

INDIANAPOLIS OPERA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 13, 2018

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**Indianapolis Opera in Association with IU Jacobs School of Music
Presents
“Page-to-Stage” World Premiere Workshop of
*Star-Cross’d Lovers***

Saturday, December 1st at the Basile Opera Center, Indianapolis, at 3:00 p.m.

**Composed and Conducted by Internationally Acclaimed
Indiana Composer Don Freund**

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (November 13, 2018) – Indianapolis Opera announces a New American Opera, *Star-Cross’d Lovers*, by renowned Indiana composer, Don Freund. This story has been told and re-told in various genres and languages through the centuries, capturing the emotions and imaginations of audiences the world over. In his new opera, *Star-Cross’d Lovers*, composer Don Freund has written the first ever staged opera of Shakespearean’s English - Romeo and Juliet. Opera audiences are familiar with popular interpretations of the story in French Grand Opera, Italian bel canto, and Bernstein’s transformed story in an American Jazz-influenced style. Now, *Star-Cross’d Lovers* lands where the story began, presenting the archetypal tale of *Romeo and Juliet* with a revolutionary modern musical score.

The Indianapolis Opera Resident Artists and Indianapolis Opera leading opera artists will present a “Page-to-Stage” showcase highlighting scenes with the IU New Music Ensemble providing the orchestral accompaniment. Immediately following the performance, the audience will be invited to participate in a feedback session with the composer, director, producer and performers as we co-create a world premier master production.

Cast:

Kevin Adamik, Romeo
Anne Slovin, Juliet
Christopher Burchett, Lord Capulet
Rachelle Woolston, Lady Capulet
Michael Colman, Friar Laurence
Emily Spencer, Nurse
Nathanael Hein, Benvolio

***See below for program notes from Don Freund.**

While the idea of yet another version of *Romeo and Juliet* may seem something less than “cutting edge,” I have discovered that the familiarity of the story and the iconic power of the poetic text provide a sturdy launch pad for a new kind of intertwining of words, drama, and music. In this reinvention of the music-theatre medium, the musical materials must be artful enough to respond to the characterizations and dramatic interactions of Shakespeare’s text, but also simple enough to allow the singing actors a naturalness that communicates with an audience on a personal, human-scaled level. The glories of Shakespeare’s poetry and the vitality of his dramatic constructions take on a special resonance when song and music is worked into the tapestry.

All of the “lyrics” are Shakespeare’s texts, abridged from five acts to three. The vocal writing for the leading characters is created in a tuneful style appropriate for young, clear, not particularly large voices, and a priority is placed on making the language readily intelligible and dramatically compelling.

About the Artists

Don Freund (Composer/Conductor) is an internationally recognized composer with works ranging from solo, chamber, and orchestral music, to pieces involving live performances with electronic instruments, music for dance, and large theater works. He has been described as “a composer thoughtful in approach and imaginative in style” (*The Washington Post*), whose music is “exciting, amusing, disturbing, beautiful, and always fascinating” (*Music and Musicians, London*). Many of Freund’s works are available on commercial CD. The recipient of numerous awards and commissions, including two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and a Guggenheim fellowship, he has served as guest composer at a vast array of universities and music festivals and has presented master classes throughout Europe, Asia, and South America. Freund is also active as a pianist, conductor, and lecturer. As a festival coordinator, he has programmed over 1,000 new American works. He has been conductor or pianist in the performance of some 200 new pieces, usually in collaboration with the composer. A professor of composition at the IU Jacobs School of Music since 1992, teaching composition continues to be a major component of Freund’s career. His students from 40 years of teaching continue to win an impressive range of awards and recognition. Freund’s piano concert repertoire extends from new music to complete performances of Book I of Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* and his own pianistic realizations of Machaut. He has performed his *Earthdance Concerto* with numerous university wind ensembles. Up-to-date news on works and performances, and videos, audio files, and PDF scores of over 100 of Freund’s compositions can be found online at DonFreund.com.

Matt Cooksey (Stage Director) is the resident assistant director for Indianapolis Opera's 2018-19 season. He serves as assistant director to their mainstage programs (*La Bohème* and *Camelot*), and directs outreach programs for audiences of all ages, including restaging two children's operas: *The Not-So Ugly Duckling* and *The Three Little Hoosier Pigs*. Cooksey earned a B.M. in Voice Performance from the IU Jacobs School of Music, and an M.M. in Performance (Voice) and Opera Production (Directing) from Florida State University (FSU). Cooksey staged an outreach production of *Béatrice et Bénédict*, a self-adapted version of Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor*, and Michael Williams's *The Prodigal Child*. He also directed scenes including excerpts from *Werther*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

Kevin Adamik (Romeo), *Tenor*, is excited to join the Indianapolis Opera's Resident Artist program this fall. While in Indianapolis he has performed Parpignol (*La Bohème*). Mr. Adamik is from Pittsburgh, PA and holds degrees from Slippery Rock University and Cleveland Institute of Music. He has attended Chicago Summer Opera, Opera in the Ozarks, and NAPA Music Festival. Recent credits include: the title role in *Albert Herring*, Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Tito (*La clemenza di Tito*), Bénédict (*Béatrice et Bénédict*), Oronte (*Alcina*), Don Basilio, Don Curzio (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Venditore (*Il Tabarro*), and Frantz, Spalanzani, Pitichinacci (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*).

