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I'm Italian. In style.
As a mature composer, Puccini traveled widely in North America and Europe. With him, he is known to have carried a small brown leather edition of a book which contained a grand vision of the afterlife: Dante’s *Divine Comedy* consisting of the three parts, *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*. Late in life, Puccini’s work seems to have been increasingly marked by human passion as related to human cruelty, themes which follow him throughout his career from *Tosca* to *Turandot*. In his *Trittico*, one of his most curious and ambitious compositions, he uses the three-part structure to look at three extremely passionate human situations with great intensity. By placing the three episodes close to each other, he looks at humanity at the lowest level, then at a level of confusion, and finally at the level of redemption. This is what make the three operas of *Il Trittico* seem so intense when they are performed together and so disparate and so isolated when they are performed apart. Together they are a grand vision of the human condition. Apart they are mere episodes of that vision, though each is a perfect work in and of itself.

Unhappy relationships, are the *Inferno* of *Il tabarro*. The cruelty of isolation and human callousness in *Suor Angelica*, form the Purgatory where a nun dares commit the sin of suicide, and the glorious thwarting of human greed to achieve human happiness brings us close to Paradise in *Gianni Schicchi*.

The operas are wisely built so that a compact ensemble can perform them. A challenge to any production is keeping the operas coherently individual while relating their thematic values strongly and clearly. Designer Peter Dean Beck, in his very graphic approach to this material, has provided a staging ground where the three fables can unfold individually but which never challenges their sense of unity. So we present this first production of Puccini’s *Il Trittico* to Hawaii, in the hope that its startling intensity will thrill an audience already so familiar with the composer’s work.

Henry Akina
The Triptych of Stories by Puccini

Il tabarro
(The cloak)

On a cargo barge moored at the banks of the Seine, stevedores are unloading freight at the final stop of their voyage: Paris. Michele the barge owner watches the sunset. He has lost the love of his much younger wife, Giorgetta, since their child died in infancy. She is now secretly in love with Luigi, a stevedore who works for Michele. The stevedores celebrate the end of their work and dance with Giorgetta to the music of a passing organ grinder. This puts Michele in a dark mood. As the stevedores prepare to finish work, the wife of the one called Talpa arrives, worried about his bad back. She is called Frugola and spends her days searching the streets of Paris for “treasures”. She shows some of her things to Giorgetta as well as displaying the meal she has bought for her adored cat. Frugola dreams of a life in the countryside. Giorgetta echoes her with dreams of her childhood in Bellville, which are echoed in turn by her secret lover Luigi. The workday ends and the stevedores depart, all except Luigi who signs on to keep working on the barge in order to be near Giorgetta. Giorgetta tells Luigi that she will strike a match as a signal for him to come aboard to meet her later, when Michele has gone to bed. Michele stays up late that night while Giorgetta goes below deck. Thinking bitterly about lost love, he lights a match for his pipe. Luigi, mistaking this for Giorgetta’s signal, steals on board. The suspicious Michele surprises Luigi, forces him to confess his love, and then quietly strangles him to death. Giorgetta, uneasy and unable to sleep, comes from the cabin, asking her husband whether he does not wish to have her near him. “Under my cloak?” asks Michele. “Yes,” she answers sadly. “You said once that everyone carries a cloak: sometimes it hides joy, sometimes sorrow.”

“But sometimes it hides a crime!” cries Michele as he flings the cloak open, revealing the dead body of Luigi.

Suor Angelica
(Sister Angelica)

The opera takes place in a convent in the Italian countryside.

Many years earlier, a young noblewoman had given birth to an illegitimate son. To avoid further embarrassment, her scandalized family forced her to enter this convent and take the veil. Now known as Sister Angelica, she tends to the health and well-being of her sisters. She is gifted with the knowledge of healing herbs and spends her days tending the convent’s herb garden, waiting for word of her family and her adored child. The Abbess announces a visitor for Sister Angelica. It is her aunt, the Princess. The old woman has come to obtain Angelica’s release from any claim on her dead parents’ estate in favor of her younger sister who is about to marry. Angelica pleads with her aunt for some news of her little boy and finally learns that he had died from fever a few years earlier. The Princess leaves. The news is more than Angelica can bear and in her distraction, she mixes and drinks a deadly poison. Suddenly realizing the full implication of what she has done, she begs the Virgin to forgive her mortal sin. As the poison takes effect she believes she sees the Madonnina and her now long-dead child.

