The VOYAGE of EDGAR ALLAN POE

Composer
Dominick Argento

April 5, 2024 7:30pm
The Huntington Theatre
“...One of the nation’s most intriguing opera companies.”
THE NEW YORK TIMES

“Passion, rejection, greed, adultery, murder — everything you expect from opera was on offer from Odyssey Opera’s Troika.”
THE BOSTON GLOBE

“A fascinating, extreme and at times delirious opera...”
OPERA NOW MAGAZINE

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An Opera in Two Acts
Composer Dominick Argento

April 5, 2024 | 7:30pm
The Huntington Theatre

www.odysseyopera.org
Voyagers, I welcome you on a particularly special journey this evening as we discover (and rediscover) two greats of American artistic history: composer Dominick Argento and poet Edgar Allan Poe. Some of our audiences may remember our Argento double bill (Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night and A Water Bird Talk) in 2014. Since that production, Argento entered my musical consciousness in a deep way, sparking a decades-long exploration of this great (and underacknowledged) American composer.

Our aptly-named opera this evening, The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe, invites us to go on a journey with Edgar Allan Poe, an American poet long-relegated to schoolrooms and elementary grade textbooks. Most of us know who Edgar Allan Poe is, but our vague recollection is likely littered with misconceptions: Wasn’t he a type of mad genius, driven to drink and despair by the death of his beloved first cousin? Didn’t he write macabre short stories?

Argento and his librettist Charles Nolte give us the opportunity to wander through the tales of Poe while revisiting his biography in a way that reinvigorates the truth behind this American literary great. Always lurking overhead, like a mad puppeteer, is the character of Griswold, based on the true-life Reverend Rufus Wilmot Griswold, a poet and critic who despised Poe while he lived and maligned him after his death in an obituary and biography littered with untruths. Tonight, we can go on a “voyage of discovery” to find the truth, both about Poe’s life and his impact as a writer.

Following tonight’s performance, Odyssey Opera will make a studio recording of Dominick Argento’s The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe; the recording will be available later this year. In both this performance and recording, Odyssey Opera continues to fulfill its mission of preserving important American works that might otherwise be lost. Born right here in Boston, Poe is the ideal subject of this type of preservation work, and I’m excited for you to hear how Argento masterfully marries Poe’s text with his music.

Tonight’s journey will be unlike any we’ve taken before. Let’s get ready to step aboard with Edgar Allan Poe and see where the wind takes us.

Gil Rose

DIRECTOR’S WELCOME

The VOYAGE of EDGAR ALLAN POE
An Opera in Two Acts

Libretto by Chris Nolte
Conducted by Gil Rose
Directed by Anne Harley
Production Designer: Chris Ostrom
Costume Designer: Brooke Stanton
Hair and Makeup Designer: Rachel Padula

ACT I

PROLOGUE

SCENE I A ship’s dock in the darkness.
SCENE II The ship’s lounge.
SCENE III On a body of still water.
SCENE IV A small make-shift stage, where a wedding procession is forming.
SCENE V Back in the ship’s lounge.

Intermission

ACT II

SCENE VI The ship’s lounge.
SCENE VII Poe’s cottage.
SCENE VIII A bizarre auction.
SCENE IX Virginia’s bier.
SCENE X The trial.
EPILOGUE The dock.

Presented Semi-Staged | Sung in English
This performance will run approximately 2 hours, 30 minutes, including a 15-minute intermission.

The production of The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe received funding from OPERA America’s Next Stage program, supported by Gene Kaufman, Terry Eder-Kaufman, and New Vision for Opera.
The CAST
In order of appearance

Neal Ferreira
Doctor (also Wedding Guest, Passenger, etc.)

Peter Tantsits
Edgar Allan Poe

Tom Meglioranza
Griswold (also Captain, Mr. Allan, etc.)

Kirsten Chambers
Mrs. Poe (also Ballad-singer, etc.)

Felicia Gavilanes
Mrs. Clemm (also Aunt Nancy, etc.)

Christina English
Mrs. Allan (also Granny Poe, etc.)

David Salsbery Fry
Theater Director (also M.Dupin, etc.)

Maggie Finnegan
Virginia Poe

Alexis Rodda
Rosy

Marcus Schenck
Willy

CREATIVE and PRODUCTION TEAM

Andy Clark
Chorusmaster

Jack Culton
Lead Electrician

Hannah Dillis
Props

Luisa Earle
Wardrobe Supervisor

Yoko Hagino
Rehearsal Pianist

Danielle Ibrahim
Production Manager

Kat Lawrence
Dresser

Linda O’Brien
Director of Production

Will Prapestis
Choral Coordinator

Corey Roberts
Stage Supervisor

Alexis Rodda
Artistic Administrative Associate

Ash Strange
Stage Manager

Kendyl Trott
Assistant Stage Manager

Henry Vumbaca
Programmer

CHORUS

SOPRANO
Grace Anderson
Alecia Batson
Jennifer Burks
Jessica Graves
Janet Stone
Laura McHugh
Elin Nelson
Kay Patterson

ALTO
Darby Clinard
Jade Espina
Ashley Grypta
Sara Mitnik
Alexis Rodda
Madison Smith
Mauri Tetreau
Hilary Walker

TENOR
Charles Blandy
Quinn Cason
Daon Drisdom
Joel Edwards
Fausto Miro
Ehimemen Omigie
Srinivasan
Raghuraman
Eduardo Ramos

BASS
Thaddeus Bell
Joshua Belt
Anthony Garza
Stephan Griffin
Nathan Halbur
Anthony Pilcher
Will Prapestis
Marcus Schenck

