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Baseball

A MUSICAL LOVE LETTER

OPERA ON THE TOWN

ORLANDO
BALLET

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FRIDAY | May 19, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY | May 21, 2023 at 2 p.m.

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DEAR FRIENDS:

Baseball holds a special place in American history and for many of us a special place in our upbringing. That certainly holds true for me. My family had our own T-Ball league growing up called Preisser T-Ball in Apopka.

Those were the days ...

After that came little league baseball which has a very strong tradition and history in Central Florida, and then came high school baseball and the dreaded choice of do I play on the baseball team or sing in the big spring musical. Well, it should be pretty obvious by now which choice I made there. However, no matter how one engages with baseball, there truly is something special about the game. It brings us together as family, friends, and neighbors. Baseball transcends cultural barriers, racial barriers, gender barriers, and in doing so has become the great equalizer and a place where all are welcome.



Baseball is also a tangible demonstration of collaboration and teamwork from the nine players on the field to the coaches to, dare I say it, even the umpires. Indeed, one might say that baseball and opera share the characteristic of being inherently collaborative and universally inclusive. Maybe that is why it just seemed to make sense to put on a baseball opera OR maybe we were just feeling nostalgic. Nonetheless, we are beyond thrilled to present the Florida premiere of this new work which was first presented at Lyric Opera of Kansas City. I hope it conjures up good memories for you, and I know you will recognize most of the tunes. Don't hold back if you find yourself singing along.

While ***Baseball: a Musical Love Letter*** wraps up our **2022-23 Opera Everlasting** season, you won't want to miss a moment of our upcoming **2023-24 All for Art** season featuring Puccini's immortal ***Tosca***, the Orlando premiere of Robert Xavier Rodriguez's ***Frida***, a Game of Thrones-inspired production of Donizetti's ***Lucia di Lammermoor***, a site-specific production of ***Rusalka*** and **Opera Orlando's** return to the Alexis and Jim Pugh Theater with Phillip Glass's ***The Juniper Tree***. Opera is indeed alive and well in Orlando and we could not do it without you and your amazing enthusiasm, patronage, and support for this glorious art form.

See **YOU** at the Opera!

Gabriel Preisser, general director
OPERAORLANDO



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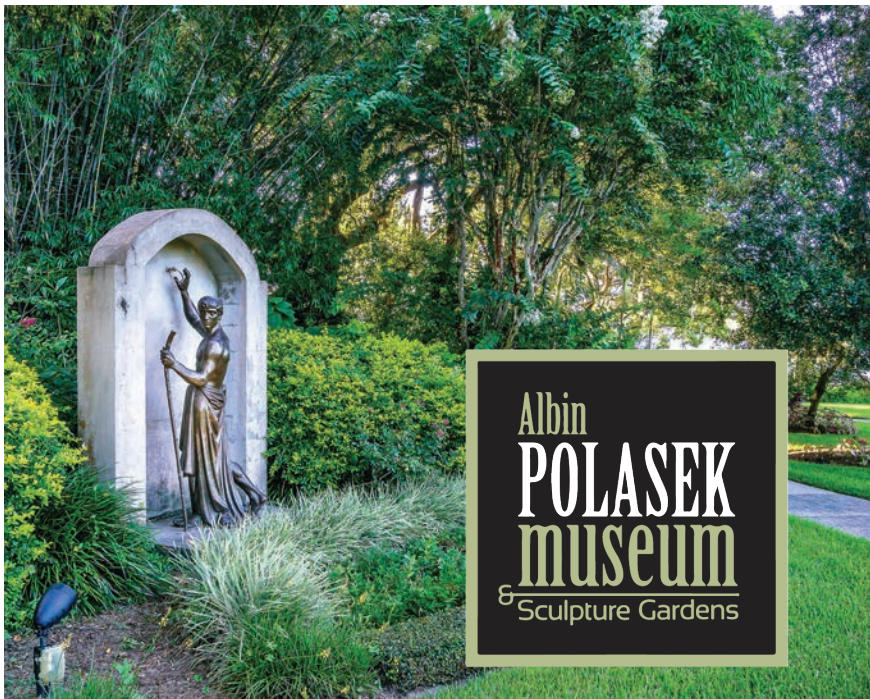
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Dancer: Hitomi Nakamura (Japan) | Photo: Zavesco Photography



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SINGS!

Baseball

A MUSICAL LOVE LETTER

production in one act written and conceived by

Kathleen Belcher & Dan Rigazzi

presented by

OPERAORLANDO ✨ ✨

sung in English

OPERA ON THE TOWN

Friday | **May 19, 2023** at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday | **May 21, 2023** at 2:00 p.m.

