



ODYSSEY
OPERA



LA REINE DE SABA

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Six years have passed since Odyssey Opera's maiden voyage, right here in Jordan Hall. Since that time we have explored many themes including the life and death of Joan of Arc, Oscar Wilde's farcical whimsy, the warriors and lovers of Ancient Rome, and an operatic version of the British Invasion. We have had the privilege of producing thirteen Boston and three US Premieres and bringing eclectic and alluring music to you, our audience.

This fall, we present to you Gounod's *Odyssey*: a celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Gounod; one of French Grand Operas "Founding Fathers", with a concert performance of his opera, *La reine de Saba* (The Queen of Sheba), followed by a rare stage performance of his most admired comedy *Le médecin malgré lui* (The Doctor in Spite of Himself). Tonight's performance and November's opera comique, two distinctly beautiful and contrasting works, have been obscured in the historical canon, falling into the shadow of his international triumphs, *Faust* and *Roméo et Juliette*.

La Reine de Saba premiered in Paris in 1862 on the heels of *Faust*. In doing research for this production, I came across an account of Napoleon III's open distaste for the piece—as one might imagine a supreme ruler having for an opera which scorns and deceives a materialistic king while romanticizing and venerating a mysterious artist. The hints of French Freemasonry, and the uprising of working-class men in the plot, further solidified that this opera would not be to the Emperor's preference. Perhaps this led to its fading from the stage and the opera being cut up and altered into a shadow of its original glory.

Acting as careful craftsmen ourselves, we have spent the last six months sourcing all of the original materials written by Gounod in the 1860s, and piecing those together. This search led us on a hunt through some unlikely, though not wholly surprising places: libraries on two continents, the Library of Congress, correspondence with writers, biographers, and conductors. The final piece of the puzzle fit into place thanks to a worn score found in a basement in Italy. What we present to you this evening will be the most complete performance of *La reine de Saba* ever heard, you might even call it a world premiere! Certainly, a voyage of discovery if ever there was one!

Bon voyage!





September 22, 2018 at 7:30pm
NEC's Jordan Hall

Music by **Charles Gounod**
Libretto by **Jules Barbier and Michel Carré**

U.S. Premiere

Presented in concert
Performed in French with English supertitles

Supertitles provided by Dan McGaha

Time: 10th Century BC
Place: Jerusalem

Act I
Adoniram's Studio

Act II
The Plateau of Zion

Act III
A Clearing in a Wood
Balkis's Suite

15 minute Intermission

Act IV
The Summer Palace
of King Solomon

Act V
A Ravine

Casting:

Kara Shay Thomson	Balkis, The Queen of Sheba
Dominick Chenes	Adoniram
Kevin Thompson	King Solomon
Michelle Trainor	Bénoni
Matthew DiBattista	Amrou
David Kravitz	Phanor
David Salsbery Fry	Méthousaël/ Sadoc
Katherine Maysek	Sarahil

Odyssey Opera Orchestra and Chorus

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Anthony D'Amico, *Personnel Manager*

Chuck Furlong, *Orchestra Manager*

VIOLIN 1

Heidi Braun-Hill
Colleen Brannen
Gabriel Boyers
Colin Davis
Sonia Deng
Lilit Harunian
Susan Jensen
Robert Curtis
Mina Lavcheva
Yumi Okada
Amy Sims
Christine Vitale

VIOLIN 2

Klaudia Szlachta
Piotr Buczek
Annegret Klaua
Susan Faux
Nicole Parks
Paula Oakes
Nivedita Sarnath
Edward Wu
Debra Boyken
Paola Caballero
Julia Cash
Sean Larkin

VIOLA

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Alexander Vavilov
Nathaniel Farny
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Dimitar Petkov
Emily Rideout
Amelia Hollander Ames
Emily Rome
Willine Thoe

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David Russell
Jing Li
Nicole Cariglia
Katherine Kayaian
Ariana Falk
Robert Mayes
Velleda Miragias
Amy Wensink

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Anthony D'Amico
Bebo Shiu
Robert Lynam
Nancy Kidd

FLUTE

Sarah Brady
Rachel Braude

OBOE

Jennifer Slowik
Catherine Weinfeld-Zell

CLARINET

Jan Halloran
Gary Gorczyca

BASSOON

Ronald Haroutunian
Margaret Phillips

FRENCH HORN

Kevin Owen
Nicholas Auer
Neil Godwin
Alyssa Daly

TRUMPET

Dana Oakes
Mark Emery
Tony Gimenez
Andrew Sorg

TROMBONE

Hans Bohn
Peter Cirelli
Christopher Beaudry

TUBA

Takatsugu Hagiwara

PERCUSSION

Craig McNutt
Jonathan Hess

TIMPANI

Robert Schulz

HARP

Ina Zdorovetch

CHORUS

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Brianna Meese, *Chorus Manager*

Yukiko Oba, *Rehearsal Pianist*

SOPRANO

Alecia Batson
Laura Ethington
Kay Patterson
Jennifer Soloway
Celeste Godin
Hagar Adam
Keiko Nakagawa
Laura McHugh
Oriana Inferrera
Isabelle Zeledon
Celeste Pellegrino
Jayne Gallagher
Brynne Pulver
Tricia Kopko
Lizabeth Malanga
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Ann Fogler
Erin Moran
Kay Maysek
Alexandra Dietrich
Jessica Trainor
Janice Hegeman

