

# Opera del West

Saturday October 13, 2007, 7:00 P.M.

*Arias and Duets from*

## *Gianni Schicchi*(1918)

Libretto: Giovacchino Forzano

Music: Giacomo Puccini

### Cast:

**Gianni Schicchi** – Tom Weber

**Lauretta** (his daughter) – Christine Petkus

**Rinuccio** (her boyfriend) – Gregory Hanson

1. Rinuccio's Aria – *Firenze e come un albero fiorito*
2. Lauretta's Aria – *O mio babbino caro*
3. Gianni Schicchi's Aria – *In testa la cappellina*
4. Rinuccio and Lauretta's final duet –  
*Lauretta mia, staremo sempre qui*  
Followed by Schicchi's final speech

*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.

# *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** – Rita Hurtado

**Second Knitter** – Rebecca Grimes

**Third Knitter** – Rachel Hauge

**Representative** – Joshua Taylor

This Opera 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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## Cast Biographies

**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. Gregory has performed the full role of Rinuccio with Opera del West at The Center for Arts in Natick, as well as a scene from *La Cenerentola* for "Once Upon an Opera" in which he portrayed Ramiro.

Mezzo-soprano **Rachel Hauge** (Third Knitter) 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. Rachel played Tisbe in the *Cenerentola* scene from "Once Upon an Opera" for Opera del West this Fall.

Canadian soprano **Christine Petkus** (Lauretta) 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 Highlights Concert in October.

**Joshua Taylor** (Representative), 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. Joshua has sung a number of full and partial roles for Opera del West, including Betto in *Gianni Schicchi*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Figaro in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and Dandini in *La Cenerentola*.

**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*.

**Rita Hurtado** (First Knitter) 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. Rita has performed with Opera del West as Monica in *The Medium* and Adina in *The Elixir of Love* in our Scenes program, and was the Stage Manager for *The Evening of One Acts* at The Center for Arts in Natick.

## 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 the French and English 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 Con-

servatory where she studied Opera Repertoire with John Moriarty. Eve lives in Wayland with her husband and two sons.

Texas native **Rebecca Grimes** (Second Knitter) 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 Deutes 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.

### **Opera del West Staff:**

Rebecca Grimes – Stage Director  
Eve Budnick – Music Director  
Dan Shore – Pianist

**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](mailto:eve@operadelwest.org) or visit our website at [www.operadelwest.org](http://www.operadelwest.org) for more information.

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## Translations for Gianni Schicchi Arias and Duets:

### *Firenze e come un albero riorito* (Rinuccio)

You're wrong! He's subtle! Astute... Every trick about laws and of codes he knows and understands. A joker! A mocker! If there's a new joke to be played, it's Gianni Schicchi who can play it! His sly eyes illuminate with laughter, his strange face, shaded by that big great nose of his, that seems like a big tower, like this! He comes from the country? Fine. Enough with these prejudices mean and petty! Florence is like a tree in bloom in the piazza dei Signori; It has a trunk and branches, but the roots bring new strength from the limpid and fertile valleys! Florence blossoms and its solid buildings and slender towers rise to the stars! The Arno River, before running to its mouth, sings, kissing piazza Santa Croce, and its singing is so sweet and so resounding that all the little streams have joined to become a chorus! In the same way, may learned men in art and sciences descend upon Florence to make Florence richer and more splendid! And from the castles of the Elsa valley welcome Arnolfo to build the beautiful tower! And let Giotto come from the wooded Mugel, and the courageous merchants, the Medici's! Enough of petty hatred and spitefulness! Long live the new people and Gianni Schicchi!

### *O mio babbino caro* (Lauretta)

Oh my daddy dear, I adore him, he's handsome; I want to go to Porta Rossa to buy the ring! Yes, yes, there I wish to go! And if I were to love him in vain, I'd go on the Ponte Vecchio, but to throw myself into the river Arno! I pine and I'm tormented! Oh, God, I would like to die! Daddy, mercy!

### *In testa la cappellina* (Gianni Schicchi)

Was my voice the same as Buoso's? Ah! Victory! Victory! But, don't you understand? Ah! What blockheads! You run to the notary. "Master notary, quickly, go to Buoso Donati! He's become much worse! He wants to make a will! Take the appropriate forms with you, quickly, otherwise it's too late!" And the notary comes. He enters: the room is dimly lit, he glimpses the form of Buoso in the bed! On his head a nightcap on his neck a kerchief! Between nightcap and kerchief, a nose that looks like Buoso's but, instead is mine, because I am there in Buoso's place! I Schicchi, with another voice and shape pretend to be Buoso Donati, dictating a will and giving the will legally! Oh people! This crazy whimsy that springs up in my imagination is such as to defy eternity!

### *Lauretta mia, staremo sempre qui* (Rinuccio, Lauretta)

Lauretta mine, we'll be always here! Look... Florence is golden! Fiesole is beautiful! You swore your love to me there in Fiesole! I asked you for a kiss! The first kiss... Trembling and white, you turned your face... Florence from afar to us seemed paradise!

The band fled! Tell me, ladies and gentlemen, if the money of Buoso could have ended in a better way than this? For this whimsy they've chased me to hell... and so be it; but with permission from the great father Dante, if this evening you've been amused, Cut me a break!  
(Schicchi)