

TULSA OPERA

Opera ROCKS the Country

featuring



Saturday, June 1st, 2024

THE *Church* STUDIO

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The Face on the Barroom Floor

composition by Henry Mollicone
libretto by John S. Bowman
sung in English with original orchestration
run time: 30 minutes without intermission

CAST

Isabelle/Madeline Stephanie Washington[^]
Larry/Matt Justin Kroll^{*^§}
Tom/John Christian Bester^{*^}

CREATIVE LEADS

Music Director Lyndon Meyer
Stage Director Dani Keil

TULSA OPERA ORCHESTRA

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Principal Cello Krassimira Figg
Principal Flute Elizabeth Potts

SPECIAL THANKS

Tulsa Repertory Musicals
for their generous production support

COVER CAST

Isabelle/Madeline Lydia Gray[^]
Larry/Matt Matt Corcoran

^{*}denotes Tulsa Opera debut

[^]denotes member of the Tulsa Opera Filstrup Resident Artist Program

[§]denotes Laven Sowell Artist of the Tulsa Opera Filstrup Resident Artist Program

Tulsa Opera Orchestra operates under agreement with the American Federation of Musicians Local 94
Stage labor provided under agreement with IATSE local 354

OPERA SYNOPSIS

In Leon Russell's Church Studio, a group of musicians gathers to explore the chamber opera, *The Face on the Barroom Floor*. Drawing upon the history of the recording studio and the pure joy and inspiration of jam sessions, the musicians begin the opera, telling two tales separated in time but parallel in characters and theme:

In present day Central City, CO, Isabelle, an opera chorister, and her friend Larry visit the Teller House Bar. Larry orders champagne and asks about the face painted on the floor. Tom, the bartender, tells the story. Spinning a melodic tale, he becomes a 19th century bartender named John, who welcomes the bargirl Madeline (played by Isabelle) as they toast to the future. A disheveled traveler, Matt (played by Larry), enters and orders drinks for all while Madeline is asked to provide entertainment. Unable to pay for the round of drinks, Matt offers instead to paint a portrait of the only woman he ever loved on the barroom floor. When John discovers the portrait is of Madeline, the two men fight until Madeline throws herself between them with tragic consequences.

The opera shifts back to the 20th century, and Larry laughs drunkenly at the old legend and forces Isabelle to dance with him. Tom now reveals his past romantic relationship with Isabelle and challenges Larry.

As the opera and the jam session conclude, the singers have fully embodied the music and the tale, and the events in the past reverberate, repeating themselves throughout time and continuing the legend of the face on the barroom floor.



LORI DECTER WRIGHT
General Director & CEO

Lori Decter Wright is an unwavering champion of the arts and its profound ability to elevate and enrich individuals and communities. Her lifelong commitment revolves around pursuing artistic excellence, educating and engaging communities, and fostering equitable access for diverse populations. Her dedication to the company extended to leading the Fundraising Committee and serving on both the Board Development and Strategic Planning Committees. In October 2023, she was appointed by the Board of Directors as the General Director and CEO, a testament to her vision and leadership. As a multifaceted professional artist, educator, entrepreneur, and executive leader, Ms. Decter Wright envisions a world where the arts are accessible to all. She is committed to offering captivating classical vocal performances and innovative storytelling of the highest artistic caliber. An award-winning soprano, Ms. Decter Wright has graced the stages of world-class opera companies and symphonies across the United States and abroad. She holds a Bachelor of Music and Master of Arts Degree in Vocal Performance from San José State University, where she was mentored by Dr. David Rohrbaugh and late, great world-renowned mezzo-soprano, Miss Irene Dalis.