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Julia Jaffe- Reaboi
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Mariflor Salas
Katherine Maysek
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Special thanks to Brooke Stanton
 Odyssey Opera would like to give special acknowledgement to these musicians whose hard work helped bring this lost masterpiece to life: Christopher Deschene, Debra Eagan, Chuck Furlong

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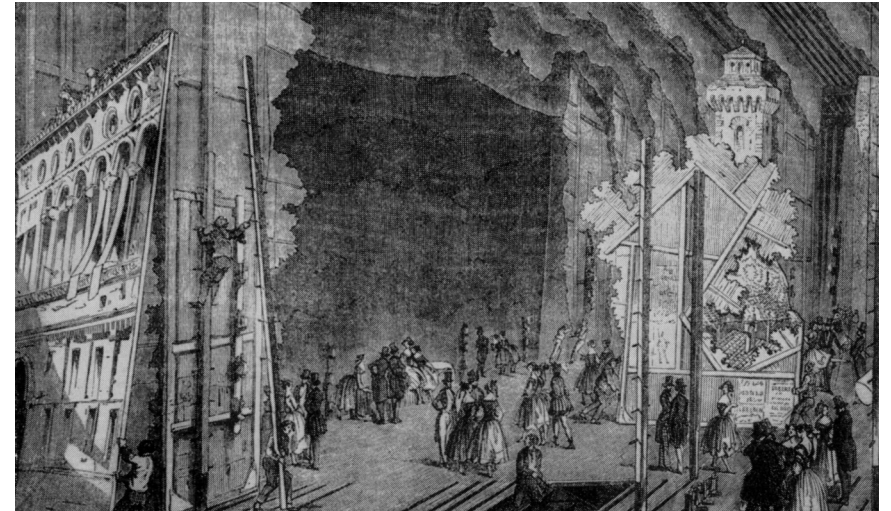
ODYSSEY OPERA

Odyssey Opera presents adventurous and eclectic works that affirm opera as a powerful expression of the human experience. Its world-class artists perform the operatic repertoire from its historic beginnings through lesser-known masterpieces to contemporary new works and commissions in a variety of formats and venues. Odyssey Opera sets standards of high musical and theatrical excellence and innovative programming to advance the operatic genre beyond the familiar and into undiscovered territory. Odyssey Opera takes its audience on a journey to places they've never been before.

PROGRAM NOTES

BY LARUA STANFIELD PRICHARD

Charles-François Gounod's *La Reine de Saba* (The Queen of Sheba) is a lavish French grand opera in five acts, restored for this presentation to its original musical proportions. The work was developed in 1860-1861 and premiered on February 28, 1862 at the Salle Le Peletier (home of the Paris Opera on rue le Peletier from 1821 until its destruction by fire in 1873). Although that hall was meant to be temporary (14,000 square meters built of wood and plaster), it was the first to use gas to light the stage effects and could be transformed into a single massive ballroom by removing the stage and orchestra pit.



Backstage at the Paris Opera House

Despite the Revolution of 1830, the Paris Opéra remained under government control, specializing in five-act grand opera. Words, music, religious processions, executions, revolutions, natural disasters, and ballet were combined to maximum spectacular effect. The official Commission de Surveillance demanded “grandeur,” but restricted Opéra scenarios to those “drawn from mythology or history; principal subjects are kings or heroes.” Due to new opportunities to synthesize the declamatory style of the French tradition with Italianate melody and Germanic harmony, early Romantic composers flocked to Paris to lay the foundations of grand opera. Gounod’s

work was in excellent company: many of the most successful French operas were premiered at the Salle Le Peletier (Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*, and Verdi's *Don Carlos*). Full-length, autonomous Romantic ballet also played an important role in the theater's history, including *La Sylphide* (the first danced in white tutus), *Giselle*, *Le corsaire*, and *Coppélia*. Ballet divertissements and pantomime scenes were an expected part of grand opera, featuring extended danced sections in both the second and third acts. When cuts were made, ballet scenes were often the first to be moved or removed, although Mme de Rémusat (Claire de Vergennes) despaired that the only reason some went to the Opéra was to "hear the legs of the dancers."

By 1860, when Wagner's *Tannhäuser* was in preparation at the Opéra, he complained about the influence of "The Jockey Club," a group founded in 1834 by members of the Parisian aristocracy and bourgeoisie; their public complaints were in part the result of Wagner's failure to include a ballet in his second act. By the time of Gounod's *La reine de Saba*, the "Jockey Club" would arrive after dinner (usually at the interval following Act I), to admire their protégées (the ballerinas). Although they rented a large number of boxes in, they would usually depart (with the dancers) after the conclusion of the danced divertissements (before Act IV).

Pierre-Étienne Piestre, known as Eugène Cormon, directed *La Reine's* magnificent first production, coordinating a lengthy rehearsal process, two costume designers, and five scenic designers. Georges Bizet contributed two-violin versions of the ballets for rehearsal purposes (one was standard for simpler works), and assisted Gounod with the creation of the three-hundred-page vocal score, some elements of orchestration, and chorus rehearsals. The score was criticized for "admiring the certain enharmonic progressions of the last quartets of Beethoven" and espousing "the doctrine of endless melody." Gounod was shocked when the Paris Opera cut the second act from the first performances, so he continued to develop the opera after its premiere, even creating concert versions in French and English by 1865.

In an effort to present *La Reine de Saba* as Gounod originally intended, the material that was cut or reordered has been restored for this performance. *Inspirez-moi, race divine!*, usually moved to Act II will appear at the top of Act I. The complete Act II Finale (cut due to the difficulty of staging a blast furnace explosion), the Act III Septour, *O Tulakain, mon pere!*, and the climactic duet for Solomon and Balkis in Act IV, *Un rebelle-Elle est en mon pouvoir!* have all been restored and we believe much of this material will be heard for the first time this evening.

