

History of Opera at Juilliard

Opera didn't always have a place at Juilliard. Founded in 1905 as the Institute of Musical Art, the original conservatory program featured solo voice study in its curriculum, and only opera scenes were performed. In 1929, once a second, well-endowed 'Juilliard Graduate School' had merged and begun to overtake the Institute, opera was introduced; the first performance was of Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*.

In 1930, an opera department was created under the auspices of John Erskine, President of both schools, and Ernest Hutcheson, Dean of the Juilliard Graduate School. Albert Stoessel, a respected orchestral and choral conductor, was appointed head of the new department and remained director until his death in 1943. Between 1943 and 1947, Wilfred Pelletier, Edgar Schenkman, and Alfredo Valenti guided the program through its ambitious schedule. During those first 18 years, Juilliard staged 31 productions; 23 were from the pre-Classical, Classical, and Romantic opera repertoire, and 15 were contemporary works, including world premieres by George Antheil and Robert Russell Bennett. Handel's *Julius Caesar* and *Xerxes* received their New York premieres at Juilliard, and it was only the second time they had been performed in the United States.

When William Schuman became President of Juilliard in 1945, he elevated the status of the opera program, changing its name to the Juilliard Opera Theater. He appointed Frederic Cohen, an experienced conductor and director, co-founder and artistic director of the Jooss Ballet, as its first director. Assisting Mr. Cohen were Frederic Waldman as associate director; Frederick Kiesler as scenic director; and Elsa Kahl as instructor in musical acting. The faculty included an expanded staff of coaches, accompanists, and diction teachers: Catherine Aspinall, Lucia Dunham, Eva Evans, Marion Szekely-Freschl, Serguis Kagen, Florence Kimball, Edith Piper, Dolf Seing, Belle Sondant, and Bernard Taylor.

The Juilliard Opera Theater's first six years included productions of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and Milhaud's *Le pauvre matelot*, presented as a double bill; Verdi's *Falstaff*; and Stravinsky's *Mavra*. In 1952, Milhaud's *Robin and Marion* was presented as Juilliard's first commissioned opera. Mr. Cohen remained director of the Juilliard Opera Theater for 16 years. He retired in 1963, just prior to the appointment of Peter Mennin who, as President of Juilliard, would usher in an age of new prestige for opera at the School.

Christopher West, Mr. Cohen's successor as Director of Juilliard's Opera Theater, began his association with Juilliard in 1963 when he directed the American premiere of Paul Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner*, conducted by the composer himself. Other premieres staged by Mr. West during his tenure at Juilliard included the New York premiere of Janáček's *Káťa Kabanová* (1964) and the American premiere of Hans Werner Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers* (1965). Standard works he produced were Puccini's *Il tabarro* and *Gianni Schicchi* (1964), *Fidelio* (1965), and *Die Zauberflöte*, *La bohème* and *Madama Butterfly* (1966). Mr. West remained at Juilliard until his death in October 1967. Among the singers educated in the early years of Juilliard's opera program were Simon Estes, Evelyn Lear, Leontyne Price, Risë Stevens, Thomas Stewart, Tatiana Troyanos, Shirley Verrett, and Marilyn Zschau.

In January 1965, President Mennin announced plans for a new American Opera Center for Advanced Training at Juilliard, aided by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. The Center would offer young artists from the United States and abroad an advanced education in operatic singing under professional conditions. The establishment of the American Opera Center took place three years later in 1968, and Tito Capobianco was named its first director. The Center's first production — Igor Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, conducted by Erich Leinsdorf and directed by Mr. Capobianco — coincided with the opening of the Juilliard Theater in April 1970 (now called The Peter Jay Sharp Theater) in Juilliard's new home at Lincoln Center.

