



The Center for Arts in Natick
music • theater • dance • visual arts • spoken word

presents

Opera del West

Friday, August 10, 2007, 8:00 P.M.

A Game of Chance

Comic Opera in One Act (1960)

Libretto: Evelyn Manacher Draper

Music: Seymour Barab

Suggested by the play **All on a Summer's Day**
By Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements

Cast:

First Knitter – Jennifer Rizzo

Second Knitter – Jacque Eileen Wilson

Third Knitter – Megan Roth

Representative – Joshua Taylor

We are using this opera as an appetizer to the larger and more famous **Gianni Schicchi**. It takes place anywhere, with characters that have no names, but very definite personalities. The First Knitter has the sweetest disposition, the Second one has a strong work ethic, and the Third is quite sure of what she wants. The Representative could be just a messenger, but maybe not? And where does he receive his powers? And, what happens when you receive everything you ask for? These seem to be heavy questions, but the music and story, filled with Jazz and Musical Theatre overtones leave you laughing and humming along.

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Gianni Schicchi(1918)

Libretto: Giovacchino Forzano

Music: Giacomo Puccini

Cast:

Gianni Schicchi – Tom Weber

Lauretta (his daughter) – Annie Griffin

Zita (cousin of Buoso) – Joanna Gates

Rinuccio (Zita's nephew) – Gregory Hanson

Gherardo (Buoso's nephew) – Eron Anthony

Nella (Gherardo's wife) – Valerie Kraft

Gherardino (their son) – Ryan Budnick

Betto (Buoso's brother-in-law) – Joshua Taylor

Simone (Buoso's cousin) – Miles Rind

Marco (Simone's son) – Bradford Gleim

La Ciesca (Marco's wife) – Christine Teeters

Maestro Spinelloccio (a doctor) – Bülent Güneralp

Ser Amantio di Nicolao (a notary) – Christina Calamaio

Pinellino (a cobbler) – Ashley Harmon

Guccio (a dyer) – Mary Ann Powers

Buoso (the deceased) – Dave Lavalley

Gianni Schicchi was written as a companion piece to two other Puccini operas, *Il Tabarro* and *Suor Angelica*. They were first performed together at The Metropolitan Opera in December of 1918 as the piece *Il Trittico*. *Schicchi* was the one comedy of the trio and was used as comic relief after the shock of murder on a dock in *Tabarro* and suicide at a nunnery in *Angelica*. Audiences were ready for something light and funny after these serious one-acts, and Puccini gave it to them in the form of a dysfunctional family fighting over the will of a man they hardly cared about. The libretto was loosely based on a reference made by Dante Aleghieri in Canto 30 of his work, *Inferno*. Apparently, there was a real Gianni Schicchi, who was a rogue that cheated Dante's wife's family out of a substantial inheritance. Our version takes place in the 1950s and is located in the ornate house of Buoso Donati, a wealthy man with many money-grubbing relatives.

Fate plays a part in this opera as well: the relatives arrive *after* Buoso's demise. Rinuccio just happens to be dating Schicchi's daughter and again, people are unhappy with their lot at the end, even though it is much more than what they had when the opera began.

Cast Biographies

Tenor, **Eron Anthony** (Gherardo), is a native of Maryland. Currently, he resides in Boston, MA where he is in his second year of the Boston University Master's of Music Program studying with renowned Bass-Baritone, Simon Estes. Eron's undergraduate studies were at the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University. He also studied at the Chautauqua Institutes' Vocal Artist program, under the direction of Marlena Malas.

Ryan Budnick (Gherardino) is an eighth grader at Wayland Middle School who likes to play piano, clarinet and saxophone. He plays in the Middle school Jazz ensemble and was in the Junior District Orchestra.

Oklahoma native **Christina Calamaio** (Notary) was a 2004 NATS Division V winner in Boston. Her roles include Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Opera in the Ozarks and Sally in *Hand of Bridge* at New England Conservatory. More recently, Ms. Calamaio was the Second Soprano soloist in the Bach *B Minor Mass* with the Belmont Orchestra.

