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A MESSAGE
from Henry G. Akina, General and Artistic Director
& Karen Tiller, Executive Director

It is a pleasure to welcome you to our 2004 Season. Since the birth of opera as an art form, the combined themes of Love and its dark mirror, War, have filled the stage with terror, amusement and excitement. We are convinced that our three operas this season will do no less.

It is a very exciting time at Hawaii Opera Theatre. The season has arrived, and though it is the busiest time for the staff, it is also the culmination of several months, even years, of work. It is our favorite time of year because we remember why we have dedicated ourselves to producing opera. We get to see you, opera lovers and first-timers alike, during the various offerings of lectures, events, performances and educational opportunities. We also have new faces at the company, including a new Executive Director. Please introduce yourself to Karen during the performances and events in the coming months.

The excitement continues in that we are adding a summer offering. Coming in August, we will produce The Mikado at the Neal S. Blaisdell Center. Stay tuned for more information about The Mikado and additional events.

It is truly an exciting time...please join us in the adventure.

Henry G. Akina
Karen Tiller

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THE RATIONAL IN THE EMOTIONAL

by Dr. Lesley A. Wright

With the successful revival of *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Vienna on 29 August 1789, Emperor Joseph II commissioned another opera from Mozart, whose collaborator, Lorenzo Da Ponte, offered a comic libretto originally destined for court composer Antonio Salieri. Mozart must have worked quickly, for the premiere of *Cosi fan tutte* (the third of the three Mozart-Da Ponte operas) took place less than five months later, on 26 January 1790.

Da Ponte fashioned his plot from a number of elements (referring even to a contemporary adultery scandal known to Salieri through his Parisian friend Beaumarchais). Italian opera provided models for the cynical older man (Don Alfonso) and the spirited maid (Despina), as well as the character disguised as a "doctor," fake poison, etc. Other comic works also observed the unities; for this plot supposedly takes place in the span of breakfast to dinner of one day. In fact, for all its charm and cleverness, *Cosi* would be only a small achievement without its pairing with the profound humanity of Mozart's music.

The nineteenth century did not appreciate the supposed immorality and frivolousness of a plot where men switch lovers as a joke. The 18th century, however, would have related this experiment to ideas current among the philosophies; Rousseau, for example, wrote that experience precedes understanding. And therefore, the old philosopher Don Alfonso, could not just tell the young men Ferrando and Guglielmo that women can be fickle. He could not just inform the two sisters from Ferrara, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, that they knew little about love. All four had to learn from painful experience so that they would no longer deceive themselves. Da Ponte called the work *The School for Lovers* (for the title *Thus Do They All* was Mozart's idea). At the end we wonder if any of the four lovers, now graduates of this school, could ever feel so confident in their love again.

The drama proceeds in two main phases. First the men wager and test the fidelity of their fiancées to disprove Don Alfonso's cynicism. Until the first-act finale, we observe a series of unsuccessful efforts to corrupt the two sisters. Despina's cure by magnetism (a sort of magical catalyst) is the turning point that shifts the ladies' feelings toward the "wrong" men.

Then the second phase shows the game careening out of control, destabilizing all four lovers until Don Alfonso reunites them with their original partners.

This is a most symmetrical opera. Three men and three women arranged to form one pair of philosophers, one sentimental pair of lovers, and one practical pair of lovers. They sing in numerous ensembles (from duets to sextets), but each soloist still has two contrasted arias, one in each act. Each act ends with a large, concerted finale. Three consecutive trios for the men establish a male perspective in Act 1; two pieces for women begin Act 2. Everywhere we find Mozart's gift for melody, resourceful orchestration, and a sparkling mixture of buffa and seria styles. This lightly cynical work, superbly paced and ennobled by Mozart's music, exposes human frailty through parody and smiling engagement and speaks to us all in a message that has proven to be both modern and profoundly human.

