

THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER AMERICA

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Media Note: Digital headshots and images are available.

OPERA AMERICA ANNOUNCES DETAILS OF THE **NEW OPERA SHOWCASE** Friday, January 13 at 8:00 p.m. | The Town Hall, NYC operaamerica.org/Showcase

Featuring excerpts of new operas by
Wang Jie, Michelle DiBucci, Rene Orth and Jason Kim,
Randall Eng and Donna Di Novelli, Julian Grant and Mark Campbell

The New Opera Showcase kicks off the second half of
OPERA America's 2016–2017 *Onstage at the Opera Center* season

January 5, 2017 (New York) — **OPERA America**, the national service organization for opera and the nation's leading champion for American opera, announces the details for the **New Opera Showcase**, taking place on Friday, January 13 at 8:00 p.m. at historic Town Hall in the heart of New York City's Times Square. The Showcase offers artists, producers and audiences a unique opportunity to hear some of the most exciting operas being composed today.

This special one-night-only concert features excerpts from five new operas currently in development, selected by an independent panel of industry experts. Joining the vocalists onstage will be SONOS Chamber Orchestra and Choral Chameleon, featuring Erik Ochsner, music director.

Audience members will be among the first to hear these powerful new works:

- ***Rated R for Rat*** by **Wang Jie** (composer and librettist)
- ***Charlotte Salomon: Der Tod und Die Malerin (Death and the Painter)*** by **Michelle DiBucci** (composer)
- ***Machine*** by **Rene Orth** (composer) and **Jason Kim** (librettist)
- ***Before the Night Sky*** by **Randall Eng** (composer) and **Donna Di Novelli** (librettist)
- ***The Nefarious, Immoral but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke & Mr. Hare*** by **Julian Grant** (composer) and **Mark Campbell** (librettist)

In addition to experiencing these new works for the first time, the audience will hear performances from some of today's brightest vocalists, including Joseph Bellino, Keith Browning, Heather Buck, Andrew Cook-Feltz, Evan Crawford, Blythe Gaisert, Clare Maloney, Nick Masters, Liam Moran, Brenda Patterson, Vale Rideout, Amy Shoremount-Obra, Michael Slattery, Chad Sloan, Amy Marie Stewart, Nian Wang, Jorell Williams, Lauren Worsham and Olivia Yokers.

"The New Opera Showcase is a rare and invaluable event for the entire opera community — composers, librettists, performers, producers and audiences alike," stated OPERA America President/CEO Marc A. Scorca. "Composers often don't have the opportunity to hear their work with orchestra until they are in

rehearsals before the premiere, and by then, it's too late to make adjustments. Presenting these excerpts in a public performance gives the composers immediate feedback from the audience, which they might not otherwise have until opening night. The performances with orchestra also benefit opera producers by enabling them to hear the composers' full sonic landscapes in a way that simply reading a score cannot," Scorca continued. "For audiences, the New Opera Showcase is a very special experience. Most people only hear an opera once the work is fully realized, so the Showcase is a unique chance to experience the creative process."

OPERA America has a long tradition of directly fostering the creation and development of new works. Over the past 30 years, OPERA America's *Opera Fund* has provided grants totaling over \$13 million to assist companies with producing new operas.

The New Opera Showcase takes place as a component of OPERA America's New Works Forum, the preeminent convening for creators and producers of contemporary American opera, taking place January 11 to 14 at OPERA America's National Opera Center. Over 100 field leaders will participate in four days of presentations, panel debates, facilitated discussions and performances of works in progress. In addition to the New Opera Showcase, the public is welcome to join the Forum for a performance of *The Life and Death(s) of Alan Turing* by Justine F. Chen and David Simpatico, presented by American Lyric Theater on January 12 at Merkin Concert Hall. Performances that are open only to Forum attendees include operamission's *When Adonis Calls* by Clint Borzoni and John de los Santos; Opera on Tap's 360-degree virtual reality opera *The Parksville Murders* by Kamala Sankaram and Jerre Dye, sponsored by WeLens; and Minnesota Opera's *Dinner at Eight* by William Bolcom and Mark Campbell.

EVENT INFORMATION

Date/Time: Friday, January 13, 2017, at 8:00 p.m.

Location: The Town Hall
123 West 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036

Tickets: \$25 (general admission)
\$10 (OPERA America members)

To purchase tickets or for more information about the New Opera Showcase, visit operaamerica.org/Showcase.