Peter Herman Adler succeeded Tito Capobianco as the American Opera Center's director in September 1973 and remained in that capacity until 1981. Some of the notable AOC productions during Mr. Adler's tenure include the world premiere of Virgil Thomson's *Lord Byron* (Gerhard Samuel, conductor; John Houseman, director; and Alvin Ailey, choreographer) in April 1972; Samuel Barber's revised version of *Antony and Cleopatra* (James Conlon, conductor; and Gian Carlo Menotti, director) in February 1975; and the U.S. premiere of Emmanuel Chabrier's *Le roi malgré lui* (Manuel Rosenthal, conductor; Bliss Hebert, director; and George Balanchine, choreographer) in November 1976. Martin Smith, a head coach with the Center from 1973-81, served as acting director for the 1985-86 academic year. David Lloyd was the American Opera Center's director from 1986 until his retirement in the spring of 1988, after which Frank Corsaro was appointed the Center's artistic advisor. These successive directors continued Juilliard's presentations of newer works with the New York premieres of

Convery's *Pyramus and Thisby*, Rhim's *Jacob Lenz*, and Delius' *Fenimore and Gerda*; the United States premiere of Weill's *Der Kuhhandel*, in new translation by Jeremy Sams; and the world premiere of the Paulus/Corsaro commission, *Heloise and Abelard*.

Beginning with the 1988-1989 performance season, the Center was more simply renamed the Juilliard Opera Center. Today it is restructured as part of the Department of Vocal Arts, under the leadership of Artistic Director and renowned pianist Brian Zeger, with expanded opera studies and song repertoire programs at several levels of study for undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate singers.

In its nearly 77 year-history, Juilliard's opera department has presented numerous premieres of new operas as well as works from the standard repertoire. For its 2005-2006 centennial celebration, Juilliard commissioned a new opera by alumnus Lowell Liebermann, *Miss Lonelyhearts*, with libretto by J.D. McClatchy, based on the novella by Nathanael West. Other recent productions have included Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*; Debussy's *L'enfant prodigue*; an English-language production of Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*; Handel's *Oreste*; Stravinsky's *Oedipus rex* and *Le rossignol*; Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*; Mozart's *Don Giovanni*; Carlise Floyd's *Susannah*; Poluenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*; Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, and others. In December 1997, its second production of Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel* – featuring new sets and costumes designed by Maurice Sendak – again made history as the first full-length opera production ever broadcast *Live from Lincoln Center* on PBS.

Today, the Juilliard Opera Center offers a professional education program for the finest young singers from around the world, with full tuition and living stipend provided. Participants are given the opportunity to perform in opera productions staged each season, as well as in Juilliard's own series of master classes presented by esteemed artists, which have included Elly Ameling, Arleen Auger, Fedora Barbieri, Régine Crespin, Sherrill Milnes, Luciano Pavarotti, Leontyne Price, and José van Dam. Alumni of the Opera Center included John Aler, Peter Atherton, Gail Dobish, Faith Esham, Renée Fleming, Anthony Dean Griffey, Barbara Hendricks, Ben Holt, Hei-Kyung Hong, Matthew Lord, Leona Mitchell, Marie Plette, and Veronica Villaroel, among others.

Juilliard Opera Center Productions 1970-2006/7

1970

Fidelio/Ludwig van Beethoven
January 16/17/19
Concert Version - NY Philharmonic & Leonard Bernstein

The Rake's Progress/Igor Stravinsky
April 23/25/26
Erich Leinsdorf, conductor; Tito Capobianco, director

Il giuramento/Saverio Mercadante
May 15/16/17
Bruno Maderna, conductor; Tito Capobianco, director

1971

La clemenza di Tito/W.A. Mozart
January 21/22/23
Bruno Maderna, conductor; Osvaldo Riofrancos, director

A White Butterfly/Alan Leichting World Premiere
February 18/20

The Losers/Harold Farberman World Premiere
March 26/28
Harold Faberman, conductor; John Houseman, director

Huckleberry Finn/Hall Overton World Premiere
May 20/22
Dennis Russell Davies, conductor; William Woodman, director

Die Zauberflöte/W.A. Mozart
December 14/15/16
Theodore Bloomfield, conductor; George London, director

1972

La bohème/Giacomo Puccini
February 10/11/12/13

Lord Byron/Virgil Thomson World Premiere
April 20/22/23
Gerhard Samuel, conductor; John Houseman, director

Don Pasquale/Gaetano Donizetti
December 7/8/9
James Conlon, conductor; Gian-Carlo Menotti, director

1973

DOUBLE BILL
March 29/30/31
The Bear/Sir William Walton
David Ramadanoff, conductor; Boris Tumarin, director
Suor Angelica/Giacomo Puccini
James Conlon, conductor; Lee Owens, director

Macbeth/Ernest Bloch NY Premiere
May 9/11/13
Peter Herman Adler, conductor; John Houseman, director

The Bartered Bride/Bedrich Smetana
December 14/15/16/17
Peter Herman Adler, conductor; Rhoda Levine, director

