

GIL ROSE, ARTISTIC &
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RACHMANINOFF

T ALEKO ♦

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3 ONE-ACT OPERAS IN CONCERT

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AFTER TWO YEARS in the dockyard, Odyssey Opera's voyage begins again!

I am thrilled to welcome you to New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall for *Troika*, our performance of the complete operatic works of

Sergei Rachmaninoff. I know many in the audience will be familiar with Rachmaninoff's music through his Symphonies and Piano Concertos, but few will have heard these three spectacular one-act operas. In fact, you will be the first audience in North America to hear all three in a single performance. They are a perfect destination on Odyssey's journey of discovery—as Jeremy Eichler of *The Boston Globe* aptly put it, our quest to explore “major works by little-known composers, and little-known works by major composers.”

What can you expect in an afternoon of opera from Rachmaninoff, the celebrated pianist, conductor, and composer? You'll hear lush orchestration and expressive melodies, paired with timeless tales of love and madness, passions and transgressions. In short, the self-proclaimed “last of the romantic composers” created three characteristically Romantic pieces—musically indulgent, dramatically pointed, and magnetically appealing.

We're joined this afternoon by a superb cast, featuring longtime Odyssey favorites alongside singers in their company debuts. Similarly, some of you are longtime travelers, while others are finding Odyssey for the first time. Whether this is your first voyage or your 37th, it brings me great joy to (finally!) say: Welcome back on board.

Gil Rose

TROIKA

3 one-act operas by
Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)
Collective US Premiere

September 25, 2022 | 3:00PM
New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall

Aleko (1892)

Libretto by Vladimir Nemirovich,
based on Alexander Pushkin's 1827 poem *The Tsingaris*

10-MINUTE INTERMISSION

The Miserly Knight (1902)

Based on Alexander Pushkin's short story featured in *Little Tragedies*

10-MINUTE INTERMISSION

Francesca da Rimini (1904)

Libretto by Modest Tchaikovsky, after Dante Alighieri's *Inferno Canto V*

Conducted by Gil Rose, General and Artistic Director

Sponsored by Samuel & Deborah Bruskin

Presented in concert | Sung in Russian

THIS PERFORMANCE WILL RUN
APPROXIMATELY 3 HOURS, 30 MINUTES



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Aleko

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The Young Man	Andrew Bidlack, <i>Sponsored by John & Elizabeth Loder</i>
The Old Man	Kevin Thompson
The Woman	Cindy Vredeveld, <i>Sponsored by Katherine Cain</i>

The Miserly Knight

The Baron	Mikhail Svetlov, <i>Sponsored by Campbell Steward</i>
The Duke	Aleksey Bogdanov, <i>Sponsored by Gregory Bulger & Richard Dix</i>
Albert	Spencer Hamlin
The Moneylender	Yeghishe Manucharyan, <i>Sponsored by Winifred Perkin Gray</i>
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The Shadow of Virgil	Kevin Thompson
Francesca da Rimini	Yelena Dyachek, <i>Sponsored by Stephanie Boyé</i>
Paolo	Andrew Bidlack, <i>Sponsored by John & Elizabeth Loder</i>
Lanceotto Malatesta	Aleksey Bogdanov, <i>Sponsored by Gregory Bulger & Richard Dix</i>

Aleko supertitle content

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The Miserly Knight / Francesca da Rimini supertitle content

by Danielle Sinclair

SYNOPSSES

ALEKO



A community of Tsingari people have pitched their tents for the night on the bank of a river. Beneath a pale moon, they light campfires, prepare a meal and sing of the freedom of their nomadic existence. An old man tells a story. Long ago, he loved Mariula who deserted him for another man, leaving behind Zemfira, their daughter. Zemfira is now grown up, has her own child, and lives with Aleko, a Russian who has joined the Tsingari community. Hearing this story, Aleko is outraged that Zemfira's father took no

revenge on Mariula. But Zemfira disagrees. For her, as for her mother, love is free, and she herself has already tired of Aleko's possessiveness and now loves a younger man, one of her own community. After dances for the women and the men, the Tsingaris settle down to sleep. Zemfira appears with her young lover, whom she kisses passionately before disappearing into her own tent to look after her child. Aleko enters and Zemfira taunts him, singing about her wild lover. Alone, Aleko broods on the catastrophe of his relationship with Zemfira and the failure of his attempt to flee the Russian world. As dawn comes, he surprises Zemfira and her lover together. In a torment of jealousy he kills them both. All the Tsingaris gather, disturbed by the noise. Led by Zemfira's father, they spare Aleko's life but cast him out from them forever.

THE MISERLY KNIGHT



Albert, a young knight, lives a life of jousting and courtly pleasure, which his father, an extremely rich but miserly baron, refuses to support. As a result Albert is now deeply in debt and unable to appear in high society, so he tries to borrow money once again. The moneylender refuses to provide a loan, but offers poison by means of which Albert can kill his father. Sending the moneylender away in horror at the idea, Albert decides to appeal to the duke who rules them all.

Meanwhile, the baron visits his cellars alone to celebrate the fact that he has now amassed enough gold to fill his sixth and last chest. Filled with greedy delight and terror, he lights candles before the chests and opens them to gloat over what they hold. In a powerful

monologue, he fluctuates between ecstasy at the sight of all this twinkling gold and despair that he might soon die and his son would then be able to claim it all and spend it. In despair, Albert asks the duke to help. The duke conceals Albert in a nearby room and summons the baron to persuade him to support his son. Questioned by the duke, the baron tries to protect his fortune and accuses his own son of wanting to steal from him. Outraged, Albert leaps from his hiding place and accuses his own father of lying. The baron challenges his son to a duel, which Albert accepts, provoking the duke to expel him from his court. The strain is too much for the baron's heart. He dies, calling not for his son, but for the keys to his beloved chests of gold.

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI



Making their way through the Circles of Hell, Dante and the ghost of Virgil come to a place of whirlwinds where they meet the spirits of those damned by lust. Here they meet Francesca and her lover Paolo and their story is retold. In life, Francesca is married to a great warrior, Lanceotto Malatesta. Lanceotto has had many successes in battle, but these bring him no joy, as he is tortured by jealousy and fear that his wife loves his younger brother Paolo, whom he had originally sent to woo Francesca on his behalf. Francesca

had not realized Paolo was representing his older brother and had exchanged vows with the younger man, believing she was to marry him. She now accepts she is Lanceotto's wife, but cannot pretend to show him love. Lanceotto sets a trap. He announces he must leave for war, and commits his wife to his brother's care. To entertain Francesca in her husband's absence, Paolo reads her the story of Lancelot and Guinevere and, as he reads, connects the tale to their own situation. When he arrives at the point where Lancelot and Guinevere embrace and kiss, Francesca yields herself to him. At that moment, Lanceotto rushes in and stabs them both to death. As Dante and Virgil listen to the end of this story, the screams of the dying lovers mingle with the cries of all the other souls of the damned streaming past in the whirlwind. The two poets are left meditating on Francesca and Paolo's refrain: "There is no greater sadness in the world than to remember a time of joy in a time of grief."