Joanna Gates (Zita), mezzo-soprano, originally from Princeton, Illinois studied voice at North Carolina School of the Arts. Some of her many roles include; Clytemnestre in *Iphigenie en Aulide*, Ottavia in *The Coronation of Poppea*, Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Charlotte in *Werther*, and Maddalena in *Rigoletto*. Joanna is delighted to be making her Opera Del West debut as Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*.

Bradford Gleim (Marco) is an active freelance singer in the Boston area. He holds a Masters in Music from the Longy School of Music and will begin studies toward a Graduate Diploma at New England Conservatory in the fall.

Christina Marie Grandy (Nella cover) is a native of Easton, Massachusetts. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Voice Performance from Boston University and a Master's Degree in Vocal Performance from The New England Conservatory of Music. Ms. Grandy has recently covered the role of Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus* for South Shore Conservatory's Opera by the Bay and she returned to them in the fall of 2006 in order to perform Fiordiligi in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. Last summer she had the pleasure of performing in the debut performance of *Opera del West* as the Marschallin in scenes from *Der Rosenkavalier* and Cio-Cio-San in scenes from *Madama Butterfly* and is excited to be working with them again this summer.

Annie Griffin (Lauretta) was raised in Orlando, Florida and attended Rollins College in Winter Park for her undergraduate studies. She has soloed with The Bach Festival and Newburyport Choral Society. Some of her favorite past roles are, Marie in *the Daughter of the Regiment*, Valencienne in *The Merry Widow*, and Gretel in Orlando Opera's Outreach program. Ms. Griffin is currently pursuing her master's degree in voice at Boston University.

Bülent Güneralp, (Doctor) bass-baritone, has performed as a soloist in many operas, oratorios and concerts in his native Turkey, the United States and Japan, with organizations including CRR Symphony Orchestra in Istanbul, Tokyo City Opera Orchestra, New Bedford Symphony Orchestra, Opera del West, Boston Opera Collaborative, Longwood Opera, Mass Theatrica, Masterworks Chorale, Riverside Theatre Works and Orient Heights Music, at venues including Boston Symphony Hall, Tokyo City Opera, Sanders Theater and Zeiterion Theater. Further information, recordings, and future engagements can be found at www.bulentguneralp.com.

Gregory Hanson (Rinuccio) graduated from Gordon College with a Bachelor Degree in Computer Science. His most recent performance was Parpignol in Puccini's "La Boheme" as well as currently performing with the Lakes Region Opera this summer. He is now pursuing a solo career while studying voice with Craig Hart, protégé of Jerome Hines.

Ashley Harmon (Pinellino) is thrilled to be making her operatic debut with Opera del West. Other scene roles include: Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Third Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*), and Off-stage voice (the Medium). Ashley is a mezzo-soprano entering her senior year at Boston University, where she studies voice with Sarah Arneson. Six days after this performance Ashley heads to the Czech Republic to sing arias with a professional orchestra. She would like to thank her family and friends for their continuing support.

Mezzo-soprano **Rachel Hauge** (Ciesca cover) is an Oregon native and a 2007 Boston University graduate with a Master of Music degree in vocal performance. While at BU Ms. Hauge performed the role La Zelatrice in *Suor Angelica*, covered the role of Foreign Singer in *Postcard from Morocco*, and joined the ensemble for *La Bohème*. Ms. Hauge is a student of Penelope Bitzas.

Valerie Kraft (Nella), soprano, originally from Milwaukee, currently lives in Boston with her husband. Recently she sang with Kentucky Opera in their puppet theater production of *The Happy Prince* after she was a young artist with Kentucky Opera singing Micaela in their Education tour of *Carmen*. Valerie has sung with New Jersey Opera Theater as La Comtesse in Massenet's *Cherubin*. She holds a Master and Bachelor of Music from the University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music where she appeared in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *Les Mammelles de Tiresias*, *The Rake's Progress*, and *Il Viaggio at Reims*.

When not playing Buoso (the deceased), **David Lavalley**, is the very much alive Executive Director of TCAN. Under his able management, TCAN has thrived to become a major venue for the presentation of a wide variety of music, arts, dance, children's theatre, and more. David can also be seen as lead guitar for the Paisley Project.

