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Seven Deadly Sins, the Fringe Festival 2003

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

College of Fine Arts

School of Music

The Opera Institute

The Fringe Festival 2003

Sharon Daniels, Director of Opera Programs

William Lumpkin, Acting Director of Opera Programs

Seven Deadly Sins

Music by Kurt Weill

Libretto by Bertold Brecht

David Gately, *stage director*

Allison Voth, *music director*

The Boston University Theater

Studio 210

264 Huntington Avenue

Boston, Massachusetts

October 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26, 2003

Cabaret Selections

The Sailor's Song from *Happy End*
Michelle Nicklas

The Song of Mandalay from *Happy End*
Nathan Troup

The Knocking Shop Tango from *The Threepenny Opera*
Michelle Nicklas and Sam Chung

Seven Deadly Sins

Music by Kurt Weill
Libretto by Bertold Brecht

David Gately, *stage director*
Allison Voth, *music director*
Tomer Zvulun, *production stage manager*

Cast

Anna I	Giavanna Kersulis (Oct. 12, 20, 25) Marci Wagnon (Oct. 11, 19, 26)
Anna II	Marci Wagnon Giavanna Kersulis
Quartet	Tenor I- Joshua Kohl Tenor II- Nathan Troup Baritone- Oshin Gregorian Bass- Paul Shafer

WELCOME FROM SHARON DANIELS

Director of Opera Programs

In any given season, and certainly over each two year training period, we try to provide performance experiences for our aspiring young professional opera singers that will allow them to integrate as many technical, musical, acting, and movement challenges as possible. We do this by varying repertoire, styles, languages, time periods, and performance venues.

Our **Mainstage Season** usually presents the more "standard" repertoire of Puccini, Mozart, Berlioz, Britten, Strauss, Poulenc, etc. performed in The Boston University Theater with beautiful production values provided through a unique collaboration with our Theatre Arts School and The Huntington Theater Company. This year we present, for instance, Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* in February, and Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette* in April, each in the original language.

Our **Fringe Festival**, modeled after the "outside the Fringe activities" at the Edinburgh Festival, provides opportunities to perform significant unusual shorter works in a small venue where the audience enjoys almost "hands on" participation in the process. In addition, this Fringe Festival has a new face. That long-cherished support from the School of Theater Arts in the artistic design and technical areas, has developed into a more complete collaboration. Through the leadership of the new Director of Theater Arts James Petosa, this year The Fringe offers a unique "operameets-theater" season, which opens with the full length play *Marat/Sade*, presented by actors from the acting program, and then rotates in repertory with Opera Institute offerings of Kurt Weill and Bertold Brecht's *The Seven Deadly Sins* and Peter Brook's adaptation of Bizet's *Carmen*, *La Tragédie de Carmen*. We are thrilled about this new idea, which supports our commitment to opera as a culmination of all the theatrical and musical arts.

Through the Fringe Festival in the last 6 years, our students and audiences have enjoyed Menotti's *The Medium*, Wargo's *Seduction of a Lady*, Foss' *The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, Ullmann's *The Kaiser From Atlantis*, Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*, Bartok's *Bluebeard's Castle*, Paulus' *The Village Singer*, Bowles' *Picnic Cantata*, Martin's *Tobermory*, Bach's *Coffee Cantata*, Merryman's *Antigone*, Viardo's *Cendrillon*, Handel's *Clori, Tirsi, e Fileno*, and Puccini *Gianni Schicchi*.

Members of **The Opera Institute**, **Opera Theater** and **Opera Workshop** study voice, coach repertoire, and take classes in period movement styles, stage combat, commedia, ballet, Alexander Technique, Italian conversation, Italian recitative, and acting. They are taught by professionals who "have done" or "are doing" that to which they aspire. They participate in master classes by distinguished guests and faculty. We are proud of our program and our young artists, whose current singers and alumni sing this year on the stages of **The Metropolitan Opera**, **The Boston Lyric Opera**, **New York City Opera**, **The San Francisco Opera**, **Chicago Opera Theater**, **The Lyric Opera of Chicago**, **the Kansas City Lyric Opera**, **The European houses of Metz, Mannheim, Munich, and Paris**, and **The Festivals at Glimmerglass, St. Louis, Santa Fe, Chautauqua, and Tanglewood**. We are thrilled that this season our own *Carmen*, directed by James Petosa with Music Director William Lumpkin, will tour to the **Olmi Theater** in Baltimore.

Welcome. Enjoy these special young singers and actors, assisted in their process by the generous and expert gifts of faculty, guest directors, Theater Arts designers, technical assistants, and crew. By combining all of our hard work and artistry, opera takes on a fresh new purpose for a new generation.

SYNOPSIS

Anna and her alter ego are sent away to seven big cities by their family (Mom, Dad and two brothers). Their mission is to earn enough money for a little family home back in Louisiana. The journey takes seven years, and along the way they encounter the seven deadly sins.

PROGRAM NOTES

Kurt Weill fled from Nazi Germany in 1933. He stayed for a short period in France before permanently settling in the United States. While in France *Les Ballets 1933* (headed by Yevgen'yevich Kochno and George Balanchine) commissioned Weill to write *Die sieben Todsünden* (The Seven Deadly Sins). It seems the entire commission/production was wrought with personal favors: the impresario, Edward James would only fund the company's season if they agreed to commission Weill to write a ballet-chanté; James's wife, Lilly Losch, had to be the dancer (Anna II); Weill wanted Lotte Lenya to sing Ann I, despite their ongoing divorce proceedings; Lenya agreed and conveniently her current lover, a tenor, was cast as part of the Family Quartet; Caspar Neher was brought in as set designer with whose wife Weill was having an affair. One condition Weill did not win was his desire to use Cocteau as the librettist. Cocteau in fact turned him down and James insisted that it be Brecht, despite Weill's recent falling out with Brecht over *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (The Rise and Fall of Mahagonny). The Seven Deadly Sins was a huge success in Paris, but less so in London. Lenya successfully revived it in the 1950's in New York, but by then had to sing it transposed down a perfect 4th.

