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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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It is almost a miracle that Verdi wrote his last two operas, Otello (1887) and Falstaff (1893). He had planned to retire from the stage with the production of Aida in 1871, and except for his Messa da Requiem (1874), wrote no new large works until Otello, which had a triumphant premiere at La Scala when he was 73. By this time Wagner’s music had swept through Europe and entranced the younger generation. The elderly Verdi, however, did not think "unending melody" was the right course for Italian composers, though he saw much to admire in his German contemporary. He espoused, instead, traditional Italian values: the primacy of melody plus the clarity of form and scoring that had characterized Italian opera for centuries. Though his last tragic opera shows more continuous musical action, more advanced harmony, and more complex orchestration than his previous scores, outlines of arias, drinking songs, duets, ensembles and choruses remain in evidence.

That Verdi came out of retirement was due in part to his enormous veneration for Shakespeare (earlier expressed in his Macbeth [1847, rev. 1865] and in an abandoned King Lear). It was also due to his friendship with two younger men: publisher Giulio Ricordi and librettist/composer Arrigo Boito. In 1879 Ricordi, well aware of Verdi’s predilection for the English master and the Italian vogue for these plays, encouraged Boito to write a libretto based on Shakespeare’s Othello. Due largely to Ricordi’s sensitive diplomacy, Verdi became willing to forgive an offensive poem Boito had penned in the 1860s. Initially cautious, Verdi held Boito’s Otello libretto for several years before he began to compose a score to it in 1884. Many (especially other musicians) rank the results of this collaboration as the culmination of the entire tragic tradition in Italian opera.

Boito was an expert librettist, known for vivid images and varied meters, and highly cultured. For Otello he suppressed the first act of Shakespeare’s play, but in general followed the model closely, providing a finely structured scaffold for Verdi’s music.

In his stirring first words the tenor hero proclaims his military victory in the middle of a tempest, while his last words breathe a sigh of love, to music that recapitulates, with intense pathos, the "bacio" fragment of the Act 1 love duet. From this all-consuming passion springs jealousy, the tragic flaw that leads to Otello’s tragic sufferings and downfall. While Verdi felt that his hero should both “sing and shout,” he assigned the Madonna-like Desdemona a pure lyricism that symbolizes devotion and idealism as well as bowing to the bel canto tradition. The evil Iago, on the other hand, declaims in parlando, with a few moments of slithering arioso to heighten the cruelty of his Mephistophelian sneer. “Iago is envy. Iago is a villain... Iago is the real author of the drama; he it is who fabricates the threads, gathers them up, combines them and weaves them together” (Boito). Whether in the magical love duet, in Desdemona’s plangent Willow Song or touching Ave Maria, in Iago’s nihilistic Credo or in so many other moments, Verdi’s complex score more than matches the virtuoso libretto, wedding song with poetry in a truly Italian masterpiece.

Dr. Wright is Professor of Musicology and Graduate Chair of Music at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.
Dedicated to the memory of Maestro Robert LaMarchina in honor of his many contributions to opera in Hawaii

Through the generosity of our sponsors, Hawaii Opera Theatre presents

*Otello*

BY GIUSEPPE VERDI

Premiere: Milan, Italy, February 5, 1887

Performed at the Neal S. Blaisdell Concert Hall by Hawaii Opera Theatre
January 30, February 1 & 3, 2004
in Italian with English Supertitles

This production is based on the *Otello* presented by Mecklenburg State Theatre, Schwerin, Germany, which premiered in May, 2000, with Ivan Torzs conducting, Henry G. Akina directing and Olaf Zombeck as production designer. The Venetian lion, sculpted for Mecklenburg, was brought to Hawaii with the cooperation of the Mecklenburg State Theatre and Horizon Lines.