Dr. Wright is Professor of Musicology and Graduate Chair of Music at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa.
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Cosi fan tutte

BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
in Italian with English Supertitles
Premiere: Vienna, January 26, 1790
Performed at the Neal S. Blaisdell Concert Hall by Hawaii Opera Theatre February 13, 15 & 17, 2004

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Dorabella ..................... Ning Liang
Guglielmo ..................... Christopheren Nomura
Ferrando ..................... George Dyer
Despina ..................... Suzanna Guzmán
Don Alfonso ..................... Steven Condy

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THE STORY OF

**Act I: Scene 1**
Two young officers argue with Don Alfonso, who says that their fiancées can be easily swayed by another man, as all women can. Alfonso offers to prove his point by suggesting a wager. The terms of the wager dictate that for 24 hours the young men must faithfully follow Don Alfonso’s instructions. The scene ends as the men sing about what they will do with their wealth when they win the bet.

**Scene 2**
Fiordiligl and Dorabella sit together discussing their handsome fiancés. Unexpectedly, Don Alfonso arrives and tells the girls that the men have been called away to active duty. Moments later, Guglielmo and Ferrando arrive in traveling clothes, and all sing of a dreadful, unexpected parting.

**Scene 3**
The girls’ maid, Despina, complains about her awful job. The sisters appear and are heartbroken over the departure of their lovers. Despina offers advice to the ladies—have fun while your men are away, for they won’t be faithful!

Don Alfonso persuades Despina to help him with his plan. Ferrando and Guglielmo appear in costume. Alfonso presents them to the sisters as his old friends. The "strangers" flirt with the women, but their fiancées remain steadfast. The young men declare victory, but the old man cautions that it is very early in the game. Alfonso and Despina make plans for their next step.

**Scene 4**
Alone, the girls are forlorn. Suddenly the strangers enter, staggering and ill. Alfonso explains that the men have taken arsenic because the women have rejected them. Don Alfonso and Despina rush to the hospital to get the doctor, leaving the girls alone with the “dying” men. Despina soon returns disguised as the doctor. After her “treatment,” the ailing patients are suddenly healthy. Their first words are words of love to the two women, and it is clear the sisters’ resolve is beginning to crumble.

**Act II: Scene 1**
Despina offers her opinion that every woman should be an expert flirt by the age of 15 and this will empower her to rule the world. Though not completely convinced, the girls decide to flirt with the strangers: Dorabella takes the dark-haired one (really Guglielmo, engaged to Fiordiligl) and Fiordiligl will flirt with the blond (really Ferrando, engaged to Dorabella).

**Scene 2**
The young men sing a duet to their mistresses. The couples separate; Fiordiligl and Ferrando depart for a walk, and Dorabella and Guglielmo stay behind. Dorabella gives in to his advances while Fiordiligl returns alone because of Ferrando’s improper advances. The three men meet to compare notes later in the day: Guglielmo is triumphant, Ferrando is despondent, and Don Alfonso is starting to sense victory.

**Scene 3**
Despina congratulates Dorabella on giving in to Guglielmo’s advances. Fiordiligl admits love but resists her feelings. Fiordiligl suggests the girls should dress in the uniforms of their “true” loves and join them at the front. Ferrando rushes in and proclaims his love to Fiordiligl. He asks her to kill him if she will not return his love. She succumbs and the couple rushes off. Guglielmo is furious that his fiancée has run off with Ferrando and curses her. Ferrando soon returns, and Alfonso tells the men to marry the girls anyway for all women are like that - Così fan tutte. Despina announces that the girls are prepared to marry the strangers.

**Scene 4**
The two couples are congratulated by all. Alfonso introduces the notary (Despina in disguise). The ceremony begins as a soldiers’ chorus is heard in the distance. The girls believe their lovers are returning and hide the strangers. The men change into their military uniforms and begin asking questions. Ferrando sees the marriage contract, and the girls admit their guilt. The men change costume once more, and Alfonso explains the entire matter. The lovers are properly reunited, and all sing the moral: Happy is the man who can take the good with the bad.

