

NEW COMMISSION CO-PRODUCTION OPPORTUNITY

Sarah in the Theatre

A new opera
by Mark Adamo



WiseMusic *Group*

INTRODUCTION

Odyssey Opera of Boston is commissioning the internationally acclaimed composer-librettist Mark Adamo to create *Sarah in the Theatre*, a new evening-length opera with a premiere set for Spring 2025. Adamo is crafting a surreal portrait of Sarah Caldwell: an American artist, and ally, so far ahead of her time — in her insistence on socially just casting, her passion for politically trenchant work, her genius for spectacle, and her uncanny ability to elicit truth in performance — that she made Boston, for a time, an international destination for opera, even as she slalomed all her life between triumph and disaster. Star mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton is featured in the title role of this production to be directed by Louisa Muller. Gil Rose, General and Artistic Director of Odyssey Opera, conducts.

WHY SARAH CALDWELL?

How has this history-making woman vanished from history? This woman whose work with Opera Company of Boston was so famous in its time that she (an opera director/conductor!) made the cover of *TIME* magazine; a woman who received the National Medal of Arts and was also burned in effigy on Boston Common. Decades before we were talking about female leaders, anti-racist casting, vivid new art and vital reëxamination of old art, there, alone, strode Sarah Caldwell, creating the opera world in which we all now live. But no paragon, Sarah: as abusive as she was inspiring, as haunted as she was fearless, this was a woman — a character — epic in her gifts, her needs, her kindness and her flaws; extraordinary in her work, she was nonetheless haunted, as we all are, the demons in her past. No character like her exists on any American (or any other) stage. Soon, she will.

SYNOPSIS

Over one sleepless day and night: haunting the theater she created, made legendary, and now, by morning, may lose; the director, conductor, and impresario Sarah Caldwell — brilliant, obsessed, intractable — inspires her artists, fends off creditors, relives her triumphs, and battles with ghosts as we wait to learn if she will be given one final chance to continue the work she lives for or whether demons of self-sabotage have, at last, outrun her luck.

PRINCIPAL RÔLES (non-doubling)

Margaret Caldwell, *mother to Sarah. 60s. Anglo-American.* Dramatic-coloratura soprano.

Imelda Marcos, *First Lady of the Philippines.* Filipina. Spinto soprano.

Vera Tyrell, *soprano; later, a major opera sponsor. Black American.* Dramatic soprano.

Sarah Caldwell, *impresaria, 40s. Anglo-American.* Dramatic mezzo-soprano.

Icarus/Demarre Hall, *both the mythic character and the singer who plays him. 20s. Black American.* Lyric, but fleet, tenor.

Tim Martin, *assistant to Sarah. 20-30s. Irish-American.* Lyric baritone.

Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino, *former senator of the Philippines. 30s. Filipino.* Basso-cantante or bass-baritone.

ENSEMBLE RÔLES (doubling)

Lyric Mezzo 1, *30s. Jewish-American.*

ideally with keyboard skills sufficient to accompany a rehearsal

Lyric Mezzo 2, *20s. Latina.*

Spinto Tenor 1, *40s. Latino.*

Lyric Tenor 2, *20s. German or Scandinavian-American.*

Lyric Baritone 1, *20s. Black American.*

Lyric Bass-Baritone 2, *40s. Irish-American.*

ORCHESTRA

2.2.2.2/4.2.3.0/pf/hp/strings

Woodwind doublings and percussion TBD.

EXCERPT: Act I, Scene 2

SARAH, *coaching the reticent Black tenor* DEMARRE HALL *in the title role of* ICARUS.

SARAH

I want to say this carefully.

I know that you and I are not the same.

But I know a little of

when people judge you on how you look, rather than what you do;

I know a little of

working twice as hard for half as much;

I know a little of

feeling like — unless you're perfect — they won't think you're even good.

I know a little of

feeling like you're the only one in the room who doesn't belong.

Even when — especially when —

You know you *do* belong.

When there's no reason — at all — why you should *not* belong.

We are not the same.

There's a lot about you I will never know.

But I am here to tell you:

You belong here.

I am here to tell you:

I believe in you...

Risk the excessive; you've never been too much yet.

Risk the leap: I swear to you:

I'll be here to catch you:

I will be your net.

All of us, in this cast,

All of us, in this company:

We will catch you:

We will be your net.