Gianni Schicchi

“...That goblin over there in Hell is Gianni Schicchi...he ventured...to counterfeit himself as Buoso Donati...making a will and giving it due form.”

The Inferno, Canto XXX, Lines 32 - 45 by Dante Alighieri

We are in the home of Buoso Donati, Florence, Italy, 1299.

The opera begins as the wealthy Buoso Donati dies. It is rumored that old Buoso has willed all his money to the Church in repentance for his sinful life. After a brief period of feigned grief, his relatives conduct a feverish search for the will. They soon discover that there is much truth to this loathsome rumor. So, in an effort to extract what they consider to be their lost legacy from the clutches of the clergy, the family must resort to some sort of deceit. But what is to be done? There is only one man in all of Florence who is clever and cunning enough to help the greedy relatives gain an inheritance: the ever-resourceful albeit poor Gianni Schicchi. They call on Schicchi and he hatches a plot. They explain that no one outside of the immediate family knows Buoso is dead, nor has any outsider, as yet, discovered the real contents of the will. Therefore the family must call the notary to take the last will and testament of the “dying” Buoso Donati and all will be right again. But not without a price: Gianni Schicchi wants to marry his daughter Lauretta to her much adored Rinuccio, Buoso’s wealthy nephew. As he dictates the will disguised as Buoso Donati, he leaves the choicest parts of Buoso’s estate to himself, enabling him to provide a dowry for Lauretta and enraging the greedy relatives.

As the opera ends Schicchi turns to the public and begs their judgment. Should he be consigned to the fires of Hell or are there other options?

IL TRITTICO 5
Puccini’s Inspiring Trio

by DR. LESLEY A. WRIGHT

Puccini had contemplated the idea of writing an evening of one-act operas for many years. Giulio Ricordi, however, pushed him to continue in the vein that had worked so well for the revenues of his publishing house, hoping for yet another La Bohème (1896), or Tosca (1900) or Madame Butterfly (1904). The very year that Ricordi died (1912), Puccini found the subject that would become the first panel of his triptych. In Paris he saw Didier Gold’s somber and violent drama La Houppelande (The Cloak), set in contemporary Paris on a barge moored along the banks of the Seine. Giuseppe Adami, also librettist for Puccini’s operetta Le Rondine (1917), adapted Gold’s play, and the composer finished the score by November 1916. At a loss for the other two panels, he considered pairing it with his first opera, Le Villi (1884), but dropped the idea because his preferred baritone for the leading role in Il tabarro was called up for military service.

In the winter of 1916-17, Giovacchino Forzano, former baritone, librettist and Italy’s first professional opera director (he would later direct the first production of Turandot in 1926), solved the composer’s predicament by offering him Suor Angelica. This work tells the tale of a woman who has been banished to a nunnery by her family as punishment for her out-of-wedlock child. Shortly afterwards, he or Puccini—who had long coveted the idea of using the Divine Comedy as a subject—conceived of ending the triptych with the comedic tale of the cunning Florentine, Gianni Schicchi, who is described in canto 30 of the Dante’s Inferno. Puccini moved rapidly to complete these two works in 1917 and early 1918 respectively. To understand cloistered life directly, he visited the convent at Vicepelago where his sister was Mother Superior. He had a great fondness for this sentimental middle opera of the triptych, but the sweetness of its subject was not in tune with post-World War I tastes. After the world premiere at the Metropolitan Opera (14 December 1918) and the European premiere in Rome (11 January 1919), critics greatly preferred Gianni Schicchi. More recently the veristic Il tabarro has come into its own. But a performance of all three works during one evening, as Puccini planned it, is still a rarity.