Christopher Burchett (Lord Capulet), *Baritone*, has performed with opera companies throughout the United States and Europe including New York City Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, the Estates Theatre, The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, BBC Orchestra at the Barbican Centre, Fort Worth Opera, The Holland Festival, Palm Beach Opera, Beth Morrison Projects, Chicago Opera Theater, Opera Orchestra of New York, Virginia Opera, Prototype Festival, Opera Omaha, Opera Saratoga, Eugene Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Kentucky Opera, Glimmerglass Opera and Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Christopher has been a champion of new music, having created roles in 14 world premieres to date and has also participated in the revival of several 21st century works.

Michael Colman (Friar Laurence), *Bass Baritone*, has performed across the country in roles ranging from the comedy of Mozart's Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* to the drama of Britten's Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*. Michael recently sang Schaunard in Indianapolis Opera's production of *La Bohème*, Ceprano in Toledo Opera's *Rigoletto*, and has performed many roles and covers as an Apprentice Artist with several leading American companies including the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Virginia Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Charlottesville Opera, Fayetteville Opera, Savannah Voice Festival, Manchester Music Festival, and Janiec Opera Company.

Nathanael Hein (Benvolio), *Tenor*, has performed in Indianapolis Opera's productions of *South Pacific* and *Man of La Mancha*, as well as in their Resident

Artist Program. Mr. Hein holds a Performance Diploma from IU's Jacobs School of Music and a Master's from the Cleveland Institute of Music. Roles include Gastone in *La Traviata*, Count Belfiore in Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera*, Prince Charmant in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, the title roles in Britten's *Albert Herring* and Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*. Mr. Hein spent three summers at the Aspen Music Festival where he performed in multiple scenes programs. He sang the role of Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* with The Missouri Symphony, and Azael in Debussy's *L'enfant Prodigue* with the Duke Symphony Orchestra.

Anne Slovin (Juliet), *Soprano*, recently originated the role of Mica Segal in Lyric Opera of Chicago's world premiere of *The Property*. In 2014, she was an Artist-in-Residence at Pensacola Opera, singing the roles of Frasquita in *Carmen*, Clorinda in *La Cenerentola* and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*. She is a past award winner at the FAVA Grand Concours de Chant and the Czech and Slovak International Vocal Competition, as well as the recipient of a scholarship from the Beebe Fund for Musicians. Anne is a 2018 graduate of the Jacobs School of Music, where she sang the role of Clara in *It's a Wonderful Life*.

Emily Spencer (Nurse), *Mezzo-Soprano*, a native of Celina, Ohio, is a member of the Resident Opera Artist program with Indianapolis Opera. Emily has previously worked with Palm Beach Opera, Opera Saratoga, Chautauqua Opera, and ArtsEmerson. Featured roles include: Ma Joad (*The Grapes of Wrath*), Hermia (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Donna Rosa (*Il Postino*), Charlotte (*Werther*), Aunt Hannah Watkins (*Emmeline*), and Marcellina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*). Emily holds both bachelor's and master's degrees in voice from Northwestern University, as well as a post-graduate certificate from Boston University's Opera Institute.

Rachelle Woolston (Lady Capulet), *Soprano*, holds masters and doctoral degrees from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She recently covered Violetta in Indianapolis Opera's production of *La Traviata*. Her roles include Elerie (*A Child's Christmas in Wales*), Mother Abbess (*The Sound of Music*), Violetta (*La Traviata*), Cio-Cio San (*Madama Butterfly*), The Queen of the Night (*Magic Flute*), Susanna and Barbarina (*Le nozze di Figaro*) Valencienne (*The Merry Widow*), and Dew Fairy (*Hansel and Gretel*). Dr. Woolston is the Education and Community Engagement Coordinator at Indianapolis Opera, and adjunct voice faculty at Marian University. She enjoys frequent recital and choral performances around the Indianapolis area, the United States and Europe.

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION:

December 1st, 2018 -- 3pm
Basile Opera Center
4011 N. Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, IN 46205

Free and open to the public. Donations at the door will support the education programs of Indianapolis Opera.

Our Mission:

The mission of Indianapolis Opera is to educate, inspire and entertain through the creation and presentation of musical storytelling for the Hoosier community.

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Experience *Opera All Around Town* with world-class voices, designers, directors, and conductors in authentic, intimate productions.