AARON BECK
Artistic Director

Aaron Beck joined the team at Tulsa Opera, the twelfth-oldest opera company in the United States, in 2010, and was appointed Artistic Director in 2022. As Artistic Director, Beck oversees the extensive artistic programs of the company, which include the annual mainstage productions, the Filstrup Resident Artist Program, the Tulsa Opera Orchestra, the Tulsa Opera Chorus, the Tulsa Opera Signature Chorale, and the Tulsa Youth Opera, and he collaborates on dozens of annual outreach performances. As a native of southwest Missouri and an adopted Tulsan, Beck affirms a revitalized commitment to both local and international artists, bringing the best of both worlds together in Tulsa's premiere performing arts organization. The son of music teachers, Beck feels a strong commitment to the education of those students who will create the future of music. Under his leadership, Tulsa Opera's education programs have grown to reach thousands of students and teachers annually across Oklahoma and the surrounding region. Beck is Music Director of Tulsa Youth Opera, Tulsa Opera's prestigious vocal music training program for students in grades 3-12. Over forty Tulsa-area students receive free training through this program. Under Beck's baton, Tulsa Youth Opera students have presented productions ranging from Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* to Dean Burry's *The Hobbit*. Additionally, in 2017-2018, Beck spearheaded the development of Tulsa Opera's Raise Your Voice program (now the Raise Your Voice Tour), bringing vocal music to disadvantaged schools

throughout Oklahoma. Beck received his Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from the Manhattan School of Music (with additional studies at the Eastman School of Music) and a Master of Music in Opera Coaching from Florida State University. He lives in northeast Oklahoma with his wife and two children.



LYNDON MEYER
Music Director
Principal Pianist

Lyndon Meyer is a Tulsa-based pianist and conductor. He has served as chorus director, assistant conductor, principal pianist, and vocal coach for the Tulsa Opera since 2014. As a vocal coach, Mr. Meyer has held positions at the University of Oklahoma, Michigan State University, and the Eastman School of Music, as well as at the Florida Grand Opera, the OK Mozart International Festival, and in Urbania, Italy. In February 2019, he made his professional conducting debut for Heartland Opera's production of *La bohème*. In the world of music theatre, he has directed numerous productions around the country and has served as staff accompanist for the annual Lotte Lenya competition since 2009. Mr. Meyer also appears frequently as a recitalist and chamber musician throughout the region. In Tulsa, he holds the post of Director of Music at the Church of Saint Mary and appears as a guest choral conductor and clinician, in addition to maintaining an active coaching studio. Mr. Meyer is a graduate of the University of Arkansas (BM) and the Eastman School (MM).



DANI KEIL
Stage Director

Dani Keil is a director, community organizer and arts educator who graduated from the University of North Carolina Greensboro with an MFA in Directing. She also holds an MA in Theatre Studies from Illinois State University and a BA in Theatre and English Education from Western Michigan University where she was awarded Student Teacher of the Year. Directing for both opera and theatre, her favorite credits include *Aida in Concert* (Tulsa Opera), *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *Pinocchio* (Tulsa Youth Opera), *Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World*, *Sid the Serpent Who Wanted to Sing* (Tulsa Opera Raise Your Voice Tour), *Disgraced* (Cape Fear Regional Theatre), *Wit* (Triad Stage), *Hedda Gabler* (UNCG), and *Angels in America, Part I and II* (Corn Stock Winter Playhouse). Dani began working with Tulsa Opera in 2017 as their season's assistant stage director and then joined the staff in 2020 as the Director of Outreach to oversee a community program that has grown to engage with more than 55,000 people annually. Dani currently serves as the Chief Operating Officer, and, when not working to share the power of art with other Tulsans, she enjoys reading, paddle boarding, and hiking with her husband, Erich, and their dog, Scout.



STEPHANIE WASHINGTON
Isabelle/Madeline

Tulsa native Stephanie Washington received her Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from the Oberlin Conservatory and College. She furthered her studies with the acclaimed soprano Carol Vaness at the Indiana Jacobs

School of Music. At Indiana, Stephanie was a recipient of the Barbara and David Jacobs Fellowship where she served as an Associate Instructor of Voice. Stephanie was a National Semi-Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and a Semi-Finalist in Houston Grand Opera's Eleanor McCollum Competition. As a Tulsa Opera Studio Artist she appeared as Kate Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), Sister Catherine (*Dead Man Walking*), and A Lady with a Cake Box (*Postcard from Morocco*). Two summer apprenticeships with the Santa Fe Opera included major covers of Olympia, Antonia (*Les contes d'Hoffmann*), Emmie (*Albert Herring*), and Musetta (*La bohème*). Stephanie has also performed with Cincinnati Opera's outreach and education program. Stephanie was also an Apprentice with Central City Opera in Colorado where she was a recipient of the E. Atwil Gilman Award. Other training programs include the Charlie Creek Vocal Workshop, Music Academy of the West under mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne, and the Oberlin in Italy program in Urbana, Italy. She has appeared as a soloist with the Atlanta Symphony and the Southwest Florida Symphony. Stephanie enjoys sharing the gift of music both in her classroom at Marquette Catholic School in Tulsa, and in her private studio of piano and voice students.