PROGRAM NOTES

Aleko

By George W. Loomis

Opera may not have been of central importance to Sergei Rachmaninoff's long and diverse creative life, but if one looks just at the early years of his professional career a very different picture emerges. Three operas were composed over a thirteen-year-period, beginning with *Aleko*, written as a graduation exercise at the Moscow Conservatory in 1892 and performed to acclaim at the Bolshoi Theater the following year. Rachmaninoff's activities in opera set a pattern for later years, when his work as a composer was intertwined with his career as a performer. In 1897 he became deputy conductor of the Moscow Private Opera Company of the railroad tycoon Savva Mamantov, where he worked with the young bass Fyodor Chaliapin. Soon he was composing another opera, *Francesca da Rimini*, to a libretto by Modest Tchaikovsky based on Dante. He put it aside temporarily for other projects, including what became his third opera, *The Miserly Knight*, a setting of one of Pushkin's "little tragedies". *Francesca da Rimini* and *The Miserly Knight* — each, like *Aleko*, in a single act — were premiered as a double-bill at the Bolshoi in January 1906. In personal terms, this must have been the high point of Rachmaninoff's two years as chief conductor of Russian opera at the Bolshoi, which had begun in 1904. But a month later he left this position and went abroad, possibly because of political unrest in Russia. Although he continued to compose songs and other vocal music, nearly all of which were written before he left Russia for good in 1917, he never completed another opera.

For any lover of the lyric stage, this is a cause for regret. But speculation about the promise Rachmaninoff's three operas so clearly demonstrate must not be allowed to obscure the very real artistic achievement they represent in their own right. Too often these operas have been overlooked on account of their youthful origins or perceived deficiencies in their librettos. In the case of *Aleko*, the assignment Anton Arensky gave his composition class of three students to compose a one-act opera was transcended by a work of genius. Indeed, you get the feeling that the task was the perfect stimulus for the nineteen-year-old composer's creative powers. "The libretto has been done very well; the subject is marvelous!" he wrote enthusiastically not long after starting work on the opera. The subject in question was Pushkin's long narrative poem "The Tsingaris," about a sophisticated urbanite who marries a Tsingari girl and joins her people. The playwright and director Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko pruned Pushkin's text severely in preparing the libretto, dispensing with much of the philosophizing about contrasts between the free-spirited Tsingaris and the supposedly civilized world. Rachmaninoff composed and orchestrated the entire opera in a twenty-four day burst of energy. He received the grade of "5+" (A+) and also won the Great Gold Medal, awarded for only the third time in the conservatory's history. But the real recognition came with the opera's acceptance by the Bolshoi, where the world premiere occurred on April 27 / May 9, 1893, less than a year after Rachmaninoff's graduation. By then the vocal score had already been published.



Sergei Rachmaninoff
in the early 1900s

Aleko will probably always be compared to *Cavalleria Rusticana*, which was received enthusiastically in 1891 at the Bolshoi, just as it had been in other major houses in the wake of its premiere the year before; it returned to the Bolshoi when Rachmaninoff was at work on *Aleko*. Like *Cavalleria*, *Aleko* has an intermezzo, which comes at the comparable point in the drama. But the relationship between the two operas involves the librettos more than the music. Each deals with murder by a jealous husband in a localized setting, with Rachmaninoff's Tsingari camp substituting Mascagni's Sicilian village. Both are "number operas;" indeed, the thirteen sections of *Aleko* correspond to a roughly similar number in *Cavalleria*. Some of the criticism of Nemirovich-Danchenko's libretto betrays a post-nineteenth-century bias in favor of operas with "continuous" music, yet *Aleko* has a number of unifying elements. Most notably, a three-note motive, consisting of a rising and falling semi-tone, is

associated with the title character, its rhythm resembling the pronunciation of his name. The motive dominates the beginning of the prelude after an initial haunting statement from flutes and oboes. This statement itself recurs later in the opera and in fact takes the three-note motive for its bassline. The prelude reaches a climax in which a vigorous triplet motive played by the strings in octaves abruptly shifts to emphatic duplets, a passage that returns at the climax of the opera; rather than consoling Aleko, it is transformed to taunt him. It forms the first three notes of the unusual lullaby Zemfira sings to her infant daughter about a wife's disdain for a cruel husband. When Aleko confronts Zemfira, the music drops its brittle woodwind tag and takes a more personal tone, but Zemfira maintains her defiant stand, much like another Tsingari girl who dies at the hands of a jealous and more conventional lover—Carmen.

Each of the other principal characters also has a solo number, all of which show the young composer's considerable gift for musical characterization. The Young Man's serenade recalls Turiddu's siciliana from *Cavalleria*, as an off-stage tenor sings ardently to the accompaniment of a harp. This melodic gem is a purley lyrical interlude, whereas the Old Man's narrative near the start of the opera is integral to the plot. To music that shows the skill of a Borodin in evoking a far-away setting, the Old Man tells how his wife abandoned him and their young daughter, Zemfira, years ago for another man, leaving him anguished but accepting of the situation. The scene thus establishes the code of behavior but also shows that Aleko has not shed his non-Tsingari ethics, for he bluntly asks why the Old Man didn't pursue them both with a knife. This clash between the two cultures is at the heart of Aleko's inner conflict, which finds expression in his cavatina, the opera's most famous number. Its broad, open-ended melodies and fluently shifting harmonies point the way to Rachmaninoff's later work and make for a powerful expression of grief as Aleko thinks back on Zemfira's former love for him.

Those essential ingredients of Russian opera, chorus and dance, are also prominent in *Aleko*. The two dance numbers, each lively and melodically distinctive, have sometimes been performed independently of the opera. And the chorus is deeply woven into the fabric of the opera from the very start as it helps establish the Tsingaris' peaceful, carefree lifestyle. The chorus is also fundamental to the expertly structured finale, beginning with a fugal passage in which the Tsingaris react to Aleko's crime and continuing on to Aleko's expulsion from the camp at the tranquil, hymn-like close, a riveting moment reminiscent of the chants in *Boris Godunov* or the execution scene in Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa*.

Tchaikovsky led the applause at the opera's premiere, and there are indeed moments that recall the lyricism of *Eugene Onegin*, most especially when the voices of Zemfira and the Young Man join in duet. But however skillfully the young composer built on his musical heritage, there is no doubt that *Aleko* announced the emergence of a new and distinctly original musical voice, a circumstance that surely fueled the success it enjoyed for a number of years following its premiere. Chaliapin sang the title role early in his career and retained a life-long love for the opera. Not only did he record the cavatina twice, but he wanted *Aleko* to serve as a vehicle for his farewell from singing in the 1930s and even tried to persuade Rachmaninoff to expand it. But Rachmaninoff refused, with the remark that "much water has run under the bridge since the

days of Aleko". The composer also declined a request from the Pushkin centenary committee to produce the opera on the anniversary of the poet's death.