The librettists for *La Reine de Saba* were Jules Barbier and Michel Carré (authors of Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman*). They were frequent partners of Gounod, and Carré had also developed libretti for Ernest Boulanger (father of composers Nadia and Lili) and collaborated with Eugène Cormon, the director of *La Reine de Saba*, on the libretto for Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*. The leading soprano role of Balkis, the Queen of Sheba, was developed by combining the Biblical queen and the magical queen depicted in the Koran. Charles Gleyre's painting *La reine de Saba* (1838) inspired the design of Balkis' cortège, and the story was adapted directly from *Voyage en Orient* by Gérard de Nerval. Due to his recent success with *Faust* (1859), Gounod was at the height of his career, on his way to becoming one of the most famous composers in the world (after the melodious *Roméo et Juliette* in 1867).

THE STORY

Acts I-III. Architect and engineer Adoniram calls upon his divine ancestors for inspiration in his work [*Inspirez-moi, race divine!*]. His apprentice, Benoni, announces the arrival of Balkis, the Queen of Sheba, and King Solomon's betrothed, singing of her legendary beauty [*Comme la naissante aurore*]. Three of Adoniram's workers, Amrou, Phanor, and Méthousaël appear and demand more money and the craftsman's secret password. He rejects their request and they swear revenge [*Il nous repousse!*].

Solomon and Balkis greet a crowd assembled outside the temple. Balkis has heard of the magnificent building and asks to meet the architect. The King warns her that Adoniram is a strange man with mysterious origins. He appears and, being struck by the Queen's beauty, demonstrates his power by summoning his workers with a slight gesture. Balkis removes her necklace and places it around his neck.

Adoniram's workers prepare to cast his latest masterpiece, a great bowl he calls the "Sea of Bronze," but he is distracted by thoughts of the Queen. Shaking the memory off, he proclaims the importance of this event "This hour will decide my glory!" Solomon and Balkis arrive to witness the casting, but as the molten bronze begins to flow, Benoni interrupts: three traitors have sabotaged the blast furnace! The mold is destroyed and the furnace explodes.

Balkis is entertained by choruses and a ballet of handmaidens washing their clothes. She sings a cavatina expressing the feelings Adoniram has aroused in her [*Plus grand dans son obscurité*]. He appears, expecting her rejection after his failure at the casting. She admits she does not love Solomon, and they sing of their mutual attraction [*Qu'importe ma gloire effacée!*]. Benoni interrupts: Djinn spirits have

repaired the mold and the great bowl is already finished. Adoniram admits that he shares the bloodline of Nimrod with the Queen. They sing a prayer of thanks while the traitors plot against them [O Tubalkaïn, mon père].

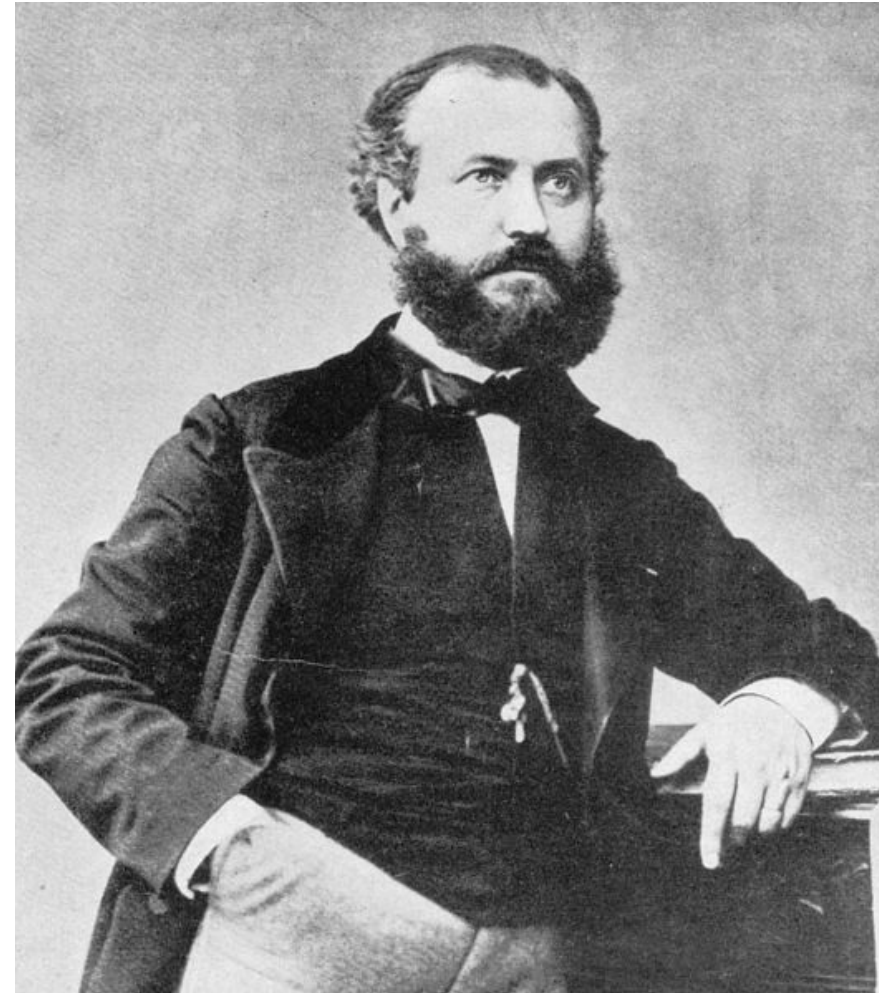
Acts IV-V. A ceremonial choir introduces Solomon, who is entertained by dancing girls [Soliman, notre Roi – Ballet]. Solomon expresses his frustration that Balkis does not return his feelings. The three workers who sabotaged the casting tell him of the illicit meeting between the Queen and the architect [Hâtez-vous de parler]. Solomon angrily dismisses them. Adoniram approaches, telling Solomon his intention to leave Jerusalem, but Solomon testing his loyalty, offers to share power with him. The architect boldly declines. Solomon vows revenge while Balkis plots her escape with the aid of Sarahil.

