



Thursday, January 28, 2016

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WORLD PREMIERE KICKS OFF INDIANAPOLIS OPERA 2016-17 SEASON
Hoosier Kurt Vonnegut's LAST WORK Leads New Season

INDIANAPOLIS – *Happy Birthday, Wanda June*, the last revised work of Hoosier author-turned-librettist Kurt Vonnegut, will have its World premiere September 16-18 and be the season opening performance for Indianapolis Opera it announced today.

“Indianapolis Opera is pleased to celebrate the Hoosier state’s bicentennial with a work by one of its greatest citizens,” said Indianapolis Opera (IO) General Director Kevin Patterson. The work has received the endorsement of the Indiana Bicentennial Commission as a Legacy Project.

Happy Birthday, Wanda June was a joint project between Vonnegut and Butler University’s Director of Instrumental Activities Richard Auldon Clark. The pair worked on the piece for some years in Vonnegut’s New York brownstone. Vonnegut handed off his final libretto two weeks before his death in April 2007.

Richard Auldon Clark said, “My work with Kurt Vonnegut began in the early 1990's when we created new works based on *Breakfast of Champions*, *Mother Night*, *Cat's Cradle*, and *Fates Worse Than Death*. Kurt always thought *Happy Birthday, Wanda June* would make a great opera, and I was thrilled when he presented me his only play to create this new work. Kurt Vonnegut was not only a great friend and collaborator, but also the most significant influence on my professional life. It was his wish that the story and his words be of great significance and that the music would really enhance rather than supersede it. I know Kurt would love this new opera and would be thrilled that it was being premiered in Indianapolis, his hometown.”

“Butler University and the Jordan College of the Arts have a strong and longstanding relationship with Indianapolis Opera. JCA Faculty Member Richard Auldon Clark’s extraordinary work on *Happy Birthday, Wanda June* continues our commitment to the Opera as well as the arts and cultural community of central Indiana. We’re delighted to be a part of Indianapolis Opera's remarkable production which will debut on our campus at the Howard L. Schrott Center for the Arts,” said Ronald Caltabiano, DMA, Dean of the Jordan College of the Arts.

“Indianapolis Opera will engage Metropolitan Opera Stage Director Eric Einhorn to direct this important premiere. Eric and his team of set designer Cameron Anderson, lighting designer Shawn Kauffman and costume designer Candida Nichols know intimately the importance of delivering a compelling narrative to audiences,” said Patterson.

- more -

World Premiere / Page 2
Thursday, January 28, 2016

IO begins its season ticket campaign 2016-17 with this announcement. New subscription sales begin Monday, May 2, followed by single ticket sales on Monday, August 1. Besides *Happy Birthday, Wanda June*, IO will also produce two other shows during the 2016-17 season and perform in two different venues during the season. Those shows include:

Happy Birthday, Wanda June
The Schrott Center for the Arts
September 16, 17 & 18 / 8:00 p.m. / 7:30 p.m. / 2:30 p.m.

Only Here, Only Once
WORLD PREMIERE

Happy Birthday Wanda June began life as a play by Kurt Vonnegut in October 1971 at New York's Theater de Lys. The play was Vonnegut's first attempt at a stage work. Written to protest the Vietnam War in 1970, the play blends the sacred and the profane to produce off-the-wall and strangely funny satires. Wanda's plot is based loosely on the Greek legends of Odysseus and Penelope – it involves the unexpected return of a mercenary career soldier/hunter named Harold Ryan and his wife, Penelope. When Harold left Penelope, she was a ditzzy carhop; when he returns after eight years lost in the Amazon, he finds that she has gone to college, majored in English lit and changed her attitude about the macho man she married.

The Barber of Seville
Tarkington at the Center for the Performing Arts, Carmel
November 18, 19 & 20 / 8:00 p.m. / 7:30 p.m. / 2:30 p.m.

Composed in 13 days and first performed in Rome in 1816, *The Barber of Seville* is a riotous romantic comedy in two acts, based on the play of the same name by the French writer Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais. This nonstop, funny, fast action piece has all the pranks, and first act finale of musical chaos and hilarity that you have to experience. The play is the first in a trilogy written before the French Revolution. Music by Rossini and libretto by Sterbini.

The Jewel Box
The Schrott Center for the Arts
March 24, 25 & 26 / 8:00 p.m. / 7:30 p.m. / 2:30 p.m.

This playful post-modern opera about opera conceived by *The New Yorker* music critic Paul Griffiths, is fully scored by Mozart. The two act original work combines concert arias, minor arias that were once plundered by rival composers, and neglected excerpts from unfinished Mozart operas were gathered by Griffiths, given new English texts and woven together with dialogue. The result is a drama about the composer who steps inside the proscenium and manipulates his characters to create a new genre of opera.

- more -

World Premiere / Page 3
Thursday, January 28, 2016

About Indianapolis Opera

Since 1975, Indianapolis Opera has delivered the passion, excitement and art of opera throughout Indiana with compelling educational, cultural and community activities. The Indianapolis Opera Resident Artist program reaches 30,000 children and adults statewide each year, with additional performances in Michigan, Illinois and Kentucky. Indianapolis Opera re-emerged in 2015 under the leadership of General Director Kevin Patterson, a Hoosier native and veteran arts leader. Under Patterson's leadership, Indianapolis Opera has embraced a production and collaboration vision seeking to engage the community. www.IndyOpera.org