



The Center for Arts in Natick

Sunday, March 13, 2022, 7:00pm

Opera del West

presents

An Evening of Divas and Doggies

featuring

Pepito

by Nicolas Lell Benavides



Stage Direction by Brenda Huggins

Music Direction by Eve K. Budnick

Program Notes

Here we are back in the theater, about to enjoy *Pepito*, the one-act opera that was supposed to take place exactly two years ago. Three of the four cast members are still with the show, and we have a new member who agreed to learn the score and even studied his dog to get the sounds and motions right. Brenda is directing again, and we are able to perform at TCAN, so everything seems correct.

And yet, we are changed. We have been through a lot over the last couple of years, and although there was virtual art going on, the fact that we missed the excitement of live performances and live audiences makes this all the more vital. We are going to work harder for representation in our casts, staff and creators. I'm so excited that we are performing a work by a living Latinx composer for our first opera back, and this will be the beginning of discovering operas from more diverse sources.

Many of the members of this show asked me when we could put on *Pepito*, as they loved learning it the first time, and wanted it to be seen in this New England premiere. I'm so happy to present it now and add in art songs about animals that may or may not be appropriate as Covid pets.

Please enjoy our first live show in two years, *Pepito*!

— *Eve Budnick, Artistic Director*

Special Thanks

The generous donations of Beth and Simon Kochen, Ann and Mitch Cohen, Carrie and Joe Regenstein, Lewis and Arleen Forsheit, and Nettie Forsheit, who has supported OdW since its beginning, and loved the performances and her granddaughter, Eve Budnick; Rob Pratt and Vickie Brennan; David and Shirley Parish.

Grants from the Natick and Wayland branch of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and the Lauren Dunne Astley Memorial Fund. Thanks to the New School of Music for the use of their rehearsal space.

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THIS PROJECT IS FUNDED IN PART BY



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL

A state agency that funds your community's local cultural council

Songs about Animals

Villanelle des Petits Canards
Ballade Des Gros Dindons

Emmanuel Chabrier
Emmanuel Chabrier

James Liu, baritone

To Arthur Davison Ficke
Fox's Aria (*The Little Prince*)

Juliana Hall
Rachel Portman

Roselin Osser, mezzo-soprano

An die Nachtigall
Le Colibri

Franz Schubert
Ernest Chausson

Joel Edwards, tenor

Two Songs about Cats

Dan Shore

1. The Cats Have Come to Tea
2. *From* Dame Wiggins of Lee and her Seven Wonderful Cats

Aurora Martin, soprano
Ryan Budnick, clarinet

-brief intermission-

Pepito

A comedic opera in one act
Music: Nicolas Lell Benavides
Libretto: Marella Martin Koch

CAST

Pepito – a lonely shelter dog
James Liu

Camila – a disappointed attorney
Aurora Martin

David – a clueless commodities trader; Camila’s husband
Joel Edwards, Jr.

Angie – an extremely committed manager at an animal rescue shelter
Roselin Osser

ARTISTIC AND PRODUCTION STAFF

Music Director / Pianist – Eve Budnick
Stage Director – Brenda L. Huggins
Lighting Designer – Larry Budnick
Clarinet – Ryan Budnick

Staff Biographies

Eve K. Budnick (Artistic Director) founded Opera del West sixteen years ago, and has music directed over 20 productions for the company. “Eve Budnick’s reputation for excellence is well-known in the business” (Thomas Pasatieri, opera composer). Her performances have taken place at the Boston Center for Arts, The Center for Arts in Natick, and Amazing Things Arts Center, among other venues. She has also music directed two virtual operas, *The ZOOMpresario* and Pasatieri’s *La Divina*.

Eve is the Chair of the Voice Department at Rivers School Conservatory, where she teaches lessons, workshops and performance classes, and was a Diction instructor for the Voice and Choral Conducting Department at Boston University. Previously she taught Diction and Vocal Literature at University of Connecticut.