Michele Girardi has recently suggested that we might understand the unity of the three panels of the triptych in terms of one of Puccini’s own maxims: "There are fixed rules in the theater: interest them, surprise them, move them, or make them laugh." This maxim also aligns with the final ordering of the group, for Puccini had initially planned to place the "strong" subject (Il tabarro) last. Suor Angelica’s sentimentality does indeed work best set between the stark tabarro and the bubbling Schicchi. Mosca Carner has written that the three works rise from darkness to light, much like the Divine Comedy itself. With three different views of death, they also move backwards in time, from Paris in 1910 to the seventeenth century to Florence in 1299. Girardi maintains that Schicchi, despite its medieval setting, serves as a tribute to and in larger form. For each, orchestral tissue and thematic commentary play significant roles, while excerptable lyricism is downplayed.

Il tabarro is often compared to Tosca because of its violent climax; however, the baritone and barge-owner Michele (age 50) is simply avenging himself upon his young wife’s lover, the stevedore Luigi (age 20), unlike Tosca, who is defending herself from a sexual predator. Puccini unifies the score with three themes. Most notable is the inexorable river theme, with its subdued scoring and parallel fourths and fifths (a language perhaps indebted to Debussy). Each of the three sections that organize the score is shorter than the preceding one. The middle portion develops the emotional tension of the situation with several duets, underlined by the river theme and the adultery theme, the latter an insistent cadential progression. The cloak theme, too, makes its first appearance. It bears a resemblance to other death themes, like the march for Cavaradossi’s execution in Tosca, and is featured in the third and catastrophic section of the opera. There, after his great monologue (“Nulla silenzio”), Michele surprises and strangles Luigi. Almost immediately Giorgetta returns, repentant for their earlier argument. Michele opens his cloak to reveal Luigi’s body and presses his wife’s face against her lover’s corpse.

Suor Angelica features an all-female cast of nuns and novices. The only outside character is Angelica’s implacable aunt, the Princess—a memorable contralto role for a torturer as psychologically cruel as Baron Scarpia. The score begins in subdued fashion, evoking the closed-in life of the cloister one spring evening. Puccini uses motives to organize scenes that correspond to the seven stations of the cross: prayer, penance,
recreation, return from collecting aims, the princess, grace, and the miracle.

Two moments stand out: the meeting between Angelica and her aunt after seven years of silence and Angelica’s heartbreaking aria, “Senza mamma.” The passionate Angelica loses all reason for living after the Princess’s shocking news of her son’s death. She brews and drinks a poison made from flowers. Horrified that she has committed a mortal sin, Angelica prays for the miracle of being joined with her child. And so, at the end of the opera the boy appears, led by the Virgin Mary as angels sing. We may interpret it as the hallucination of a dying woman, or a mystical apparition as in a medieval miracle play, or a transfiguration due to God’s grace.

In Gianni Schicchi, Puccini delights us with his gift for rollicking comedy. He paints memorable portraits of the title character (age 50) and his daughter Lauretta (age 21) and does mordant sketches of the grasping relatives of the newly deceased Buoso Donati. A comparison with Verdi’s last opera, Falstaff, is appropriate, since both fast-paced comedies feature baritones in their title roles and are the last completed scores of each composer.

Puccini unifies his work through constant rhythmic activity and transformation of the initial ostinato. Only the three principals have significant solo moments, and of these, only Lauretta’s “O mio babbo caro” is detachable. There she persuades her father to help the Donati, the family of her beloved Rinuccio (age 24) and make their marriage possible. Faced with Buoso’s last testament leaving all his money to the church, it is the wily Schicchi who disguises himself and takes the risk of dictating an illegal new will to the notary. But by leaving the fortune to himself, he thwarts the Donati family and provides a dowry for his daughter. The two lovers, assured of a happy future together, can sing their love duet at the end of the evening’s entertainment. We, the audience, are co-conspirators in Schicchi’s disposition of Buoso’s riches. And we willingly grant him the extenuating circumstances he requests of us, while applauding Puccini’s fiction during an evening’s voyage through time and the gamut of human emotions.
The Triptych: Three One-Act Operas by Giacomo Puccini