Alone with Solomon, Balkis attempts to delay their wedding. Solomon reveals what he was told about her meeting with Adoniram, and vows to prevent her from leaving him. [Elle est en mon pouvoir]. Sarahil slips a sleeping potion into his cup while they argue, and as he falls into unconsciousness Balkis is able to slip the engagement ring from his finger and flee. Adoniram waits for the Queen but is set upon by the three traitors. Balkis finds him mortally wounded and gives him the ring. Her slaves and the courtiers attend Adoniram's death [Emportons dans la nuit].

CHARLES GOUNOD (JUNE 17, 1818 – OCTOBER 18, 1893)

The world-renowned composer of *Faust* and the theme of Alfred Hitchcock's 1955-1965 mystery show (Funeral March for a Marionette) was raised in an artistic Parisian family. Gounod's father, an engraver and court painter who won the second Prix de Rome for painting in 1783, died when Gounod was only five, so his talented mother opened a piano studio to support the family. She took him to his first opera (Mozart's *Don Giovanni*), which he later felt was formative: "I was chilled by a sensation of actual terror. When I heard terrible thundering roll of ascending and descending scales, stern and implacable as a death warrant, I was seized with such shuddering fear that my head fell on my mother's shoulder and trembled in the dual embrace of beauty and of horror."

Gounod studied with his mother through his teens and was impressed by Parisian performances of the vocal works of Mozart and Beethoven. Popular French chansons and political songs helped to bring about the July Revolution of 1830, when Louis-Philippe was placed on the throne. Despite this political turmoil, the Paris Opéra (called the Académie Royale de Musique) remained under government control (specializing in five-act French grand operas, mainly by foreign composers



Charles Gounod circa 1859

like Rossini and Meyerbeer), and the Opéra-Comique focused on established French composers with occasional one-acts by former Prix de Rome winners.

Gounod entered the Paris Conservatory at the (late) age of eighteen and focused on organ, sacred music, and composition under Fromental Halévy and Jean-François Le Sueur. He would go on to write over twenty settings of the Mass and two Requiems, building on his teachers' innovations. With *Ossian*, Le Sueur was christened a "founder" of French Romantic opera, as the originality of his orchestration evoked a fantastic world far removed from the merveilleux – the magical aspect – of the Baroque. It was not until after the July Monarchy that sacred

subjects began to be taken seriously again by French composers – but in the concert hall, not the theater. The French oratorio would finally come into its own through works by César Franck (Ruth, 1846), Félicien David (Moïse au Sinai, 1846; L'Éden, 1848; Le Jugement dernier, c. 1849), and later, by the mature Charles Gounod (Tobias, 1854 and five others) and Hector Berlioz (L'Enfance du Christ, 1858).

After excelling in Bach-style counterpoint and vocal composition, Gounod won the 1839 Prix de Rome in music for his choral cantata Fernand. The grand prize for this prestigious competition included study at the French Academy in Rome. Before leaving for the Villa Médici, Gounod composed a beautiful Agnus Dei for three solo voices and choir, dedicated to his professor Le Sueur. Composer and critic Hector Berlioz praised the young Gounod's approach: "Everything there is new and distinguished: song, modulations, harmony. M. Gounod proves here that one can expect everything from him."