ORCHESTRA

FLUTE
Sarah Brady
Rachel Braude

OBOE
Jennifer Slowik
Laura Pardee Schaefer

CLARINET
Jan Halloran
Amy Advocat

BASSOON
Ronald Haroutunian
Michael Mechanics

HORN
Whitacre Hill
Neil Godwin
Sarah Sutherland

TRUMPET
Terry Everson
Eric Berlin

TROMBONE
Hans Bohn

TUBA
Ben Vasko

TIMPANI
Craig McNutt

PERCUSSION
Robert Schulz
Nick Tolle

PIANO/CELESTA
Yoko Hagino

VIOLIN I
Heidi Braun-Hill
Yumi Okada

VIOLIN II
Colleen Brannen
Lilith Hartunian

CELLO
David Russell
Nicole Cariglia

HARP
Amanda Romano

VIOLIN II
Colleen Brannen
Lilith Hartunian

TROMBONE
Hans Bohn

BASS
Anthony D’Amico
Bebo Shiu

TROMBONE
Hans Bohn

BASS
Anthony D’Amico
Bebo Shiu

TROMBONE
Hans Bohn

BASS
Anthony D’Amico
Bebo Shiu
SYNOPSIS

PROLOGUE A doctor recalls his last encounter with Poe. Poe, whose young wife Virginia died two years earlier, appears ill and feverish, his creativity at an end. He plans to sail to Baltimore that night, despite the doctor’s belief that no ship is scheduled to depart. Poe insists, for his literary executor Griswold has told him of one. The doctor warns him against Griswold, but Poe is determined to embark on his “voyage of discovery.”

SCENE I Alone on the dock, Poe awaits the ship. Griswold appears, dressed as a Ship’s Captain. A ghostly vessel materializes out of the blackness. Strange phantoms drift across its decks. They draw Poe onto the vessel which again disappears into the mist.

SCENE II In the ship’s lounge a small troupe of actors is presenting a melodrama. Poe becomes aware that it is a reenactment of his own mother’s death when he was a small child. He is drawn into the scene which becomes “real” to him. The mother dies and a sheet is drawn over her face. The actress playing “Mrs. Allan” gleefully adopts him, chiding him for drinking and gambling while at the University. Bewildered, Poe protests that he lacked funds. Griswold, now dressed as Mr. Allan, pops up from beneath the sheet formerly covering the corpse of Poe’s mother and berates his foster-son for lack of occupation and refuses to lend him more money. Insults are exchanged and the two men grapple amid the bedclothes. In the confusion, Poe finds himself wrestling with a large rag doll of Virginia. Griswold has disappeared.

SCENE III On a body of still water a small boat in which Virginia is seated glides into view. Poe steps into it and together they move over the water, reliving happy memories of their love. A second boat appears bearing Griswold and a woman whose face is averted. As it drifts past Poe, the woman turns toward him and smiles: it is his mother. Without speaking, she turns back to Griswold with a seductive expression on her face. The two boats glide away into darkness.

SCENE IV A wedding procession is forming on the small make-shift stage. Poe is pushed forward to take part in the ceremony, for it is his own wedding. Virginia appears in wedding veil and gown but clearly a child of twelve. There are shocked whispers and giggles as the ceremony proceed, with Griswold, now costumed as the minister, officiating. Poe declares he is too poor to marry. He is advised to appeal to Mr. Allan. The minister instantly turns into Mr. Allan. Poe attempts to beg for funds and an argument ensues. In rage, Allan disinherits him and disappears. In his place stands the minister, pronouncing Virginia and Poe man and wife.

SCENE V In the lounge, passengers are preparing for a masquerade party as a storm is rising. Poe wanders among them, appealing for help, for work. The theatre director suggests that he give a lecture and thus make some money. Poe’s attempts are hindered by the jeering of the crowd and by a disembodied voice singing “Annabel Lee.” In his feverish imagination, he believes it to be the voice of his dead wife. He is assured it is merely a ballad-singer, who presently enters. Poe sees in her his dead mother once again, who, like Virginia, died while singing to him. To blot out the dreadful vision, he drinks excessively. The carousing grows more violent. Poe continues to hear a distant voice singing “Annabel Lee” even though the ballad-singer is now beside him. The others are amused by his hallucinations and crown him a member of their mad company as the violence of the storm increases. In desperation, Poe cries out that he knows Virginia is just outside the door. A sudden gust of wind blows open the door revealing Virginia in blood-stained bridal clothes. Poe rushes to embrace her as Griswold and the others erupt in macabre laughter. Virginia falls to the floor, bearing Poe with her.

Intermission

SCENE VI The lounge as last seen except that the passengers are now dressed in normal clothing. There is no suggestion of hallucination and no trace of Virginia. Poe, clutching a blood-stained bridal veil, struggles back to consciousness. Confusedly, he recounts the preceding events and the passengers conclude that he is insane. Poe’s fictional detective, Auguste Dupin, suggests a trial to contest the charge of madness. Griswold, now in scarlet robe and judicial wig, prepares to hear the testimony. Dupin invokes a reconstruction of past events in his client’s life.

SCENE VII Poe’s cottage on the day of Virginia’s death. Her mother, Mrs. Clemm, and neighbors are gathered at the deathbed. Poe, with a priest (Griswold), watches from a distance. When Virginia calls to him, he moves forward and kneels beside her. She sings of “Annabel Lee” and then expires. The priest urges Poe to confess that he longed for his wife’s death, that he needed her suffering to inspire his art. Poe fiercely denies the accusation. The priest conjures up a vision of Poe’s future actions to serve as proof.
SCENE VIII  A bizarre auction over which Griswold presides. Various women, prominent in Poe's final years, are offered as possible muses for his flagging imagination. One by one they come forward through a mirror-frame to confront Poe with their charms. The scene becomes more and more nightmarish as they struggle for his attention. They begin to divest themselves of their “parts” for his edification, offering a leg, an arm, a heart. Poe utters a terrifying scream and the vision abruptly dissolves.

SCENE IX  Still kneeling at Virginia’s bier, Poe can no longer deny the priest’s charges even though he will not admit his own guilt. A sound is heard, a heartbeat. The body of Virginia comes to life in his embrace. Despite a warning not to ask about the land beyond the grave, Poe, in his wild excitement cannot refrain. Hesitantly and painfully, Virginia tells him of the other world “where gold and silver fish swim through the river of silence.” She falters, begging him to ask no more. He persists. Her voice rises in ecstasy as she describes the “valley of the many-colored grass,” then abruptly ceases. Clutching her throat, she falls back lifeless in Poe’s arms. Poe now recognizes his guilt: she died again, victim of his creative life.