In the years since, *Aleko* has too often been the province of the opera workshop. But it, like Rachmaninoff's other operas, offers rewards that only a top-flight performance can realize. Fortunately, a new generation of performers has discovered, in the words of the conductor Constantine Orbelian, "this miracle by a nineteen-year-old who brought to the creative task not only a fully developed musical intellect but a tremendous vision for the depth of the tragedy".

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The Miserly Knight

By Leon Botstein

Following *Aleko*, Rachmaninoff completed two more one-act operas between 1903 and 1905, some of his most productive years. He had recovered from the critical catastrophe and psychological aftermath of the First Symphony and was experiencing the momentum of fame and respect triggered by the premiere of the Second Piano Concerto. *The Miserly Knight* was composed first, in close proximity with a setting of the *Francesca da Rimini* story from Dante's *Inferno*, also the subject of a major orchestral work by Tchaikovsky. The two operas were premiered together in 1906.

Caryl Emerson's chapter in *Rachmaninoff and His World* explains the centrality of Pushkin's unequalled lyrical command of the Russian language, whose *Little Tragedies* included *The Miserly Knight*, one of four miniatures that highlight human frailty and vices. Aleksandr Dargomyzhsky's 1869 setting of *The Stone Guest* was the pioneering example of setting Pushkin to music, while Rimsky-Korsakov's 1898 *Mozart and Salieri* become the most famous setting of these texts. Rachmaninoff chose the least well-known and appreciated of these stories as a companion to *Francesca da Rimini*, a sympathetic portrayal of sexual desire, lust, and adultery—less dishonorable sins for Dante than the greed and stinginess that are at the center of *The Miserly Knight*. The two works represent a mature composer fully in command of operatic traditions—the Italian and German as well as the Russian repertoire. Musically and dramatically, *The Miserly Knight* is the finest of Rachmaninoff's operas, yet it is rarely if ever performed—understandable given the discomfort with the central role of the Jewish moneylender.

Unlike Tchaikovsky did in *Eugene Onegin*, Rachmaninoff took pains to honor Pushkin's language and preserved practically the entire poem. However, both text and story are unabashed examples of the commonplace anti-Semitism of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries in Russia and throughout Europe. The discomfort that surrounds Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* is even more justified in the case of *The Miserly Knight*. The Jewish moneylender is presented as scheming, hypocritical, exploitive, ruthlessly materialistic, whimpering, and poisonous. At the same time, Pushkin and Rachmaninoff, in different ways, use him as a foil, taking sharp aim at the myths of chivalry and practices of feudal privilege. The text and music offer an unvarnished and unsentimental account of the corrupting power of money and wealth. Throughout the opera,

one is made aware of the helpless dependence of ethics and art, particularly music, on the patronage of those with surplus wealth. By the same token, the absence of the virtues of generosity, forgiveness, trust, honor, and love of the arts and learning that every individual should possess is made clear. *The Miserly Knight*, in Pushkin's hands, was a critique of aristocratic conceits of the early 19th century, and Rachmaninoff's musical retelling is a critique of the landed aristocracy during the last years of tsarist autocracy, just a decade before the seizure of power by the equally cruel, barbarous, and tyrannical Bolshevik Revolution that Rachmaninoff hated without reserve...

Having to listen to the caricature of the Jewish moneylender and stereotypical dehumanization of the cruelly persecuted Jews at the hands of Russia's greatest poet, set to music by one of Russia's greatest composers, is not entirely easy. It is, however, more than worth the effort. Rachmaninoff's music for this opera is among his finest creations. The orchestration and writing are magical. The sonorities, like the story, are dark. There are no female voices and no heroes, only deeply flawed men, and one is left with a sense of horror at what drives those at the top of our social and political hierarchies.

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This excerpted note originally appeared in the program for Bard Music Festival's August 7, 2022 production of The Miserly Knight. Leon Botstein is the Coartistic Director of the Bard Music Festival and President of Bard College.

Prelude to a Kiss: Rachmaninoff's *Francesca da Rimini*

By Mark Pullinger

"There is no greater sorrow than to recall happiness in times of misery." Thus begins *Francesca da Rimini*'s account to Dante Alighieri of how she and Paolo Malatesta came to be condemned to the Second Circle of Hell, a place reserved for lustful sinners. Considering its relatively brief mention in Dante's *Inferno*, the legend of Paolo and Francesca has drawn a huge number of artistic responses, not least Rodin's sculpture *The Kiss* (originally titled *Francesca da Rimini*) and paintings by Gustave Doré, Ary Scheffer, Alexandre Cabanel and, appropriately enough, Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

The lovers' representation in music is even more prolific, most famously in Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's tempestuous symphonic poem *Francesca da Rimini*. Yet Tchaikovsky's *Francesca* could well have been composed as an opera instead. His younger brother, Modest, had suggested the subject in 1876 and Pyotr Ilyich considered an operatic setting to a "charming libretto" by Konstantin Zvantsev, but later that year he changed direction. While travelling to Paris in June, he wrote again to his brother, "This evening in my coach I read the 4th Canto [he meant the 5th] of the *Inferno*, and was inflamed with a desire to write a symphonic poem on *Francesca*."

But Modest must have tucked his idea away for safekeeping, for when the young Sergei Rachmaninoff asked for his help in deciding a new opera project, possibly based on Shakespeare's *Richard II*, Modest suggested *Francesca da Rimini* instead and proposed writing the libretto himself. Modest was a

dramatist and translator and had form as a librettist—including his brother's operas *Pique Dame* and *Iolanta*.

Rachmaninoff already had his first opera under his belt, *Aleko*, a graduation piece (1892) which drew much praise from Pyotr Ilyich himself. It was actually on Tchaikovsky's recommendation that the opera premiered at the Bolshoi Theatre in May 1893. But it took a long time for Rachmaninoff to get around to composing another. Indeed, for a long time, he composed very little at all. The disastrous premiere of his First Symphony in 1897, demolished by the composer and critic César Cui, led the young composer into depression and a severe case of writer's block, "like the man who had suffered a stroke and for a long time had lost the use of his head and hands," as he described it.

Rachmaninoff's fortunes changed when he took up a conducting post at railway tycoon Savva Mamontov's Private Opera in Moscow, where he met the great bass Fyodor Chaliapin and resolved to compose another opera. Modest Tchaikovsky even beefed up the role of Lanceotto—Francesca's husband—to satisfy Chaliapin (although he ended up never singing it). In 1900, Rachmaninoff started by composing the love duet—part of the creative rebirth he experienced thanks to his sessions with hypnotherapist Dr Nikolai Dahl—but he did not resume work on it until 1904, when he urgently needed a double bill partner for his next opera, *The Miserly Knight*.