The New Opera Showcase is made possible by generous and deeply appreciated grants from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, and The Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation.



**VIRGINIA B. TOULMIN
FOUNDATION**

ONSTAGE AT THE OPERA CENTER

The New Opera Showcase concert is part of OPERA America's 2016–2017 *Onstage at the Opera Center* series of performances and discussions. The second half of the *Onstage* season includes the following events, all taking place at OPERA America's National Opera Center in Midtown Manhattan and streaming live at operaamerica.org/Live:

Creators in Concert

- William Bolcom, Composer | Thursday, April 6 at 7:00 p.m.

Conversations

- Thomas Hampson, Baritone | Thursday, March 16 at 7:00 p.m.
- Renée Fleming, Soprano | Tuesday, April 25 at 7:00 p.m.

Emerging Artist Recital Series

- Houston Grand Opera Studio Artists | Thursday, March 2 at 7:00 p.m.
- Opera Index Vocal Competition Winner | Tuesday, March 28 at 7:00 p.m.
- Arizona Opera Studio Artists | Thursday, April 20 at 7:00 p.m.

Tickets for each event are \$25 (\$10 for OPERA America members). Following each event, attendees are invited to stay for a casual reception.

For more information about the 2016–2017 *Onstage at the Opera Center* season or to purchase tickets, visit operaamerica.org/Onstage.

Onstage at the Opera Center is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and by grants from the Amphion Foundation and NYC & Company Foundation.



THE AMPHION
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ABOUT THE NEW OPERA SHOWCASE WORKS

Rated R for Rat

By Wang Jie (composer and librettist)

In this original story, a zodiac goddess experiences humans' soulful music for the first time, and she forsakes her place in the heavens to join her divine musical power with that of men.

- Watch the [introductory video](#).

Charlotte Salomon: Der Tod und Die Malerin (Death and the Painter)

By Michelle DiBucci (composer)

This work is based on *Life? Or Theater?*, a series of 769 paintings by the German-Jewish artist Charlotte Salomon, who was killed during the Holocaust.

- Watch the [introductory video](#).

Machine

By Rene Orth (composer) and Jason Kim (librettist)

Machine follows the chilling story of an Asian-American scientist who elects to plant a chip in her head and become the world's first perfect, emotionless human.

- Watch the [introductory video](#).

Before the Night Sky

By Randall Eng (composer) and Donna Di Novelli (librettist)

Twins separated and united create the structure of this updated Greek myth that reimagines the Gemini twins, Castor and Pollux, and their overlooked sisters, Helen of Troy and Clytemnestra.

- Watch the [introductory video](#).

The Nefarious, Immoral but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke & Mr. Hare

By Julian Grant (composer) and Mark Campbell (librettist)

In the late 1820s, Edinburgh's anatomy schools experienced a severe shortage of cadavers to study, so Burke and Hare served this niche market by murdering the disenfranchised and selling their corpses. In this opera, the victims of the anatomy murders finally have their say, from beyond.

- Watch the [introductory video](#).

NEW OPERA SHOWCASE COMPOSERS AND LIBRETTISTS

MARK CAMPBELL is one of the most in-demand librettists in the country. Of the 15 plus operas he has written, his most-known work is *Silent Night*, which received the 2012 Pulitzer for Music. Since its premiere at Minnesota Opera, the work has been broadcast on PBS' *Great Performances* and produced by many opera companies around the country. Campbell's other successful operas are *Later the Same Evening*, *Volpone*, *Bastianello/Lucrezia*, *As One*, *The Manchurian Candidate* and, most recently, *The Shining*. Campbell has received many prestigious honors, including a Grammy nomination, the first Kleban Foundation Award for Lyricist, two Richard Rodgers Awards, a Jonathan Larson Foundation Award, a NYFA Playwriting Fellowship and the first Domenic J. Pellicciotti Award. Campbell also mentors future opera librettists and composers through American Opera Projects, American Lyric Theater, WNO's American Opera Initiative and the University of Colorado's New Opera Workshop. He premieres five new operas in 2017: *Dinner at Eight* for Minnesota Opera, *Some Light Emerges* for Houston Grand Opera, *The Nefarious, Immoral but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke & Mr. Hare* for Boston Lyric Opera, *Elizabeth Cree* for Opera Philadelphia and *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* for The Santa Fe Opera.