Harriett's Orlando Ballet Centre

Chevalier Lovett, music director

Kathleen Belcher, stage director

pre-show entertainment provided by musicians from **Con Vivo**

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A NOTE ON THE OPERA

The world as we knew it came grinding to a halt in March of 2020. We theatre-types struggled with our loss of work, losing our creative outlets, and our mental health. This project is a reaction to the aforementioned items.



Dan Rigazzi, my dear friend and Metropolitan Opera co-worker, and I spoke on the phone frequently to give each other pep talks, worry out loud, and brainstorm about what we could do next. This “baseball cabaret” was born from those conversations. I do not recall what first made me plug baseball and opera into a search engine, but once I went down that rabbit hole a crazy idea began to form.

The University of Kansas Opera program agreed to workshop our piece and the Lyric Opera of Kansas City believed in our original vision. What you are going to see is a culmination of a deep love of baseball, history, and music theatre come to fruition on the stage. Ultimately, we discovered that despite our differences and disagreements, we could look to our national pastime to unite us all. So, while we theatre people wait for the words “Places, please,” we will rejoice in the words “Play ball!”

Kathleen Belcher, stage director

MUSICAL NUMBERS

“In 1839” from *The Mighty Casey*
music by **William Schuman** and lyrics by **Jeremy Gury**

“What a Game!” from *Ragtime*
music by **Stephen Flaherty** and lyrics by **Lynn Ahrens**

“The First Baseball Game”
music by **Don Raye & Gene de Paul**

“Prologue”
“What Have You Got to Lose?”
“Say It Ain’t So, Joe” from *1919: A Baseball Opera*
music and lyrics by **Rusty Magee**

“Baseball Boogie” by **Bill Williams**

“Don’t Look Back”
music by **Fred Sturm** and lyrics by **Satchel Paige**

“Did You See Jackie Robinson Hit That Ball?”
music by **Count Basie** (arr. **Fred Sturm**) and lyrics by **Buddy Johnson**

“Six Months Out of Every Year” from *Damn Yankees*
music by **Richard Adler** and lyrics by **Jerry Ross**

“Take Me Out to the Ballgame”
music by **Albert von Tilzer** and lyrics by **Jack Norworth**

“In the Cards” from *Diamonds*
music by **Alan Menken** and lyrics by **David Zippel**

“You Gotta Have Heart” from *Damn Yankees*

“Ballad of Buck O’Neil” by **Danny Cox**

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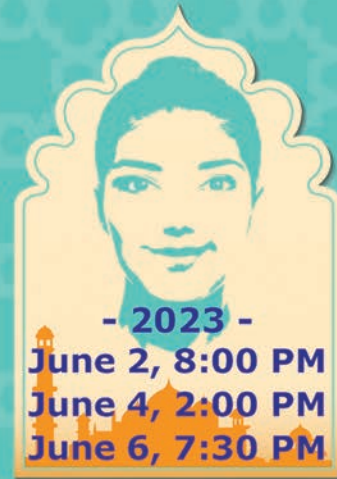
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Baseball

A MUSICAL LOVE LETTER

production in one act written and conceived by

Kathleen Belcher & Dan Rigazzi

CAST

Robert Hartfield

Laura Hodos

Makendy Jacob

Juliana Lind

Raphaella Medina

Geoffrey Peterson

Gabriel Preisser

John Teixeira

Michaela Wright

FEATURED ARTIST **Danny Cox**

BAND

Rosamund Hencinski piano

Alex House drums

Aydan Douglas Bailey saxophone

CON VIVO SINGERS

Jim Beck

Alice Fortunato

Larry Fortunato

Rachel LaQuea

Justin McGill

PRODUCTION TEAM

Chevalier Lovett music director

Kathleen Belcher stage director

Daniel Rigazzi co-director & librettist

Christopher Payen choreographer

Rosamund Hencinski rehearsal pianist

Tiffany Meadows-Green stage manager

Grant Preisser scenic & props designer

Cait Durrance costume designer

Gina Makarova hair & make up designer

George Jackson lighting designer

Miles Bresin lighting assistant

Tyler Bargfrede master carpenter

Andrew Blunt carpenter

Charles Richardson scenic artist

THE ARTISTS



ROBERT HARTFIELD

HOMETOWN: Overland Park, KS

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

Tonio (cover), *The Daughter of the Regiment*, 2023
Rinuccio, *Bella Notte* at Bella Collina, 2023
Tamino (cover), *The Magic Flute*, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Lorenzo, *The Pirate's Daughter* (Romanza Lyric Opera)
Ferrando, *Così fan tutte* (Finger Lakes Opera)
soloist, Mozart's *Requiem* (Treasure Coast Singers)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Singing Sergeant with the United States Air Force Band