SCENE X  The trial resumes. Dupin asks the court to be merciful. Judge and jurors remain unmoved and ridicule Poe’s own defense. Driven to rage, Poe seizes a sword-cane and lunges toward Griswold, standing mockingly in the mirror-frame. “Who dares judge me,” Poe cries. “Myself,” replies Griswold, “Your soul. Your secret self.” With a despairing cry, Poe stabs at the image in the mirror. But his nemesis has disappeared and in his place stands an image of Poe himself. With welcoming gesture, Poe’s image stretches out his arms to receive the blows.

EPILOGUE  The dock. Dawn. Poe stands in the mist alone. There is no suggestion of a ship. Unseen by Poe, Griswold emerges from the shadows and watches him. The disembodied voice of Virginia is heard from far off singing the final phrases of “Annabel Lee.” Poe sinks down, dying “by the side of my darling, my life and my bride, in her sepulcher here by the sea.” Virginia’s voice dies away and the manuscripts drop from Poe’s hands. The doctor is heard calling for Poe. He enters and discovers Griswold standing over the body. The doctor explains that Poe wished to take ship last night, but Griswold assures him that no vessel departed. He disappears into the dark while the doctor remains kneeling by the body of Poe.

HOW the OPERA CAME to BE

The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe has been commissioned by the University of Minnesota in commemoration of America’s Bicentennial. The project began in late 1973 when Dominick Argento, Professor in the University’s Department of Music, petitioned for a short leave to write a chamber opera. The College of Liberal Arts committee that reviews applications for leaves suggested that this modest project should be expanded. Roy Schuessler, then chairman of the University’s Department of Music, and Frank Sorauf, Dean of CLA, agreed with this suggestion and determined that this should be a major Bicentennial project for the University. Acting Academic Vice President Harold Chase brought the proposal to Elmer L. Andersen, then Chairman of the Board of Regents, and the Regents commissioned the University’s first opera. The University Foundation accepted the responsibility for obtaining funds to finance copying and printing of the score and libretto. Northwest Bancorporation underwrote this phase of the commission.

Early in this process the Minnesota Opera Company was contacted, and arrangements were made for the Opera Company to present this new work during its 1975-76 season. The Minnesota Opera Company is an appropriate choice to present the premiere of this opera because of its national reputation for the performance of new operas and because it has premiered two other Argento works: The Masque of Angels in its 1963-64 season and Postcard from Morocco in 1971.

Another early participant was Charles M. Nolte, Professor in the Department of Theatre Arts, who agreed to write this libretto. H. Wesley Balk, Associate Professor in Theatre Arts, was selected to be stage director.

The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, renowned Minnesota musical organization, is taking part in The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe under direction of Philip Brunelle, Music Director of the Minnesota Opera Company. Sets and costumes have been designed by Tanya Moiseiwitch, noted theatrical designer who was a lifelong colleague of the late Sir Tyrone Guthrie.

The University of Minnesota has provided further practical support for the production. Thomas Lancaster, Associate Professor in the Music Department, selected 20 members of the University’s Chamber Singers to sing in the opera chorus. They have practiced three times each week during winter quarter as part of their regular class schedule. A similar activity has been organized by James Bakkom, former Property Master and Artist-in-Residence at the Guthrie Theatre, who is supervising creation of props for the opera in his University Theatre Arts class in set design.
Dr. Argento has been a member of the Minnesota music faculty for 18 years. He previously has composed seven operas and numerous other compositions, including the song cycle From the Diary of Virginia Woolf, for which he received the Pulitzer Prize in 1975.

Dr. Argento selected Edgar Allan Poe as subject for this opera because the colorful elements of Poe’s life and his role as a giant in American literature during our country’s first century offered strong materials from which to create an operatic work. He has focused on the legend of evil that has been attached to both Poe the man and Poe the creative writer. The composer asks us to discard many of the facile images of Poe as a neurotic and intemperate romantic. However, in rebuilding an image of Poe’s genius, we are asked to concentrate on the relationship of a man to his own character in its darker as well as its more humane dimensions.

The following notes are from the program from the premiere production of The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe, commissioned by Minnesota Opera in 1976. These notes and articles are reprinted courtesy of Minnesota Opera archives.

For the complete booklet, please scan the QR code below.

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**BIOGRAPHIES**

**PETER TANTSITS  Edgar Allan Poe**

American tenor Peter Tantsits, named by Opera Magazine as one of the most enduring performers of his generation, excels in the opera and concert repertoire of Beethoven, Britten, Stravinsky, Schönberg, Berg, Janáček, Richard Strauss and Mahler. He is also at home in the complex works of Milton Babbitt, Luigi Nono, György Ligeti, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Pascal Dusapin, Héctor Parra, Gerald Barry, Philip Glass and Bernd Alois Zimmermann.

At the start of the 2023/24 season, Peter returns to the Semperoper Dresden for a production of Powder Her Face, before singing the role of Manager in the world premiere of Hector Parra’s Justice at the Grand Théâtre de Genève. Later this year Peter Tantsits will also sing Henze Voices with the London Sinfonietta in Great Britain. Future projects will take him back to the opera houses in Antwerp, Ghent, and Brussels.

At the beginning of 2022, Peter Tantsits made his house debut with The Kahle Sängerin at the Semperoper Dresden. He then sang the premiere of Point D’orgue in St. Etienne before making his major debuts at the Liceu Barcelona as Andres in Wozzeck, at the Salzburg Festival as Monostatos in The Magic Flute and his role debut as Herod in Salome in Basel. Later in the 2022/23 season he sang the refugee in Luigi Nono’s opera Intolleranza, also in Basel. At the end of the season, he sang Henze Voices with the London Sinfonietta at the Vitasaari festival.