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Stage Director .............. Henry G. Akina
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Supertitles written by ...... David Anglin

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Otello ......................... Mark Lundberg
Desdemona .................... Robin Follman
Iago ...................... Gary Simpson
Cassio .................... Jonathan Boyd
Emilia ...................... Dorothy Byrne
Rodrigo ..................... James Price
Lothario ..................... John Mount
Montano ..................... James Scott Sikorski
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THE STORY OF

Based on the play by Shakespeare

ACT 1

Otello’s ship battles a fierce storm as it tries to reach the port of Cyprus. Onlookers are concerned for the safe arrival of the ship. Among those waiting are Roderigo, a Venetian who hates Otello for having married Desdemona, and Iago, Otello’s chief of staff. Otello arrives, announcing his victory over the storm and the Turks. Noticing that Cassio has been promoted by Otello, Iago vows to bring unhappiness to the Moor.

The soldiers and villagers celebrate a successful victory. Iago plots to ruin the reputation of Cassio by getting him drunk. Reluctant at first, Cassio is soon drunk and Roderigo, in alliance with Iago, provokes Cassio. Montano tries to quell the disturbance but unwittingly ends up in a fight with the officer. Otello soon appears and finds a drunk Cassio and a wounded Montano. Iago offers no explanation for the incident, and Cassio is stripped of his commission. Otello dismisses everyone, staying on watch himself; Desdemona remains at his side. They recall the details of their courtship as the stars appear.

ACT 2

Cassio is upset that he has lost his commission. Feigning friendship, Iago suggests that Cassio speak with Desdemona and have her plead his case to Otello. Believing this to be good advice, Cassio goes into the garden to wait for her.

Otello passes by and sees Cassio and Desdemona in the garden. Iago sows the seeds of doubt in Otello’s mind by suggesting that Cassio and Desdemona spend too much time together. Otello brushes away his jealous thoughts until Desdemona pleads Cassio’s case. The Moor becomes incensed and throws her handkerchief to the ground when she tries to wipe his brow. Emilia, Desdemona’s lady-in-waiting, picks it up as her husband Iago looks on.

Otello is upset with Iago for encouraging him to believe the worst of Desdemona and Cassio. Iago relates an incident, saying he heard Cassio mumbling in his sleep. "Sweet Desdemona! We must hide our love. Let us be wary! I am drowning in heavenly ecstasy!" He goes on to describe a handkerchief that Otello identifies as Desdemona’s. Iago says he has seen it in Cassio’s hand. He suggests that if she cannot produce the handkerchief, then her lover must have it. The two men take a vow of vengeance.

ACT 3

Iago tells Otello that he has overheard a conversation confirming the guilt of the lovers. Desdemona appears and again pleads for Cassio’s commission, and Otello is furious, demanding to see her handkerchief. Desdemona cannot produce it, and Otello accuses her of infidelity. She pleads her innocence as she is ordered away.

Badly shaken, Otello hides behind a pillar as a casual conversation develops between Iago and Cassio. They are talking about the young man’s love, Bianca, but the Moor can only hear snatches of the conversation, thinking they are speaking softly because the topic is his wife.

The Venetian Ambassador has arrived. Otello is in a terrible state. A chorus is heard proclaiming the greatness of Otello as the "Lion of St. Mark" as the Ambassador enters with orders for the Moor to return to Venice and for Cassio to take over the governorship of Cyprus. Overhearing his wife’s praise of Cassio, he strikes her, knocking her to the ground. Everyone is in shock, and Otello soon orders all away.

Alone with Iago, Otello rants about vengeance and falls over in convulsion. The crowd praises him off-stage while Iago gloats over his victim: “Behold the Lion.”

ACT 4

Desdemona prepares for bed with the assistance of Emilia. Thinking Otello has gone mad, Desdemona sings The Willow Song about a woman named Barbara whose lover also went mad. Emilia leaves and Desdemona goes to bed. Otello enters, puts out the candle, kisses his wife, and then asks if she has prayed. She pleads for her life. In a terrible rage, he strangles Desdemona.