JAMIE BARTON

Critically acclaimed by virtually every major outlet covering classical music, American mezzo-soprano **Jamie Barton** is increasingly recognized for how she uses her powerful instrument offstage – lifting up women, queer people, and other marginalized communities. In recognition of this activism and her iconic performance at the Last Night of the Proms, she was named 2020 Personality of the Year at the BBC Music Magazine Awards. Ms. Barton is also the winner of the Beverly Sills Artist Award, Richard Tucker Award, International Opera Awards Readers' Award, and both Main and Song Prizes at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition. Her 2007 win at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions launched a major international career that includes leading roles at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Bayerische Staatsoper, San Francisco Opera, Teatro Real Madrid, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Houston Grand Opera, and the Met. Her solo albums include *All Who Wander*, which received the 2018 BBC Music Magazine Vocal Award, and *Unexpected Shadows*, recently released with composer Jake Heggie.



LOUISA MULLER

Based in Vienna, this season **Louisa Muller** directs at LA Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Boston Baroque, Opera Colorado, and The Juilliard School, as well as reviving her acclaimed *The Turn of the Screw* for Garsington Opera, which won a 2020 Royal Philharmonic Society Award and was named by *The Guardian* as one of the Top 10 classical events of the year. She was a finalist for the 2020 International Opera Awards in the Best Newcomer category.



She has directed at the Metropolitan Opera, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Houston Grand Opera, New York Philharmonic, Edinburgh International Festival, Minnesota Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and Opera Queensland.

MARK ADAMO

“A brilliant theater composer,” (*The New Yorker*), composer-librettist **Mark Adamo**’s newest opera is *The Lord of Cries* (libretto, after *Euripides* and Bram Stoker, for a score by John Corigliano) commissioned and introduced by Santa Fe Opera in July 2021. *The Lord of Cries* follows four operas for which Adamo wrote both score and libretti. *Becoming Santa Claus*, commissioned and introduced by The Dallas Opera in December 2015, was released on DVD/Blu-Ray in December 2017, and given its most recent new production by Chicago Opera Theater in December 2021. *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* was commissioned and introduced by San Francisco Opera in June 2013; it followed *Lysistrata*, after Aristophanes, co-commissioned by Houston Grand Opera and New York City Opera in 2005-2006 and produced by Washington National Opera in 2008 and Fort Worth Opera in 2012. Its first filmed version is scheduled for release in 2022. *Little Women*, commissioned and introduced by Houston Grand Opera in 1998, had, before COVID, been staged multiple times every year since its premiere (130+ productions;) recorded for audio in 2002 and released on film in 2010, its UK premiere is scheduled for summer 2022. Other commissions include *Aristotle*, for Thomas Hampson and the Jupiter String Quartet, by Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; *Four Angels: Concerto for Harp and Orchestra*, for the National Symphony Orchestra (also Utah Symphony, 2011;) *The Racer’s Widow*, for New York Festival of Song; and the cantata *Late Victorians*, for Eclipse Chamber Orchestra, which recorded it on its all-Adamo recording for Naxos, alongside *Alcott Music*, (a suite from *Little Women*) and the *Overture to Lysistrata*. His choral work has been commissioned and performed by Chanticleer, Conspirare, The Esoterics, The Gregg Smith Singers, Choral Arts Society in Washington, Young People’s Chorus of New York City, and The New York Virtuoso Singers. His music is published exclusively by G. Schirmer. www.markadamo.com.



GIL ROSE

Dynamic performances on the symphonic and operatic stages as well as over 80 recordings have garnered producer and conductor **Gil Rose** international critical praise. In 2013, General and Artistic Director Rose founded Odyssey Opera to give voice to new or hidden and underappreciated works, including 40 operas by 36 composers, two world premieres, two U.S. premieres, and seventeen Boston premieres. Its in-house recording label's discography includes Mascagni's *Zanetto*, three one-act operas by Argento, the premiere recording of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and a reconstruction of Gounod's *La reine de Saba*.



Rose is also the founder of the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), dedicated to symphonic music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. BMOP has won fourteen ASCAP awards for adventurous programming and Musical America's 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra so honored. In 2021, BMOP received a Special Achievement Award from Gramophone. Rose serves as executive producer of the GRAMMY® Award-winning BMOP/sound recording label.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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**Once in a while, when everything is just right, there is a moment of magic.
People can live on moments of magic.
— Sarah Caldwell**

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