It was not plain sailing. Dissatisfied with Modest's libretto, there was a testy exchange of letters. Rachmaninoff felt the love duet was too short ... so compensated by composing a 51-bar orchestral passage to represent "the kiss" between Francesca and Paolo. In fairness to Modest, Dante didn't exactly provide him with a huge amount of source material.

But who were Francesca and Paolo? In Dante's original text, as he and the shade of Virgil enter the Second Circle of Hell, the poet recognizes Francesca ... as well he might, for her story was well known. She was the daughter of a Ravenna nobleman and in 1275 she married Gianciotto Malatesta, a political marriage to quell the civil unrest between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. When Gianciotto discovered that she was having an affair with his younger brother, Paolo, Malatesta killed them both. Dante even had a personal connection to her story, having once lived in the house of Francesca's nephew in Ravenna.

Dante himself appears in Rachmaninoff's Prologue. Heading into the Second Circle, he and Virgil's ghost hear a wordless chorus of the damned ... wordless because Modest had not provided them with any text! But it's a striking effect, the wailing, groaning chorus anticipating the third movement of his Edgar Allan Poe-inspired choral symphony, *The Bells*. In these gloomy, swirling mists, trapped in an eternal whirlwind, Dante sees two lovers, clinging to each other, and invites them to tell their story. "There is no greater sorrow than to recall happiness in times of misery," they sing. In Silviu Purcărete's 2015 production, Paolo and Francesca both clutch their own skeletons.

Clouds disperse and the scene changes. We're suddenly in Malatesta's palace. Against a nervy, orchestral background, Lanceotto is given a dark, brooding soliloquy... one in a long line of dark, brooding soliloquies for Russian baritones and basses (think Boris Godunov or, indeed, of Rachmaninoff's own *Aleko*). Lanceotto is deformed and knows that his wife, Francesca, does not love him. She was tricked into the wedding, thinking she would be marrying Paolo, Malatesta's handsome younger brother. Lanceotto voices his suspicions

and resolves to lay a trap for the lovers. Francesca appears (with a tender, five-note descending leitmotif) and Lanceotto questions her. Although she vows obedience to him, she explains that she cannot love him. Lanceotto announces that he is off to war, telling Francesca that he will not return until after the battle is over.

A passionate love scene follows. Paolo reads Francesca the story of Sir Lancelot and Guinevere, during which he declares his own love for her. Francesca sings that although earthly kisses are forbidden to them, their reward will be heavenly bliss in the afterlife (cue a beautiful, floating soprano aria). But Paolo does not wish to wait for paradise, wanting only the “burning delight of a kiss”. After a long—orchestral—embrace, Lanceotto surprises the lovers and strikes them down, after which the lovers are heard in a swift epilogue, explaining to Dante “that day we read no further!” before they recede into the Mists.

Rachmaninoff’s opera itself can be criticized for its structural deficiencies. Its lengthy Prologue feels out of proportion to the two short scenes and epilogue that follow, and that central action is largely static. It could be argued that the opera’s greatest moments are purely orchestral—Rachmaninoff even called it a “symphonic opera”—due to its long interludes. Perhaps there’s a reason that Pyotr Ilyich opted for a symphonic poem instead! But there are some wonderfully atmospheric, emotionally turbulent moments in the best Tchaikovskian style that make it an opera worth hearing.

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A Note on the Source Material from *Odyssey Opera*

Both *Aleko* and *The Miserly Knight* perpetuate problematic tropes, stereotypes, and micro-aggressions present in their source material. We believe that sensitivity to and deeper education on the use of racist language supports a more inclusive translation, thereby presenting these operas for their historical merit and context within Rachmaninoff’s operatic canon while acknowledging the problematic stereotypes in Pushkin’s work.

Odyssey Opera understands that Rachmaninoff’s *Aleko* includes problematic tropes, stereotypes, and micro-aggressions in several scenes based on Pushkin’s poetry. While such depictions of the Roma people appear frequently in the opera canon, they remain harmful and racist. We have translated this work with respect to this issue, choosing to more literally translate the original Cyrillic with the name Tsingari, and we condemn the use of G*psy as a racist slur.

Similarly, *The Miserly Knight* includes problematic and anti-Semitic tropes and stereotypes in several scenes of Pushkin’s adaptation of his own short story. These harmful depictions of the Jewish people are racist, and we at *Odyssey Opera* do not support Anti-Semitism in any form. We have translated this work with respect to this issue, choosing to eliminate slurs and maintain Religious epithets, in addition to highlighting the antagonistic nature of the Baron with his prevalent bigotry.

ARTISTS



Andrew Bidlack

(The Young Man / Paolo)

Sponsored by John & Elizabeth Loder

Odyssey Opera debut

Featured by Opera News as one of their “top 25 brilliant young artists” (October 2015), tenor Andrew Bidlack’s recent highlights include his 2016 Metropolitan Opera debut as Beppe in *I Pagliacci*, performances he was invited to repeat in 2018; the principal tenor role in Iain Bell’s world premiere *In Parenthesis* at Welsh National Opera with performances at Covent Garden in 2016; and the role of Sprinck in Kevin Puts’s Nobel Prize-winning composition *Silent Night* at Arizona Opera. Other recent successes include his performances as Tony in *West Side Story* at Atlanta Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City and Liepāja Symphony Orchestra, Latvia; the role of Lyonnell in *Le Roi Arthus* at Bard Summerscape; and the role of Rob Hall in Joby Talbot’s celebrated *Everest*, a role he inaugurated at Dallas Opera, sang at Calgary Opera, Austin Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, and revived at Dallas Opera. A concert recording is scheduled with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at London’s Barbican Theatre in a future season.

Renowned for his interpretation of new roles in contemporary opera, Andrew has appeared in many world premieres, including premiering Bell’s *Stonewall* as Andy at New York City Opera; workshopping Greenhorn/Ishmael in the developmental production of *Moby-Dick* at San Francisco Opera and later singing the role at Dallas Opera and at Chicago Opera Theatre; inaugurating *Tancredi The Inspector* (John Musto) at Wolf Trap; creating the role of Charles Carter in Thomas Pasatieri’s *The Hotel Casablanca*; developing the role of Christopher Morcom in *The Life and Death(s) of Alan Turning* (by Justine Chen and David Simpatico); and developing the role of the Pilot in Liliya Ugay’s *The Opposable Thumb* for American Lyric Theatre. Other contemporary roles include The Young Collector in *A Streetcar Named Desire* with Renée Fleming in his debut with Lyric Opera of Chicago and also at Carnegie Hall; Ricky Ian Gordon’s *27* as Pablo Picasso and *Morning Star* as Irving Tashman; the role of Sandy in *The Lighthouse* at Dallas Opera; highly lauded performances as Bill in *Flight at Des Moines Metro Opera*; in several productions of *Florencia in el Amazonas* in the role of Arcadio; and in the title role of *Candide*.