In recent seasons he made his debut at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden London and in Dublin with Alice’s Adventure Under Ground. He made his debut at the New National Theater Tokyo with A Dream of Armageddon and was celebrated with Die Nase in Basel.

His career has already taken him to some of the most beautiful houses in the world, including the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Leipzig Gewandhaus, the Konzerthaus Wien, as well as the Bavarian State Opera, the Cologne Opera, the Scala in Milan, the Festspielhaus Baden - Baden, the Glyndebourne Festival, the LA Opera and the opera houses in Basel, Mainz, Bonn, St. Gallen and Karlsruhe.

*Photo credit Don Freeman*
His repertoire ranges from Erik in The Flying Dutchman (at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino under Maestro Luisi) to the premiere of new music. During his career he has developed a strong focus on contemporary music. The highlights of the last few seasons include Alviano in The Zoned, the title role in Dusapin’s Perelà, Ferraud in Colonel Chabert, roles in Die Soldaten, Wozzeck and Ligeti’s Le Grand Macabre, as well as new pieces such as Canti Di Vita E D’amore, The Nubisches Wort For Flowers, and A Journey To The Moon. He has had a great success at the Vlaamse Opera in 2019 with the world premiere of Les Bienveillantes and he also sang Madame Whitesnake at the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

TOM MEGLIORANZA  Griswold

American baritone Thomas Meglioranza was a winner of the Walter W. Naumburg, Concert Artists Guild, Franz Schubert/Music of Modernity, and Joy In Singing competitions.

Highlights from recent seasons include an all-Hugo Wolf recital at Lincoln Center’s Mostly Mozart Festival, as well as the role of Lord Henry in Lowell Liebermann’s The Picture of Dorian Gray with Odyssey Opera, and Saint John in Louis Karchin’s Jane Eyre with the Center for Contemporary Opera. He also sang Handel’s Messiah at Saint Thomas Church in New York City, and debuted with Ars Lyrica Houston singing J.C.F. Bach’s solo cantata, Pygmalion. Last season, he sang the role of Wreck in Bernstein’s Wonderful Town with the Seattle Symphony, Bach’s solo bass cantatas with Lyra Baroque in Minneapolis and performances of Schubert’s Die schöne Müllerin with Reiko Uchida and Winterreise with fortepianist David Breitman.

Described in The New Yorker as an “immaculate and inventive recitalist,” his Songs from the WWII Era program was named one of the “Top Ten Best Classical Performances of the Year” in the Philadelphia Inquirer. His discography includes the Schubert cycles and assorted lieder, and French mélodies with pianist Reiko Uchida, songs of Virgil Thomson with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and Bach cantatas with the Taverner Consort.

He has been an oratorio and pops soloist with many of America’s leading orchestras has also sung Copland’s Old American Songs with the National Symphony, Peter Maxwell Davies’ Eight Songs for a Mad King with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, John Harbison’s Fifth Symphony with the Boston Symphony, Milton Babbitt’s Two Sonnets with the MET Chamber Ensemble, Roberto Sierra’s Missa Latina with the Houston Symphony, and Bach cantatas with Les Violons du Roy and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. He has also appeared with many period instrument ensembles, including the American Bach Soloists, Philharmonia Baroque, Portland Baroque, the New York Collegium, the Waverly Consort, and Apollo’s Fire.

His operatic roles include Fritz in Die tote Stadt, Mozart’s Don Giovanni and Count Almaviva in Le Nozze di Figaro, as well as Chou Enlai in Nixon in China, Prior Walter in Lötvös Peter’s Angels in America, and Oedipus in Ruth Schönthal’s Jocasta. He also regularly performs with the Mark Morris Dance Group, including the role of Aeneas in Didò and Aeneas.

A native New Yorker of Thai, Italian, and Polish heritage, Meglioranza graduated from Grinnell College and the Eastman School of Music. His non-musical interests include cooking and fungi.

MAGGIE FINNEGAN  Virginia Poe

Hailed by Opera News for her “clear, poised and defiant soprano” and the Washington Post for her “silvery, pitch-perfect voice,” Maggie Finnegan’s versatile repertoire spans periods from medieval to contemporary music. Overseas she has had debuts with the Belgian National Orchestra; the Andriessen Festival in The Netherlands; and, the PyeongChang Winter Music Festival in South Korea. A proponent of both legacy and contemporary works, Ms. Finnegan has performed extensively throughout the United States with numerous companies: Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Parallèle, Portland Bach Experience, National Sawdust, Boston Baroque, Handel and Haydn Society, the Center for Contemporary Opera, Boston Modern Opera Projects, American Chamber Opera, Capital Fringe Chamber Music Series, Avanti Orchestra and Beth Morrison Projects.

Recent engagements include the role of Little Stone in Matthew Aucoin’s Eurydice with Boston Lyric Opera, Brooklyn Art Song Society Songs of Schoenberg, guest recitalist with Vanderbilt University, Tod Machover’s VALIS with the M.I.T. Media Lab, Marc Hoffeditz’s opera U-Hauling, Boston Lyric Opera and Opera Philadelphia’s presentation of SVADBA by Canadian composer Ana Sokolović, and the title role in Sophia’s Forest by Lembit Beecher.

As a recording artist, she can be heard on X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X by Anthony Davis, The Wake World by David Hertzberg, and Everything for Dawn with Experiments in Opera collaborative.

Learn more at www.MaggieFinneganSoprano.com

Photo credit Shawn Flint Blair
The tenor’s 2023-24 engagements include the role of Flavio in Orchestra Project, Emmanuel Music, and Guerilla Opera. Repertory Theatre, Handel and Haydn Society, Odyssey Opera, Boston Modern Opera Colorado, Virginia Opera, Anchorage Opera, Syracuse Opera, American Repertory Theatre, Handel and Haydn Society, Odyssey Opera, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Emmanuel Music, and Guerilla Opera.