Emilia knocks and enters. With her last breath, Desdemona says she has killed herself, and Otello cries, “Liar! Twas I that killed her!” Otello then threatens Emilia’s life as she cries summon Lodovico, Cassio and Iago. Otello finally learns the truth as Emilia tells of her husband’s treachery. He looks to the dead woman he dearly loved. Heartbroken, he takes out a dagger and stabs himself. He kisses his love one final time and falls dead.

Synopsis by Karen Tiller
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*Otelto

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Stage Director
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*Otelto

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Cosi fan tutte
Tim Yakiniec
The Merry Widow

Asst. Stage Managers
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*Otelto
The Merry Widow
Morgan Robinson
Cosi fan tutte

Second Asst Stage Managers
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Otelto
Laura Brucia Hamm
Cosi fan tutte
Troy Apostol
The Merry Widow

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Master Electrician
Ams Scott

Prop Master
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Kepoi Lyons

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Richard Sullivan
Hazel Theodore
Joyce Tomorni
Carlynn Wolfe
David Wunsch

*Opera For Everyone Intern
Henry G. Akina, Director
Born in Honolulu, Henry G. Akina is a graduate of Punahou School, Tufts University, The Free University of Berlin, as well as a number of other European institutions. From 1977-1996, he made his home in Berlin, Germany, where he founded and managed The Berlin Chamber Opera. In 1996, he returned to Hawaii and became HOT’s General and Artistic Director. He stage directed for the opera companies of Halle, Gießen, Kiel, Innsbruck, Lyons, and Budapest. In 2000, he directed Otello in Schwerin, Germany and Macau and Beijing, China. For HOT, he directed Madame Butterfly (1993); Tosca (1997); Macbeth (1998); the Hawaii premieres of Elektra (1999) and Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde (2000); Offenbach’s The Tales of Hoffmann (2001) Salome (2002) and La Bohème (2003). He directed Rigoletto for the Edmonton Opera, La Bohème for the Memphis Opera and will direct Madame Butterfly in 2004 for the Atlanta Opera.

Peter Dean Beck, Scenic & 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 Hoffmann, Tristan and Isolde, Elektra, Macbeth, L’italiana in Algieri and Samson and Delilah. Among his other opera credits are Falstaff, Turandot, Manon, Madame 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, Petrouchka 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.

Jonathan Boyd, Tenor (Cassio)
Jonathan Boyd has appeared in San Francisco Opera’s productions of Falstaff, Samson et Dalila, The Merry Widow, Turandot and Alcina. He appeared in the new Romeo and Juliet by Lee Hoiby at the Kennedy Center, Mother of Us All and Central Park with NYCO; Bach’s St. Matthew Passion with Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic; and a recording of Pagliacci with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Engagements this season: San Francisco Opera as Thadeus Stevens and Jo in Mother of Us All and Tamino in Die Zauberflöte; Michigan Opera Theatre as Tamino in The Magic

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Flute; Opera Santa Barbara as Ferrando in Cosi fan tutte; Lake George Opera as Candide; Bach’s E-flat Magnificat and Cantata 110 with the Philharmonia Baroque; Haydn’s Creation with the Choral Arts Society at the Kennedy Center; Don Octavio in Don Giovanni at Opera Royal de Wallonie in Belgium; and Florentine Opera as Rodolfo in La Bohème.