Written for a mezzo-soprano (Anna I), dancer (Anna II) and male quartet (Family), the piece is a dark parody comprised of separate musical numbers: a prologue, seven sin movements and epilogue. Although originally conceived as a ballet-chanté, Anna II is often played by an actor. The work is a wonderful mix of popular and classical styles. The curious choice of an all-male quartet (TTBB) with the bass as mother, adds to the dark comedy. Weill loved to compose for this particular quartet of voices because of a popular all-male quartet in Berlin in the 1930's.

FUTURE MAINSTAGE PRODUCTIONS

Don Pasquale

By Donizetti

Sharon Daniels, *Stage Director*

William Lumpkin, *Music Director/Conductor*

Performances: February 12, 13, 14, 15, 2004

MEET THE DIRECTORS

David Gately, Stage Director, is known for his fresh creative productions. Mr. Gately has recently directed productions of *L'Elisir d'Amore* with The Dallas Opera, *Madama Butterfly* with Seattle Opera, *La Boheme* with Florida Grand Opera, *Carmen* in New Orleans, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Edmonton, *La Sonnambula* with AVA in Philadelphia, *Die Zauberflöte* with Cincinnati and Vancouver operas, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Milwaukee's Florentine Opera and at Glimmerglass Opera, *Falstaff* with Opera Omaha, and *Rigoletto* with the Utah Opera. His hugely successful "wild west" production of *Don Pasquale* has been mounted by San Diego Opera, Kentucky Opera, Calgary Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Virginia Opera, Dayton Opera, Canadian Opera, Opera Omaha, Edmonton Opera and with Fort Worth Opera. Mr. Gately's production of *The Mikado* and *The Pirates of Penzance* as well as his *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *L'Italiana in Algeri* have appeared throughout the U.S. and Canada. A partial list of wide ranging production credits includes *Carmen*, *Tosca*, *Manon*, Smentana's *Two Widows*, *Hansel und Gretel*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Salome*, *La Traviata*, *La Cenerentola*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *I Pagliacci*, *The Merry Widow*, *Candide*, *Amahl & the Night Visitors*, *Don Giovanni*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Otello*, *Samson et Dalila*, *Aida*, *Turandot*, *La Fille Du Regiment*, *Le Comte Ory*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Les Percheurs des Perles*, *Lakme*, and *The Ballad of Baby Doe*.

Al Voth, Music Director, is an Assistant Professor of Music at Boston University College of Fine Arts, serving as principal coach for the Opera Institute and teacher of English and French diction for the voice department. Ms. Voth is a well-known coach in New York and Boston, and has worked with such companies as Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Boston, Providence Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Verismo Opera of New Jersey, Opera North, Red House Opera and Cantanta Singers, as well as the Florence Vocal Seminar, and Athens Music Festival. This past spring she assisted in the English diction for the highly acclaimed Opera Unlimited Festival in Boston. As a champion of new music, she has performed and assisted in many premieres with Alea III, Collage New Music, The New Music Consort, The Group for Contemporary Players, and the National Orchestral Association New Music Project. She is a specialist in the music and literature of Paul Bowles and produced and performed a multi-media performance entitled, *Paul Bowles: one man, two voices*, at Merkin Hall in New York City. The EOS ensemble consequently invited her to partake in their Paul Bowles festival in New York City where she premiered a set of piano preludes. Miss Voth, fast becoming known for her supertitles, has written titles for Boston University's Opera Institute productions of *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Idomeneo*, as well as Boston Academy of Music's production of *La Jongleur de Notre Dame* and *Tosca*. This fall her titles will be used for Boston Baroque's *Alcina* production. Ms. Voth can be heard on CRI recordings.

Tomer Zvulun, Production Stage Manager, has been Stage Manager and Assistant Director for more than 40 operas. Mr. Zvulun has spent 3 seasons as a Stage Manager for Israel's premier Opera company, The New Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv where he worked on *Don Giovanni*, *Macbeth*, *Norma*, *Billy Budd*, and *L'Elisir d'amore*. He has stage managed *Turandot* and *Otello* with the Ceasaria Festival in Israel Summer Festival, and as an assistant director for the Israel Vocal Arts Institute, the summer workshop headed by Metropolitan Opera's Joan Dornemann. He worked there for four seasons on numerous productions including *Lakme*, *Traviata*, *Pelleas et Melisande* and *The Rape of Lucretia*. Other credits include The Israeli Premier of *Les Miserables*, *Othello* at the NYAC Pantheon Theatre, *Carmen* at Kentucky Opera, *Die Fledermaus* at The Indianapolis Opera and *Beatrice and Benedict*, *Kaiser from Atlantis*, *Così Fan Tutte*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Idomeneo* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* at Boston University. Upcoming engagements include returning to BU for *Romeo and Juliette*, Saint Louis (*Carmen* and *Secret Marriage*), Indianapolis Opera (*Così Fan Tutte*), and debuts at Nashville Opera (*Pagliacci* and *Pirates of Penzance*) and Dallas Symphony's Bernstein's *Mass*.

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