She was repetiteur and pianist for MassOpera’s Workshop production of *Freedom Ride* at The Strand Theatre. Eve was trained in the Boston Lyric Opera “Words! Music! Opera!” program to compose and direct original operas in the classroom. She has been a Music Director and Pianist for Opera Boston and Music Director for *Suor Angelica* for Boston Opera Collaborative. Ms. Budnick has been the music director for opera scenes programs for the Boston University Opera Institute, New England Conservatory Opera Workshop, and Summer Opera Workshop. She has performed in faculty recitals at the University of Connecticut, Boston Conservatory, and Princeton University.

Eve holds a bachelor’s degree in Musicology from Princeton, a master’s degree in Vocal Accompaniment from Boston University, and a graduate diploma in Collaborative Piano from New England Conservatory.

Brenda Huggins is a multi-disciplinary stage director, dramaturg, and puppetry artist. As the Resident Dramaturg with Guerilla Opera for the 2019-2020 season, she directed the Emergence Composer Fellowship program and facilitated an artist development lab in libretto writing. With a deep interest in new works, Brenda has directed many workshops, premieres, and new productions of contemporary opera including *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret* by Leanna Kirchoff (2019), *An Embarrassing Position* by Dan Shore (2016), *334 Bunnies* by Francine Trester (2012) at the Longy School of Music, and *The Rough Faced Girl*, a touring children’s opera (2012). Brenda made her NYC directing debut with Handel’s *Teseo* at the Abrons Center for the Arts (2019). With Opera del West, Brenda has created intimate productions of classical and contemporary opera works including *Le Portrait de Manon* (2017), *Signor Deluso* (2017), *Don Pasquale* (2016), *Le nozze di Figaro* (2015), and *The Seagull* (2014).
www.brendalynnhuggins.com

Cast Biographies

Joel Edwards, Jr. (David) begins his 2022 season with this return to Opera del West, after having performed with the company in *The ZOOMpresario*, *Second Nature*, *The Seagull*, and as the title role in *Candide*. He is excited to make his company debut with TUNDI Productions at the Wagner in Vermont festival covering Siegmund in *Die Walküre*. He recently sang Florestan with Promenade Opera Project and made his Opera North debut in Rothstein's *All is Calm in December*. The Boston-based tenor completed an MM and GPD in opera performance from the Longy School of Music of Bard College. Most recent roles include the title in Rameau's *Daphnis et Eglé*, Ein Soldat in Viktor Ullman's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, and Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, all with Connecticut Lyric Opera. The tenor has also performed frequently with Odyssey Opera, Halifax Opera, and Utah Festival Opera and Musical Theater.

Baritone **James Liu** (Pepito) is a physician who has announced classical music at WHRB; sings with Cantata Singers; performed a range of art song repertoire; and sung opera with Opera del West, Lowell House Opera, Opera Boston, Longwood Opera, Greater Worcester Opera, Opera51, and other groups. He is excited to add Pepito to *The Magic Flute* (Papageno), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Antonio, Bartolo, Almaviva), *Così fan tutte* (Guglielmo, Alfonso) *Fledermaus* (Falke), *Faust* (Valentin), *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Music Teacher), *Hansel and Gretel* (The Father), and *Fidelio* (Don Fernando). He is indebted to his voice teacher, Frank Kelley, and to Alexandra, his patient wife. <http://www.jamescsliu.com/>

Aurora Martin (Camila) is quickly becoming recognized for her colorful soprano. She performs with Odyssey Opera, The Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Lowell Chamber Orchestra, Opera del West, and Opera on Tap. She is the soloist at Christ Church Episcopal in Quincy, MA. Last September Aurora joined Opera Company of Middlebury as a Young Artist. Operatic highlights include Pamina, Micaëla, Miss Silvertone, Noémie, and Liesgen. Solo concert repertoire includes Satie's *Socrates*, Mahler's *Das Knaben Wunderhorn*, Beethoven's Mass in C Major, and Saint-Saëns' Christmas Oratorio. Aurora holds a MM from The New England Conservatory and bachelor's degrees in Music and Chemistry from Virginia Tech.

Mezzo-soprano **Roselin Osser** (Angie) has excelled in comic and whimsical opera roles including The Fox in *The Little Prince*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and the title role in *El gato con botas*. Concert highlights include alto soloist in Bach's *Magnificat* with the Providence Singers and Mozart's *Requiem* with the Masterworks Chorale. With a lifelong passion for both performing arts and climate action, she now balances an unusual dual career as both a classical singer and an energy consultant for prominent New England green building projects. To learn more, please visit www.RoselinOsser.com.