Canadian soprano **Christine Petkus** (Lauretta cover) holds a Masters degree from the New England Conservatory of Music. Her dramatic and vocal versatility have been showcased in such roles as *Gianni Schicchi's* Nella, *Game of Chance's* The Representative and *Hansel and Gretel's* Witch. Ms. Petkus is thrilled to be joining Opera del West for this production and their upcoming Highlights Concert in October.

Soprano, **Mary Ann Powers** (Guccio), has performed a diverse variety of repertoire this past year including a Modern Music Chamber recital, a Bach Chamber Music recital, premiering *The Lady of Shalott* a trio by Matthew McConnell, and sang with Schola Nocturna, which specializes in Early Music. Ms. Powers' operatic repertoire includes Josephine from *Story of an Hour*, Cis from *Albert Herring*, Ida Zinga from a contemporized twist of *Grease*, and Pamina (understudy). Mary Ann Powers will begin studies for a DMA this fall at the University of Connecticut, holds a MM in Vocal Performance and a MM in Vocal Pedagogy from New England Conservatory, and a BM in Vocal Performance from Ohio University.

Miles Rind (Simone) is a frequent performer with opera companies in New England, including Boston Lyric Opera, Opera New England, Opera Boston, Worcester Opera Works, Longwood Opera, Lowell House Opera, and Boston Bel Canto Opera. His recent roles include Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Figaro and Dr. Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Coppélius and Dr. Miracle in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Colline in *La Bohème*, Horace in *Regina*, and Balthazar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. He has also appeared as concert soloist with the Masterworks Chorale, the Paul Madore Chorale, the Newton Community Chorus, and the Arlington-Belmont Chorale. Later in 2007, he will be appearing with Longwood Opera as Frank in *Die Fledermaus*.

Soprano **Jennifer Rizzo** has performed Belinda in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Gretel in Humperdink's *Hansel and Gretel*, has understudied Despina in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, and will be performing Rosa Bud in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* next month with the Turtle Lane Playhouse. Jennifer performed operetta as a soloist in the *Very Viennese Television Concert* with members of the Vienna State Opera Chorus, was Konzerpreis Winner in the Klassikmania International Competition in 2006, and was the winner of the Benton Schmidt Competition in 2004. Jennifer has studied at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Austria, the Middlebury College German for Singers Program, the Académie Musicale de Villecroze in France with Marilyn Horne, and received a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Oklahoma and a Master's Degree from the New England Conservatory of Music.

Mezzo-soprano **Megan Roth** is delighted to be singing with Opera del West as 3rd Knitter in *A GAME OF CHANCE* and the title character in *LA CENERENTOLA* in the scenes showcase in September. Her most prominent roles include Sesto (Giulio Cesare), Rosina (Il barbiere di Siviglia), Charlotte (Werther), Isolier (Le Comte Ory), and Cherubino (Le nozze di Figaro). Ms. Roth holds an Artist Certificate in Opera and Master's degree in performance from Florida State University, and a Bachelor's degree in performance from DePaul University.

Joshua Taylor (Representative, Betto), baritone, is a native of North Carolina and a current Masters candidate at Boston University's College of Fine Arts. Operatic credits include Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Faninal in *Der Rosenkavalier*, and Gherardo in *Gianni Schicchi*. As a choral scholar at Boston University's Marsh Chapel, Joshua has been a featured soloist in presentations of several Bach cantatas with that organization's choir and collegium orchestra. Joshua is a student of Professor James Demler.

Christine Teeters (Ciesca) A graduate of The Boston Conservatory with a Master of Opera Ms. Teeters, has performed in many operas and scenes including *Albert Herring*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Turandot*, *Carmen*, *Suor Angelica*, and has premiered several new operas and shows such as *Amerika* at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge. Ms. Teeters is happy to be making her Opera del West premier. Ms. Teeters studies voice with Douglas Kevin Wilson.

