

Opera Performance:

2021-11-12/2021-11-14 – Three Decembers (Friday/Sunday cast)



Audio Playlist



Video Playlist

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THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA OPERA THEATRE PROGRAM PRESENTS

THREE DECEMBERS

Music by Jake Heggie

Libretto by Gene Scheer

Based on an original play by Terrence McNally

Commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Three Decembers is a modern masterpiece that explores the truths, lies, resentments, and ultimately the hopes of a trio of characters over the course of three decades.

The opera premiered in 2008 as a coproduction between Houston Grand Opera and San Francisco Opera under the working title, *Last Acts*. The character of Madeline Mitchell was performed by Frederica von Stade, for whom composer, Jake Heggie, conceived the role. Its libretto is loosely based on Terrence McNally's unpublished play *Some Christmas Letters (and a Couple of Phone Calls)*, which was performed as a staged reading at an AIDS benefit in 1999. Librettist Gene Scheer more tangibly drew inspiration from *The Wild Duck*, Henrik Ibsen's 1884 play about the lie of the mind that sustains family's fragile illusion of itself.



The production examines the fragility of relationships and the tenuousness of the narratives that bind us together. The visual world of the opera is an expressive extension of the characters' interior worlds, rather than a literal representation of their surroundings. Maddy, Charlie, and Bea become the architects of the worlds in which they live, which crumble and rebuild along with the narratives they each construct about themselves.

With profound storytelling that bares the souls of each character, *Three Decembers* is an intimate meditation about family—the ones we are born into and those we create.

—Bill Theisen, *director of opera*

This production contains adult content and language.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Production Director.....Richard Loula
Production Stage Manager.....Briana Maxwell
Assistant to Production Director.....Kristi Clarida

SCENERY AND PROPS STAFF

Technical Director.....Don Schneider
Scene Shop Supervisor.....Mike Nolte
Scenic Change Artist.....Joan Newhouse
Scenic Artist.....Gina Smothers
Props Artisan.....Christian Santiago
Painters.....Paris Sissel, Maggie Bashore
Crew.....Abigail Ballaur, Zoe Olson,
Kathryn Ostgaard, Richard Stockton

COSTUME STAFF

Costume Shop Supervisor.....Cindy Kubu
Costume Tailor.....Joyce McKinley
Wardrobe Staff.....Andrea Wright,
Fiona Zachel, Karle Jeanne Meyers

ELECTRICS STAFF

Electrics Supervisor.....Josh Nathanson
Electrics AssistantJared Kiebel
Electrics Crew.....Emily Bargamian, Nicole Blodig,
La Della Gallagher, Caleb Weber
Sydney Williams
Spot Operators.....Elizabeth Krebs, Hayden Jensen,
Aubrey Vantiger, Molly Watt

AUDIO/VIDEO STAFF

Audio/Video Supervisor.....Rachel Duncan
Sound Mixer.....Bri Atwood
Audio/Video Technicians.....Nashali Cruz, Theophile Habimana,
Brady Willis

RECORDING STUDIOS

Recording Engineers.....Chris Jensen, James Edel

STAGE CREW

.....Heather Craig, Allison Demaree,
Kyleigh Harm, Amya Lopez,
Ashley McKim, Kate Tonn,
Talia Howard

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

BILL THEISEN (director) made his professional theatre debut at the Skylight Opera Theatre in his hometown of Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1981. His longtime affiliation with the company came full circle when he returned to serve as artistic director from 2004 through 2013. Bill has directed over 100 productions for theatre and opera companies from coast to coast. Recent directing credits include *The Pirates of Penzance* for Santa Fe Opera, *Showboat* with Gateway Playhouse, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Barber of Seville*, and *The Mikado* at Lyric Opera of Kansas City, *Sweeney Todd* with Cleveland Opera, and *The Magic Flute* for Virginia Opera. Mr. Theisen works frequently on the university level as a guest director and lecturer. He served as the interim director of opera at the University of Iowa in 1998 and has continued that relationship for the past 15 years culminating in his returning to the university as the full time director of opera beginning in the fall 2013. Bill was the artistic director of the Capitol Center for the Performing Arts in Upstate New York and is an adjudicator for arts programming on PBS.