CASTS

Il tabarro (The cloak)

Michele, the owner of the barge
Luigi, a stevedore
Tinca, a stevedore
Talpa, a stevedore
Giorgetta, Michele’s wife
Frugola, Talpa’s wife
Song Vendor
Midinettes

Sister Angelica (Sister Angelica)

Sister Angelica
The Princess, Sister Angelica's Aunt
The Abbess
The Monitor
The Mistress of the Novices
Sister Edmunde
Sister Osmina
Sister Dolcina
The Nursing Sister
Tourieres
Novices
Lay-Sisters

The Child

Gianni Schicchi

Gianni Schicchi
Lauretta, his daughter
Zita, called the “Old Woman,” Buoso’s cousin
Rinuccio, Zita’s nephew, in love with Lauretta
Gherardo, Buoso’s nephew
Nella, his wife
Gherardino, their son
Betto, of Signa, Buoso’s brother-in-law
Simone, Buoso’s cousin
Marco, his son
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Henry G. Akina, Director
Henry Akina is the first Hawaiian-born General and Artistic Director of Hawaii Opera Theatre. Before joining the company in 1996 he was the Artistic Director of the Berlin Chamber Opera, a company he founded in Berlin, Germany, in 1981 for which he directed over 50 productions of contemporary, baroque and 19th century repertoire. His tenure at HOT has been longer than that of any General Director in the company's history. During this time he has staged the Hawaii premieres of Verdi's Macbeth, Strauss' Elektra and Wagner's Tristan und Isolde as well as highly acclaimed productions of Orello, Salome, La Bohème, The Tales of Hoffmann, The Flying Dutchman, Turandot, The Mikado and The Pirates of Penzance. In demand around the world, Henry Akina has directed numerous opera productions in Germany, France, Hungary, Canada, China and Thailand as well as for the operas of Atlanta, Augusta and Memphis in the United States. This year Mr. Akina will direct The Flying Dutchman for Arizona Opera, based on his 2005 production at Hawaii Opera Theatre, using the sets designed by Peter Dean Beck, constructed here in Hawaii.

Peter Dean Beck
HOT Resident Scenic & Lighting Designer
Mr. Beck has designed scenery and/or lighting for over two hundred productions around the country. During his twenty previous seasons with Hawaii Opera Theatre, he has designed the sets for thirty-six productions and the lighting for fifty-six, among them: La Bohème, Eugene Onegin, The Tales of Hoffmann, Tristan and Isolde, Elektra, Macbeth, Il Trittico in Algeri 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. In 2004, he designed The Nutcracker for Ballet Hawaii. And recently, he 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.

Jeremy Blossey
Tenor (Tinca, a stevedore; Gherardo, Buoso’s nephew)
Hawaiian tenor Jeremy Blossey is emerging as a bright talent on both the opera and concert stages. His recently performed roles include Porg and Pang in Turandot, Flavio in Norma, Romeo in Romeo et Juliette, Beppe in Pagliacci and Gherardo in Gianni Schicchi. On the concert stage, Mr. Blossey appeared as a tenor soloist with the Theater Chamber Players at the Kennedy Center, performing a series of Lassus motets. He has also performed the solos from the Mozart Requiem at several venues, including a September 11, 2002 Mozart Requiem with the Annapolis Symphony and Chorale as part of a nationwide tribute.