sponsored by *Walter Bissett & Bernard Foong*



MAKENDY JACOB

HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

chorus, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, 2023
chorus, *The Magic Flute*, 2022
Herald/chorus, *Rigoletto*, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Officer/chorus, *The Barber of Seville* (Florida Opera Theatre)
Figaro, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Florida International University Opera Theatre)
chorus, 2017-2018 season (Florida Grand Opera)



LAURA HODOS *

HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Beggar Woman, *Sweeney Todd* (Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra)
soloist, *On Broadway: Bernstein and Sondheim* (Sarasota Orchestra)
Marian Paroo, *The Music Man*
(Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra & Jacksonville Symphony)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Player 2, a.k.a. Everyone Else, *Jekyll & Hyde* (Ensemble Stage)
solo cabaret, *Back Home To Broadway* (Ensemble Stage)
Katie Lane Murphy, *Honky Tony Laundry* (Winter Park Playhouse)

sponsored by *Carmen and Scott Moscrip*



JULIANA LIND

HOMETOWN: Oviedo, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

chorus, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, 2023

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

soloist, *The 44th annual Christmas in the Park*
(The Bach Festival Society of Winter Park)
soloist, *Ukraine Ballet Benefit* (The Ginsberg Family Foundation)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Opera Studio Young Artist (Musiktheater Bavaria)



RAPHAELLA MEDINA
HOMETOWN: New York, NY

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS
Ciesca, *Bella Notte* at Bella Collina, 2023
Third Lady, *The Magic Flute*, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

soloist, *Moulin Rouge* (Orlando Ballet)
mezzo elder, *Sky on Swings* (Opera Saratoga)
Rosina, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera)

sponsored by Cathy Roth & Lawrence Kellogg



GEOFFREY PETERSON
HOMETOWN: Trumansburg, NY

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS
Hortensius, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, 2023
Billy Bob/Amantio,
Bella Notte at Bella Collina, 2023
Augustus, *The Secret River*, 2021

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

The Scholar, *I CANT BREATHE* (Pacific Opera Project)
Bob (cover), *Highway 1, U.S.A.* (Opera Theater of St. Louis)
Pastor/Promoter/Walter White, *Marian's Song* (Houston Grand Opera)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Johanes Zegner, *Proving Up* (Opera Steamboat)
Betto, *Gianni Schicchi* (Opera Steamboat)

sponsored by Leila Trismen



GABRIEL PREISSER
HOMETOWN: Apopka, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS
Gianni Schicchi,
Bella Notte at Bella Collina, 2023
Belfiore, *King for a Day*, 2022
Eisenstein, *Die Fledermaus*, 2020

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Danilo, *The Merry Widow* (Opera Idaho)
Farmer Bean, *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Opera San Antonio)
Lt. Gordon, *Silent Night* (Detroit Opera)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Figaro, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Teatro San Carlo)
Enrico, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Opera Orlando)

sponsored by Suzanne McGuire



JOHN TEIXEIRA
HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS
Gherardo, *Bella Notte* at Bella Collina, 2023
Victor Granier, *All Is Calm*, 2022
Giuseppe, *La Traviata*, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Tateh, *Ragtime* (Central Florida Community Arts)
Che, *Evita* (Osceola Arts)
Pirate King, *Pirates of Penzance* (Central Florida Community Arts)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Normanno, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Opera Orlando)

sponsored by Frank Santos

* Opera Orlando debut

THE PRODUCTION TEAM



MICHAELA WRIGHT *
HOMETOWN: Oakland, FL

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Hansel, *Hansel & Gretel* (Opera del Sol)
The Fox, *Cunning Little Vixen* (Lyric Theatre Illinois)
Orfeo, *Orfeo ed Euridice* (The Armory Theatre Illinois)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Mina, *The Bloody Hatchet* (Nathan Felix Productions)



CHEVALIER LOVETT | music director
HOMETOWN: Winter Park, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

assistant conductor, *Don Giovanni*, 2017
assistant conductor, *Cinderella*, 2018
assistant conductor, *The Secret River*, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

conductor, Margaret Bonds' *Credo* (Orlando Sings)
baritone soloist, recital series (College Park United Methodist)

