17 set numbers, a requiem, a warning, and a theatrically-staged wake. A meditation on loss and a reflection on death as a vital part of life, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* offers valuable and unique lessons that abide with the listener long after hearing.

Composer: **Ricky Ian Gordon**  
 Librettist: **Jean-Claude van Itallie**

105'

1995

Fl.(dbl. Picc., A.Fl.) Cl.(dbl.B.Cl.) Hn. Tpt.  
 3Perc. Pno. Hp. Vln. Vlc. Cb.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

Commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera and The American Music Theatre Festival, 1995

Composer: **Shulamit Ran**Librettist: **Charles Kondek**after the drama *Dybbuk* by **S. Ansky**

120'

1997

2(2Picc./AltoFl.) 1(E.H.) 2(2EbCl./AltoCl.)  
 1(Cbsn.) - 1 2 2(B.Tbn.) 0; 3Perc. Pno. Hp.  
 Str. (4 2 2 1) 3 Shofars (recorded shofar  
 and sampled shofar sounds may be sub-  
 stituted)

[CLICK HERE TO SEE MORE](#)

## OPERA IN TWO ACTS

## Between Two Worlds

3 Sopranos, 2 Mezzo-sopranos, 3 Tenors, 4 Baritones,  
 Chorus: at least 12 singers (some doubling)

Leya, a young woman about to enter into an arranged marriage, is secretly in love with another man, Khonnon. After Khonnon's unexpected death, Leya gains possession of his soul. This possession comes to a climax during the arranged marriage ceremony. The resulting exorcism of the "dybbuk" leads Leya to becoming unconscious, interrupting the proceedings. Khonnon appears to the sleeping Leya, and tells her that although he has left her body, he is now forever part of her soul.

Commissioned by the Lyric Opera of Chicago, 1997





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