Katherine Ciesinski
Mezzo Soprano
(The Princess, Suor Angelica’s Aunt)
Katherine Ciesinski performs with leading opera companies, including Metropolitan Opera, the Royal Opera House, Covent

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Artists

Susan V. Cromer, Soprano (The Mistress of the Novices)

Ms. Cromer is pleased to be performing her second role with HOT. She sang earlier in the season as The Page in Rigoletto. Ms. Cromer has enjoyed four years as a member of the HOTOpera Chorus, most recently in Pirates of Penzance. She sang with the Women’s Chorus of the Kaiserslautern Opera in Germany and was a soloist there with the Barbarossa Chamber Singers. Ms. Cromer has been a soloist in Hawaii with Hawaii Vocal Arts Ensemble and St. Andrew’s Cathedral Choir. She is also in her third year as a proud scholarship recipient of the Mae Z. Orvis Opera Studio. With the Studio she has performed on live radio broadcasts on KHPR and for the Great Singers/Great Songs Series.

Mary Dibbern, Vocal Coach/Rehearsal Pianist

Mary Dibbern, American pianist and a 26-year resident of Paris, France, works internationally as a free-lance vocal coach and accompanist. Her career has taken her to all of the major operas in France, and many venues in Switzerland, Germany, Portugal, China, Lithuania and the U.S. She has accompanied vocal recitals in the USA, Europe and Japan. Her recital recordings for Harmonia Mundi France and Claves include the complete songs of Jacques Leguerney, for which she was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque. She is the author of the Performance Guide series for Pindragon Press, which currently includes The Tales of Hoffmann, Carmen, and Faust/Romeo et Juliette. She is co-author of Interpreting the Songs of Jacques Leguerney: A Guide for Study and Performance.

Barbara Divis, Soprano (Giorgetta, Michele’s wife; Sister Angelica; Lauretta)

Soprano Barbara Divis has performed over thirty-five roles in her young career. With her acclaimed versatile range at her disposal, Barbara is known particularly for roles that demonstrate her captivating lyric soprano voice through an impressive lower range. With rave reviews, Barbara is highly regarded for her interpretation of roles such as Violetta in La Traviata, Micaëla in Carmen, Tatyna in Eugene Onegin, Marguerite in Faust, Nedda in I Pagliacci, Cio-Cio San in Madame Butterfly, and Mimi in La Bohème. Highlighting her career are performances with opera companies in San Diego, San Jose, Santa Barbara, Nevada, Tacoma, Arizona, Austin, and Augusta. Upcoming engagements include Micaëla in Carmen and First Lady in Die Zauberflote with San Diego Opera, and the Soprano soloist in Gala Concerts with Opera Santa Barbara and the San Diego Symphony.

Jake Gardner, Baritone (Michele, the owner of the barge, Gianni Schicchi)

Jake Gardner has appeared with major opera companies and orchestras throughout the world. Known for the diversity of his repertoire, Mr. Gardner was for many seasons principal baritone with the Cologne Opera in Germany. In American, he has recently appeared with the New Orleans Opera in the...
Hawaii Opera Theatre

Amy Healy, Soprano (Sister Genevieve)
Amy is an affiliate artist of the Mae Z. Orvis Opera Studio and, in addition to her work with Hawaii Opera, she studies and teaches in the French department of the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Since her professional operatic debut as the 2nd Spirit in Mozart's Die Zauberflöte at Connecticut Opera, Amy has sung leading roles in a wide range of repertoire, from the ingenues of French, German and English operetta at the Ohio Light Opera, to the leading role in the world-premiere of Limbus - an expressionist bluegrass mechanical opera for the Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh. Amy has also sung with Hart Opera Theater, Kentucky Opera, The Grandin Festival, Whitewater-Song Opera, Cincinnati Conservatory Opera Theatre, and the Opera Theater of Lucca, Italy. Among her favorite roles performed are Amina in Janacek's The Cunning Little Vixen, Dejanira in Kurt Weill's Royal Palace, Cherubino in Le Nozze di Figaro and Mimi in La Bohème.