1974

La bohème/Giacomo Puccini
February 28, March 1/2/3
James Conlon, conductor; Theodore Mann, director

Ariadne auf Naxos/Richard Strauss
May 2/3/4/5
Peter Herman Adler, conductor; Gerald Freedman, director

Tosca/Giacomo Puccini
December 12/13/14/15
Peter Herman Adler, conductor; John Houseman, director

1975

Antony and Cleopatra/Samuel Barber Premiere, revised version

February 6/8/9/10
James Conlon, conductor; Gian Carlo Menotti, director

The Turn of the Screw/Benjamin Britten
February 28, March 1

Rusalka/Antonín Dvořák
November 19/20/21/23
Peter Herman Adler, conductor; Moni Yakim, director

La traviata/Giuseppe Verdi
December 11/12/13/14
Sixten Ehrling, conductor; Bliss Hebert, director

1976

Il matrimonio segreto/Domenico Cimarosa
February 7/8

DOUBLE BILL
April 22/24/25
Il cordovano/Goffredo Petrassi US Premiere
John DeMain, conductor; Jack O'Brien, director
The Hundred Nights/Hugo Weisgall World Premiere
Bruce Ferden, conductor; John Olon-Scrymgeour, director

DOUBLE BILL
May 8/9
Signor Deluso/Thomas Pasatieri
Savitri/Gustav Holst

Le Roi malgré lui/Emmanuel Chabrier US Premiere
November 18/20/21/22
Manuel Rosenthal, conductor; Bliss Hebert, director

1977

Die Zauberflöte/W.A. Mozart
March 3/4

Falstaff/Giuseppe Verdi
April 21/22/24
Sixten Ehrling, conductor; Tito Gobbi, director

The Medium/Gian Carlo Menotti
May 8/9

Madama Butterfly/Giacomo Puccini
December 14/15/16
Myung-Whun Chung, conductor; Roy Lazarus, director

1978

La calisto/Pier Francesco Cavalli
February 24/25
Martin Isepp, conductor; David Ostwald, director

Jenůfa/Leo Janáček
April 13/14/16
Peter Herman Adler, conductor; Gerald Freedman, director

Un ballo in maschera/Giuseppe Verdi
December 6/9/10
Sixten Ehrling, conductor; Tito Gobbi, director

1979

L'Orfeo/Claudio Monteverdi
February 1/3/4
Peter Herman Adler, conductor; Sandro Sequi, director

La finta giardiniera/W.A. Mozart
April 5/6
Roger Nierenberg, conductor; David Ostwald, director

A Midsummer Night's Dream/Benjamin Britten
April 27/29
Stephen Colvin, conductor; Norman Ayrton, director

La rondine/Giacomo Puccini
December 12/14/15/16
Laszlo Halasz, conductor; Ian Strasfogel, director

1980

Feathertop/Edward Barnes World Premiere
February 7/8/9/10
Richard Dufallo, conductor; H. Wesley Balk, director

The Mother of Us All/Virgil Thomson
February 29, March 1
Richard Fletcher, conductor; David Ostwald, director

DOUBLE BILL
April 24/26/27
Le rossignol/Igor Stravinsky
Jorge Mester, conductor; Norman Ayrton, director
La vida breve/Manuel de Falla
Jorge Mester, conductor; Norman Ayrton, director

The Hero/Gian Carlo Menotti NY Premiere
December 10/12/14
Christian Badea, conductor; Gian Carlo Menotti, director

1981

Lucia di Lammermoor/Gaetano Donizetti
February 25/27/28, March 1
Laszlo Halasz, conductor; Norman Ayrton, director