WAYNE WYMAN (conductor) is an accomplished conductor, stage director, and coach whose career has included numerous guest appearances as well as serving as artistic director of Capitol Opera (Raleigh, NC) and Lyric Opera of San Antonio. His work has been consistently well-received by audiences and critics: "Most impressive was the confidence in the pit. Wayne Wyman led his orchestra through the moods and colors of this gorgeous score with knowledgeable Gallic style... Wyman repeatedly seduced the listener with sensuous nuance." (*Carmen*, Roy Dicks, *Raleigh News & Observer*) While at the artistic helm of the San Antonio company, Wyman founded and directed the Lyric Studio young artist program, whose alumni now perform at leading opera houses, including the Vienna State Opera, La Scala, and the Metropolitan Opera. Wyman is the opera coach at the University of Iowa. Since 2005, his summers are spent in Graz, Austria on the faculty of the American Institute for Musical Studies (AIMS). Wyman earned an Artist Diploma in Opera from the Cincinnati Conservatory and studied privately with the Director of Opera at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna.

MEGAN MADDALENO (assistant conductor) is a current Doctor of Musical Arts student in orchestral conducting at the University of Iowa. There, she has had the immense privilege of conducting the orchestral ensembles, opera workshops, and new music initiatives, as well as studying under such respected conductors as Dr. Mélisse Brunet, Dr. William LaRue Jones, Professor David E. Becker, and violinist Dr. Scott Conklin. Awards received during her time at UI include the Yamaha Fellowship for Eastman Leadership Academy in Summer 2020, the 2019

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UI Summer Music Research Grant for her involvement in conducting workshops, and membership of the collegiate pedagogical association, Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning. A passionate educator, Megan was the Director of Orchestras for Columbia Public Schools prior to pursuing her graduate degrees. While in Columbia, Missouri, Megan was a conducting student of Maestro Kirk Trevor, and acted as Musical Assistant of the Missouri Symphony Society Conservatory. In recent years, she has acted as cover conductor and assistant conductor for the Missouri Symphony's summer and winter seasons. An advocate for new music, she also collaborated with the Missouri Composer's Project and Columbia Civic Orchestra to conduct premieres of local composers. Megan Maddaleno received her Bachelor of Music Education degree with emphasis in instrumental studies from Webster University, and her master's of orchestral conducting from the University of Iowa.

BRIANA MAXWELL (stage manager) is a proud member of the Actors' Equity Association. She is the production stage manager for the Department of Dance and the Martha-Ellen Tye Opera at the University of Iowa. Her recent stage management credits include Dance Gala In Motion, UI Dance Company 2021, and *The Light in the Piazza* at the University of Iowa. Additional stage management credits include *Madama Butterfly* at Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre, *Ubu the King* at Williamstown Theatre Festival, and *Heartbreak House* at Montana Shakespeare in the Parks.

TAYLOR JACKSON (assistant stage manager) *Three Decembers* is Taylor's fourth production as a UI Stage Management MFA Candidate. Taylor's select opera and dance credits include *Opera Outdoors* (ASM – 2018, 2017, 2014, 2013), *Così fan tutte* (PA), *La Bohème* (PA), and *The Barber of Seville* (PA) with Opera Omaha and *The Nutcracker Tour* (ASM – 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016), *Momentum* (2019, 2017), *The Wizard of Oz*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Cleopatra* with American Midwest Ballet. Proud member of IATSE Local 42.

MARGARET WENK-KUCHLBAUER (scenery and costume designer) is the scenery and costume designer for UI Division of Performing Arts Production Unit, collaborating with many UI faculty and guests. In this extraordinary year and a half, challenging all our norms, latest opera designs include scenery for *The Light in the Piazza*, co-production with Theatre Arts sadly postponed then cancelled, *The Tragedy of Carmen* and *Little Women*. Designs for in-person dance and virtual dance include Dance Gala 2021, UIDC 2021, and Dance Gala 2020 IN MOTION.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

BRYON WINN (lighting designer) Bryon is delighted to have the opportunity to collaborate with Bill, Margaret, and Briana on *Three Decembers*. He is a professor of design and Director of Theatre for the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Iowa. He has designed over 250 productions for theatre, opera, dance, and corporate events throughout the country. This includes the recent SOM Opera productions of *Grand Night for Singing*, *Così Fan Tutte*, *The Medium*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*. Bryon is a member of United Scenic Artists 829.

VICTOR MALDONADO (assistant lighting designer) After recently graduating with a BFA in technical theatre design from The University of Texas El Paso, Victor was accepted to the University of Iowa's MFA design program with a focus in lighting and scene design. This past month, Victor also assisted Bryon Winn on *Our Lady of 121st Street* for the Department of Theatre Arts. Other recent design credits include *Saturday Night Fever*, and *Christmas Carol En La Frontera*.