Dorothy Byrne, Mezzo-Soprano (Emilia) A full-voiced mezzo who possesses great agility and power, Dorothy has appeared with Lyric Opera of Chicago in Susannah, Jenufa, Roméo et Juliette and Candide. With Hawaii Opera Theatre, she was the Page in Salome, Filipyevna in Eugene Onegin, Nicklausse in Les Contes d’Hoffmann. Other performances include Gertrude in Hamlet and Emilia in Otello with Opera Theatre of St. Louis; Cecilia March in Little Women with the Minnesota Opera; Clementine in Offenbach’s Bluebeard with Glimmerglass Opera and the Marquise in Daughter of the Regiment; and Orlofsky in Die Fledermaus with Boston Lyric Opera. Upcoming engagements include Leda/Mrs. Traxell in Bennett’s The Mines of Sulphur with Glimmerglass Opera and the Innkeeper’s Wife in The Cunning Little Vixen with the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Robin Follman, Lyric-Soprano (Desdemona) Previous engagements for Ms. Follman: Tosca with Florentine Opera; Micaela in Carmen with Houston Grand Opera and Opera Pacific; Die Zauberflote with Los Angeles Opera; Abigail Williams and Sarah Good in The Crucible with Washington Opera; Mimi in La Bohème for the Macau International Music Festival and Opera Pacific; and Musetta in La Bohème for New York City Opera, Opera Pacific, and Florentine Opera. Upcoming engagements: Florentine Opera as Mimi in La Bohème; Marguerite in Faust with Michigan Opera Theatre; and The Magic Flute with the Beijing Music Festival. In addition to her recently released solo
CD, Rare Verismo Arias (VOG/Qualiton) with Yves Abel and the English Chamber Orchestra, she can be heard on Brahms’ Liebeslieder Walzer, Op. 82, with the William Hall Master Chorale (Angel).

**Bebe 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. Freitas is currently a member of the faculty at the University of Hawaii and has been with HOT since 1966.

**Elsa Grima,** Assistant Stage Director
Elsa Grima was born in Marseilles, France and studied at the Sorbonne and the National Theatre School in Paris before becoming production manager at the Orange Opera Festival (France) in 1988. She subsequently worked as stage manager and assistant director in various opera houses in France, Switzerland and Germany. In 1993, she joined the stage management team at the Paris National Opera. Since 1999 she has been regularly invited to HOT (Elektra, Barber, Hoffmann, Salome, Bohème) and made her debut as stage director with Ravel’s L’Enfant et les Sortilèges in 2001 with the Mae Z. Orvis Opera Studio.

**Mark Lundberg,** Heldentenor (Otello)
Mark Lundberg is a true heldentenor with a large voice, commanding presence and easy high notes. As Tristan in Tristan and Isolde with Opera North in 2001, critics hailed him “as good as Heldentenor as we have today” (The Scotsman). In the 2003-04 season he makes his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut in the title role of Wagner’s Siegfried, among other engagements. In 2002, he sang the role of Otello with Utah Opera and Das Lied von der Erde in Warsaw. Mr. Lundberg has sung 37 performances of Florestan in Fidelio and 35 performances of Samson in Samson et Dalila.

**Patrick McNichols,** Bass-Baritone (Herald)
Born in California, Patrick P. McNichols has called Hawaii home since 1970. An alumnus of Punahou School and the University of Hawaii at Mānoa, he earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Vocal Music in 1994. He has done choral and solo work locally with St. Christopher’s Church, the Hawaii Vocal Arts Ensemble, the Kona Association for the Performing Arts and the Honolulu Symphony and Chorus. Most recently he performed as the bass soloist in the May 2003 performance of Mozart’s Requiem at St. Andrew’s Cathedral. Mr. McNichols has performed every year with HOT since 1998 and is a member of the Mae Z. Orvis Opera Studio. Recent roles for HOT include King Balthazar in Amahl and the Night Visitors and the Second Priest in The Magic Flute.

**John Mount,** Bass-Baritone (Lodovico)
This is Mr. Mount’s 29th season performing with HOT. He has performed in over 60 HOT roles, including Benoit and Alcindoro in La Bohème; Sarastro in The Magic Flute;
Crespo in The Tales of Hoffmann, Timur in Turandot, the King in Aida, and Sarastro in Tosca. Mr. Mount is Professor of Voice and co-director of the Opera Workshop at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa. He has appeared with San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Denver Lyric Opera and the Colorado Opera Festival. A frequent soloist with the Honolulu Symphony, Mr. Mount has sung the bass solos in Elijah, Beethoven’s Symphony No.9, Verdi’s Requiem, Mozart’s Requiem, Brahms’ Requiem and several other productions. He is a former national finalist in both the Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera auditions.