Andrew’s significant body of standard repertoire includes many Rossini/Mozart and bel canto roles such as Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Almaviva (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*); Rodrigo (*Otello*), Don Ramiro (*La Cenerentola*), Bastien (*Bastien et Bastienne*), Nemorino (*L’elisir d’amore*), Tonio (*La Fille du Regiment*), Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*), and the title role of Getry’s rarely heard opera *Zemire et Azor*. Other past roles include Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*), Young Man (*Aleko*), Lamplighter (cover Edmondo) (*Manon Lescaut*), Baron Lummer (*Intermezzo*), Almerich (*Iolanta*), Prince Karl Franz (*Student Prince*), Anatol (*Vanessa*), Rodolfo (*La*

bohème), Snout (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Emilio (*Partenope*) and Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*).

Andrew's concert appearances are legendary, and he appears with eminent conductors in much of the standard vocal symphonic repertoire as well as the new works of today's composers; his credits include *Carmina Burana* (Milwaukee Symphony, South Dakota Symphony), Bach's *Weihnachts Oratorium* in his Carnegie Hall debut, Handel's *Messiah* with Lexington Philharmonic, *The Creation* with Greensboro Symphony, and the premiere of Iain Bell's *London's Fatal Fire* at the Spitalfield's Festival. A graduate of San Francisco Opera's prestigious Adler Fellowship, Mr. Bidlack made his house debut in *The Little Prince* and went on to appear as Odoardo (*Ariodante*), Count Albert (*Die Tote Stadt*), Simpleton (*Boris Godunov*), Gastone (*La traviata*), Ruiz (*Il Trovatore*), Pedrillo (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) and Arturo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*). Other international engagements include his appearance as A Guest in *The Saint of Bleeker Street* at the Spoleto Festival in Italy, which was recorded and released under the Chandos label; the role of Oronte in *Alcina* in Chile; and Silvio in *Acis and Galatea* in Macau. Future engagements include his return to Dallas Opera in *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*; as Camille in *The Merry Widow* at Opera Idaho; and as Steven Kodaly in *She Loves Me* at Madison Opera.



Aleksey Bogdanov

(Aleko / The Duke / Lanceotto Malatesta)

Sponsored by Gregory Bulger & Richard Dix

Odyssey Opera credit: Lionel in *The Maid of Orléans*, 2017

Baritone Aleksey Bogdanov's 2022-23 season includes returns to Arizona Opera for *Tosca* (Scarpia), Maryland Lyric Opera for his role debut in *Un ballo in Maschera* (Renato), and Odyssey Opera for *Troika* a trio of One-Act Rachmaninoff operas. On the concert stage, he will make his San Diego Symphony debut in Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*. Last season, he made his debut at The Metropolitan Opera in *Boris Godunov* (Shchelkalov). Other engagements that season included a debut with Nashville

Opera in *Rigoletto* (title role) and a debut at Royal Swedish Opera for *La fanciulla del West* (Rance). Recent engagements included a return to Gran Teatre del Liceu for *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (Crespel/Luther) and debuts with Austin Opera in *Tosca* (Scarpia) and Central City Opera in *Rigoletto* (title role). He debuted at Hawaii Opera Theatre in *Tosca* (Scarpia). Additional performances included *Aida* (Amonasro) with Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, *Madama Butterfly* (Sharpless) with Tulsa Opera, and *Everest* (Beck Weathers) and the title role in *Aleko* with Chicago Opera Theater. Concert appearances included Verdi *Requiem* with the Colorado Symphony and The Phoenix Symphony, and Handel's *Messiah* with the Richmond Symphony.

Mr. Bogdanov started the 2018-19 season with a debut at Maryland Lyric Opera in *La fanciulla del West* (Rance). He returned to Washington National Opera for *Silent Night* (Lieutenant Horstmayer) and covered in *Tosca* (Scarpia) and *Eugene Onegin* (title role). Additional debuts included *Moby Dick* (Starbuck) at Chicago Opera Theater, *Il corsaro* (Pasha Seid) at Teatr Wielki (Warsaw,

Poland), and *Gurre-Lieder* (Peasant/Narrator) with KBS Symphony Orchestra. Aleksey made his debut with the San Francisco Symphony in *Boris Godunov* (Shchelkalov) conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. Additional recent appearances include Arizona Opera for *Tosca* (Scarpia), Sarasota Opera for d'Albert's rarely-heard *Tiefland* (Sebastiano), Tchaikovsky's *The Maid of Orléans* (Lionel) with Odyssey Opera in Boston, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (Four Villains) with Opera North (US), *La fanciulla del West* (Rance) with Opera Carolina, *Tosca* (Scarpia) with Opera North (US), *Les pêcheurs de perles* (Nourabad) with Tulsa Opera, *Hérodiade* (Vitellius) with Washington Concert Opera, and he covered the title role in Rubinstein's *The Demon* with Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona.

As a member of the Cafritz Young Artist Program at Washington National Opera he was seen in 100 performances including *Carmen* (Escamillo), *Hansel and Gretel* (Peter), title roles in *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte* (Guglielmo), *L'elisir d'amore* (Belcore), *Madama Butterfly* (Sharpless); he also created the role of Governor George Wallace in the revised version of Glass' *Appomattox*. Mr. Bogdanov made his debut at The Glimmerglass Festival in *Carmen* (Escamillo), a signature role that he has performed with The Atlanta Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and Columbus Symphony Orchestra. He returned to The Glimmerglass Festival for *Madama Butterfly* (Sharpless) and Picker's *An American Tragedy* (Samuel Griffiths). He also appeared in the US premiere of O'Regan's *Heart of Darkness* with Opera Parallèle. Other career highlights include his Canadian debut as the title role in *Eugene Onegin* with Edmonton Opera, and his Carnegie Hall debut as Bass Soloist in *Messiah*. He has been featured as a soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* at Place des Arts in Montréal, Beethoven's *Fidelio* with National Symphony Orchestra, Barber's *A Hand of Bridge* with Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Castelnovo-Tedesco's *Romancero Gitano* at Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia and Teatro Baretto di Torino, Dvořák's *Te Deum* and Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* at Basilica of the National Shrine, and the *Requiems* of Mozart, Fauré, and Duruflé at the Washington National Cathedral.



