

BLAKE ZIDELL & ASSOCIATES

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ON SITE OPERA PRESENTS *A DOUBLE BILL OF MONODRAMAS* AT THE HARMONIE CLUB, SEPTEMBER 29-30

Coming Off the Heels of their Highly Acclaimed Production of Marcos Portugal's *The Marriage of Figaro*, OSO Begins its Sixth Season with Dominick Argento's *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* and Hector Berlioz's *La Mort de Cléopâtre (The Death of Cleopatra)*

September 29 Performance Will Serve as a Benefit for OSO

New York, NY—Known for staging “the ultimate in intimate productions” (*The New York Times*), **On Site Opera** begins their sixth annual season on **September 29-30** with an evening of powerful monodramas including **Dominick Argento's** *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* and **Hector Berlioz's** *La Mort de Cléopâtre (The Death of Cleopatra)* in the exquisite grand ballroom at **The Harmonie Club**. The evening stars soprano **Leah Partridge** as Miss Havisham and mezzo-soprano **Blythe Gaisert** as Cleopatra and features the string quintet **SYBARITE5** at the center of a chamber orchestra. Conducted by OSO's Music Director, **Geoffrey McDonald**, and directed by the company's General & Artistic Director, **Eric Einhorn**, the site-specific production features lighting design by **Shawn Kaufman** and costume design by **Fay Leshner**. OSO invites audiences to join as Miss Havisham's wedding guests for the evening – there's champagne and cake for all!

A Double Bill of Monodramas will take place September 29 at 7:00 pm and September 30 at 7:30 pm. Tickets, which go on sale July 20, are \$500 for the September 29 benefit performance, which includes a seated three-course dinner, and \$50 for the September 30 performance. Tickets can be purchased online at www.osopera.org. The Harmonie Club is located at 4 East 60th Street, New York, NY 10022. Performance running time is approximately 90 minutes.

On Site Opera's 2016-2017 performances:

May 2017: On Site Opera joins forces with The Atlanta Opera's Discoveries Series for a new site-specific co-production of Mozart's *The Secret Gardener (La finta giardiniera)*. Written by an 18-year-old Mozart, *The Secret Gardener* is a story of love, madness, and redemption that unfolds in the lush setting of a beautiful garden. Performances will take place at New York's West Side Community Garden before travelling to Atlanta's Botanical Gardens and marks a bi-city first for the two companies. More information: osopera.org/secretgardener/

June 2017: On Site Opera's acclaimed Figaro Project concludes with the U.S. premiere of Darius Milhaud's *La Mère coupable (The Guilty Mother)* featuring a collaboration with the award-winning International Contemporary Ensemble

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(ICE) in a new chamber orchestration. The site-specific production celebrates the 125th birthday of Milhaud and is dedicated to Katharine Warne, composer and founder of the Darius Milhaud Society.

About the Performers

Mezzo-Soprano **Blythe Gaissert (Cleopatra)** has established herself as a fresh and exciting artist in great demand in the United States for opera, concert and recital engagements. The Texas native has received great praise from critics for her rich sound and intense, dramatic interpretations of operatic roles. In the coming 2016-17 season, Ms. Gaissert will perform Cleopatra in Berlioz's exciting monodrama *La Mort de Cleopatre* with On Site Opera and reprise the role of Hannah After in a new production of *As One* with Opera Colorado. She will also continue her relationship with American Opera Projects' Composers and the Voice series, serve as soloist in the Mozart *Requiem* with the National Chorale at David Geffen Hall, and perform a solo recital with double bassist Louis Levitt of SYBARITE5 as a part of the Phoenix Concert Series. Highlights of the 2015-16 season included performances with AOP's Composers and the Voice project, two world premiere operas: *The Whole Truth* by Robert Paterson with American Modern Ensemble and *Frau Schindler* by Thomas Morse and Ken Cazan in a Los Angeles concert performance, and additional performances with American Modern Ensemble. www.blythegaissert.com

Soprano **Leah Partridge (Miss Havisham)** has performed more than 30 roles in 50 operatic productions across the United States, South America, and Europe in companies such as The Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Washington National Opera, Atlanta Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Teatro Colón Buenos Aires, Dresden Semper Oper, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Maggio Musicale in Florence, Italy, and Vlaamse Oper in Antwerp Belgium, among many others. Ms. Partridge has recorded with the Metropolitan Opera Live in HD series and has a recording of American Art Songs with composers Ricky Ian Gordon and Jake Heggie accompanying their pieces. For the 2015-16 season, Ms. Partridge will make a return to her home opera company at the Atlanta Opera as Musetta in *La Bohème*, and will follow these performances with her debut as Mimì in *La Bohème* with Opera Coeur d'Alene in Spokane, Washington. She will begin 2016 with performances of *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Opera Eugene in Eugene, Oregon and make her role debut as Pamina in Mozart's beloved *The Magic Flute* with the renowned Boston Baroque Orchestra in April 2016. www.leahpartridge.com/