Malia Ka'ai, Soprano
(A Tourner, La Ciesca, Marco's wife)
A graduate of the Kamehameha Schools, Whitworth College, she has a Masters Degree from UH Manoa. General Manager for the Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus, she is an active soloist and choral member in the Hawaii community and sings with the Hawaii Opera Theatre, Kawaiolaonoapukanileo and Kawaiaha'o Church etc. She studies with Neva Rego and Elizabeth Grierson. She is a member of HOT's Mae Z. Orvis Opera Studio and has participated in numerous master classes with: Denise Graves, Diana Soviero, Frederika von Stade, Mark Morash and Richard Perman etc. She appeared as soloist in HOT's productions of Elektra, Merry Widow & Madama Butterfly and with the Honolulu Symphony in Giorgio's Peer Gynt & Mendelson's Mid Summer Night's Dream. This past season she appeared as Mrs. Hayes in HOT's production of Suor Angelica.

Sondra Kelly, Mezzo Soprano
(Fruogla, Talpa's wife; The Abbess, Zita)
Sondra Kelly is one of opera's exceptional interpreters of the dramatic mezzo-soprano repertoire. She has appeared with great success with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Opera de Geneve, and Opera Lausanne, Switzerland Connecticut Opera, Opera Carolina, Opera Saskatchewan, Green Bay Opera, Utah Opera, Sarasota Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Long Beach Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Opera International in Washington, DC. Prominent roles include Herodias in Salome for the Utah Opera, Ulrica in Un Ballo in Maschera, Azucena in Il Trovatore and Marcellina in Le Nozze di Figaro most notably. Ms. Kelly began her professional career at the Metropolitan Opera, where she appeared in over 250 performances of 23 different roles ranging from Mozart to Wagner. She also has been featured on recordings of Il Trovatore for Sony Classical and La Traviata for Deutsche Grammaphon, both conducted by Maestro Levine, and "Live from the Met" videos of La Fanciulla del West, Die Walküre, The Ghosts of Versailles, and the Opening Night Gala (Otello).

Patrick McNichols, Baritone
(Marco)
Originally from Laguna Beach, California, Mr. McNichols has been raised, educated and employed in Hawaii since 1970. He has performed locally throughout the years in various venues including the Hawaii Vocal Arts Ensemble, Kawaiolaonoapukanileo, Kona Association for the Performing Arts, the Honolulu Symphony Chorus as well as other HOT performances. Mr. McNichols joined the Hawaii Opera...
Artists

Theatre Chorus in 1998 and made his comprimario debut as the Imperial Commissioner in HOT’s production of Madama Butterfly, 2000 season. He has been a HOT Mae Z. Orvis Opera Studio Scholarship recipient since the year 2000 and has performed as a soloist in the following HOT productions: L’Enfant et les Sortileges, La Traviata, Amahl and the Night Visitors, The Magic Flute, La Bohème, Otello, The Merry Widow and Susannah.

John Mount, Bass-Baritone
(Master Spinelloccio, Physician; Amantio di Nicolao, Notary)
Mr. Mount has performed with HOT for over 30 seasons, in over 60 HOT roles, including Benoit and Alcindoro in La Bohème; Sarastro in The Magic Flute; Crespel in The Tales of Hoffmann; Timur in Turandot; The King in Aida; Sacristan in Tosca and last year as Lodovico in Otello. Mr. Mount is Professor of Voice and co-director of the Opera Workshop at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. 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 9th Symphony, Verdi’s Requiem, Mozart’s Requiem, Brahms’ Requiem and several other works. 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.