*Synopsis by Karen Tiller*
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Contributors
Lois Taylor-Clarke
Karen Tiller
Dr. Lesley Wright

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Harvey Gray (right) and Marilyn Gray (second from left) chat with Sherry Chock Wong and husband Kendric Wong (left) as the costumed pair sold "opera-unities" to help underwrite HOT operations.
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*Opera For Everyone Intern*
Peter Dean Beck, Scenery & Lighting Designer
Peter Dean Beck has designed scenery and/or lighting for over two hundred productions around the country. During his eighteen previous seasons with HOT, he has designed the sets for thirty-two productions and the lighting for forty-nine, among them: La Bohème, Eugene Onegin, The Tales of Hoffman, Tristan and Isolde, Elektra, Macbeth, L’italiana in Algen and Samson and Delilah. Among his other opera credits are Falstaff, Turandot, Manon, Madama Butterfly, Hansel and Gretel, A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Roméo et Juliette for such companies as Atlanta Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Virginia Opera and Chautauqua Opera. His musical theater credits include West Side Story, Guys and Dolls, Candide, The King and I and Fiddler on the Roof. For Eugene Ballet, he designed Firebird, Petrushka and Swan Lake. He recently did a double bill of Le Rossignol and Cavalleria Rusticana for Sakai City Opera in Japan (built and painted by HOT Scene Shop) and The Indigo Girls Project for Atlanta Ballet.

Steven Condy, Baritone (Don Alfonso)
Steven Condy, has become renowned for his portrayal of the great “buffo” roles, performing with opera companies throughout North America. His repertoire includes Dr. Dulcamara in The Elixir of Love, Sulpice in The Daughter of the Regiment; Don Magnifico in La Cenerentola; and the title role in Verdi’s Falstaff. Venturing into the great dramatic-baritone repertoire, he has also performed the roles of Scarpia in Tosca with Chautauqua Opera and Marcello in La Bohème with Anchorage Opera. Mr. Condy received a Bachelor of Music Degree from the University of Hartford and a Master of Music Degree from Yale University. Upcoming engagements include Dr. Bartolo in Rossini’s The Barber of Seville with Portland Opera, Count Stankar in Verdi’s Stiffelio with Chautauqua Opera and Sir Robert Cecil in Britten’s Gloriana with Opera Theater of St. Louis.

Mary Dibbern, Rehearsal Pianist and Continuo
Mary Dibbern works internationally as a freelance vocal coach and accompanist for main-stage productions and young artist programs. This season she is coach for the Festival of Radio France (where she worked with Mirella Freni), Seattle Opera, Fort

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Worth Opera, the Seagle Music Colony and returns to HOT. She has also been guest coach for Paris Opera-Bastille, the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, operas of Nice, Bordeaux, Lyons, Châtelet, Marseilles, Toulouse and Opéra-Comique as well as in Switzerland, Portugal and China. She has recorded French recital repertoire for Claves and Harmonia Mundi. Pendragon Press publishes her Performance Guides for Carmen, The Tales of Hoffmann, Faust, Romeo and Juliet (2004) and The Melodies of Leguerny.

George Dyer, Tenor (Ferrando)
Mr. Dyer made his professional debut in 1996 with New York City Opera and since has been a regular guest with opera companies throughout North America. He made his HOT debut last season as Lenski in Eugene Onegin. He has also appeared in concert with the Utah Symphony, the Jerusalem Symphony, the Estonia National Orchestra, the Liverpool Royal Philharmonic and has been a guest soloist with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on several of their national broadcasts. Upcoming engagements include Steersman (Flying Dutchman) with Austin Lyric, Il Duco (Rigoletto) with Wildwood Festival, Ralph Rackstraw (HMS Pinafore) and Ferrando (Così fan tutte) with Utah Opera, and Joaquin (Fidelio) and Percy (Anna Bolena) with Atlanta Opera. He is also an accomplished recording artist.

Beebe Freitas, HOT Associate Artistic Director
A graduate of Oberlin College, Ms. Freitas received her Master's Degree from Boston University and studied at Juilliard where she was choral accompanist. Ms. Freitas has
performed with such renowned soloists as Yo Yo Ma, Bass Virtuoso Edgar Meyer and with the Tokyo String Quartet. She has recorded with clarinetist David Shifrin. Ms. Fretas is currently a member of the faculty at the University of Hawaii and has been with HOT since 1966.