From Mozart to Radiohead, SYBARITE5's (String Quintet) eclectic repertoire and commanding performance style is turning heads throughout the music world: "...that impassioned playing, those hard-driving rhythms, the blissed-out faces of the mostly young audience... Genuine, spontaneous... excitement" (*The Washington Post*). The Quintet's debut EP disc *Disturb the Silence*, featuring music by Radiohead and Piazzolla, plus two original works written for Sybarite5, was released in spring 2011 and quickly reached the top ten on the Billboard charts. The group's follow-up CD, *Everything in its Right Place*, is a continuation of the Radiohead Remixed Project and was released in November 2012 on the CAG Records label. SYBARITE5's 2016-2017 season starts with a summer tour across the United States including appearances at Wolf Trap, Music in the Mountains, Fontana Chamber Arts, Miami's Community Arts Program and culminating with a performance of their latest commissioning project, *Look Back/Move Forward*, at the Interlochen Arts Festival. In the 2016-2017 season, the group will be seen in performances and residencies at series including Cliburn Sessions, Arts Tucson, Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, Wittenberg Series, Ohio University Performing Arts, Bologna Performing Arts Center, Chamber Music Society of St. Cloud, Cornell College, Hesston-Bethel Performing Arts, Pittsburg State University, Binghamton Philharmonic and at the cell in New York City. The group will serve as the resident ensemble for Wolf Trap Opera's "Studio Spotlight" as well as for On Site Opera in New York City. A feature of their season is their newest project titled "OUTLIERS" featuring works written by some of today's hottest composers including Shawn Conley, Jessica Meyer, Daniel Bernard Roumain and Michael Gilbertson. An album by the same name will be released in the fall of 2016. With their dynamic view on 21st-century entrepreneurial musicianship, the group will conduct residencies and workshops at major institutions and conservatories including the Curtis Institute of Music and New England Conservatory among others. SYBARITE5 will serve as the resident ensemble for the American Composers Forum International Competition in the fall of 2016 to be held at Le Poisson Rouge in New York City. <http://www.sybarite5.org/>

About the Creative Team

Eric Einhorn (Stage Director, A Double Bill of Monodramas | Co-Founder and General & Artistic Director, On Site Opera) has been praised by *The Austin Chronicle* as "a rising star in the opera world" and by *Opera News* for his "keen

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eye for detail and character insight.” He is the co-founder of On Site Opera, a company dedicated to immersive, site-specific productions. Mr. Einhorn has directed productions for Chicago Lyric Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Ft. Worth Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Florentine Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, Utah Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, the Pacific Symphony, and Gotham Chamber Opera. He has been a member of the stage directing staff at the Metropolitan Opera since 2005. *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* named Mr. Einhorn’s production of *Dialogues des Carmélites* for Pittsburgh Opera one of the top ten classical music performances of 2011. He originally created the production for Austin Lyric Opera in 2009 and was awarded “Best Opera” at the Austin Critics’ Table Awards in addition to garnering him a nomination for “Best Director.” During summer of 2014, he directed Rameau’s *Pygmalion* at Madame Tussauds New York and the Lifestyle-Trimco mannequin showroom. This production featured the world’s first implementation of supertitles for Google Glass. Upcoming engagements include the world premiere of *Happy Birthday, Wanda June* with Indianapolis Opera, a revival staging of *Simon Boccanegra* starring Plácido Domingo at the Metropolitan Opera, and a new staging of *The Flying Dutchman* for Austin Opera.

Shawn Kaufman (Lighting Designer) is the Director of Lighting Design at CS Lighting, a firm specializing in providing lighting design and lighting resources for theatre, film, television, special events and fashion. Shawn created this new division for CS Global in 2010 after working for the last 15 years in the industry. Shawn oversees the day-to-day operations of the lighting division for all locations of CS Global from the New York office, designing all in house projects for the company as well as providing services for its own clients. Recent clients include Public School, Greg Lauren, Zimmermann, Isabel Marant, Phillips Auction House, Tiffany (Blue Book Gala Event 2013 and 2014), Celine, Givenchy, Chloe, Armani Exchange, Vogue Magazine, Estee Lauder, Kohl’s, St. John, Bombardier, Target, GQ, Hermes, Y3, The Elder Statesman, Microsoft, Ivanka Trump, Moncler, Halston, Marchesa, Macys, Lands End, Carolina Herrera, the Gap, Rockefeller Center, Tom Ford, Zegna, Oxygen Network, Hugo Boss and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Recent theatrical work includes *Carmen* at Portland Opera, *Dialogues of the Carmelites* at Austin Lyric Opera and Pittsburgh Opera, *Orpheus in the Underworld* at Glimmerglass Opera, *I Pagliacci* and *Xerxes* at Pittsburgh Opera. Television: QVC Red Carpet Style, The Face Finale, CNBC studio relight, The Big Gay Sketch Show (Logo Channel), Wendy Williams (Fox Network), episodes of The Apprentice Martha Stewart and Donald Trump, Associate for Martha Live and Rachael Ray Live.

