

OPERA

November 11, 2023, 7:00 PM
Simon Concert Hall
Omaha Conservatory of Music
7023 Cass Street, Omaha, NE

UNPLUGGED

Featuring:



Karina Brazas
Soprano



Thomas Gunther
Baritone

Program:

Giuseppe Verdi

Overture to Nabucco

*La Traviata: Germont-Violetta, Duetto: "Madamiglia Valery"

-- Intermission --

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Overture to "La Clemenza di Tito"

*The Marriage of Figaro - Scene 1 Duetto: Figara-Susanna

*Don Giovanni Act 1 Duettino: Don Giovanni-Zerlina

*Magic Flute: Pagano's Aria: "Der Vogelfanger bin Ich, ja!"

*Pamina's Lament: "Ach, Ich Fuhl's" Duet: Papageno-Papagena

**Soloists / Karina Brazas & Thomas Gunther*

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meet our ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

Violin I

David Newberry*
Concertmaster
Taryn Geiger
Linda Autenrieth
Seha Ok
Collin Moriarty
Leslie Steele
Sophia Revesz
Wendy Petty

Violin II

Kumiko Tubrick*
Abigail MacIntosh
Ginny Janis
Annabelle Abisset
Bonnie Hartley
Jenny Reid
Kelsey Brown
Abigail Layne

Viola

Viktoria Matheson*
Danielle Acers
Jestin Cam
Christine Seeman
Josephine Abuhl
Arminda Dyrek
Ana Suh
Ellis Thomas

Cello

Michelle Juon*
Camille Hinz
Annika Shaw
Laura Goodwin
Nicholas Mettler
Abby King
Ashley Saddock
Ashley Byars

String Bass

Alex Schmer
Laura Nelson
Peter Nelson
Michael Overfield

Flute

Tina Shogrin
Tina Stoll

Oboe

Bruce Bender
Deanna Davis

Clarinet

Shari Lyles
Tami Cervantes

Bassoon

Chuck Serfass
Sarah Beideck

Horn

Keith Davis
Doug Divis
Don Love
Lenette Haliburton

Trumpet

Ryan Anderson
Skyler Meints

Trombone

Robert Serfass
Hanna Ingraham de Hernandez
Jeff Ingraham

Tuba

Nate Griffith

Timpani

Nick Lacroix

Percussion

Tommy Roustio
Steve Jordon

Music Director

Dr. Kenneth Meints

*section Principal



MEET OUR FEATURED ARTIST KARINA BRAZAS!



Soprano Karina Brazas, described as “sumptuous and soaring” (Omaha World Herald), has built a career on repertoire ranging from the Baroque to the 21st century. Upcoming performances in 2023-24 will include a guest recital and masterclass with Hastings College and a performance of Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5 at the Omaha Conservatory of Music in late February.

During the 2022-2023 season, Ms. Brazas joined Omera Omaha for ‘X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X’ as the Reporter/Social Worker, made her role debut as the Mother in ‘Amahl and the Night Visitors’ in a unique collaboration with Resonance Ensemble and Trinity Cathedral, and returned to Opera Omaha in the spring for ‘Le nozze di Figaro.’ In addition to her operatic schedule, Ms. Brazas performed an evening of French song with the Salt Creek Song Festival, and performed as Papagena with the Omaha Symphony in their 2023 Gala honoring Jun and Ree Kaneko.

During the ongoing Covid pandemic, Ms. Brazas joined the Omaha Symphony twice, for their 2020 fall pops concert and as the soloist for their Choral Collaborative program in 2021. Previous seasons saw her role debut as Young Alyce in ‘Glory Denied’ by Tom Cipullo in Saint Louis with Union Avenue Opera. Her professional debut was Kitty Hart in ‘Dead Man Walking’ with Central City Opera in Colorado, where she also sang as Susanna in ‘Le nozze di Figaro,’ and joined the cast of ‘The Sound of Music.’