La buona figliuola/Niccolò Piccinni
April 24/26

Ivan Torzs, conductor; Norman Ayrton, director

La traviata/Giuseppi Verdi

December 9/10/11/13

Christian Badea, conductor; Andrei Serban, director

1982

Montezuma/Roger Sessions NY Premiere

February 19/21/23

Frederick Prausnitz, conductor; Ian Strasfogel, director

School For Fathers/Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari

April 23/25

Jonathan McPhee, conductor; Norman Ayrton, director

Manon/Jules Massenet

December 9/10/12/13

Jorge Mester, conductor; Norman Ayrton, director

1983

I Capuleti ed i Montecchi/Vincenzo Bellini

February 23/25/27

Denis Vaughn, conductor; Ian Strasfogel, director

Die Walküre (Act I)/Wagner - Concert Version

April 8

Jorge Mester, conductor

Così fan tutte/W. A. Mozart

April 13/14/15

La bohème/Giacomo Puccini

December 8/9/10/11

Jorge Mester, conductor; Graziella Sciutti, director

1984

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk/Dmitri Shostakovich

February 15/17/19

Maxim Shostakovich, conductor; Robert Goldschlager, director

La Vie Parisienne/Jacques Offenbach

April 5/7/8

Roger Nierenberg, conductor; Norman Ayrton, director

Il trittico/Giacomo Puccini

December 5/7/9

Vincent La Selva, conductor; James Lucas, director

1985

Postcard From Morocco/Dominick Argento

February 20/22/24
Ronald Braunstein, conductor; David Ostwald, director

Xerxes/George Frederick Handel
April 24/26/28
Albert Fuller, conductor; Norman Ayrton, director

Pyramus and Thisbe/Robert Convery NY Premiere
October 18

Casey at the Bat/William Schuman
November 22/24
Ronald Braunstein, conductor; Daniel West, director

1986

Mireille/Charles Gounod
February 21/23/25
Anton Coppola, conductor; Bernard Lefort, director

Don Giovanni/W.A. Mozart
April 16/18/20
Klauspeter Seibel, conductor; Dino Yannopoulos, director

Le nozze di Figaro/W.A. Mozart
December 10/12/14
Michael Charry, conductor; Rhoda Levine, director

1987

Albert Herring/Benjamin Britten
February 18/20/22
Andreas Delfs, conductor; Cynthia Auerbach, director

DOUBLE BILL
April 24/26/28
Tamu-Tamu/Gian Carlo Menotti
Amelia al ballo/Gian Carlo Menotti
Mark Stringer, conductor; Gian Carlo Menotti, director

Jakob Lenz/Wolfgang Rihm NY Premiere
December 11/13/15
Klauspeter Seibel, conductor; Ian Strasfogel, director

1988

Béatrice et Bénédicte/Hector Berlioz
February 19/21/23
Jorge Mester, conductor; Jack Eddleman, director

A Midsummer Night's Dream/Benjamin Britten
April 22/24/26
Raymond Harvey, conductor; Dorothy Danner, director

The Crucible/Robert Ward
December 7/9/11

John DeMain, conductor; Eve Shapiro, director

1989

A Celebration of Grand Opera
February 17/19
Arias and Scenes From Famous Operas
Anton Coppola, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

L'amico Fritz/Pietro Mascagni
April 12/14/16
Nello Santi, conductor; Christopher Mattaliano, director

Così fan tutte/W. A. Mozart
November 17/19/21
Andreas Delfs, conductor; Eve Shapiro, director

1990

DOUBLE BILL
February 23/25/27
Rothschild's Violin/Fleischmann-Shostakovich
American Premiere
The Seven Deadly Sins/Kurt Weill
Bruno Ferrandis, conductor; Christopher Mattaliano, director

Hugh the Drover/Ralph Vaughan Williams
April 25/27/29
Richard Bradshaw, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

DOUBLE BILL
December 12/14/16
A Matter of Taste/William Schuman
The Mighty Casey/William Schuman
Gerard Schwarz, conductor; Edward Berkeley, director

1991

Falstaff/Giuseppe Verdi
February 11/13/16
Julius Rudel, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

DOUBLE BILL
April 24/25/28, May 20
Le donne rivali/Domenico Cimarosa
Lo sposo deluso/W. A. Mozart
Will Crutchfield, conductor; Eve Shapiro, director

Vanessa/Samuel Barber
December 11/13/15
Richard Bradshaw, conductor; Edward Berkeley, director

1992

A Celebration of 20th-Century Opera

February 26/28, March 1

Featuring singers from the Juilliard Opera Center in works by Shostakovich, Blitzstein, Bernstein, Walton, Kern, Hoiby, and Weill

Hal France, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

Fennimore and Gerda/Frederick Delius New York Premiere

April 29, May 1/3

Christopher Keene, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

Medea/Jacob Druckman

October 15

A concert reading of The Prologue and Act I

Bruno Ferrandis, conductor; Edward Berkeley, director

Don Pasquale/Gaetano Donizetti

December 9/11/13

Hal France, conductor; Moni Yakim, director

1993

DOUBLE BILL

February 24/26/28

Les Mamelles de Tirésias/Francis Poulenc

La Voix humaine/Francis Poulenc

John McGlenn, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

The Rape of Lucretia/Benjamin Britten

March 25/26/27/28

(Chamber Opera Production)