Yelena Dyachek (Zemfira / Francesca da Rimini)

Sponsored by Stephanie Boyé
Odyssey Opera debut

Ukrainian-born soprano Yelena Dyachek was a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2016, receiving praise from The New York Times saying "...memorable was the soprano Yelena Dyachek from California, who demonstrated impressive range, depth and power in 'Come scoglio', before delivering an emotionally captivating Letter Scene...". She is a graduate from Houston Grand Opera's prestigious studio program and during her time in the HGO Studio, Ms. Dyachek appeared in several productions including as Musetta in *La bohème*, Flora in *La traviata*, and Berta in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Further productions included *Norma*, *Some Light Emerges*, and *Nixon in China*. In the summer of 2019, she made her debut as Marie Antoinette in *Ghosts of Versailles* at the Glimmerglass Festival. In the 2019-20 season she joined the Lyric Opera of Chicago for their productions of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*

and *Dead Man Walking* and was scheduled to make her role debut as Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin* with Palm Beach Opera. Other scheduled performances that season were her Houston Symphony debut and a return to the Aspen Music Festival. Recent performances for Dyachek include Susan B. Anthony in *The Mother of Us All* with the Rochester Philharmonic, Elettra in *Idomeneo* and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* as a Filene Young Artist at Wolf Trap Opera and Fiordiligi for San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program. A multi-year member of the Aspen Opera Theatre Center, Ms. Dyachek appeared as Fiordiligi in 2015 and as Tatiana in 2014. She returned to the Aspen Music Festival in the Summer of 2020 as part of their Beethoven Celebration. Further recognition includes the Ana Maria Martinez Encouragement Award at the 2016 Eleanor McCollum Competition and singing as a finalist at the Palm Springs Opera Guild of the Desert's vocal competition. She holds a bachelor's degree from University of the Pacific Conservatory of Music, and a master's degree from the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music. Further roles performed while at USC include Frau Von Daubek in the concert premiere of Thomas Morse's *Frau Schindler*, the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Vitellia in *La clemenza di Tito*, the title role in *Iphigénie en Tauride*, and Madama Cortese in *Il viaggio a Reims*.



Spencer Hamlin (Albert)

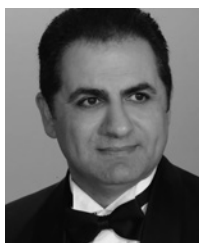
Odyssey Opera debut

Odyssey Opera credit: Duke of Norfolk in *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*, 2020 (Canceled)

Spencer Hamlin has been praised by Opera News for his "scintillatingly smooth" and "dazzling Italianate voice." Most recently, Hamlin returned to The Glimmerglass Festival where he sang the role of Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, and Ruiz in *Il Trovatore* while covering Manrico. He debuted the role of Don José in a virtual production of *Carmen* with Brooklyn College Conservatory and performed as a soloist in Playhouse on Park's professionally filmed production of *All is Calm*. He was scheduled to perform the Duke of Norfolk in *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra* with Odyssey Opera as well as Max in *The Sound of Music* and Gunther in Wagner's *Die Feen* with The Glimmerglass Festival in 2020, all of which were unfortunately canceled due to the pandemic. In 2021 he sang Mr. Angel in *The Impresario* with Syracuse Opera and Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Opera Theater of Connecticut, and was the tenor soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with Symphoria.

His 2022 season has been very busy: he performed several roles in the New York City Opera world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Gardens of the Finzi-Contini*, made his debut at Tulsa Opera as Second Nazarene in *Salome*, made a role and company debut as Il Cantatore in the rarely performed *Giulietta e Romeo* with Teatro Grattacielo, sang Dr. Caius in *Falstaff* with Raylynmor Opera, and assays his first Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Opera Theater of Connecticut. He returns to Odyssey Opera as Albert in Rachmaninoff's *The Miserly Knight* followed by Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* and The Defendant in *Trial By Jury* at Salt Marsh Opera. He was the tenor soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the York Symphony and returns for Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*. Other concert

appearances include Mozart's *Requiem* and Bruckner's *Te Deum* with the Waterbury Chorale as well as Theofanidis' *The Urgency of Love* with the New Haven Chorale. In 2023 he covers both Major Domo roles in *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Metropolitan Opera. As a member of The Glimmerglass Festival in 2019, he sang Chekalinsky in *The Queen of Spades* and covered Bégearss in *The Ghosts of Versailles*. He was an Apprentice Artist with Sarasota Opera in 2019 singing the role of Il principe di Persia in *Turandot*. Spencer appeared as Almaviva in New York City Opera's Bryant Park series production of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, after making his NYCO debut as Detective Thibodeau in the New York premiere of Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*. Other roles include Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, Tonio in *La fille du régiment*, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Judge Danforth in *The Crucible*, Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, The Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, the title role in *Albert Herring*, Henrik in *A Little Night Music*, and Laurie in *Little Women*.



Yeghishe Manucharyan

(The Moneylender / Dante)

Sponsored by Winifred Perkin Gray

Odyssey Opera credits: Edoardo di Sanval in *Un regno di giorno*, 2014; Lucio Silla in *Lucio Silla*, 2016; Raymond in *The Maid of Orléans*, 2017; Don Gomez in *Henry VIII*, 2019

Admired for his outstanding musical intelligence and for the purity, power, and flexibility of his voice Mr. Manucharyan made his Carnegie Hall début in December 2003 as Percy in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* with the Opera Orchestra of New York. Mr. Manucharyan joined the roster of the Metropolitan Opera covering the difficult role of Pylade in Gluck's *Iphigenie en Tauride* and Alfredo in *La Traviata* while continuing to do concert work in Boston (Verdi *Requiem*); Eugene, Long Island, and in New York at Carnegie Hall with the New York Chorale Society for the Berlioz *Requiem*. He began his 2008-09 season with *La bohème* for Tulsa Opera and returned to Carnegie Hall with Opera Orchestra of New York as Lykov in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Tsar's Bride* with Olga Borodina. He was also seen with Opera Boston in Shostakovich's *The Nose* where he returned for *Tancredi*. He also returned to the Met to sing the role of Eustazio in a new production and HD presentation of *Armida* opposite Renee Fleming. Additional engagements included Donizetti's *Maria Padilla* with Opera Boston, *I Puritani* with Knoxville Opera, *La bohème* with Eugene Opera, the Dvorak *Stabat Mater* with New York Choral Society; and concerts in Anchorage, New Bedford, and St. Petersburg, Russia.

In recent seasons Mr. Manucharyan has appeared as Riccardo in *Maria di Rohan* by Donizetti at the Wexford Festival, followed by a debut in Boston with the Verdi *Requiem*, Rodolfo in *La bohème* with the Teatro San Carlo of Naples in Salerno, Gerald in *Lakmé* with the Opera Orchestra of New York at Carnegie Hall, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* at the New York City Opera, and Argirio in Rossini's *Tancredi* at the Caramoor Festival. He opened the Minnesota Opera as Rodrigo in Rossini's *La donna del lago* and made his début with San Diego Opera, continuing the expansion of his bel canto roles, as Leicester in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* and Arturo in Bellini's *I Puritani* in Knoxville. In recent seasons Mr. Manucharyan appeared as Alfredo in *La traviata* at the