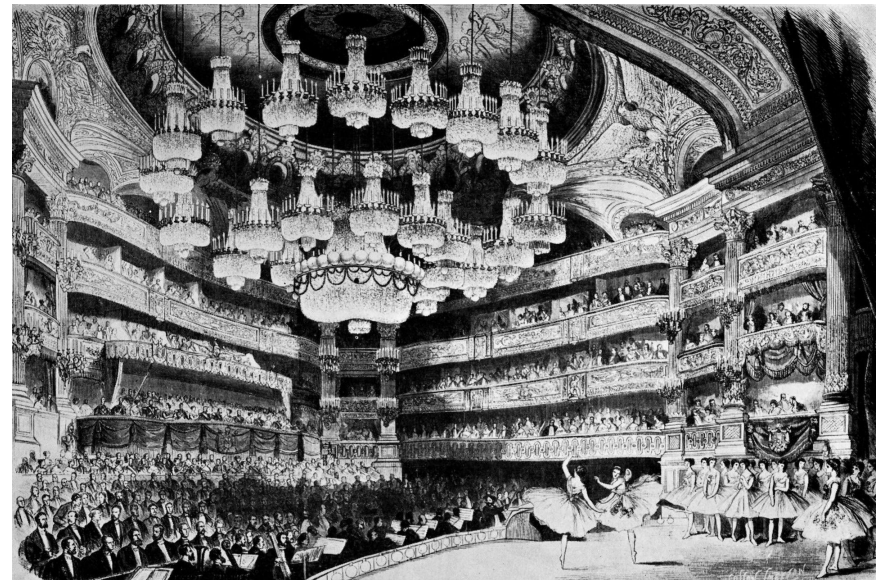
EUROPEAN INFLUENCES

Roman art, music, and liturgical spectacle shaped Gounod as a young man and composer. He found inspiration in the extraordinary religious paintings of Michelangelo, studied the lyrical melodies of Rossini and Palestrina, and became determined to revive sacred musical forms and subjects in France. Gounod attended a cappella services at the Sistine Chapel and concerts at the Academy of Music, dedicated to and dominated by a painting of St. Cecilia playing the organ. Gounod also wrote a number of songs in Italian, including a complete song-cycle, *La biondina*. He engaged in a thorough study of sixteenth-century counterpoint (both for choir and organ), and then spent the third year of his fellowship in Austria and Germany, particularly in Vienna. During this time he explored Viennese Classicism and the German Romantics: his two symphonies show a careful study of Mendelssohn and Beethoven.

In 1843, Gounod returned to Paris and began a position as maître de chapelle and composer for the Séminaire des Missions Etrangères. A profoundly religious young man, he embarked on a series of sacred choral and solo works. Most of the larger Parisian churches at this time were dominated by great organists who incorporated music from popular operas and ballets into their improvisations. In contrast, Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, the greatest builder and re-builder of Parisian cathedral organs (La Madeleine, 1846; Saint-Sulpice, 1862; Notre Dame, 1868), advocated for a return to Bach. In order to encourage organists to revive "more conservative" organ and choral music, Cavaillé-Coll gave scholarships to two protégés: Alexandre Guilmant and Charles-Marie Widor. Widor became the best-

known organist in Paris, leading the music program at the massive Saint-Sulpice for sixty-four years.

During the 1847-1848 academic year, the twenty-nine-year-old Gounod put his musical projects on hold and enrolled as a divinity student at the Saint-Sulpice seminary. Here, he sang under Widor's direction in both the seminary choir (fifty baritones) and in huge multi-part choral works. Gounod briefly considered becoming a priest and began to refer to himself as Abbé Gounod. Gounod was also an avid reader, memorizing sections of Goethe's *Faust* and Lamartine's sumptuous poetry. These two muses, Romanticism and the Catholic faith, juxtapose audibly in his music. Whereas his opera *Faust* interweaves polyphonic organ music and unison choral chant (in French) with a romantic orchestra, Gounod's sacred music displays sensuous beauty within a respectful, forthright treatment of his Latin texts.



The Paris Opera House

His ambitions to revitalize French sacred music were diverted by the revolutions of 1848 and, more seriously, a close friendship with the charismatic opera singer Pauline Viardot, the daughter of Rossini tenor Manuel Garcia. Pauline and her husband Louis Viardot, a critic and impresario, tempted Gounod to England to compose an opera (the sensuous *Sappho*). Since *Sappho* was written to showcase

Pauline's acclaimed soprano voice, her participation ensured performances at Covent Garden and in Paris. Once again Hector Berlioz was supportive of Gounod's authentic, conservative approach to composition. Upon his return to Paris, he briefly resided at a Carmelite monastery, and then married his Anna Zimmerman, the daughter of one of his teachers. Gounod would eventually write a dozen operas.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT WORKS

To entice Verdi to take on the opera *Aida*, the Khedive of Egypt hinted he might offer the commission to Gounod (or worse, Wagner). Gounod became a sought-after conductor: he founded the Royal (Albert Hall) Choral Society in 1871 with 1,000 singers; it was the first large chorus in England to include no male sopranos or altos. The event set off a tidal wave of protest, with dozens of letters to *The Musical Times* and a gradual shift in the British choral tradition that would even reach Westminster Abbey's commemorative concerts by the end of the century. Gounod returned to Paris in 1874 as an important teacher and master of sacred choral composition.

By the early twentieth century, Gounod's operas were the most popular opera in the world: at the Paris Opéra alone, *Faust* achieved over 2,000 performances by the mid-1970s. His dramatic work was typical of France's Second Empire, with grandiosity, sinewy lyricism, and brilliant orchestral color eschewing the motivic development of Richard Wagner's contemporaneous German music dramas. The Pontifical March and Anthem he wrote in 1859 was declared the official papal anthem and national anthem of Vatican City in 1949, and he contributed incidental and choral music for notable French plays such as Jules Barbier's five-act *Jeanne d'Arc* (1873). Saint-Saëns played the organ at his funeral, with choirs led by Gabriel Fauré.

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GIL ROSE

ARTISTIC AND GENERAL DIRECTOR, CONDUCTOR

Acknowledged for his “sense of style and sophistication” by *Opera News*, noted as “an amazingly versatile conductor” by *The Boston Globe*, and praised for conducting with “admiral command” by *The New York Times*, Gil Rose is a musician helping to shape the future of classical music. Over the past two decades, Mr. Rose has built a reputation as one of the country’s most inventive and versatile conductors before the public. His dynamic performances and many recordings have garnered international critical praise.