Wilbur Pauley, Bass (Simone, Buoso’s cousin)
Wilbur Pauley is very happy to return to Hawaii Opera Theatre for his third season. He has appeared here in Andrea Chenier, Manon, and as Colline in La Bohème in 2003. Some of Mr. Pauley’s credits during his three decades in the entertainment business include: operas with the Metropolitan Opera, Salzburg Festival, Israel Philharmonic, Teatro Nacional Lisbon; concerts and oratorios with NY Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, Chicago Symphony Orchestra; the Broadway shows Band in Berlin, The Merchant of Venice (with Dustin Hoffman); and film soundtracks for Beauty and the Beast, Pocahontas, Dead Man Walking and Home On The Range. Recent opera credits include Peter Grimes with Santa Fe Opera and Haroun with NY City Opera. Upcoming appearances include Christus in the St. Matthew Passion at Carnegie Hall, Ades The Tempest in Santa Fe, and Salome at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Robert Pel, Stage Manager
Robert has recently participated in two world premieres: Patric’s production of The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix by R. Murray Schafer and Pacific Opera’s production of Erehwon. He has been the principal Stage Manager for Opera Lyra in Ottawa. He has also stage managed for Edmonton Opera, Manitoba Opera, Canadian Opera Company and Opera de Québec. A member of the Walsh Polytechnical University in Toronto, Robert has also stage managed at the Charlottetown Festival in P.E.I. and Huron Country Playhouse in Grand Bend. Other credits include In the Ring at Stratford Festival, L’orca del Cairo and Les Moulins de Tiresias for the University of Toronto Opera School and Evita for Theatre Calgary. Robert has spent four years at the Banff Festival for the Performing Arts, where the exciting projects he stage managed included Princess of the Stars.

Jacqueline Quirk, Soprano
(Sister Dolcina; Nella, Gherardo’s wife)
Full lyric soprano, Jacqueline Quirk recently returned to Hawaii and Hawaii Opera Theatre, where she began her operatic career as a Young Artist in the Mae Z. Orvis Opera Program. Most recently, she made her debut at the Kennedy Center (DC) in Regina, starring Patti LuPone and conducted by Steven Mercurio. Jacqueline has had the privilege of singing at the Washington National Cathedral, Arts Club of Washington, Choral Arts Society (DC), Hawaii Opera Theatre, Honolulu Symphony, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Alice Tully Hall to name a few. Her role highlights include, Pamina, Contessa, Donna Anna, Laurretta, Liu, Mira, Micaela, the Merry Widow, and Rosalinda. Some of her upcoming highlights for 2005-2006 season are Cio-Cio San with Ashevile Lyric Opera, a debut Puccini Gala with Annapolis Opera, the Contessa (Le Nozze di Figaro) with Belcanto, DC, and the role of

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Henry G. Akina

The first Hawaiian born General & Artistic Director of the Hawaii Opera Theatre. Born in Honolulu, 1955, Henry is a Punahou graduate who continued his education at Tufts University and The Free University of Berlin. He became the "HOT" General & Artistic Director in 1996.

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Henry has directed operas in the U.S., China, Germany, and Canada. This year, The Hawaii Opera Theatre presents "IL TRITTICO" by Giacomo Puccini directed by Henry Akina. An opera with everything from drama to comedy.

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More info on Henry Akina and a calendar of Hawaii Opera Theatre performances go to... HawaiiOpera.org

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Marguerite Vauzzi in New York City.

Helen E. Rodgers, Costumer
Helen Rodgers return to HOT for her fifth season, where she designed costumes for Susannah, La Bohème, and Cosi fan tutte in addition to her work as Costumer for the company. Recent work at other companies include includes costume design for Good Evening at Florida Studio Theatre, Magic flute for Marines Opera, Stävelfo and Susannah for Chautauqua Opera, and La Bohème for Opera Memphis, Chautauqua Opera, and Mannes Opera. She was Costume Consultant for Cosi fan tutte at the Lincoln Center Festival and Doctor and Patient for Basyshnikov Productions. She designed costumes for a Wild West Don Pasquale for the San Diego Opera, which has now also mounted at companies across the US and Canada. Formerly resident costume designer for both Sarasota Opera and Chautauqua Opera, her work for those companies encompassed over 60 designs, including world and American premieres. Other company credits include New Orleans Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Virginia Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Opera Delaware, New York City Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and Costume Coordinator for the Rady City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular in New York.

Louise South, Mezzo Soprano (The Monitor)
Louise South, who has sung oratorio across the United States and throughout Hawaii. She obtained her Masters of Music at the University of Hawaii. Her roles with Hawaii Opera Theatre include Inez (Il Trovatore), Schlepphirgin (Elektra), Suavil (L’Enfant et les Sortilèges), and Mrs. Ott (Susannah). She was also the Mrs. Dake/Pink Fox in Green Eggs & Ham/Gertrude McFuzz (a joint production of HOT, HSO and HTY), and most recently, Fr. Schneider in Manoa Valley Theatre’s Cabaret. Ms. South and husband Bill are active in the Kaneohe community.