Tulsa Opera, made a dazzling début as Nadir in *Les pêcheurs de perles* with the Orquesta Sinfonica del Estado de Mexico, returned to Baltimore Opera to sing the Duke in *Rigoletto* and to the Orquesta Sinfonica del Estado de Mexico as Rodolfo in *La bohème*, was guest soloist in a gala concert in Boston celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the birth of composer Aram Khachaturian, and sang Alfredo in *La traviata* with the Boston Concert Opera. He has appeared at the Caramoor International Music Festival in the role of Potosí in the world premiere of Donizetti's long lost opera *Elisabeth*. Other recent performances have included the Dvorak *Stabat Mater* with the Masterworks Chorale, Lukas Foss' *Griffelkin* with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, which was performed both in Boston and at the Tanglewood Festival, his début with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, the role of Saro in Tigranian's *Anoush* at the Michigan Opera Theater, and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* in Baltimore. Mr Manucharyan debuts with the Boston Symphony in the 2022-23 season in concert performances of Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. A native of Yerevan, Armenia, in 1995 Mr. Manucharyan was engaged by the Armenian National Opera as a principal artist and sang leading roles including Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Cassio in *Otello*, Count Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Don Ramiro in *La cenerentola*, Beppe/Arlecchino in *I pagliacci*, and Saro in *Anoush*. As featured soloist with the State Philharmonic Orchestra from 1995 to 1998, Mr. Manucharyan performed in various repertoire including Verdi's *Requiem*, Bruckner's *Te Deum*, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, and the Berlioz *Requiem*. While a graduate student at Boston University's Opera Institute, he sang the title role in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*, Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, and Rodolfo in *La bohème*.



Mikhail Svetlov (The Baron)

Sponsored by Campbell Steward

Odyssey Opera credits: The Archbishop in *The Maid of Orléans*, 2017

Bass Mikhail Svetlov's international career began at Wexford Festival Opera, since which time he has performed at many leading houses worldwide. Known for the unique range, beauty, and penetrating dark timbre of his voice, as well as his outstanding acting ability, Mr. Svetlov's early career saw him work as a company principal at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, where his roles included the title role in *Boris Godunov*, Gremin (*Eugene Onegin*), Saltan (*The tale of Tsar Saltan*), Mephistopheles (*Faust*), Zaccaria (*Nabucco*), Ferrando (*Il Trovatore*), Sobakin (*The Tsar's Bride*), Dodon (*Le coq d'Or*), Dosifey (*Khovanshchina*), King René (*Iolanta*), Mendoza (*Betrothal in a Monastery*), Galitsky (*Prince Igor*), Angelotti (*Tosca*), and the Gusli player in *The Legend of the invisible city of Kitezh*.

Recent engagements include Archibaldo in *L'amore dei tre Re* and King Raimondo in *Isabeau* for Opera Holland Park, Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra* with Kentucky Opera, Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlo* for the Caramoor Festival, Zaccaria in *Nabucco* with Naples Opera, the title role in *Boris Godunov* and Don Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at the Chaliapin Opera Festival, Russia, and Stravinsky's *Le Noces* with the Orchestra of Santa Cecilia, Rome. Recent

appearances include Royal Opera Covent Garden in Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and roles in *Boris Godunov*, *Jenufa* and *Pique dame* at the Metropolitan Opera.



Kevin Thompson

(The Old Man / Ivan / The Shadow of Virgil)

Odyssey Opera credits: Thibaut d'Arc in *The Maid of Orléans*, 2017; King Solomon in *La reine de Saba*, 2018

Kevin Thompson, acclaimed by the *New York Times* as a "stentorian bass," "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, to the throne of Boris Godunov, and the majestic court of Sarastro..." (*San Francisco Classical Voice*). The 2022-2023 season includes debuts for Mr. Thompson with Washington Opera in *Elektra* as both Der Pfleger des Orest and Ein Alter Diener, and with Fort Worth Opera in *Aida* as Il Re. Return engagements include with Opera Omaha for an Opera Outdoors Concert where he will perform scenes from Boito's *Mefistofele* as Mefistofele; with Roanoke Opera for their Opera Gems Gala Concert; and with Odyssey Opera to sing the Old Man in Aleko, The Shadow of Virgil in *Francesca di Rimini*, and Ivan in *The Miserly Knight*. During the 2021-22 season Mr. Thompson performed the role of Il Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* with San Antonio Opera; the Old Hebrew in *Samson et Dalilah* with Bob Jones Opera; Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* with Nashville Opera; the First Nazarene in *Salome* with Tulsa Opera; Oroveso in *Norma* with Festival Opera; and in the world premiere of *Southern Crossings* by Zaid Jabri at Barnard in New York.

Concert engagements included with Johnson City Symphony Orchestra in the *Verdi Requiem*, with Roanoke Opera, and in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with The Florida Orchestra. In the pandemic season of 2020-2021, Mr. Thompson made his debut in Bulgaria with Ruse State Opera singing the role of Polonius in the world premiere of *Hamlet* by Joseph Summer. He returned to Tulsa Opera to perform Monterone in *Rigoletto* and to Shreveport Opera for Sparafucile, also in *Rigoletto*. He performed in concert with Tulsa Opera's Greenwood Overcomes honoring the centennial of the Tulsa Massacre. Additional concert performances included with Pocono Mountains Music Festival and Opera Omaha. Singing under the batons of a roster of distinguished conductors, since 2009, Mr. Thompson has performed in opera houses and concert venues throughout the world: US, Austria, Bulgaria, China, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Spain, South America and Switzerland. He has sung Ramfis and Il Re (*Aida*); Osmin (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*); Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*); Mephistophélès (*Faust*); Oroveso (*Norma*); Sparafucile and Monterone (*Rigoletto*); Grand Inquisitor (*Don Carlos*); Banco (*Macbeth*); Lodovico (*Otello*); Il Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*); Raimondo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*); Don Basilio (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*); The Old Gypsy (*Aleko*); Colline (*La Bohème*); Judge Turpin (*Sweeney Todd*); Ned (*Treemonisha*); El Captain (*Florencia en el Amazonas*); Hans Schwartz (*Die Meistersinger*); Stefano Colona (*Rienzi*); the *Verdi Requiem*; *Mozart Requiem*; *Beethoven's 9th Symphony* and *Missa Solemnis*, *Dvorak's Stabat Mater*; Haydn's *The Creation* and the *Lord Nelson Mass*; and *Stravinsky's Les Noces*.

He has made debuts with New York City Opera, Santa Fe Opera, New Orleans Opera, Tulsa Opera, Opera Carolina, Bard Opera, National Philharmonic, The Florida Symphony, Opera Santa Barbara, Odyssey Opera, Hannover Staatsoper, Fundacion Teatro Nacional Sucre in Ecuador, Teatro Verdi Trieste, Hong Kong Opera, Teatro Regio Parma, Ruse State Opera, Theater Kiel, the Gasteig in Munich and the Wexford Opera. Mr. Thompson was born in Washington, D.C. He is an alumnus of The Juilliard School in New York, San Francisco Opera's prestigious Merola Program, and the Santa Fe Opera Program. Recordings include *Verdi Requiem* with Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra, *Haggadah shel Pesach* by Dessau with the American Symphony Orchestra, *Thy will be done* by Rice with the National Choral Society, Polonius in Joseph Summer's *Hamlet* and as King Soliman in Gounod's *La Reine de Saba* with Odyssey Opera. Visit www.KevinThompsonBass.com for additional information.