In September 2013 he introduced a new company to the Boston opera scene, Odyssey Opera, dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire. Since the company’s inaugural performance of Wagner’s *Rienzi*, which took the Boston scene by storm, Odyssey Opera has continued to receive universal acclaim for its annual festivals with compelling themes and unique programs, presenting fully staged operatic works and concert performances of overlooked grand opera masterpieces. In its first five years, Mr. Rose has brought 22 operas to Boston, and introduced the city to some important new artists. In 2016 Mr. Rose founded Odyssey Opera’s in-house recording label with its first release, Pietro Mascagni’s *Zanetto*. Future projects include a double disc of one act operas by notable American composer Dominick Argento, and the world premier recording of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Formerly, Mr. Rose led Opera Boston as its Music Director starting in 2003, and in 2010 was appointed the company’s first Artistic Director. He led Opera Boston in several American and New England premieres including Shostakovich’s *The Nose*, Weber’s *Der Freischütz*, and Hindemith’s *Cardillac*. In 2009, Mr. Rose led the world premiere of Zhou Long’s *Madame White Snake*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2011.

Mr. Rose also served as the artistic director of Opera Unlimited, a contemporary opera festival associated with Opera Boston. With Opera Unlimited, he led the world premiere of Elena Ruehr’s *Toussaint Before the Spirits* and the New England premiere of Thomas Adès’s *Powder Her Face*, as well as the revival of John Harbison’s *Full Moon in March*, and the North American premiere of Peter Eötvös’s *Angels in America*.

In 1996, Mr. Rose founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and

recording symphonic music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP has won fourteen ASCAP awards for adventurous programming and was selected as Musical America’s 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra to receive this distinction.

An active recording artist, Mr. Rose serves as the executive producer of the BMOP/sound recording label. His extensive discography includes world premiere recordings of music by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, Evan Ziporyn, and many others on such labels as Albany, Arsis, Chandos, ECM, Naxos, New World, and BMOP/sound.

He has led the longstanding Monadnock Music Festival in historic Peterborough, New Hampshire. Since his appointment as Artistic Director in 2012, Mr. Rose has conducted several premieres. He made his opera stage directing debut in two revivals of operas by Dominick Argento as well as conducting, directing and producing the world premiere recording of Ned Rorem’s opera *Our Town*.

Mr. Rose maintains a busy schedule as a guest conductor on both the opera and symphonic platforms. He made his Tanglewood debut in 2002 and in 2003 he debuted with the Netherlands Radio Symphony at the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, and National Orchestra of Porto. In 2015, he made his Japanese debut substituting for Seiji Ozawa at the Matsumoto Festival conducting Berlioz’s *Béatrice et Bénédict*, and in March 2016 made his debut with New York City Opera at the Appel Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center. He has since returned to City Opera in 2017 (as Conductor and Director) and 2018 conducting a Double Bill of Rameau & Donizetti’s *Pigmalione*.

In 2007, Mr. Rose was awarded Columbia University’s prestigious Ditson Award as well as an ASCAP Concert Music Award for his exemplary commitment to new American music. He is a four-time Grammy Award nominee.



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THE CAST

KARA SHAY THOMSON (BALKIS, THE QUEEN OF SHEBA)

Odyssey Opera debut.

Recognized for the natural beauty of her voice and her sense of dramatic insight, American soprano Kara Shay Thomson is proving herself a versatile and essential artist on the operatic and concert stages. Her engagements this season include the title role in *Turandot* in a return to Sarasota Opera, and the title role in *Salome* for her return with Dayton Opera. Kara Shay Thomson returned to the Berkshire Choral in the summer of 2017 as concert soloist in Mahler's *Symphony No. 2*. Last season, Ms. Thomson was the title role in *Tosca* with Arizona Opera, *Marta in Tiefand* by Eugene d'Albert with Sarasota Opera, and she returned to Dayton Opera as the title role in *Turandot* and *Magda Sorel* in *The Consul*. Her engagements in the 2016-17 season included her first performances of *Agathe* in *Der Freischütz* with Virginia Opera, *Tosca* with Intermountain Opera Bozeman, and joining Lyric Opera of Chicago for its production of *Les Troyens*. Ms. Thomson's recent engagements include *Tosca* with the opera companies of Sarasota, Portland, Dayton, Utah, Atlanta, Florida Grand and Kentucky; Kentucky Opera as *Leonore*; *Sieglinde* in a staged presentation of Act I of *Die Walküre* with Dayton Opera; *Santuzza* in *Cavalleria rusticana* with Kentucky Opera; and *Judith* in *Bluebeard's Castle* with Opera Omaha. She has performed *The Woman* in *Erwartung* with New York City Opera; *Santuzza*, *Leonore* in *Fidelio*, and the title role in *Vanessa* with Sarasota Opera; *Zemfira* in *Aleko* with Cincinnati May Festival; *The Marschallin* in excerpts from *Der Rosenkavalier* with Quad City Symphony; and *Marietta* in *Die tote Stadt* with Washington, DC's Summer Opera Theatre Company. Concert engagements include soloist in Dvořák's *Te Deum* with Cincinnati May Festival, and *The Bells* at Ravinia Festival under James Conlon. A graduate of New England Conservatory, Ms. Thomson is thrilled to make her Odyssey Opera debut at Jordan Hall.



DOMINICK CHENES (ADONIRAM)

Odyssey Opera debut.