In a professional career spanning two decades, Ferreira has appeared with an array of companies including Florida Grand Opera, the Glimmerglass Festival, and performing, he is also an Assistant Professor of Voice at Berklee College of Music. In addition to performing, he is also an Assistant Professor of Voice at Berklee College of Music.
Felicia Gavilanes

An Emerging Artist Alumna with Boston Lyric Opera, Felicia has gained a reputation as an exciting and versatile singing actress. Italian American mezzo-soprano Felicia Gavilanes is gaining a reputation as an exciting and versatile singing actress. An Emerging Artist Alumna with Boston Lyric Opera, Felicia is a frequent performer in both mainstage and concert roles in Boston and throughout New England. As The Double in Poul Ruders’ The Handmaid’s Tale with Boston Lyric Opera, the Wall Street Journal wrote “Felicia Gavilanes brought a poignant innocence to Offred in the Time Before” and Opera Magazine praised her “touching vulnerability.”

Felicia recently made her Jordan Hall debut as Ino in Boston Modern Orchestra Project and Odyssey Opera’s East Coast Premiere of John Corigliano’s The Lord of Cries starring Anthony Roth Costanzo, and a return to Latin America as an invited soloist with the National Conservatory Symphony Orchestra of the Dominican Republic in an evening of opera arias and duets.

2024 will see the release of Felicia’s first full-length album La Sera, a celebration of art song from Italy’s golden salon age. Felicia will next be seen onstage as Sandman in Hansel and Gretel with Boston Lyric Opera. Recent company and role debuts include Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Salt Marsh Opera (Mercedes in Carmen), Teatro Lírico Nacional de Cuba (Dido in Dido and Aeneas), Odyssey Opera (Léaëna in La Belle Hélène), Winter Opera St. Louis (Zulma in L’Italiana in Algerì), and Gulfshore Opera (Maria in Lauda per la Natività).

FELICIA GAVILANES Mrs. Clemm

Acclaimed as “sensitive and impassioned” by Opera News, Italian American mezzo-soprano Felicia Gavilanes is gaining a reputation as an exciting and versatile singing actress. An Emerging Artist Alumna with Boston Lyric Opera, Felicia is a frequent performer in both mainstage and concert roles in Boston and throughout New England. As The Double in Poul Ruders’ The Handmaid’s Tale with Boston Lyric Opera, the Wall Street Journal wrote “Felicia Gavilanes brought a poignant innocence to Offred in the Time Before” and Opera Magazine praised her “touching vulnerability.”

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Felicia is a recipient of Berklee College’s Faculty Recording Grant, Boston Lyric Opera’s Stephen Shreftinian Award for Excellence, Opera America’s Career Blueprints grant, the Beaulieu Award in Opera, the Gallaher Award, and the Edith S. Joel Fellowship in Opera. Felicia is a recent finalist in the MetroWest Opera Vocal Competition for Emerging Artists and a prize winner of Mobile Opera’s Madame Rose Competition.

A dual citizen of the U.S. and Italy, Felicia completed her Bachelor of Arts in Italian Literature and Music from Dartmouth College. She received her Master of Music with Honors from the New England Conservatory and her Doctorate from Florida State University.

CHRISTINA ENGLISH Mrs. Allan

Noted for her “rich and mellifluous” voice (Opera News) and “striking” presence (The Arts Fuse), mezzo-soprano Christina English brings musical sensativity and dramatic commitment to a versatile array of concert, opera, and musical theater stages. Her 2023-24 appearances include Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, Handel’s Messiah, and Mozart’s Don Giovanni with the ensemble of Boston Baroque; soloist in A Heavenly Baroque Christmas with Musicians of the Old Post Road; soloist in Charpentier’s Messe de minuit pour Noël and Il Pastor Fido with Arcadia Players; and soloist in Haydn’s Nelson Mass with Back Bay Chorale.

She is a long-time member of the Boston Baroque chorus and a founding core member of Lorelei Ensemble. Highlights with Lorelei include Julia Wolfe’s Her Story with the Boston, Chicago, Nashville, and San Francisco Symphonies; the premiere of choreographer Nanine Linning’s La Mer with Boston Ballet; collaborations with GRAMMY-nominated ensembles Cantus and A Far Cry; and appearances at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music. Favorite opera and musical theater roles include the Pilot in Rachel Portman’s The Little Prince with NEMPAC Opera Project; the Housekeeper in Man of La Mancha with New Repertory Theater; Miss Prism in The Importance of Being Earnest with Odyssey Opera; and the nursing sister in Puccini’s Suor Angelica with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Other theater and opera appearances include Lyric Stage Company of Boston, Guerilla Opera, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Boston Midsummer Opera, Boston Opera Collaborative, and Intermezzo Opera.

Photo credit Allana Taranto
As both a performer and an arts administrator, Christina believes that music is a powerful catalyst for community and connection. Offstage, she is Executive Director of Sheffield Chamber Players, an ensemble founded on the belief that experiencing chamber music in the intimate settings for which it was written profoundly changes the way listeners respond to music, and to each other. She is also a member of Beyond Artists, a coalition of artists who donate a percentage of their concert fees to organizations they care about. She supports the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts and the Environmental Defense Fund through her performances.

DAVID SALSBERRY FRY  Theater Director
David Salsbery Fry is a bass opera singer, actor, and advocate for performers with disabilities. Praised for his “extremely sensual and almost impossibly deep tones” by concerti, he is the grand prize winner of the Bidu Sayão International Vocal Competition.


Other notable engagements include Butt the Hoopoe in Wuorinen and Fenton’s Haroun and the Sea of Stories for BMOP, Osmin in Die Entführung aus dem Serail for St. Petersburg Opera, Don Basilio in Il barbiere di Siviglia for Vero Beach Opera, and the world premiere productions of Wheeler and Jacobs’s Naga, Karchin and Osen’s Jane Eyre, Czernowin and Perceval’s Infinite Now, and Maor and Levy’s The Sleeping Thousand.