Suzanna Guzmán, Mezzo Soprano
(Despina)
Suzanna Guzmán has appeared as a principal soloist with many international opera companies. *Time* magazine called her “a fire-eating singing actress” for her portrayal of Carmen for Houston Grand Opera. She was nominee for a Helen Hayes Outstanding Lead Actress award and spotlighted by *People* magazine in Español in their Silver Millennium issue. Recent CD releases include the recordings of *Florencia En El Amazonas* and the Debussy Trio’s *Three Friends* which features Ms. Guzmán in works by lan Krouse based on Lorca. She is the co-host of the radio show *Opera Notes on Air* and her award-winning show *Don’t be Afraid It’s Just Opera* has been performed for over 250,000 students nationwide.

Richard Harrell, Stage Director
Stage director Richard Harrell has served as Director of the Juilliard Opera Center, Director of the San Francisco Opera Center and is currently the Artistic Advisor and head of faculty for the Opera Training Program of the New National Theatre Tokyo. As a stage director, recent productions include *La Cenerentola*, *Così fan tutte* and Cavalli’s *La Calisto* for San Francisco Opera Center and *La Traviata* for Sacramento Opera. Upcoming productions include *The Barber of Seville* for Gold Coast Opera in Fort Lauderdale and *Don Giovanni* for Sacramento Opera. An internationally recognized Master Class teacher, he has taught for institutions such as the International Opera Center of the Netherlands, Yale, Indiana University and the Chautauqua Institution.

Ning Liang, Mezzo-Soprano
(Dorabella)
Ning Liang has performed at the Teatro La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, the Semper Opera Dresden, the Bavarian State Opera, and opera houses in Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Marseilles, Bologna, Helsinki, Tel Aviv, Washington, Philadelphia and Toronto. Previous engagements: Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* in Bilbao, at the Royal Albert Hall in London, at Michigan Opera Theatre and Baltimore Opera; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Così fan tutte* at Hamburg State Opera; *Alice in Wonderland* in Amsterdam; *La Forza del Destino* at Deutsche Oper Berlin; *La Cenerentola* in Norway; Hercules in Athens; *Das Lied von der Erde* in concert in Rouen, France; and *Carmen* for HOT. Upcoming engagements: Brahms’ *Alto Rhapsodie* in Antwerp; *Das Lied von der Erde* in Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Reims Music Festival; and Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* at Opera de Monte-Carlo and in Toulouse and Rouen, France. Ms. Liang is well known for her role as Suzuki in the recent film *Madama Butterfly*.  

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Gretchen Mueller, Stage Manager
Ms. Mueller has stage-managed for San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, Banff School of Fine Arts and fifteen seasons at HOT. Her production stage management credits include Washington Opera, Dallas Opera, Skylight Opera Theatre, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Wolf Trap, Tanglewood and a variety of other small opera companies. During her career, she has worked on two productions of War and Peace and two productions of The Ring Cycle, as well as several Russian works such as Boris and Khovanskhiina. She served as Company Manager, Stage Manager and Technical Liaison for International Attractions’ tours of The Rustavi Company of Tbilisi, Georgia and of The Peking Opera Company of Chongching, China. Ms. Mueller is a graduate of Harvard with a Bachelor’s in Fine Arts and a minor in Physics.

Nola A. Nāhulu, Choral Director
Ms. Nāhulu has been Choral Director with HOT since 1991 and with Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus since 1986 where she serves as Executive & Artistic Director.

A native of Wai`anae, O`ahu, she also is Choral Director for the Pearl Harbor Hawaiian Civic Club and the Kawaiaha`o Church. She is a lecturer at the University of Hawai`i, Mānoa in Hawaiian Choral Music and Director of Kawaiolaanapuka`ileo, an a capella vocal ensemble whose goal is to perpetuate Hawaiian Choral Music. She is past-president of the Executive Board of the Hawai`i Chapter of the American Choral Directors’ Association.