Born in Brooklyn to a family of chefs and illustrators, **Fay Leshner (Costume Designer)** has worked in the fashion and art industry since the age of 15. Beginning her career as a model, she continued her education in Fashion design at the prestigious Parsons school in both New York and Paris. Fay has been featured in various publications such as Time Out, Style like U and Elle for her personal style and creativity. Fay still resides in Brooklyn and continues to work as a professional stylist and designer.

Hailed by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* as a “promising and confident” member of the new generation of American conductors, **Geoffrey McDonald (Music Director, *A Double Bill of Monodramas* | Music Director, On Site Opera)** commands a broad repertoire with extensive experience in operatic, symphonic, and choral works. He is steadily gaining recognition for his versatility – “an agile conductor...whose pacing is sure in both reflective and restless passages” (*The New York Times*) – and for his “original and flexible musical imagination” (*The New York Observer*). Geoffrey’s passion for promoting new or neglected pieces and his enthusiasm for fresh, innovative presentation combine in his work as Music Director of On Site Opera, whose immersive production of Paisiello’s *Barbiere di Siviglia* in the summer of 2015 earned wide critical acclaim. *Opera News* wrote: “[McDonald] led with brio and admirable ensemble,” while *The New York Times* noted, “the conductor, Geoffrey McDonald, drew stylish, nimble playing”. This success followed recent productions of Handel operas, *Orlando* and *Alcina*, for which he partnered with director R.B. Schlather to create inventive art-installation-opera: “Conductor Geoffrey McDonald repeated the miracle of nuanced coordination [in On Site Opera’s production of Paisiello’s *Barber of Seville*] between orchestra and singers he recently accomplished with *Orlando* downtown” (*The New York Observer*). He has acted as Assistant Conductor for Opera Philadelphia, the American Symphony Orchestra, and Gotham Opera. A dedicated educator, he has served on the faculties of Bard College and the Longy School of Music, and was Music Director of the Philadelphia Young Artists Orchestra and the Columbia University Bach Society. He is an active composer, and an original member (cellist/songwriter) of indie rock band Miracles of Modern Science. He earned his Masters in Conducting at Mannes College, and his Bachelors in Music at Princeton University. www.geoffreymcdonaldmusic.com

About On Site Opera

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Embarking on its sixth season of producing immersive site-specific opera, On Site Opera (OSO) has established itself as one of New York City's most imaginative, nimble opera companies by doing more than simply staging musically and dramatically rich works outside of the opera house. OSO's team of General & Artistic Director, Eric Einhorn, Music Director, Geoffrey McDonald, and Executive Director & Producer, Jessica Kiger have pushed the boundaries of operatic storytelling, producing operas in locations that allow singers and audiences alike to immerse themselves in the narrative. Reviewing the first chapter of *The Figaro Project*, in which OSO is staging lesser-known operatic adaptations of French playwright Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais' (1732-1799) famed trilogy of Figaro plays, Anthony Tommasini of *The New York Times* wrote, "This visionary company could be on to something big." He also noted that the "space proved ideal for the intrigues of the opera."

OSO has presented Shostakovich at The Bronx Zoo, Gershwin at Harlem's legendary Cotton Club, Rameau at Madame Tussauds New York and the Lifestyle-Trimco mannequin showroom, Paisiello at Fabbri Mansion, Marcos Portugal at 632 on Hudson as well as a site-specific workshop of *Clarimonde*, a new work by Frederic Chaslin and P.H. Fisher.

Committed to exploring new technology in opera, OSO implemented the first-ever Google Glass supertitles during its 2014 run of Rameau's *Pygmalion*, of which *The Verge* reported: "Few things seem like obvious fits for Google Glass so far, but this is one of them." Founded in 2012, OSO is dedicated to producing site-specific opera in non-traditional venues throughout New York. OSO molds its productions to specific locations using physical space to create an environment in which the concept, storytelling, music, and performers unite to form an immersive, cohesive, and meaningful whole. OSO, a registered 501(c)(3), is a proud member of Opera America and the New York Opera Alliance.

www.osopera.org

About The Harmonie Club

As one of the city's earliest and most prestigious clubs, Harmonie is truly a New York institution. Founded in 1852, Harmonie's ranks include the most prominent leaders and achievers in the most significant fields and walks of life. Beyond their primary occupations, however, members are recognized for their active participation in cultural, civic, social and charitable causes. The Harmonie Club's elegant Stanford White designed clubhouse provides an oasis in the center of Manhattan for members and their guests. www.harmonieclub.org

For more information, please contact Blake Zidell or Ron Gaskill at Blake Zidell & Associates, 718.643.9052, blake@blakezidell.com or ron@blakezidell.com.