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DANNY COX * | featured artist
HOMETOWN: Kansas City, MO

Danny Cox is an American folk singer and songwriter, best known for his 1974 album *Feel So Good*. He has recorded albums for ABC Dunhill, Casablanca, and MGM. In September 2011, Mr. Cox recorded *Kansas City - Where I Belong* at Pilgrim Chapel in Kansas City. Produced by Dr. Roger Coleman, filmmaker Benjamin Meade, and musician Bob Walkenhorst, the CD (along with a short film entitled *Up Close and Personal* by Benjamin Meade) was released in 2012. Also in 2012, Mr. Cox wrote the music and lyrics, and starred in the show *Fair Ball*, a musical play about the history and courage of the men and women who played against all odds of racial segregation, including the "Jim Crow" laws, in the Negro leagues of baseball. He currently writes jingles and works with children's theaters.



KATHLEEN BELCHER |
show creator & stage director
HOMETOWN: Liberty, MO

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

stage director, *Rigoletto*, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

revival stage director, *Le Comte Ory* (Lyric Opera of Chicago)
stage director, *Rigoletto* (Pacific Symphony)
stage director, *La bohème* (Lyric Opera of Kansas City)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

stage director, *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Opera Colorado)
stage director, *Die Zauberflöte* (Hawaii Performing Arts Festival)
assistant stage director, *Carmen* (new production)
(The Metropolitan Opera)

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DANIEL RIGAZZI * | co-creator
HOMETOWN: New York City, NY

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

stage director, *Le nozze di Figaro* (Madison Opera)
stage director, *Il Trovatore* (Pittsburgh Opera)
revival stage director, *La Traviata* (The Metropolitan Opera)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

stage Director, *Il Re Pastore* (Orpheus PDX)
stage director, *La Traviata* (Tulsa Opera)



CHRISTOPHER PAYEN * | choreographer
HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

co-choreographer, *MACKOSSA* (Orlando Repertory Theatre)
choreographer, *Willy Wonka* (Montverde Theatre Academy)
choreographer, *Sing Your Heart Out!* (Walt Disney Amphitheater)



TIFFANY MEADOWS-GREEN |
stage manager
HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

stage manager,
The Daughter of the Regiment, 2023
stage director, *Bella Notte at Bella Collina*, 2023
stage manager, *All is Calm*, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

production manager, current (St. Luke's United Methodist Church)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

production stage manager, *All Shook Up!* (Theatre at St. Luke's)



GRANT PREISSER |
scenic & props designer
HOMETOWN: Chicago, IL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

scenic designer,
The Daughter of the Regiment, 2023
stage director, *Bella Notte at Bella Collina*, 2023
production designer, *The Magic Flute*, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

scenic designer, *La bohème* (University of Michigan)
scenic designer, *Alcina* (University of Michigan)
scenic designer, *Last American Hammer* (UrbanArias)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

scenic designer, *Tosca* (Opera Orlando)
scenic designer, *Frida* (Opera Orlando)
stage director, *Rusalka* (Opera Orlando)

* Opera Orlando debut



CAIT DURRANCE | costume designer

HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

associate costume designer,
The Daughter of the Regiment, 2023
costume designer, *The Magic Flute*, 2022
costume shop manager, 2022-23 Season

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

associate costume designer, *All Is Calm*, (Opera Orlando)
costume shop manager, 2022 Summer Season (Des Moines Metro Opera)
wardrobe supervisor, *Rigoletto* (Opera Orlando)



GINA MAKAROVA | hair & makeup designer

HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

hair & makeup designer, *Lizbeth*, 2022
hair & makeup assistant, *The Secret River*, 2022
hair & Makeup Designer, *King for A Day*, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

wig & makeup artist, *Streetcar Named Desire* (Orlando Ballet)
wig & makeup artist, *Moulin Rouge* (Orlando Ballet)
wig & makeup artist, Michael Pink's *Dracula* (Orlando Ballet)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

performer, *Tales of the Undead* (Phantasmagoria Orlando)
wig tech, The Wish Ship (Disney Cruise Lines)

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private dinner with general and artistic director	✦	✦								
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lunch/golf with general director	✦	✦	✦							
invitation to board annual meeting	✦	✦	✦	✦						
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invitation to MainStage dress rehearsals	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦					
backstage tour of the production	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦				
invitation to fall Studio Artist donor party	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦			
lunch/bridge with development director	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦			
invitation to Ambassador receptions	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	
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