Recently reviewed in the Huffington Post as a “breakout star” and “powerhouse lyric tenor”, young tenor Dominick Chenes most recently debuted Seattle Opera as *Pinkerton* in *Madame Butterfly*, Opera Colorado as *Rodolfo* in *La Boheme*, Hong Kong as *Rodolfo* in *La Boheme*, the role of *Turiddu* with New Orleans Opera, and joined the Lyric Opera of Chicago in the role of *Faust* (cover). Prior to that he was recently heard as *Don Jose* in *Carmen* with Palm Beach Opera, *Alfredo* in *La Traviata* at the Pa Skaret Opera Festival in Sweden, *Riccardo* in *Un Ballo in Maschera* with Austin Lyric Opera and debuted Grand Theatre de Genevre as *Iopas* in *Les Troyens* with Maestro Dutoit, followed by his debut as *Mario Cavaradossi* in *Tosca* with the Minnesota Opera. Prior to that he returned to Austin Lyric Opera as *Pinkerton*, performed *Don Jose* with Utah Opera, followed by *Rodolfo* in *La Boheme* with Welsh National Opera and *Pinkerton* with Austin Lyric Opera. Future engagements include his debut in Valencia as *Carlo* in *I Masnadieri* conducted by music director Roberto Abbado, *Liege* as *Pinkerton* in *Madame Butterfly*, and *Cavaradossi* in *Tosca* with the Reading Symphony, and a return to Hong Kong for *Pinkerton*.



KEVIN THOMPSON (SOLOMON)

Odyssey Opera debut: Thibaut D'Arc in *The Maid of Orléans*, 2017

The American Bass, Kevin Thompson, possesses a voice with extraordinary range, depth, color combined with a commanding stage presence. “A mountain of a voice, with resonance from the Escorial of Philip II, the throne of Boris Godunov, and the majestic court of Sarastro. Thompson delivered all the goods...”

(San Francisco Classical Voice). Recent engagements included his debut with Opera Carolina as *Zemfira's father* in *Aleko*, Verdi's *Requiem* with the National Chorale at Avery Fisher Hall, Wagner's *Rienzi* at the Kennedy Center, Handel's *Messiah* with the National Philharmonic, *Osmin* in *Die*

Entführung as dem Serail at the Walnut Creek Festival, and the role of Captain in Daniel Catan's *Florenca en el Amazonas* with the New York City Opera. Prior to that he performed the role of Ahmed Sumani in the world premiere of *Qadar* at the Kennedy Center; a return engagement with Opera Santa Barbara as Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*; Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, also at the Kennedy Center and with the Washington Chorus; and his debut as Osmin in *Die Entführung as dem Serail* and the role of Mephistopheles in *Faust* with West Bay Opera, Mozart's *Requiem* with Maestro David Robertson and the St. Louis Symphony, Verdi's *Requiem* with Tallahassee Symphony, Basilio in the *Barber of Seville* with Opera Hong Kong, the *Old Gypsy* in *Aleko* with the New York City Opera, and the role of Angelotti in *Tosca* with Opera Tampa. Last season he returned to Bob Jones University as Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, performed *Thibault* in *The Maid of Orleans* with Odyssey Opera, and the role of Ramphis in *Aida* with Knoxville Opera. In concert he returned to the National Choral as a soloist for *Thy Will be Done* and performed Verdi's *Requiem* with the Chautauqua Institute and Lord Nelson's *Mass* at Carnegie Hall. This season he will make his debut as Sparafucile with the New Orleans Opera, and perform the role of Soliman in Gounod's *La Reine de Saba* with Odyssey Opera.

MICHELLE TRAINOR (BÉNONI)

Odyssey Opera debut: Ghita in *Der Züwerg*, 2016

Michelle Trainor, a Massachusetts native, will be debuting four roles this season beginning with her return to Odyssey Opera singing Benoni in Gounod's *La Reine de Saba*. She returns to Boston Lyric Opera singing Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Ofglen in *The Handmaid's Tale* as well as Mrs. Peachum in *The Beggar's*



Opera with Emmanuel Music. She most recently debuted the role of Mrs. Peachum in *The Threepenny Opera*, Jocasta in Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, and she created the role of Helen McDougal in the World Premiere of Julian Grant and Mark Campbell's *The Nefarious, Immoral but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke & Mr. Hare* with Boston Lyric Opera. Michelle returned to the Boston Lyric Opera stage to sing the role of Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and made her Odyssey Opera debut as Ghita in Zemlinsky's *Der Züwerg*. She was the soprano soloist in Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony* with New World

Chorale as well as the soprano soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at Nashua Symphony. Other recent highlights include her Boston Symphony Orchestra debut in *Der Rosenkavalier* and a performance of *Isolde's Liebestod* from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* with Brookline Symphony Orchestra. She sang a staged version of Schubert's early song *Hagar's Lament* with Boston Lyric Opera that was recorded on the BIS label. As a Boston Lyric Opera Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist alumna she has sung roles in their productions of *The Inspector*, *Macbeth*, *Clemency*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Merry Widow*, and *The Love Potion*.

MATTHEW DIBATTISTA (AMROU)

Odyssey Opera debut: Sir Hugh Evans in *Sir John in Love*, 2015

Described as "brilliant" by Opera News, tenor Matthew DiBattista is in demand on some of the world's most prestigious stages. He has sung with such conductors as Charles Dutoit, Sir Andrew Davis, James Conlon, Seiji Ozawa, Keith Lockhart, and Robert Shaw. In the 2017-18 season, Mr. DiBattista made debuts with Michigan Opera Theatre as Borsa in *Rigoletto*, the Santa Fe Opera as Goro in *Madama Butterfly* and Scaramuccio in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. His 2018-19