Tom Weber (Schicchi) has pleased audiences and critics alike, displaying versatility and flexibility in a variety of roles and settings, from Germont to Dr. Dulcamara, and Broadway to Opera. Of Tom, critics have written, "(he) has a flexible, warm-toned baritone that he uses with seeming ease, plus dramatic effect...", "...he made listening like drinking a cordial..." and "...clearly one of the stars of the evening...he possesses a great voice." In the past year, Tom has appeared in the role of Dr. Bartolo in Rossini's *The*

Barber of Seville, with Longwood Opera; as Peter, the Father, in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, with the Symphony Pro Musica; and in the title role in the Longwood Opera production of Verdi's *Falstaff*. Other New England opera appearances by Mr. Weber have included Giorgio Germont in Verdi's *La Traviata*, Don Magnifico in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, Dr. Dulcamara in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*, and Gideon March in Mark Adamo's contemporary opera *Little Women*.

Hailed as "passionate singer with beautiful warm tones," mezzo soprano **Jacque Eileen Wilson** (2nd Knitter) received her Master's degree in Opera Performance from The Boston Conservatory. Her operatic roles include: Meg in Mark Adamo's *Little Women* (New England Premiere with Boston Opera Project), Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Granite State Opera & Chorus Pro Musica), Meg Page in *Falstaff* (Longwood Opera) and Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Worcester Opera Works.) Her upcoming engagements for the 2007-2008 season include: the Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with Mass Theatrica, Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* with Longwood Opera, and Mezzo Soprano Soloist in Copland's *In the Beginning* with Newton Choral Society.

Opera del West Staff Biographies

Eve K. Budnick is the music director and co-founder of Opera del West. She is currently the Opera Coach and French Diction Instructor at the University of Connecticut, where her duties include preparing the graduate voice majors for recitals, student operas, and professional auditions. This year she prepared them for a full production of *The Magic Flute*. She is also a Staff Pianist and Vocal Coach at Boston University and the Lyric Diction Instructor for New England Conservatory's Continuing Education Department. Eve has been the Music Director for Boston productions of *Don Pasquale* and *Riders to the Sea*, as well as Opera Scenes Programs for Boston University Opera Institute, New England Conservatory Opera Workshop, and New England Conservatory Summer Opera Workshop. She played offstage organ for the Boston University production of *Romeo et Juliette* and Harpsichord for a recent production of *Radamisto*. She has performed in Faculty Recitals at the University of Connecticut, Boston Conservatory, and Princeton University. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Musicology from Princeton University, a Master's Degree in Vocal Accompaniment from Boston University, where she studied art song with Allen Rogers, and a Graduate Diploma in Collaborative Piano from New England Conservatory where she studied Opera Repertoire with John Moriarty. Eve lives in Wayland with her husband and two sons.

Texas native **Rebecca Grimes** divides her professional time between performing, directing, and teaching. As a director, Ms. Grimes has directed opera scenes programs for the University of Connecticut and Opera del West. Light-lyric soprano, Ms. Grimes' stage credits include *The Plaintiff in Trial by Jury*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas*, Second Knitter in *Game of Chance*, Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi*, The Shepherdess in *L'enfant et le Sortilège*, Rosina in *La vera costanza*, and most recently Susanna in Worcester Opera Works' production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Solo oratorio appearances include the *Mozart Mass in C Minor*, Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Faure *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Bach Cantatas 106 and 51. Ms. Grimes will be performing and recording John Cooper's *Peace Cantata* later this year in Amherst, MA. She teaches at the University of Connecticut where she is completing her DMA in Vocal Performance. Ms. Grimes lives in Northborough with her husband, Eric, and their two children.

Dan Shore (Pianist) is an opera composer and playwright whose works include *The Beautiful Bridegroom*, *Travel*, *The Chorus Girl*, *Downtown Diner*, *Works of Mercy*, and the forthcoming *Lady Orchid*, as well as numerous children's musicals. He is an alumnus of the BMI-Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop and a Fulbright scholar, and he holds a B.M. and M.M. from the New England Conservatory. Currently completing his Ph.D. at the CUNY Graduate Center, Dan teaches at Emerson College.