His writing includes articles for Classical Post, Classical Singer, HowlRound, The Liberated Voice, and Opera and Disability. He is also a featured contributor to Claudia Friedlander’s The Singer’s Audition & Career Handbook and James Harrington’s Building a Career in Opera from School to Stage: Operapreneurship.

More on Mr. Fry’s life and career can be found at davidsalsberyfry.com and in the October 2015 issue of Classical Singer.

ALEXIS RODDA  Rosy
Alexis Rodda is a soprano described by New York Classical Review as having “a lovely voice, full of color and body in every register.” She attended Princeton University (BA), Mannes College (MM), and currently attends CUNY Graduate Center as a Five-Year Fellowship recipient and doctoral candidate. She attended Princeton University (BA), Mannes College (MM), and currently attends CUNY Graduate Center as a Five-Year Fellowship recipient and doctoral candidate.

She recently sang in the New York premiere of Émigré with the New York Philharmonic. Other appearances with the New York Philharmonic Chorus include Orchestrating Maestro with Bradley Cooper, Adolphus Hailstork’s Done Made My Vow, and Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9.

As a music researcher dedicated to uncovering musical works lost to discrimination, hatred, or other political, societal, or historical conflicts, Alexis has worked closely with the nonprofit organization Elysium Between Two Continents in presenting multimedia musical and theatrical productions that uncover the works of exiled composers. Recent performances that Alexis curated and performed include Innovators in Exile, Healing a Fractured World: The Music of Egon Lustgarten, and Campaigning for Women’s Rights – Fighting against Fascism. In March 2019, she was chosen for a 2019 - 2020 Fulbright scholarship; she worked with Dr. Gerold Gruber and Dr. Michael Haas at the Exilarte Center of the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna to unearth the works of émigré composer Egon Lustgarten.
MARCUS SCHENCK Willy  
Marcus Schenck is a Boston-based baritone, thrilled to be making his role debut with Odyssey Opera as Willie in Argento’s The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe. Recent credits include creating the role of Immanuel in Benjamin Rossen’s The Unknowable with Lowell House Opera, Schlendrian in Bach’s Coffee Cantata in West End Lyric’s inaugural performance, the title role in Marc Hoffeditz’s Mr. Twister and the Tale of Tornado Alley, Bottom in Britten’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream with Miami Music Festival, the Baritone Soloist in Vaughan Williams’ Fantasia on Christmas Carols and the Bass Soloist in Mozart’s Krönungsmesse with the Arlington Philharmonic Orchestra, and Lore in The Maid of Orleans with Opera Company of Middlebury.

In upcoming performances, Marcus will be appearing as a guest artist with Boston Conservatory Opera in A Midsummer Night’s Dream as Bottom in April 2024, as well as giving recital performances alongside soprano Natalia St Jean and pianist James Myers in June 2024 in the greater Boston area.

DOMINICK ARGENTO
Dominick Argento (1927 – 2019), considered to be America’s pre-eminent composer of lyric opera, was born in York, Pennsylvania in 1927. At Peabody Conservatory, where he earned his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees, his teachers included Nicholas Nabokov, Henry Cowell, and Hugo Weisgall. Argento received his PhD from the Eastman School of Music, where he studied with Alan Hovhaness and Howard Hanson. Fulbright and Guggenheim Fellowships allowed him to study in Italy with Luigi Dallapiccola and to complete his first opera, Colonel Jonathan the Saint. Following his Fulbright, Argento became music director of Hilltop Opera in Baltimore, and taught theory and composition at the Eastman School. In 1958, he joined the faculty of the Regents School of Music at the University of Minnesota, where he taught until 1997.

Although Argento’s instrumental works have received consistent praise, the great majority of his music is vocal, whether in operatic, choral, or solo context. This emphasis on the human voice is a facet of the powerful dramatic impulse that drives nearly all of his music, both instrumental and vocal. Writer Heidi Waleson has described Argento’s work as “richly melodic...[his] pieces are built with wit and passion, and always with the dramatic shape and color that make them theater. They speak to the heart.”

Argento photo credit Judy Olausen

During his years at Eastman, Argento composed his opera, The Boor (1957), which has remained in the repertoire; John Rockwell of The New York Times, writing of a 1985 production, stated that “[i]t taps deep currents of sentiment and passion.” Following his arrival in Minnesota, the composer accepted a number of commissions from significant organizations in his adopted state. Among these were the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, who commissioned his suite Royal Invitation (1964); and the Civic Orchestra of Minneapolis, who commissioned Variations for Orchestra [The Mask of Night] (1965). Argento’s close association with Sir Tyrone Guthrie and Douglas Campbell, directors of the Minnesota Theatre Company led to his composing incidental music for several Guthrie productions, as well as a ballad opera, The Shoemaker’s Holiday (1967).

The 1970s and 1980s saw the composer working increasingly in the song cycle form, while still writing operas and orchestral music. Among his major song cycles are: Letters from Composers (1968); To Be Sung Upon the Water (1973); From the Diary of Virginia Woolf (1975); the choral I Hate and I Love (1982); The Andrée Expedition (1983); and Casa Guidi (1983). His most recent song cycles, both premiered in 1996, are A Few Words About Chekhov (mezzo-soprano, baritone, and piano), premiered by Frederica von Stade, Håkan Hagegård, and accompanist Martin Katz at the Ordway Theater in St. Paul; Walden Pond (mixed chorus, harp, and three cellos), commissioned and premiered by the Dale Warland Singers; and Miss Manners on Music, to texts by the noted advice columnist.

Since the early 1970s the composer’s operas, which have always found success in the US, have been heard with increasing frequency abroad. Nearly all of them, beginning with Postcard from Morocco (1971), have had at least one European production. Among these are The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe (1976), Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night (1981), and Casanova’s Homecoming (1984); Robert Jacobson of Opera News described the latter work as “a masterpiece.” The Aspern Papers was given its premiere by Dallas Opera in November 1988 to great acclaim, was telecast on the PBS series Great Performances, and was again presented, to critical praise, by the Washington National Opera in 1990. It has since been heard in Germany and in Sweden; June 1998 brought a performance at the Barbican Center in London.