Joel Ayau (Rehearsal Pianist)

This fall, Joel Ayau joined the faculty of New England Conservatory as Senior Vocal Coach. A graduate of the Cafritz Young Artist Program of the Washington National Opera, Ayau has assisted on eleven productions at WNO, including *Carmen*, *Aida*, and *Eugene Onegin*. Ayau has also served on the creative teams of Opera Omaha, North Carolina Opera, Portland Opera, Opera Memphis, and Wolf Trap Opera. Among the highlights of his three seasons on the music staff of the Castleton Festival was serving as chorus master for productions of *Don Giovanni* and *Madama Butterfly* under Lorin Maazel. He has served as cover conductor for more than 30 Pops and Declassified concerts for the National Symphony Orchestra, assisting such conductors as Gianandrea Noseda and Steven Reineke, and performed in recital with Kathryn Lewek, Zach Borichevsky, and Renée Fleming.

Mariah Wilson (Chorus Master)

Dr. Mariah Wilson is a conductor interested in telling relevant stories through music and collaboration throughout the arts. Her doctorate is in Choral Conducting from Boston University, with a dissertation project on "How Choral Music Can Illuminate The Cancer Experience". She also has degrees from Brigham Young University in Piano Performance and Choral Conducting, with Orchestral Conducting certificates from courses in Berlin, Vicenza, and Paris, where she was awarded highest honors.

She has conducted Boston's Back Bay Chorale, Harvard's Radcliffe Choral Society, Boston University's Opera Institute, BU's Treble Chorus, Utah Lyric Opera, and was a coach on faculty for BU's Tanglewood Institute. In addition to conducting, Mariah has sung with the Grammy-winning Oregon Bach Festival Chorus, and recorded with the Handel and Haydn Society, the Analog Chorale, and BYU Singers (*Eric Whitacre 2*). Her interest in bringing musicians together across cultural differences has led to exchanges with choirs in Mexico, Indonesia, Palestine, and Israel with director André deQuadros. Her interest in telling lesser-known stories has inspired her composition of Biblical song cycles from women's perspectives, and a musical about early settlers of San Francisco, premiered last year. She strives to spread thoughtfulness and beauty in the world through music.



Gil Rose

Artistic & General Director, Conductor

Sponsored by Samuel & Deborah Bruskin

Gil Rose is one of today's most trailblazing conductors, praised as "amazingly versatile" (*The Boston Globe*) with "a sense of style and sophistication" (*Opera News*). Equally at home performing core repertoire, new music, and lesser-known historic symphonic and operatic works,

"Gil Rose is not just a fine conductor, but a peerless curator, sniffing out—and commissioning—off-trend, unheralded, and otherwise underplayed repertoire that nevertheless holds to unfailingly high standards of quality. In doing so, he's built an indefinable, but unmistakable, personal aesthetic" (*WXQR*). A global leader in American contemporary music, Rose is the founder of the performing and recording ensemble the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), who "bring an endlessly curious and almost archaeological mind to programming... with each concert, each recording, an essential step in a better direction" (*The New York Times*), as well as the founder of Odyssey Opera, praised by *The New York Times* as "bold and intriguing" and "one of the East Coast's most interesting opera companies."

Since its founding in 1996, the "unique and invaluable" (*The New York Times*) BMOP has grown to become the premier orchestra in the world for commissioning, recording, and performing music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under Rose's leadership, BMOP has won seventeen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, been selected as *Musical America's* Ensemble of the Year in 2016, and in 2021 was awarded a *Gramophone Magazine* Special Achievement Award in recognition of its extraordinary service to American music of the modern era. Under Rose's baton, BMOP has been featured at numerous festivals including the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), and the MATA Festival in New York.

In 2013, Gil Rose expanded his musical vision with the founding of Odyssey Opera, a company dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire from all eras. Working with an international roster of singers and directors, Odyssey has presented more than 35 operas in Boston, with innovative, thematically linked seasons. The company has also established itself as a leader of modern opera in the United States, having given three world premieres and numerous U.S. premieres.

In addition to his role as conductor, Rose is leading the charge for the preservation and advancement of underperformed works through recordings. BMOP/sound, the independent record label Rose founded in 2008, has released over 86 recordings of contemporary music by today's most innovative composers, including world premieres by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Chen Yi, Anthony Davis, Lisa Bielawa, Steven Mackey, Eric Nathan, and many others. With Rose as executive producer, the label has secured five GRAMMY® nominations and a win in 2020 for Tobias Picker's opera *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. Odyssey

Opera's in-house label has released five CDs, most recently a complete version of Camille Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII*.

Beyond Boston, Gil Rose enjoys a busy schedule as a guest conductor and educator. Equally at home on the podium in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, Rose has led performances by the Tanglewood Opera Orchestra, the Netherlands Radio Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the National Symphony of Ukraine, the Matsumoto Festival of Japan, the New York City Opera, and the Juilliard Symphony among others. In addition to being former faculty at Tufts University and Northeastern University, Rose has worked with students across the U.S. at institutions such as Carnegie Mellon University, MIT, New England Conservatory, and the University of California at San Diego. He is a visionary curator of music, inaugurating the Ditson Festival of Music at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art and programming three seasons for the Fromm Concerts at Harvard series. In the upcoming season, Gil Rose leads Odyssey Opera in a concert performance of three one-act operas by Rachmaninoff and brings John Corigliano and Mark Adamo's new opera *The Lord of Cries* to Boston audiences. In addition, he and BMOP will travel to Carnegie Hall for the orchestra's debut performance and culmination of their 25th season, and BMOP and Odyssey will co-produce *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed That Line to Freedom*, the second opera in AS TOLD BY: History, Race, and Justice on the Opera Stage, a five-year initiative highlighting Black composers and vital figures of Black liberation and thought.

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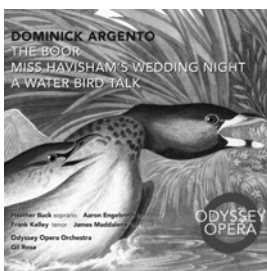
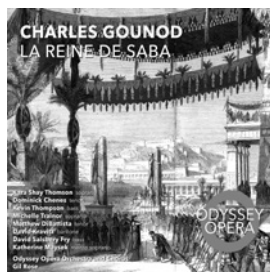
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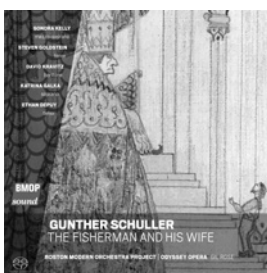


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