Ms. Brazas spent the first twelve years of her life as a U.S. Army Brat, before her family settled in Olympia, Washington. She holds degrees in vocal performance from Washington State University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

MEET OUR FEATURED ARTIST THOMAS GUNTHER!



Thomas Gunther, Baritone, Professor of Voice at The Omaha Conservatory of Music and Adjunct Voice Professor at Doane University will soon be seen performing as the soloist in Vaughan Williams Fantasia on Christmas Carols with Doane University Choirs, as well as Schaunard in La Boheme with First Coast Opera and Amelia Island Opera this coming December and January. He was most recently seen in a joint annual recital with Dr. Suna Gunther as well as Scarpia in Tosca with

Soo Opera Theater. His resume includes roles and soloist of the works of Bach in Cantata 106, Britten's War Requiem, Faure Requiem, Beethoven's 9th Symphony and Handel's Messiah and Mendelssohn's Elijah. Operatic Roles include; Germont with Soo Opera Theater and Bay View Opera, Guglielmo with Schenectady Symphony, Pangloss/Voltaire in Candide and Captain Corcoran in HMS Pinafore with Union Avenue Opera, Eisenstein in Die Fledermaus with First Coast Opera and Winter Opera St. Louis. Other roles include Danilo in Merry Widow, Falke in Die Fledermaus, Marcello and Schaunard in La Bohème, Dandini in La Cenerentola, The title role in Steven Sondheim's Sweeney Todd, Don Giovanni and Masetto in Don Giovanni, Count Almaviva in Le Nozze di Figaro, Silvio in I Pagliacci, and Mercutio in Gounod's: Romeo et Juliet. Notably Mr. Gunther has performed La Bohème with the Dominican Republic National Symphony, and with the Merola Opera Program in San Francisco with their production of composer André Previn's: A Streetcar Named Desire as Stanley Kowalski. In Musical Theatre; Billy Bigalow in Carousel, Javert in Les Misérables and Raul in Phantom of the Opera.

please enjoy our **PROGRAM NOTES:**

Overture to Nabucco

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

Giuseppe Verdi experienced success in the production of his first opera, *Oberto*, at Milan's La Scala in 1839. Due to his success, Verdi received a commission for three more operas. Shortly thereafter, tragedy struck - the loss of his two children, along with the death of his beloved wife, Margherita. Despite Verdi's devastation, La Scala demanded that he fulfill his commission of a comic opera for the fall season. Not surprisingly, the ensuing work was a failure and Verdi vowed to never compose music again. However, he was given a libretto based on the Old Testament story of King Nebuchadnezzar, and found himself interested. Despite his vow, Verdi felt compelled to set the dramatic conflict of the Hebrew slaves and their Babylonian captors to music. The title was soon shortened to the more pronounceable *Nabucco*, and the opera established Verdi on the international stage. The overture is a dramatic assortment of themes taken from the opera, primarily choruses and themes trumpeting military exercises to come. Verdi's stroke of genius, however, is the opening chorale on the lower brass, vividly symbolizing the steadfastness of the Hebrews in the face of Babylonian persecution.

*program notes by Michelle Juon

La Traviata: Germont-Violetta, Duetto

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

La traviata, opera in three acts by Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi (libretto in Italian by Francesco Maria Piave) that premiered in Venice at La Fenice opera house on March 6, 1853. Based upon the 1852 play by Alexandre Dumas fils (*La Dame aux camélias*), the opera marked a large step forward for Verdi in his quest to express dramatic ideas in music. *La traviata* means "the fallen woman" or "the one who goes astray" and refers to the main character, Violetta Valéry, a courtesan. The opera features some of the most challenging and revered music in the entire soprano repertoire; the aria "Sempre libera" at the end of Act I is especially well known.

Duet is between Violetta Valéry, a courtesan (soprano) and Giorgio Germont, her lover's father (baritone).