He is also Director of Music for Kailua Methodist Church. Marseille, Monte Carlo, London, Paris and Trieste. He loves to sing Italian music, especially the Verdi roles. A long-lasting wish was to debut as Otello.

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 Wāipahu, O’ahu, she also is Choral Director for the Pearl Harbor Hawaiian Civic Club and the Kawaiha’o Church. She is a lecturer at the University of Hawai’i, Mānoa in Hawaiian Choral Music and Director of Kawaiolaonapukaileo, 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.

Tony Pisculli, Fight Choreographer
Tony Pisculli is Hawaii’s premiere fight coordinator. He has been teaching and directing stage combat in Hawaii for over seven years and has worked at every major theatre on Oahu. He holds a MFA in Directing from the University of Hawaii at Mānoa and directs and produces theatre locally. He serves on the board of the Honolulu Theatre for Youth (Vice President) and the Lizard Loft (President) and is the co-founder and producer of the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival.

James Price, Tenor
(Roderigo)
Jim is a former member of HOT’s Mā Z, Orvis Opera Studio. His past roles with HOT include Triquet in Eugene Onegin and the Slave in Salome as well as King Kaspar in Amahl and the Night Visitors and Le Chat in L’Enfant et les Sorcîères with the Opera Studio. He is a former winner of both the Hawaii NATS Competition and the Hawaii Public Radio/Lotte Lehmann Foundation Art Song Contest. This past fall Jim performed in various
concerts and recitals in the Chicago area. Additionally, he performed the title role in Albert Herring for DePaul Opera and in live excerpts for WFMT Chicago. Jim was also a finalist for Santa Fe Opera’s Apprenticeship Program. Future projects with HOT include Pang in Turandot in 2005.

James Scott Sikin, Bass-Baritone (Montano)
Career highlights have included the Sacristan in Tosca and Der Pfleger in Elektra with Houston Grand Opera; Bertrand in The Dangerous Liaison with San Francisco Opera; Sharpless in Madama Butterfly with Cincinnati Opera; Baritone in Der Elfenbein with the Vienna Volksoper; Kuligin in Katya Kabanova and Harasta in The Cunning Little Vixen with Dallas Opera; Capulet in Roméo et Juliette, Antonio in Le Nozze di Figaro, Johann in Werther, Benoit/Alcindoro in La Bohème and the Bonze in Madama Butterfly with San Diego Opera; Bartolo in Le Nozze di Figaro with HOT and Tulsa Opera; Leporello in Don Giovanni, Papageno in Die Zauberflöte and Ferrando in Il Trovatore with the Colorado Opera Festival among many others.

Gary Simpson, Baritone (Iago)
Labeled a “True Verdi Baritone” by Opera News, Gary Simpson recently performed at the Deutsche Oper Berlin as Scarpia in Tosca (300th performance). He has performed with Los Angeles Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Minnesota Opera, Orlando Opera, L’Opéra de Montreal, and more.

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 premiers of A Chekhov Trilogy for Chautauqua and American premieres of La Fille de Perth, Maskarade, La Wally and Hubrèka 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.

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Richard Stead, Wig & Make-up 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.

Ivan Törzs, Conductor

A native of New Jersey, Ivan Törzs is currently music director of the Vlaamse Opera (Flemish National Opera) in Antwerp, Belgium, where he recently conducted Verdi’s Luisa Miller. Future projects include Arabella, Carmen, Salome and a new production of The Ring. This is his fifth production for HOT, having previously conducted Macbeth, Elektra, Tristan und Isolde and Salome. Ivan has guest-conducted at companies in Vienna, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Budapest, Prague, Miami and many other cities. He also appears as an accompanist for recitals, most recently with Cheryl Studer, Edda Moser, Kurt Moll and Theo Adam.
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