Christopheren Nomura, Baritone
(Guglielmo)
Christopheren Nomura has emerged at the forefront of the new generation of American singers. He is a noted Mozarteian and has had a strong association with Puccini’s Madama Butterfly. He made his film debut as Prince Yamadori in the Scorsese/Mitterand film. He has performed with Dallas Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Seattle Opera, Opera Carolina, the Boston Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony and the Boston Pops. He sang at the Vatican for its Jubilee Year in 2000, performing before an audience of 15,000 and simulcast to 200,000. Nomura has recorded for Sony, Dorian; Teldec; London;
Helen E. Rodgers, Costumer
Helen Rodgers returns to HOT for her third season. Recent work includes costume design for La Bohème for Opera Memphis, Chautauqua Opera and Mannes Opera. She designed a Wild West Don Pasquale for the San Diego Opera, which was also mounted at Edmonton Opera, Kentucky Opera, Fort Worth Opera and Arizona Opera. Formerly resident costume designer for both Sarasota Opera and Chautauqua Opera, her work for those companies encompassed over 60 designs, including the world premiere of A Chekhov Trilogy for Chautauqua and American premieres of La Jolie Fille de Perth, Maskarade, La Wally and Hurevka for Sarasota. Other credits include New Orleans Opera, Opera Festival of New Jersey, Virginia Opera and Canadian Opera Company. Rodgers is Assistant Costume Coordinator for the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Show.

Richard Stead,
Wig & Makeup Designer
Mr. Stead has been Wigmaster at the San Francisco Opera where he won an Emmy Nomination. He has worked with Netherlands Opera, Royal Shakespeare Company, Central City Opera, Utah Opera, Boston Opera, Minnesota Opera, American Conservatory Theatre, Spoleto Festival USA, Bolshoi Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Ballet Hawaii, films and television. He was on the faculty of San Francisco State University and University of California. Mr. Stead operates his own wig & make-up company. This season Mr. Stead celebrates his 22nd consecutive season with HOT.

Joanna K. Takagi,
Assistant Chorus Director
No stranger to HOT, Ms. Takagi made her company debut in the children’s chorus of Otello (1990) and continued to intern and sing with the HOT chorus throughout high school. Returning this season as Assistant Chorus Director, Ms. Takagi says she is proof that opera education works! Ms. Takagi holds a Master of Music Degree in Choral Conducting from Butler University, where she studied conducting with Henry
H. Leck and Dr. Eric Stark. She has worked as Assistant Director with the Indianapolis Children’s Choir and has collaborated locally with the Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus on numerous projects. Ms. Takagi currently directs the choral program at Sacred Hearts Academy.

**Antony Walker**, Conductor
Since his conducting debut in 1991, Australian-born Antony Walker has led 35 operas, 47 large-scale choral/orchestral works, and numerous symphonic works with companies in Europe, Australia and the US. He has worked with Welsh National Opera, Minnesota Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Wolf Trap Opera Company, Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Rome Opera, Opera Australia and Washington Concert Opera. He has led acclaimed productions of *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmen*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Beatrice et Benedict*, *Stiffelio*, *La Traviata*, *Dardanus* and the North American premiere of *The Handmaid’s Tale*. Upcoming are *Roberto Devereux*, *La Donna del Lago*, *Ulysses* and *The Fairy Queen*. Mr. Walker has recorded extensively, including 23 CDs and DVDs representing the works of Bach, Beethoven, Fauré, Handel, Mahler, Mozart, Orff, Verdi and Vine.

**Yali-Marie Williams**, Soprano (Fiordiligi)
One of opera’s most promising young artists, Ms. Williams has, during the past two seasons, performed Violetta in *La Traviata* for the Opera Festival of New Jersey, Connecticut Grand Opera, Opera de Puerto Rico and Annapolis Opera; and Anna Maurant in *Street Scene* for the Aspen Music Festival. She also appeared with the New Orleans Opera as the principal soprano lead of Pontalba in Thea Musgrave’s new work, *Louisiana Purchase*; Tulsa Opera as Antonia in *Les Contes d’Hoffman*; Tampa Opera, Teatro de La Opera de Puerto Rico as Desdemona in *Otello*; and as Musetta in *La Bohème* for Opera Theater of St. Louis. This summer she will debut with Chautauqua Opera as Marguerite in *Faust*.

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