*program notes from Britannica.com

please enjoy our PROGRAM NOTES:

Overture to La Clemenza di Tito

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

La Clemenza di Tito (The Clemency of Titus) was the last operatic work of Mozart and is based upon a libretto written more than half a century earlier by Pietro Metastasio. The opera was written in eighteen days to celebrate the coronation festivities of Leopold II as King of Bohemia (now part of the Czech Republic). Beginning with halting, dramatic fanfares, the overture is festive music clearly meant for a coronation. Set in Rome 80 CE, the plot of Clemenza revolves around a trio of characters: Emperor Titus, his loyal friend Sesto, and Vitellia, the daughter of the former emperor. Vitellia wants to marry Titus, but his heart is set on Berenice. Vitellia wants revenge and plots his assassination with the help of Sesto, who happens to be in love with her. The plan fails miserably and leads back to Sesto, who in turn does not implicate anyone and is sentenced to death. Feeling remorseful over her actions, Vitellia eventually confesses to Titus, and he grants clemency to both her and Sesto.

*program notes by Michelle Juon

The Marriage of Figaro

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Widely considered one of the greatest opera's ever written, The Marriage of Figaro (Italian: Le Nozze di Figaro) was the first of three world-renown opera's collaborated on by composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte. It is packed with hit after hit song, and is truly a masterpiece of the opera world.

The rather humorous opera tells how the servants Figaro and Susanna succeed in getting married despite the efforts of others to stop the wedding. Love, humor, revenge, and disguises all play a huge role in this opera all to the amazingly unforgettable compositions by Mozart.

Duet is between Figaro, the count's valet (baritone) and Susanna, the countess's maid and Figaro's betrothed (soprano).

*program notes from operaguides.com

In Memory of Lon Ewing and In Honor of All Our Veterans: Thank You

Lon Ewing passed away this past summer on June 15, 2023. Lon retired as a TSgt in the United States Air Force and was a treasured member of Orchestra Omaha, playing 1st trumpet for several seasons.

please enjoy our **PROGRAM NOTES:**

Don Giovanni Act 1 Duettino

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Don Giovanni takes the legendary character of Don Juan and sets his escapades to Mozart's sweeping music. This serial womanizer, along with his trusted servant Leporello, gallivants around Spain attempting to seduce as many women as possible. While he has always evaded consequences in the past, this time, a former lover, Donna Elvira, is out to get him. Duet is between Don Giovanni (baritone) – A young nobleman with a reputation for seducing women and Zerlina (soprano), a young peasant woman out with her new husband.

As Giovanni and Leporello wander the streets of Seville, they meet Zerlina and Masetto, who are celebrating their wedding day. Immediately, Don Giovanni sets his sights on Zerlina. He attempts to separate her from Masetto by offering to host a party for the newlyweds at his nearby castle. Once Giovanni and Zerlina are alone, he begins to seduce her.

*program notes from operacolorado.org

Magic Flute: Pagano's Aria

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

The Magic Flute, singspiel in two acts by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, with a German libretto by Austrian actor and theatrical producer Emanuel Schikaneder. The opera, Mozart's last, premiered at the rustic Theater auf der Wieden near Vienna on September 30, 1791, not long before Mozart's death on December 5. On one level, The Magic Flute is a simple fairy tale concerning a damsel in distress and the handsome prince who rescues her. Beneath the surface, however, the piece is much more complex. It is an allegory of the quest for wisdom and enlightenment as presented through symbols of Freemasonry. Pagano's Aria features Papageno, a birdcatcher (baritone). Papageno the bird catcher enters, singing of the joys of his profession and his desire for a wife.

Pamina's Lament features Pamina (soprano), who is part of a young couple with Tamino, Pamina believes that Tamino's silence means that she has lost his love. Duet features Papageno, a birdcatcher (baritone) and Papagena, a transformed young woman who Papageno loves (soprano). This duet from near the end of the second act shows the lonely bird catcher Papageno, who has decided life is not worth living after seeming to lose his beloved Papagena.

*program notes from britannica.com