Translation of Art Songs about Animals

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| <p>Villanelle of the Little Ducks (Villanelle des Petits Canards)</p> <p>They go, the little ducks, all on the bank of the river, like fine country folk! Paddlers and wrigglers, happy from muddying the clear water, they go, the little ducks. They seem a little gullible, but they go about their business-like fine country folk!</p> <p>In the water full of tadpoles, where a flimsy weed quivers, they go, the little ducks, marching in scattered groups, at a steady pace like fine country folk! In the fair spinach-green of the damp watercress bed, they go, the little ducks, and though a bit snarky, they are of good-natured humor like fine country folk!</p> <p>Making, in chattering circles, a veritable riot of noise, they go, the little ducks, chubby, glossy and jolly, they are jolly in their own way, like fine country folk! Amorous and nasal, each with its crony, they go, the little ducks, like fine country folk!</p> | <p>Ballad of the Stout Turkeys (Ballade des Gros Dindons)</p> <p>The stout turkeys, they cross fields with a step solemn and untroubled, at dawn, at dusk, stupidly march in a line, before the shepherdess who sings, humming an old tune, they go in docile procession, the stout turkeys! They seem like fat merchants, filled with an imbecile haughtiness, like bailiffs, arrogantly and spitefully watching you with a hostile eye; Their red wattles oscillate, they seem, among the thistles gravely to hold a council, the stout turkeys! They have not ever found moving the sounds that the nightingale makes, they follow, clumsy and stumbling, one among them, dignified as a magistrate; And when from the distant bell tower, the Angelus makes its slow ding! dong! they return to their homes, the stout turkeys! Sages stout, their only inclinations are to the practical and useful, for them, love and its sweet songs are a pastime too trifling; Philistines of the race of birds, rotund with black paunches, they care nothing for any romance, the stout turkeys!</p> |
| <p>To the Nightingale (An die Nachtigall)</p> <p>He lies and sleeps upon my heart, My guardian angel sang him to sleep And I can be happy and merry, And enjoy every flower and leaf. Nightingale, o nightingale! Do not awaken Cupid with your song!</p> | <p>The Humming Bird (Le Colibri)</p> <p>The green humming bird, king of the hills, Seeing the dew and the bright sun Glitter on his next, woven of fine grasses, Like a light breeze escapes into the air. He hurries and flies to the nearby springs, Where the reeds make the sound of the sea, Where the red hibiscus, with its heavenly scent, Unfolds and brings a humid light to the heart, Towards the golden flower he descends, alights, And drinks so much love from the rosy cup That he dies, not knowing if he could have drained it! On our pure lips, oh my beloved, My soul likewise would have wanted to die Of the first kiss, which has perfumed it.</p> |

Previous Shows by Opera del West

La Divina, Fall 2020 (online)
The ZOOMpresario, Summer 2020 (online)
Cendrillon, Summer 2019
Freedom Ride (workshop), Spring 2019
The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret, Spring 2019
Candide, Summer 2018
Second Nature, Spring 2018
Alcina, Summer 2017
Le portrait de Manon and *Signor Deluso*, Spring 2017
Don Pasquale, Summer 2016
The Best of Opera del West, Spring 2016
The Marriage of Figaro, Summer 2015
A Night at the Cabaret, Winter 2015
The Seagull, Summer 2014
A Night at the Operetta, Winter 2014
Così fan tutte, Summer 2013
An Embarrassing Position and *Coffee Cantata*, Winter 2013
Little Women, Summer 2012
L'Isola Disabitata, Summer 2012
Amelia goes to the Ball, Winter 2012
The Magic Flute, Summer 2011
The Romances of Mozart, Winter 2011
The Elixir of Love, Summer 2010
La Serva Padrona, *The Telephone*, Winter 2010
Hansel and Gretel, Summer 2009
Die Fledermaus, Winter 2009
La Cenerentola, Summer 2008
Little Red's Journey Continues, Winter 2008
Gianni Schicchi, *A Game of Chance*, Summer 2007
Once upon an Opera, Winter 2007
An Evening of Opera Scenes, Summer 2006

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