JUSTIN KROLL
Larry/Matt

Praised by the *Miami Herald* for his "penetrating tenor," Justin Kroll is a focused singer who combines an exciting instrument with radiant musicality and an undeniable stage presence. The 22/23 season was an active one for Justin as an

Emerging Artist at Opera Idaho and a Bonfils-Stanton Apprentice at Central City Opera. In addition, the 22/23 season saw Justin make his debut with the Madison Symphony Orchestra in Orff's *Carmina Burana*, as well as with Geneva Light Opera in Geneva, New York covering Nemorino in Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*. While at Opera Idaho, Justin covered Il Conte Almaviva in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, performed Malcom and covered Macduff in Verdi's *Macbeth*, and performed the Gamekeeper and covered the Prince in Dvořák's *Rusalka*. An active performer, Justin is currently a Filstrup Resident Artist with Tulsa Opera. Justin was recently heard as Beadle Bamford in University Opera's award-winning production of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* at UW-Madison, as well as Arturo in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Madison Opera. Other recent operatic performances include Narcissus in a premiere performance of Christopher Cerrone's *All Wounds Bleed* with Latitude 49, Lensky in

Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* with the Russian Opera Workshop, and both Spoletta in Puccini's *Tosca* and Don Pelagio in Haydn's *La Canterina* with Painted Sky Opera of Oklahoma City. In competition, Justin was the 4th Place winner in the 39th Annual Palm Springs Opera Guild Competition, as well as a semi-finalist for the 2023 Rochester International Voice Competition. Justin has also represented the United States in international competition— as a finalist and the Dr. Roselia Reimer Duersken prize winner at the 8th Linus Lerner International Voice Competition in Guadalajara, Mexico, and a quarterfinalist at the 6th UNISA (University of South Africa) International Voice Competition in Pretoria, South Africa.



CHRISTIAN BESTER
Tom/John

Hailed by the *Los Angeles Times* as "Impressive," South African baritone Christian Bester made his professional debut as Schaunard in *La bohème* for Pro Musica Theater in South Africa and his European debut as Zaremba in *Polin Blut* for the Americke Jaro Festival in the

Czech Republic. Additional critical acclaimed roles include Major General Stanley, Gianni Schicchi, Don Giovanni, Count Almaviva, Belcore, Enrico, Marcello, Germont, Aeneas, Guglielmo, Escamillo, Prince Moritz Popolescu, Basil (Der Graf von Luxemburg) and Dr. Malatesta. Orchestral engagements include: Fort Worth Symphony, Kwazulu Natal Philharmonic, Manitowoc Symphony, Lone Star Wind Orchestra, Allen Philharmonic, and Dallas Symphony Orchestra League. Dr. Bester currently serves as Assistant Professor of Voice at the Greenwood School of Music at Oklahoma State University. Christian also serves as Artistic Director for Voces Intimae: The Art of Song, a not-for-profit organization that brings Art Songs to the Dallas/Fort Worth community. Christian is a sought-after recitalist, presenter and clinician with regular presentation, performances and masterclasses throughout the United States, Europe, Australia, and South Africa.



THREE CHORD JUSTICE

Formed in March 2008 by Liz Grace in San Diego, Three Chord Justice (TCJ) was the finest example of a country honky-tonk dance band in Southern California. Hailing from Missoula, Montana, singer/songwriter Liz Grace

sings TCJ through a mix of classic country influenced originals and handpicked covers from the likes of Emmylou Harris, Hank Williams, Loretta Lynn, Buck Owens, Patsy Cline, and other country greats. TCJ is now made up of Tulsa, Oklahoma's finest country musicians who love what they do. Three Chord Justice doesn't want to change the world, they just want to put a little twang in your corner of it.