As a librettist, **DONNA DI NOVELLI** has written a found-text music-theater piece, *The Good Swimmer* (2016), with music by Heidi Rodewald; text for Paola Prestini's *Oceanic Verses* (2012); and the libretto for Christopher Theofanidis' *Heart of a Soldier* (2011), commissioned by San Francisco Opera. She has also written lyrics for Rachel Portman's musical *Little House on the Prairie* (2017). Di Novelli wrote the screenplay for the award-winning short film *Stag* (2015), which was directed by Kevin Newbury and screened in over a dozen festivals. She also co-wrote a feature film, *Movie #1*, with indie director Josephine Decker (in post-production) and is currently at work on a VR piece. Di Novelli has collaborated with composer Randall Eng many years. Their opera *Florida* is scheduled for a U.S. premiere in 2018.

MICHELLE DIBUCCI is a composer and an artistic innovator with over 30 productions to her credit. Her work crosses genres and environments and encompasses theater, opera, dance and new media. Her most recent work, the full-length ballet-opera *Charlotte Salomon: Death and the Painter*, was described as "an oratorio of sounds, voices and bodies that translates the luminosity of the template into a polyphonic theatrical language" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*). Created with acclaimed choreographer Bridget Breiner, *Death and the Painter* received the 2015 Faust Award — Germany's highest theater prize — and returns to Musiktheater im Revier in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, in the 2017–2018 season. DiBucci's music-theater work *Basetrack Live* was hailed by *The New York Times* as "one of the top 10 theatrical events of 2014" and was performed in 33 cities across America. Currently on tour is *On the Nature of Things*, featuring Pilobolus Dance Theater with original music by DiBucci. Her "effectively provocative score" (*The Wall Street Journal*) features mezzo-soprano, chamber orchestra and electronics. DiBucci's music for stage includes commissions from Kronos Quartet, the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Lincoln Center Institute, En Garde Arts and Pilobolus, and her music has been performed around the world at such venues as Komische Oper in Berlin, BAM Harvey Theater in New York, South Bank Centre in London, Dr. Dantes Aveny in Copenhagen and Teatro Carlos Gomes in Rio de Janeiro. She has been a professor at The Juilliard School since 1992 and teaches in both the music and drama divisions.

RANDALL ENG's music lies at the intersection of opera, music theater and jazz. His operas *Florida* and *Henry's Wife* have been presented at Lyric Opera Cleveland, New York City Opera's VOX, Center for Contemporary Opera, American Opera Projects, Virginia Arts Festival, the Public Theater and Manhattan School of Music. *Florida* is slated for a production in 2018. His latest project is a song cycle tracing the Chinese-American male experience over the past 150 years. Other dramatic works include *The Dangers of Electric Lighting* (Luna Stage), *Usher*, *Falling* (Opera Vindaloo Festival) and the video opera *The Woman in the Green Coat* (Edinburgh Festival Fringe). Non-theatrical works include commissions for Albany Symphony's Dogs of Desire, Mirror Visions Ensemble, Composer's Voice and baritone Marcus DeLoach. Eng has been awarded grants and residencies from Civitella Ranieri Foundation, Montalvo Arts Center, Ucross Foundation, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Bang on a Can Summer Institute, John Duffy Composers Institute, Tapestry Opera and American Composers Forum. He is a graduate of Harvard University, Cambridge University and NYU's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program, where he is now a full-time faculty member and runs the GMTWP Opera Lab. He is a Staten Island native and *Jeopardy!* champion.

JULIAN GRANT is a composer, writer, educator, music journalist and broadcaster. He has resided in the U.S. since 2010. Grant has composed 19 operas of various lengths and sizes for many companies, including English National Opera, The Royal Opera, Tête à Tête Productions and Mecklenburgh Opera. For ROH and ENO he ran education projects in Russia, Europe and the U.K. From 2002 to 2007 he was director of music at St. Paul's Girls' School, London, a post previously occupied by Holst and Vaughan Williams. In Hong Kong, Grant hosted a classical music radio show, and while living in Tokyo and Beijing, he worked with the Beijing New Music Ensemble and learned the Yang Qin (butterfly harp). In 2012, his Cultural Olympiad commission *Hot House* was premiered at the Royal Opera House. He is associated with the Princeton Symphony Orchestra and his 20th opera, *The Nefarious, Immoral but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke & Mr. Hare*, premieres at Boston Lyric Opera in 2017.