Bruno Ferrandis, conductor; Christopher Mattaliano, director

Il viaggio a Reims/Gioachino Rossini

November 10/12/14

Richard Bradshaw, conductor; Christopher Mattaliano, director

1994

A Celebration of Song from Mussorgsky to Bernstein

February 2/3/4/5

(Chamber Opera Production)

Frank Corsaro and Richard Harrell, directors

L'incoronazione di Poppea/Claudio Monteverdi

April 20/22/24

Gary Wedow, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

The Immortal Hour/Rutland Boughton

November 16/18/20

Randall Behr, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

1995

The Impresario/W.A. Mozart

February 2/3/4

(Chamber Opera Production)

Kenneth Merrill, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

Werther/Jules Massenet
April 5/7/9
Guido Ajmone-Marsan, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

L'Amour des trois oranges/Serge Prokofiev
November 15/17/19
Randall Behr, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director;
Maurice Sendak, scenic and costume design

1996

Le nozze di Figaro/W.A. Mozart
April 17/19/21
Richard Bradshaw, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

Elegy for Young Lovers/Hans Werner Henze
November 20/22/24
Randall Behr, conductor; Christopher Mattaliano, director

1997

DOUBLE BILL
April 16/18/20
Monsieur Choufleuri/Jacques Offenbach
Gianni Schicchi/Giacomo Puccini
Randall Behr, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

Hänsel und Gretel
December 11, 13, 15, 17 (Live from Lincoln Center broadcast)
Randall Behr, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director
Maurice Sendak, new costume and set design

1998

Il cappello di paglia di Firenze/Nino Rota
November 18/20/22
Randall Behr, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director; Franco Colavecchia, set design

1999

Armide/Christoph Willibald Gluck
November 17/19/21
Randall Behr, conductor; Chas Rader-Shieber, director; David Zinn, set and costume design

2000

Der Kuhhandel/Kurt Weill
United States premiere production
Newly commissioned translation by Jeremy Sams
April 11/13/15
Randall Behr, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director; Franco Colavecchia, set design

La Cenerentola/Gioachino Rossini
November 15/17/19
Kenneth Merrill, conductor; Eve Shapiro, director; Juliana von Haubrich, set design

2001

Dialogues of the Carmelites/Francis Poulenc
April 25/27/29
Julius Rudel, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director;
Franco Colavecchia, set design

Susannah/Carlisle Floyd
November 14/16/18
Julius Rudel, conductor; Eve Shapiro director;
Chris Barreca, set design

2002

Heloise and Abelard/Stephen Paulus/Frank Corsaro World Premiere
April 24/27/29
Miguel Harth-Bedoya, conductor; Frank Corsaro, director

Eugene Onegin/Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky
November 13/15/17
Julius Rudel, conductor; Eve Shapiro, director

2003

Don Giovanni/W. A. Mozart
April 25/27/29
Jahja Ling, conductor, Edward Berkeley, director

Oreste/G.F. Handel
November 12/14/16
Daniel Beckwith, conductor, Lillian Groag, director

2004

DOUBLE BILL
Oedipus rex/Stravinsky
Le rossignol/Stravinsky
April 20/22/24
Miguel Harth-Bedoya, conductor, Ned Canty, director

DOUBLE BILL
L'enfant et les sortilèges/Ravel
L'enfant prodigue/Debussy
December 8/10/12
Yves Abel, conductor; Lillian Groag, director

2005

The Bartered Bride/Smetana
April 27/29, May 1
Mark Stringer, conductor; Eve Shapiro, director

A Midsummer Night's Dream/Britten
November 16/18/20
David Atherton, conductor; Eve Shapiro, director

2006

Miss Lonelyhearts/Liebermann/McClatchy
April 26/28/30
Andreas Delfs, conductor; Ken Cazan, director

Orphée aux enfers/Offenbach
November 15/17/19
Anne Manson, conductor; Jon Pascoe, director

2007

La finta giardiniera/W.A. Mozart
April 25/27/29
Gary Thor Wedow, conductor; Jay Lesenger, director