season included Triquet in *Eugene Onegin* and the Witch in *Hansel und Gretel* with Michigan Opera Theatre, soloist in Britten's *War Requiem* with the Wichita Symphony, and the Doctor in Poul Ruders' *The Handmaid's Tale* with Boston Lyric Opera. Recent engagements include a debut with Minnesota Orchestra as the First Jew in *Salome*, Normano in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Don Basilio in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Boston Lyric Opera, his return to Lyric Opera of Chicago as Faninal's Major-Domo in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as Tanzmeister in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and soloist in Verdi's *Requiem* with Wichita Symphony Orchestra. In addition to performances

with Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Parsifal*, *Capriccio*), Mr. DiBattista has performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (*Die Meistersinger*, *Tosca*, *Norma*), Glimmerglass Opera (Central Park, *Falstaff*), Opera Boston (*Angels in America*, *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, *The Nose*, *Midsummer's Dream*), Long Beach Opera and Chicago Opera Theater (*Thérèse Raquin*, *The Good Soldier Schweik*), Boston Lyric Opera (*Madama Butterfly*, *Midsummer Night's*

Dream) and as principal artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (including Pagliacci, The Death of Klinghoffer, The Magic Flute, The Ghosts of Versailles). He has won great acclaim in a tour de force assignment -- the four servants in Les contes d'Hoffmann (performances in Miami, Denver, Boston, St. Louis, Palm Beach).

DAVID KRAVITZ (PHANOR)



Odyssey Opera debut: Paolo Orsini in *Rienzi*, 2013

Hailed as “a charismatic baritone” by the New York Times, “magnificently stentorian and resonant” by Opera News, and “a first-rate actor” by Opera (UK), David Kravitz has appeared as a featured soloist around the United States, including at Washington National Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Opera Saratoga, Boston Lyric Opera, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. An exceptionally versatile artist, Mr. Kravitz’s repertoire ranges from Bach to Verdi to Sondheim to cutting-edge contemporary

composers. Mr. Kravitz has recorded for the Naxos, BIS, Sono Luminus, Koch International Classics, BMOP/sound, Albany Records, and New World labels. His distinguished legal career has included clerkships with the Hon. Sandra Day O’Connor and the Hon. Stephen Breyer.

DAVID SALSBERY FRY (MÉTHOUSAËL/ SADOC)

Odyssey Opera debut: Don Alonzo & L’Envoye Maire in *Le Cid*, 2015.

Widely praised for his skills both as a singer and as a nuanced and subtle actor, David Salsbery Fry seized the spotlight in 2013 when he stepped in as Mosè in Mosè in Egitto for a four-performance run with New York City Opera on very short notice. Possessed of



virtuosic technique and a wide vocal range which gives him command of both the bass and bass-baritone repertoires, Mr. Fry plunged down to contra G (49 Hz) for his performances of Ogro in Gotham Chamber Opera’s production of Montsalvatge’s *El gato con botas*. Other notable engagements have included Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for St. Petersburg Opera, Seneca in *L’incoronazione di Poppea* and Hobson in *Peter Grimes* for Aspen Music Festival, Don Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for Vero Beach Opera, Truffaldin in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Tanglewood, Arkel in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* in Tel Aviv, his Mostly Mozart debut in Stravinsky’s *Renard*, and Olin Blitch in *Susannah* with Opera at Rutgers. Mr. Fry is a tireless advocate for new music; he has created roles in three world premiere opera productions: Scott Wheeler’s *Naga*, Louis Karchin’s *Jane Eyre*, and Chaya Czernowin’s *Infinite Now*, selected as “World Premiere of the Year” in the 2017 Opernwelt critics survey. Mr. Fry studied at Juilliard, the University of Maryland, and Johns Hopkins and apprenticed with the Santa Fe Opera. He is the grand prize winner and reigning laureate of the Bidu Sayao International Vocal Competition. His recordings are available from Albany, Navona, Naxos and VIA Records. David is a proud member of the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA), and serves his union as a member of the Board of Governors and as Vice Chair of the New York Area Committee.

KATHERINE MAYSEK (SARAHIL)



Odyssey Opera debut.

Known for her vivid and touching vocal performances, mezzo-soprano Katherine Maysek is an artist equally at home on the stage and in the concert hall. Ms. Maysek loves the challenge of portraying many vastly different characters, be they within song, oratorio, or opera. Ms. Maysek made her debut this summer at The Glimmerglass Festival as Dinah in Bernstein’s *Trouble in Tahiti* and Lapák the dog in a new English translation of Janáček’s *The Cunning Little*

Vixen. In January 2019 she will sing Brother in the Boston Opera Collaborative production of Stefan Weisman’s *The Scarlet Ibis*. Katherine made her Carnegie Hall debut with the American Symphony Orchestra in a rare production of Max von Shillings’ *Mona Lisa*. Other operatic roles include Kate Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), Lisbé (*Grétry’s Zémire et Azor*), Meg Page (*Falstaff*), Mrs. Grose (*The Turn of the Screw*), Nerone (*L’incoronazione di Poppea*) and Cherubino (*Le nozze*

di Figaro). Ms. Maysek has collaborated with the Concord Chorale, Burlington Choral Society, The Orchestra Now and the Blanche Moyses Chorale among others. Katherine's concert repertoire includes Stravinsky's Pulcinella with maestro Gerard Schwarz, Vivaldi's Gloria with maestro James Bagwell and numerous Bach oratorios including the Christmas Oratorio, St. John Passion and Mass in B minor. Katherine has also appeared with the Des Moines Metro Opera, the Tanglewood Music Center, Mass Opera, Opera Saratoga and the Berkshire Opera Festival. Katherine received her bachelor's degree from McGill University and her masters degree from Bard College Conservatory's Graduate Vocal Arts Program.

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