Rita Hurtado (Stage Manager) recently graduated from Boston University with a Master of Music degree. While at Boston University, Rita performed in the Opera Theatre production of *A Hand of Bridge* as Geraldine and Opera Institute production of *Gianni Schicchi* as Nella. She currently studies voice with Maria Spacagna.

Opera del West Staff:

Rebecca Grimes – Stage Director
Eve Budnick – Music Director
Dan Shore – Pianist
Rita Hurtado – Stage Manager
Larry Budnick – Tech Director
Andrew Budnick – Supertitles Technician

Opera del West was born from the idea of bringing opera to the western suburbs of Boston. Our mission is to create high-quality performances for Metrowest audiences, while providing meaningful professional opportunities for local musicians. Future projects include opera programming for children, works by local composers, early music operas, one-act operas, and full-scale opera favorites produced in an intimate setting.

We have performed for the “Bach, Beethoven, and Beyond” Series at The Center for Arts in Natick, for the Wayland Little Theatre Concert Series and for a summer concert series at the St. Barnabas Church in Falmouth. We will be performing a Children’s program of fairy tale characters called “Once upon an Opera” at TCAN on September 15, 2007.

Opera del West is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your tax-deductible contributions are greatly appreciated. If you are interested in becoming a supporter of Opera del West, please contact Eve Budnick by email at eve@operadelwest.org or visit our website at www.operadelwest.org for more information.

Special Thanks to the following:

St. Ann’s Parish Church for the use of their Events Room for rehearsal space.

Carl and Clarice Budnick for their generous donation for a Supertitles projector.

Thomasville and Bob’s Furniture for their furniture donations.

Beth and Simon Kochen, Nettie Forsheit, Ann and Mitch Cohen, Irma and Roy Alexander and Carrie and Joe Regenstein for their generous donations.

TCAN for the use of their lovely hall and the talents of Dave Lavalley, Dave Massey and Lauren Komack.

Upcoming Chamber Music

Sunday, October 7, 2007, 7:00 P.M. – **Mozartiana**, Mozart Comic operas, “Bastien and Bastienne” and “The Impresario.”

Sunday, November 4, 2007, 7:00 P.M. – **Q/X** – playing string quartets of Verdi and Ravel, as well as a Mozart duet.

Sunday, December 2, 2007, 4:00 P.M. – **“Messiah” Sing**” – Jon Mitchell conducting. Bring your voices for this first TCAN sing-a-long!

Sunday, December 9, 2007, 7:00 P.M. – **Cappella Clausura** – with dancer, **Helena Froelich** “A Virgin among Virgins: The Magnificat and the Nativity in the Convent,” featuring chants, motets and dance.”

Sunday, December 16, 2007, 7:00 P.M. – **Lydian String Quartet** – (Beethoven’s birthday), music of, Piazzolla, Beethoven, and Harbison..

Sunday, January 13, 2008, 7:00 P.M. – **Triple Helix** – “Music With a French Accent,” music of Ravel, Debussy and Fauré.

Sunday, January 27, 2008, 7:00 P.M., – **Lydian String Quartet** – music of Beethoven, Vali and Ornstein.

Friday, March 14, 2008, 8:00 P.M. – **Frederick Moyer** – piano, featuring a program of classical piano masterpieces.

Sunday, April 13, 2007, 7:00 P.M. – **Lydian String Quartet**– music of and Beethoven, Sibelius, Dvorak

Sunday, April 20, 2008, 7:00 P.M. – **Triple Helix** – “Music from Mother Russia: Slipping the Bonds of Reason to Embrace the Song of the Soul,” music of Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky.

Sunday, April 27, 2008, 7:00 P.M. – **Fumito Nunoya**, marimba, **Elko Akahori**, piano. –

Sunday, May 4, 2008, 7:00 PM. – **Wanda Paik**, piano– music of Beethoven, Chopin, Dohnanyi and Rachmaninoff.

Saturday, May 10, 2008, 8:00 P.M. – **Quartet San Francisco** – Grammy-nominated Quartet San Francisco delivers an irresistible mixture of genre-bending world chamber music.

This event is generously sponsored in part by Family Financial Architects, Inc., and is partially funded by the Natick Cultural Council, supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