Part cartoon character, part virtuoso, musical whiz kid **WANG JIE** has spent the last decade nudging serious music and its concert audiences into spectacular frontiers. One day she spins a few notes into large symphonic forms, the next she calls a grotesque rat to the opera stage. She'll even tempt comedy writer Paul Simms to help her coax belly laughs from the OPERA America audience with "Lord? Please don't let me die in a funny way." It is no accident that Jie's stylistic versatility is a rare trait in today's composers. There is a mile-long dossier on Jie's outside-the-box incidents. It begins with a thrilling escape from a Chinese military-run kindergarten at the age of four. Behind a touch of glorious madness to Jie's music, the skill, theatricality and method that once facilitated her youthful escape are now the engines for her appetite to engage, explore and play. Jie credits her mentors at the Curtis Institute of Music and the Manhattan School of Music for all the music mischief she didn't think was possible. This year, she looks forward to transitioning from composing the symphonic overture *America, the Beautiful* to writing *Phoenix Rising*, a prison opera to be premiered in a Minnesota woman's prison. Supported by the McKnight Foundation, Jie has been a resident composer at the Shakopee Correctional Facility, where she collects real-life stories for her new opera and conducts opera workshops in collaboration with the Lake Superior Chamber Orchestra and the Shakopee prison choir.

JASON KIM is a Korean-born dramatist based in New York City. His work has been presented at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, Ars Nova, Ma-Yi Theater Company, Keen Company, Naked Angels, The Flea, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington National Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Manhattan School of Music, Spoleto Festival, OPERA America and others. He is an IFP-Marcie Bloom Fellow in Film, a Screenwriters Colony Fellow, a Paul and Daisy Soros Fellow for New Americans, and a Mark Campbell Chair Librettist Fellow in American Opera Projects' Composers & the Voice. He is a member of the Ma-Yi Writers Lab and Ars Nova's Uncharted. He is currently Lincoln Center Theater's resident writer. In television, he has written for HBO's *Girls* and Fox's *Gracepoint* and has adapted *The Middlesteins* for Showtime. He is currently the consulting producer for *Love* on Netflix. Kim holds a B.A. from Columbia University and an M.F.A. from The New School for Drama.

RENE ORTH is a composer originally from Dallas. Her music has been described as "whimsical, spikey, sometimes show-bizy, always dramatic, reflective, rarely predictable, and often electronic" (*Musical America*). She currently serves as composer-in-residence with Opera Philadelphia and Music-Theatre Group. Recent and upcoming projects include commissions from Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, baritone Sean Plumb, Composers and Schools in Concert, and the Louisville Orchestra. She is a recipient of a 2016 Discovery Grant from OPERA America's Opera Grants for Female Composers program, which will contribute to the development of her new opera, *Machine*, with librettist Jason Kim. Her most recent chamber opera, *Empty the House* (Mark Campbell, librettist), received its staged premiere with the Curtis Opera Theatre in a sold-out run in January 2016. A portion of the work was also featured in Fort Worth Opera's *Frontiers* program in May 2016. In 2014, Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative commissioned Orth for a chamber opera, *An American Man* (Jason Kim, librettist), which premiered at the Kennedy Center. She has held residencies at Yaddo and Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and served on the theory and composition faculty for Luzerne Music Center. Orth is a recent graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music.

For more information about OPERA America, its many programs and the National Opera Center, visit operaamerica.org.



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About OPERA America

OPERA America (operaamerica.org) leads and serves the entire opera community, supporting the creation, presentation and enjoyment of opera.

- Artistic services help opera companies and creative and performing artists to improve the quality of productions and increase the creation and presentation of North American works.
- Information, technical and administrative services to opera companies reflect the need for strengthened leadership among staff, trustees and volunteers.
- Education, audience development and community services are designed to enhance all forms of opera appreciation.

Founded in 1970, OPERA America's worldwide membership network includes 150 Professional Company Members, 250 Associate, Business and Educational Members, 1,200 Individual Members, and 16,000 subscribers to the association's electronic news service. In response to the critical need for suitable audition, rehearsal and recording facilities, OPERA America opened the first-ever **NATIONAL OPERA CENTER** (operaamerica.org/OperaCenter) in September 2012 in New York City. With a wide range of artistic and administrative services in a purpose-built facility, OPERA America is dedicated to increasing the level of excellence, creativity and effectiveness across the field.