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Opera Workshop

Z 99
1989
3-14

Featuring works by

Samuel Barber
Mark Kuss
Bruce A. Monroe

Musical Director

Joseph Pollard White

March 13 & 14, 1989
8:00 PM, Meany Studio Theater
Program

MONDAY, MARCH 13

A Hand of Bridge
My Fellow Traveler

Intermission

The Insanity of Mary Girard

A Hand of Bridge

Intermission

The Insanity of Mary Girard

My Fellow Traveler

---

A Hand of Bridge, Op. 35

Music by Samuel Barber
Text by Gian Carlo Menotti

Jeff Caldwell, Director

CHARACTERS

David, a florid businessman
Geraldine, his wife
Bill, a lawyer
Sally, his wife

Paul Elgin
Cynthia Ann Oeck
Gregory Calvin Stone
Cynthia Beitmen

First performed at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy, June 17, 1959.

---

My Fellow Traveler

Music & Libretto by Mark Kuss
(based on a Gorky short story)

Jeffrey Hinze, Director

CAST

Shakro Pedatze
Maxime
Narrator
Double

Tim Campbell
Irene Senedak
Ann Wopat
Charles Hiestand

---

The Insanity of Mary Girard

Music, Lyrics and Adaption by Bruce A. Monroe
(based on the play by Lanie Robertson)

Tammiss Doyle, Director

Time: A Saturday night in the Fall of 1790.
Place: A lunatic cell in the basement of the Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia.

CAST

Mary Girard
Stephen Girard

Lynn Shelton
Steve Zediker

The Furies:

Warder
Mrs. Lum
Mr. Phillips
Polly
Mrs. Hatcher

Stewart A. Fisher
Ganet Hundly
Daniel Yarr
Sondra Spungener
Daniel Coe
SYNOPSIS

**A Hand of Bridge**

The opera is a little masterpiece in depth, unfolding within its light comedy framework of two couples playing bridge, an acute and sad portrayal of four people alienated from one another, each living in his or her own private world. It starts with the formalities of the card game, the voices being in recitative over a sportive solo piano (this music will recur, "rondo" fashion, twice more during the course of the chamber opera). Then, as the characters begin to speak their inner thoughts, the vocal lines take on melodic shapes and the other instruments enter. We first discover Sally, constantly rebuffed by her husband, finding pleasure in thoughts of new clothes ("a hat with peacock feathers") while her husband, Bill, is daydreaming of a mistress ("Cymbaline, Cymbaline"), his vocal line for this being a kind of languorous waltz. There is a return to the card chatter and then we hear the thoughts of Geraldine. She is now mentally estranged from her husband, and from Bill, with whom she has been carrying on a flirtation. Most poignantly she feels the long estrangement from her mother, who is now gravely ill. She cries out in mind, "Do not die, Mother. I am learning to love you." Her "stock market husband," David, is at the same time expressing in mind his frustrated rage at his job, his boss, and his straightjacket life, with erotic fantasies of riches, freedom and power. The music in which this is expressed has adroit touches of the sardonic wit of jazz. Near the close all four streams of consciousness are woven together.

**My Fellow Traveler**

Maxime and Shakro meet at the port city of Odessa, where Maxime is working as a laborer. Shakro, well dressed and clearly out of his social element convinces Maxime to accompany him back to his home in the Crimea. Shakro promises opulent rewards to Maxime for his assistance. Maxime agrees to go, concealing a number of his motives for doing so and revealing only the valid concern that Shakro will be destroyed by the town if left to his own devices. They journey together and their relationship develops. They discover fundamental differences in the way they see things which culminates in a rift between them. Just before they reach Shakro's town he abandons Maxime, promising to return but failing to do so. Maxime, alone again, is forced to find his way by himself.

The story is presented by the Narrator who is Maxime ten years after the experience. His memories are presented as active tableaux which he interrupts when they become either too revealing or too painful. Through his act of censorship two stories are told; the one which actually occurred and the one he wishes to reveal.