Richard Stead, Wig & Make-up Designer
This season, Mr. Stead celebrates his 24th consecutive season with HOT. He 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 and make-up company.

Joanna Takagi, Choral Director
Ms. Takagi is in her third season as Choral Director with HOT. She directs the 135-voice women’s choir at Sacred Hearts Academy and teaches the Bambini Ensemble of the Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus. Ms. Takagi earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Choral Conducting from Butler University, where she studied with Henry Leck and Dr. Eric Stark, and a Bachelor of Music degree from Pomona College, where she studied with Dr. Donna Di Grazia and Donald Brinegar. Johanna can be heard on Public Radio 88.1 as co-host with Gary Hickling for Great Songs Sunday evenings at 7:00 pm.

Leslie Tennent, Baritone
(Marullo, a courtier)
Leslie “Buzz” Tennent, recently seen as Samuel in Pirates of Penzance with HOT, is equally at home in opera, oratorio, recitals and musical theater. Highlights include Marcello with NYCO, Gerard with Santa Fe, Amfortas in Mallorca and Emile DeBeque on the national tour of South Pacific. As principal baritone with Stadttheater Hildesheim and guest with Hannover Staatsoper, roles included Don Carlo, Stankar, Germont, Count, Moses and Machele in Il tabarro. Mr. Tennent was recently soloist with the Honolulu Symphony in Beethoven’s Ninth and Elijah. Musical theater credits include leads in Kismet, Kiss Me Kate, and as El Gallo in The Fantasticks at DHT. A voice professor at Chaminade, Mr. Tennent looks forward to a debut with the Maine Grand Opera next summer as Don Quixote in Man of La Mancha.

Ivan Törzs, Conductor
American by birth, Ivan Törzs has lived and worked in Europe since 1985. He is currently music director of the Flanders Opera in Antwerp, Belgium, a position he has held since 2002. He previously served as principal conductor and artistic director of the Mecklenburg State Theater in Schwerin, Germany. As a guest conductor, Törzs has appeared at the Vienna State Opera, the Hamburg State Opera, and the opera houses of Stuttgart, Düsseldorf, Strasbourg, Prague, Budapest, and many other cities. When not on the podium, Ivan Törzs is in demand as a pianist. He has played recitals of lieder with such artists as Cheryl Studer, Kurt Moll, and Edita Moser; Ivan Törzs holds a conducting diploma from the Mannes College of Music and a B.A. in mathematics from Princeton University.

Kip Wilborn, Tenor (Luigi, a stevedore; Rinuccio, Zita’s nephew, in love with Lauretta)
Making his Hawaii Opera Theatre debut as Luigi in Il tabarro, American tenor, Kip Wilborn, has enjoyed a career that has flourished in both North America and Europe. Accomplished in the classical repertoire, his credits include engagements in opera houses such as San Francisco Opera, Opera National de Paris, New York City Opera, Seattle Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Cleveland Opera, Cincinnati Opera, San Diego Opera, Opera Pacific, Essen Aalto Theater, Theatre des Westers-Berlin, Dublin Grand Opera, Vienna Volkoper and the Wexford Festival, Ireland. His repertoire includes: Les Contes d’Hoffmann, Rodolfo La Bohème, Cavaradossi Tosca, Pinkerton Madama Butterfly, Pelleas & Melisande; the title role in Werther; Tom Rakewell The Rake’s Progress; and Riccardo Un Ballo in Maschera. Upcoming engagements include, Turiddu Cavalleria Rusticana with Connecticut Opera, Pinkerton Madama Butterfly with Arizona Opera. With the release of his new solo CD, Be My Love, he has been nominated for the Horizon Award of Best New Artist by the Surround Music Awards.
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