Dominick Argento examined fame and the immigrant experience in the opera, The Dream of Valentino, set in the early days of Hollywood. Washington National Opera gave the work its premiere under the baton of Christopher Keene in January 1994, followed by its co-commissioning company, Dallas Opera, in 1995. The production featured special multi-media sets by John Conklin and costumes by the couturier Valentino. Writing of the premiere, Peter G. Davis of New York Magazine stated, “What a pleasure to encounter a real opera composer, one who has studied and learned from his predecessors, loves the form, understands its conventions, has mastered them, and then lets his
imagination take wing.” *The Dream of Valentino* received its European premiere in February 1999 in Kassel, Germany.

Other works include *Four Seascapes* for SATB chorus and orchestra (2004), commissioned by the Hanson Institute of American Music, University of Rochester, New York, and dedicated to the Silbey Music Library of Eastman School of Music for their 100th Anniversary; *Three Sonnets of Petrarch* for baritone and piano (2007), commissioned by the Cheltenham Music Festival in the UK; and *Evensong: Of Love and Angels* for solo treble voice, solo soprano, reader, mixed chorus, and orchestra (2007), and commissioned by the National Cathedral in Washington, DC for the cathedral’s 100th Anniversary. Premieres also include *Cenotaph* for chorus and orchestra, commissioned by the American Choral Directors Association for its 50th anniversary, and performed in March 2009 at its annual conference in Oklahoma. In addition to new pieces, a volume of Argento’s collected writings about his works entitled *Catalog Raisonné as Memoir* was published by the *University of Minnesota Press* in 2005.

Among other honors and awards, Dominick Argento has received the Pulitzer Prize for Music, given in 1975 for his song cycle *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. He received the 2004 Grammy Award for “Best Classical Contemporary Composition,” awarded for Frederica von Stade’s recording of *Casa Guidi* on the Reference Records label. He also received the 2006 World of Songs Award from the Lotte Lehmann Foundation. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1979, and in 1997 was honored with the title of Composer Laureate to the Minnesota Orchestra, a lifetime appointment.

**CHARLES NOLTE**

Charles Nolte (1923 - 2010) was born in Duluth, Minnesota, and moved to the Twin Cities in the 1930s. He received his bachelor’s degree in 1947 from Yale University and his master’s in 1963 and Ph.D. in 1965 from the University of Minnesota. For eight years after college graduation Nolte was a professional actor in New York City and appeared in many Broadway productions. He had the title role in *Billy Budd*, was Willie Keith in *The Caine Mutiny Courtmartial*, Silius in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and Payne in *Mister Roberts*. He last appeared as an actor in New York in 1965 in his own drama *Do Not Pass Go*, produced at the Cherry Lane Theatre. He has also performed in London, Munich, Stockholm, and many other cities in the United States, appearing with Henry Fonda, Katharine Cornell, Sir Godfrey Tearle, Judith Anderson, and Christopher Plummer among others.

In Hollywood from 1953 to 1955 and then in Europe for the next seven years, Nolte was in numerous film and television productions, including *Under Ten Flags*, *Ten Seconds to Hell*, *Armored Command*, *The Day Lincoln was Shot*, and *The Caine Mutiny Courtmartial*. While abroad, he began his playwriting career. He returned to Minneapolis in 1962 and taught at the University of Minnesota as Professor in the Department of Theatre Arts, leading seminars in playwriting, directing, and theater history. He also continued to act, write, and direct in the Twin Cities and elsewhere. Nolte directed all of his own plays in the Twin Cities area, and several were seen in other cities in the United States and Europe. Those included *Do Not Pass Go*, *End of Ramadan*, *The Boarding House*, *Sea Change*, *Sister Heeno’s Warm Elbow*, *The Summer People*, *Bacchae ’65* and *A Night at the Black Pig*.

The libretto for *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* represented the author’s first experience in the opera field, but not the last; he collaborated with Argento again as the librettist for the opera *The Dream of Valentino* (1993).

Charles Nolte photo courtesy of Boosey & Hawkes

**ANDREW CLARK  Director of Choral Activities**

Andrew Clark is the Director of Choral Activities and Senior Lecturer on Music at Harvard University. He serves as the Music Director and Conductor of the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum, the Harvard Glee Club, the Radcliffe Choral Society, the Harvard Summer Chorus, Cambridge Common Voices, and teaches courses in conducting, choral literature, and music and disability studies in the Department of Music.

Clark’s studio recording of Dominick Argento’s 1973 oratorio *Jonah and the Whale* with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project and the Providence Singers was released on the BMOP/sound label to critical acclaim. The performance was hailed as “excellent” (*Fanfare*) and “idiosyncratic, colorful, stylistically varied” (*Opera News*), “led with fine sense of balance and pacing by Andrew Clark, … a coup for the Boston ensemble, whose players are vivid and subtle as they negotiate the contrasting sonorities in Argento’s score (*Gramophone)*. This marks Clark’s second collaboration with Odyssey Opera, following the 2018 production of Arthur Honegger’s *Joan of Arc at the Stake*, featuring the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum mixed chorus.

Clark’s work with the Harvard Choral Program empowers individuals and communities through active engagement with choral music: fostering compassion, community-building, and joy. As an artist-educator devoted to advancing equity, justice, and access to the arts, Clark has developed community partnerships...
with youth music education programs, correctional institutions, health care facilities, overnight shelters, senior-care communities, and other service organizations operating beyond the normalized conventions of arts practice. Clark has organized Harvard residencies with distinguished conductors, composers, and ensembles, including Sweet Honey in the Rock, The Crossing Choir, the Aeolians, the Lorelei and Antioch ensembles, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Maria Guinand, Harry Christophers, Donald Nally, Rosephanye Powell, Craig Hella Johnson, and Maasaki Suzuki, among others.