Program corrections and additions

Greg Elder, Stage Manager

A Hand of Bridge

The role of Geraldine will be performed by Julie Thornton.

Dancers: Amy Baker, Tom Dickerson, Gretchen Durrie

The Insanity of Mary Girard

The role of Mrs. Hatcher will be performed by Kimberly L. Shreiner.

Daniel Cole, Costume Coordinator.

Special Thanks to:

Delia Mulholland
Tom Wisely
K. C. Davis
Anne Stewart
The Insanity of Mary Girard

Seattle composer and musical director Bruce Monroe has transformed Laney Robertson's one act play, The Insanity of Mary Girard, into a musical drama. Set in 1790, in the first years of the new Republic, this new musical drama concerns the plight of Mrs. Stephen Girard (Mary) who is confined to the insane ward of the Pennsylvania Hospital. It is a matter of historical record that she was thus bound and that her husband, Stephen, signed the papers. The musical examines the reasons he may have done so. When the show opens, Mary Girard is sane, pregnant, confused and helplessly restrained in a "tranquilizer chair," an invention of the period utilized to calm the patient.

Mary finds herself surrounded by a group of inmates who turn into "furies" who guide her through a journey of knowledge concerning her imprisonment. They present scenes from her life, and the life of her husband, in order to show Mary that her life outside may have been "insane" as she tried to be honest in a world that is not.

In the 1960s, the therapist R.D. Lang supposed that some forms of insanity may actually be "sane reactions to an insane world." Is Mary Girard sane or insane?

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

Mark Kuss

Mark Kuss graduated with honors from the New England Conservatory of Music and is presently a graduate student at the University of Washington. He has received commissions from the Ohio Boys Choir, the Boston String Quartet, and the Marzena Performance Ensemble. Several of his compositions have recently been accepted for publication.

Bruce A. Monroe

Bruce A. Monroe is active in Seattle's theatre community as a musician and music director. Recent productions in the latter capacity include Hair and the Decline and Fall of the Entire World as Seen Through the Eyes of Cole Porter at Evergreen Theatre. His compositions and arrangements have been performed by local ensembles ranging from the Emerald City Brass Quintet to the Bellevue Philharmonic Orchestra. A Seattle native (born in 1960), he received a B.A. in Drama from the University of
PRODUCTION STAFF

Music Director/Conductor
Joseph Pollard White

Rehearsal Pianists
Robert Jones
(assisted by Bruce Monroe, Mark Kuss, Jeff Caldwell)

Lighting Designer
Mark Baratta

Preset Operator
Larry Forbes

Costume Coordinator
Daniel Cole

Special thanks to Vince Liotta and Alex Danilchik.

ORCHESTRA

Violin
Robin Prinzing
Judy Drake
David Powell
Cathan Baker Prinzing
Becky Soukup
David Tobin

Viola
Lauren Daugherty
Patricia Isaacson

Cello
Erin Adams
Bret Smith

Bass
Kevin Brown

Trumpet
Bob Gale

Flute
Ellen Bercovitz

Oboe
David Oakley

Clarinet
Mac Cantrell

Bassoon
Ann Kosanovic Brown

Horn
Beth Brokaw

Piano
Walter Atha

Synthesizer
Robert Jones

UPCOMING CONCERTS

Brechemin Scholarship Winners Recital, March 29, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater
University Harp Ensemble, April 4, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater
University Masters Series: Bisi Adeleke, Music of Nigeria, Topeng Dance of Indonesia, April 11, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater
Faculty Recital: Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet, April 14, 8:00 PM, HUB Auditorium
Percussion Festival, April 14, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium
Percussion Festival, April 15, 9:00 AM - 10:00 PM, Meany Studio Theater
Collegium Musicum, April 16, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium
University Symphony, April 19, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater
University Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band, April 25, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

University Masters Series: Emilie Berendsen, soprano, May 3, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

UW Opera: The Mikado, May 11-14, 8:00 PM Thursday Saturday, 3:00 PM, Sunday, Meany Theater

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