DONOR RECOGNITION

President's Council

Founded by R. Thomas Seymour, the President's Council provides Tulsa Opera financial strength to promote artistic excellence. It convenes three times annually for elegant evenings, featuring intimate performances of opera stars.

For information on enrollment send an email to development@tulsaopera.com. Special thanks to all our 2023-2024 members.

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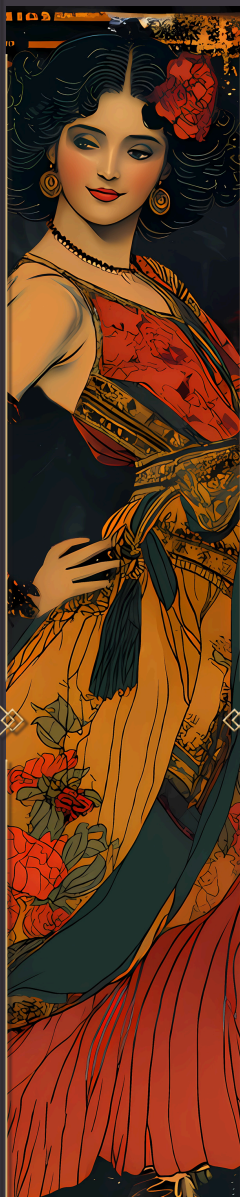
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TULSA OPERA

2024-2025 SEASON



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the tragedy of
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GRAND VOICES: THE TULSA OPERA CHORUS IN CONCERT

October 19, 2024, 7:30 p.m., VanTrease Performing Arts Center for Education at Tulsa Community College

Tulsa talent is on full display when the dedicated professional, avocational, and student artists of the acclaimed Tulsa Opera Chorus unite with the Tulsa Opera Orchestra to deliver a musical experience of unforgettable power and passion that only a dynamic assembly of voices can bring.

THE TRAGEDY OF CARMEN

February 21, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

February 23, 2025, 2:30 p.m.

Williams Theatre at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center

A wildfire of passion ignites the moment disgraced nobleman-turned-soldier Don José meets the beautiful, free-spirited Roma woman, Carmen, but it soon burns out of control, threatening to consume them both. You'll enjoy the most beloved musical gems and dramatic moments from Georges Bizet's blockbuster score in this compact, intimate, and scorching adaptation of Prosper Mérimée's original story.

DVOŘÁK STABAT MATER

April 26, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Holy Family Cathedral

Profoundly emotional. Deeply devotional. Sublimely beautiful. Antonín Dvořák's Stabat Mater is a sensitive and humble setting of the Crucifixion story, seen through the eyes of Mother Mary. The text explores themes of grief, love, faith, compassion, and ultimately, hope. The Tulsa Opera Signature Chorale, the Tulsa Opera Orchestra, and four talented soloists, under the baton of Artistic Director Aaron Beck, join forces to offer an evening of transcendence.

RENÉE FLEMING'S VOICES OF NATURE: THE ANTHROPOCENE

May 10, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Chapman Music Hall at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center

It's the most sought-after ticket of the season when international superstar soprano Renée Fleming, who has been heard everywhere from the opera stage to *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* to singing the National Anthem at the 2014 Superbowl, brings her legendary voice to Tulsa. Fleming's acclaimed recital of Romantic and contemporary songs accompanied by orchestra to the backdrop of a beautiful film from the National Geographic Society. The program explores our evolving relationship with nature and the world we live in via classical song.

A RECEPTION WITH RENÉE FLEMING

Enjoy an exclusive reception with America's star soprano immediately following the recital. Seating is limited to 200 and available only to full-season subscribers, on a first-come, first-served basis.

THE HOBBIT

June 7, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

June 8, 2025, 2:30 p.m.

Lorton Performance Center at the University of Tulsa

In Dean Burry's adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy epic, the Elf King Elrond asks Bilbo the Hobbit to create a musical drama about his adventures, resulting in a rollicking play-within-a-play complete with Elves, Goblins, Gollum, a mysterious Ring, and of course, the fire-breathing dragon, Smaug!

Subscription Renewals: open through May 31

Subscriptions Open to General Public: June 3 - September 2

Single Ticket Sales: open September 3

**Call the Tulsa Opera Box Office at (918) 582-3133
or visit www.TulsaOpera.com for tickets and more information.**