KELLY HILL, mezzo-soprano, began her doctoral studies at the University of Iowa in 2018 as an Iowa Performance Fellow. As a student of Professor Stephen Swanson, she has portrayed the title character in *Carmen*, and performed the role of Jo March in *Little Women* with the University Opera Theater. Kelly holds ties with the Yale School of Music, Cedar Rapids Opera, Central City Opera, the Santa Fe Opera, and the Aspen Music Festival and School.

BRENNAN MARTINEZ is a mezzo-soprano pursuing a D.M.A. at the University of Iowa. She holds a Master of Music from the A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute at UNCSA, and a Bachelor of Music from Oklahoma City University. Recent performances include: Armelinda in *Cinderella* and Anna Kennedy in *Maria Stuarda* (Piedmont Opera), the title role in *The Tragedy of Carmen* (Hawaii Performing Arts Festival), and Consuelo in *West Side Story* (The Glimmerglass Festival). www.brennanmartinez.com

MIKAYLA LIU is a soprano currently completing her master's at the University of Iowa, studying under Stephen Swanson. Mikayla graduated Magna Cum Laude, with her Bachelor degree in vocal music education from the University of Northwestern, and enjoyed success in solo recitals, choirs, musical and opera productions. Mikayla's previous roles include: First Lady in scenes of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Guilietta in scenes of Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*, ensemble member in Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* and Sherman's *Mary Poppins* (University of Northwestern). Mikayla is excited to debut at the University of Iowa as Beatrice in Heggie's *Three Decembers* and hopes you enjoy the show!

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ANDREW RENÉ, baritone, is a student at the University of Iowa. Recently, he performed as a member of the Virginia Opera Herndon Foundation Emerging Artist Program, the Tulsa Opera Filene Resident Artist Program, and, most recently, the Gerdine Young Artist Program at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. In September, he played the role of Andrew Young in Opera Carolina's production of *I Dream*, a musical drama about the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr.

NATHAN BROWN (he/him) is a second-year graduate student at the University of Iowa, earning his MA in vocal performance. Originally from the St. Louis area, Nathan has performed and taught across the Midwest at various different levels. He hopes to explore more operatic repertoire in the coming years after graduation. He's also excited to be part of the School of Music's return to live music-making this year. Enjoy the show!

AVERY NABHOLZ, Coloratura Soprano, is a 5th year Vocal Performance and Music Education student at the University of Iowa. She studies voice with Professor Stephen Swanson. This is her fourth production with the University of Iowa Opera Theater. Her previous productions include a role in Rogers and Hammerstein's *A Grand Night for Singing* and Mark Adamo's *Little Women*. She was also a young artist selected to perform in Cedar Rapids Opera Theater's annual children's outreach production *The Enchanted Forest*.

ORCHESTRA

FLUTEJoshua Stine

OBOELexi Doremus

CLARINETMina Jerome

SAXOPHONEYo-yo Su

PERCUSSIONJohn O'Shaughnessy

PIANOMinji Kwon, Klyde Ledamo

VIOLINJunhong Zhou, Shengho Wang
Oriana Ross

CELLOAdrián Gómez Hernández

BASSAlexander Waters

UPCOMING EVENTS

For the most up to date listing of concerts and recitals, please visit arts.uiowa.edu.

All events are FREE unless otherwise indicated.

View livestreamed concerts at music.uiowa.edu/livestream.

NOVEMBER

2021

13	3:00 p.m.	Faculty Recital: Nicole Esposito, <i>flute</i> ; Greg Hand, <i>harpsichord</i>	Organ Hall
13	7:30 p.m.	Ulowa Combo Concerts	Recital Hall
13	7:30 p.m.	Iowa Faculty Brass Quintet and Graduate Brass Quintet	Concert Hall
14	1:30 p.m.	Celebrating Beethoven: Complete 32 Sonatas UI Festival, Concert #5	Concert Hall
14	7:30 p.m.	LOUi Concert	Stark Opera Studio
14	7:30 p.m.	Jazz Repertory Ensemble	Concert Hall
15	7:30 p.m.	Latin Jazz Ensemble	Concert Hall
16	7:30 p.m.	Johnson County Landmark	Concert Hall
17	7:30 p.m.	Iowa Symphony Band and Moline High School Bands	Concert Hall
18	7:30 p.m.	Faculty Recital: Jorge Montilla, <i>clarinet</i> and Rene Lecuona, <i>piano</i>	Concert Hall

DECEMBER

2021

01	7:30 p.m.	UI Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops Concert	Hancher Auditorium
02	7:30 p.m.	JACK Quartet	Concert Hall
03	7:30 p.m.	Voxman Chorale and Camerata	Concert Hall

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