Since arriving at Harvard in 2010, Dr. Clark has led the Harvard Choruses in performances at the Kennedy Center, Boston Symphony Hall, New York’s Carnegie Hall and Metropolitan Museum of Art, and venues across the United States, Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America. His choral-orchestral performances with the Harvard Choruses have received critical acclaim, ranging from the Baroque era to seminal 20th- and 21st-century works. Clark has commissioned and premiered over fifty compositions and recently launched the Harvard Choruses New Music Initiative, supporting the creative work of undergraduate composers. His choirs have been hailed as “first rate” (Boston Globe), “cohesive and exciting” (Opera News), and “beautifully blended” (Providence Journal), achieving performances of “passion, conviction, adrenalin, [and] coherence” (Worcester Telegram). He has collaborated with the National Symphony, the Pittsburgh and New Haven Symphonies, the Boston Pops, the Handel and Haydn Society, the Rhode Island Philharmonic, the Boston Philharmonic, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Trinity Wall Street Choir, the Washington Chorus, Stephen Sondheim, Ben Folds, and the late Dave Brubeck, among others.

Prior to his appointment at Harvard, Clark was Artistic Director of the Providence Singers and served as Director of Choral Activities at Tufts University. Clark continues his work as a founding faculty member of the Notes from the Heart music program near Pittsburgh, a summer camp for children and young adults experiencing disabilities and chronic illness. He earned degrees from Wake Forest, Carnegie Mellon, and Boston Universities, studying with Ann Howard Jones, David Hoose, and the late Robert Page. He lives in Medford, MA, with his wife Amy Peters Clark, and their daughters, Amelia Grace and Eliza Jane.

Andrew Clark photo credit Kevin Condon

GIL ROSE  Artistic and General Director, Conductor

Gil Rose is one of today’s most trailblazing conductors, praised as “amazingly versatile” (The Boston Globe) with “a sense of style and sophistication” (Opera News). Equally at home performing core repertoire, new music, and lesser-known historic symphonic and operatic works, “Gil Rose is not just a fine conductor, but a peerless curator, sniffing out—and commissioning—off-trend, unheralded, and otherwise underplayed repertoire that nevertheless holds to unfailingly high standards of quality. In doing so, he’s built an indefinable, but unmistakable, personal aesthetic” (WXQR). A global leader in American contemporary music, Rose is the founder of the performing and recording ensemble the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), who “bring an endlessly curious and almost archaeological mind to programming… with each concert, each recording, an essential step in a better direction” (The New York Times), as well as the founder of Odyssey Opera, praised by The New York Times as “bold and intriguing” and “one of the East Coast’s most interesting opera companies.”

Since its founding in 1996, the “unique and invaluable” (The New York Times) BMOP has grown to become the premier orchestra in the world for commissioning, recording, and performing music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In 2013, Gil Rose expanded his musical vision with the founding of Odyssey Opera, a company dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire from all eras. In addition to his role as conductor, Rose is leading the charge for the preservation and advancement of underperformed works through recordings. BMOP/sound, the independent record label Rose founded in 2008, has released over 86 recordings of contemporary music by today’s most innovative composers, including world premieres by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Chen Yi, Anthony Davis, Lisa Bielawa, Steven Mackey, Eric Nathan, and many others.

With Rose as executive producer, the label has secured five GRAMMY® nominations and a win in 2020 for Tobias Picker’s opera Fantastic Mr. Fox. Odyssey Opera’s in-house label has released five CDs, most recently a complete version of Camille Saint-Saëns’s Henry VIII. Beyond Boston, Gil Rose enjoys a busy schedule as a guest conductor and educator. Equally at home on the podium in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, Rose has led performances by the Tanglewood Opera Orchestra, the Netherlands Radio Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the National Symphony of Ukraine, the Matsumoto Festival of Japan, the New York City Opera, and the Juilliard Symphony among others. In addition to being former faculty at Tufts University and Northeastern University, Rose has worked with students across
In the 2022/2023 Season, Gil Rose led Odyssey Opera in a concert performance of three one-act operas by Rachmaninoff and brought John Corigliano and Mark Adamo’s new opera *The Lord of Cries* to Boston audiences. Gil and BMOP traveled to Carnegie Hall for the orchestra’s debut performance and celebration of the culmination of their 25th season in April 2023. This season, BMOP and Odyssey will co-produce Ulysses Kay’s *Frederick Douglass*, the second opera in As Told By: History, Race, and Justice on the Opera Stage, a five-year initiative highlighting Black composers and vital figures of Black liberation and thought.

ANNE HARLEY  **Director**

Canadian-American Anne Dorothy Harley is a director, performer, educator and scholar, serving on faculty at Scripps College, where she has led the voice area and has taught music history and interdisciplinary humanities since 2009. As part of her research, teaching, and service, she regularly leads projects uniting faculty, students, community groups, and visiting scholars from various disciplines in the creation of new music about pressing social issues.

Harley’s solo performances appear on Hänssler Profil, Naxos, Sony Classics, Canteloupe, Musica Omnia, einKlang, Bridge Records, and BMOP/sound, among others. In 2012, she founded the new music commissioning series, *Voices Of The Pearl* (www.voicesofthepearl.org). As director of the project, Harley produces, premieres, and records newly composed song cycles, setting texts by and about female esoteric practitioners and mystics from all spiritual traditions, reclaiming women’s texts that have been lost to the mainstream.

She has been awarded four NEA grants, four grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, and a residency at the Salzburg Mozarteum, among others. Funding has made the premiering and recording of works by over 15 composers possible, including Karola Obermüller, Moshe Shulman, Marjorie Merryman, Bill Alves, Gao Ping, Pablo Ortiz, Yii Kah Hoe, Fahad Siadat, Preben Antonsen, Aida Shirazi, and Jodi Goble. She has held visiting professorships in Germany and the People’s Republic of China, in both music and theatre departments. In 2023-24, she serves as a Scholar-in-Residence at the Center for the Study of World Religions at the Harvard Divinity School, researching the connection between voice and psyche and ways in which embodied sounding practices have been employed in spiritual practices.
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