UPCOMING OPERA THEATRE EVENTS

2019 Fall Opera (production TBA)
Saturday, November 23, 2019 | 7:30 p.m. | Sursa Hall
Sunday, November 24, 2019 | 3 p.m. | Sursa Hall

Fourth Annual Opera Gala
Saturday, February 1, 2020 | 7:30 p.m. | Sursa Hall

2020 Spring Opera (production TBA)
Friday, April 17, 2020 | 7:30 p.m. | Sursa Hall
Sunday, April 19, 2020 | 3 p.m. | Sursa Hall

UPCOMING SCHOOL OF MUSIC EVENTS

University Singers’ 55th Annual Spectacular
Friday, April 5 | 7 p.m. | Emens Auditorium
Saturday, April 6 | 7 p.m. | Emens Auditorium

Symphony Band and Muncie Central HS Band
Monday, April 8 | 7:30 p.m. | Sursa Hall

Masterworks Concert (preview)
Friday, April 12 | 7:30 p.m. | Sursa Hall

Masterworks Concert at the Hilbert Circle Theatre
Sunday, April 14 | 4 p.m.

Ball State Jazz Ensembles
Wednesday, April 17 | 7:30 p.m. | Sursa Hall

Ball State Symphony Orchestra
Tuesday, April 23 | 7:30 p.m. | Sursa Hall

Wind Ensemble and Symphony Band
Friday, April 26 | 7:30 p.m. | Sursa Hall

Statesmen, Women’s Chorus, and University Choral Union
Sunday, April 28 | 3 p.m. | Sursa Hall

Series LXXIII – Numbers 157a & 157b
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There is no doubt that *Don Giovanni* is about something. It’s been written about by the likes of Shaw and Kierkegaard, its music has made it into a Sherlock Holmes movie and commercials about kitchen products, and it holds a sacred place among the most performed operas of all time. The story is even tangentially where we get the English word “superman”! Surely *something* important is being said to merit all this attention. My personal journey with the opera is a long one and meanders through playing two roles in the piece and directing multiple previous productions, and each time I’ve been around it I’ve seen something different, which is perhaps what makes it a great work of art.

This time I came upon the work after reading some historical books dealing with the French revolution, and it was this angle that grabbed my attention. Written about a decade after the American revolution and two years prior to the French, *Don Giovanni* was written in the twilight of the intellectual flowering in the West called the Enlightenment. In this context one could see the opera as posing a question: in the view of the Enlightenment idea that we are born as a “tabula rasa” and are free to build our own set of values based on our own reason, is Don Giovanni a bad person? Whatever our personal beliefs may be on the subject (and thanks to the Enlightenment we are all able to have our own!), the opera clearly responds with an emphatic “yes!” In the world view of the opera, Don Giovanni has broken a set of rules that transcend his free will and gets punished for it. So, what do we take from that? As mentioned previously, much has been written about this, including conflicting claims that Giovanni is a pro-Christian and anti-Christian tale. For this encounter with the Don I’ve taken a different view that maybe the opera is arguing that, while we all are born with a free will and have the freedom to make our own choices, some things are simply wrong in every circumstance. Things like slavery, rape, racial genocide, and other crimes against humanity are wrong in any context and must be recognized as such for the free ideals of the Enlightenment to work. Perhaps the opera was prescient: as much as the Enlightenment ultimately led to the nation in which we perform tonight, it also led to the guillotine in another. As much as it led to documents extolling inalienable rights, those same rights of personhood were denied to African slaves. It led to flowerings of freedom and to wars of conquest. Maybe Mozart and his collaborator Da Ponte are arguing that to remain truly free we must also be good to each other, or else the Don Giovanni’s of the world will run rampant through the land crying “Viva la liberta!”

But that’s just me! The work has meant many things to many people and we hope you find something today as you join with us in celebrating this masterpiece. We do hope that you’ll be good to us when the performance concludes and that you’ll believe we’ve been good to you as well.

-Jon Truitt, director
CAST, PRODUCTION TEAM, ORCHESTRA

Marcel Ramalho..........................Don Giovanni
Matthew Kosin..............................Leporello
Zac Biddle...............................II Commendatore
Mindy Wesley.............................Donna Anna
Rory Wallace..............................Don Ottavio
Juliana Shamel.............................Donna Elvira
Alexandra Billhartz........................Zerlina
Carrington Neal..........................Masetto
Rebekah Willson*..........................Zerlina
Cameron Clevenger*........................Zerlina

*denotes Sunday cast

ENSEMBLE:

Seth Allen, Joseph Bloom, Stephen Fernung, Lindsay Fields,
Alexander Gushrowski, Cheyenne Johnson, Rachel Lesh, Erin Moody,
Emily Reed, Aasia Sampley, Kendra Vanderstar, Mary Yong

Jon Truitt..................................Director
Douglas Droste..............................Conductor
Cara Chowning..............................Vocal Coach, Répétiteur
Kerry Glenn..................................Chorus Master
Peter Douglas & Alvise Pascucci..............Rehearsal Pianists
Isis Carvalho & Mindy Wesley..............Production Assistants
Rachel Hemm...............................Technical Director and Lighting Designer
Maureen Thomas..........................Costume Designer

SYNOPSIS

ACT 1: Leporello, servant to the nobleman Don Giovanni, keeps watch outside the Commendatore’s home just before dawn while the Don attempts seduction within. Suddenly, the Commendatore’s daughter, Donna Anna, rushes out, struggling with the masked Giovanni. After Anna escapes Giovanni’s grasp, the Commendatore challenges Giovanni to a duel and is killed. After Giovanni and Leporello take their leave, Donna Anna reappears with her fiancé, Don Ottavio, and is shocked to discover her dead father. She asks Ottavio to avenge her father’s death. Later that morning, Giovanni and Leporello encounter one of Giovanni’s former female conquests, Donna Elvira, who is devastated by his betrayal. Leporello tells her that she is neither the first nor the last woman to fall victim to Giovanni and shows her his catalogue with the name of every woman Giovanni has seduced. Next, peasants celebrate the marriage of Masetto and Zerlina. After dismissing Masetto, Giovanni flirts with the bride, telling her she is destined for a better life. The pair is about to depart for Giovanni’s palace when Elvira interrupts, telling Zerlina to flee Giovanni. Elvira departs with the young girl, leaving Giovanni alone. Anna and Ottavio enter, asking Giovanni for help in finding the man who murdered her father. Elvira then returns, shocked to see Giovanni with yet another woman. While she begs Anna and Ottavio to not trust the Don, Giovanni insists that Elvira is crazy. Anna and Ottavio wonder whom to believe. As Giovanni leaves, Anna suddenly recognizes that Giovanni’s voice is the voice of her father’s murderer. Devastated but determined, she once more asks Ottavio to avenge her father. He wonders how to restore her peace of mind. Giovanni, who has invited everyone to his home, looks forward to an evening of drinking, dancing, and further conquests. As the Don departs, Zerlina manipulates Masetto into forgiving her earlier behavior. The two hide as Giovanni re-enters to welcome guests into the party. Spying Zerlina, Giovanni again attempts a tryst with her, only to be interrupted this time by Masetto. He gallantly changes direction, inviting the two into the party. Next, Anna, Elvira, and Ottavio appear masked and are invited in by Leporello. The three pray for God’s aid in their plans to bring Giovanni to justice. In the ballroom, Giovanni dances with Zerlina and then drags her into an adjoining room. When she cries for help, Giovanni rejoins Leporello, Anna, Elvira, and Ottavio take off their masks and, along with Zerlina and Masetto, accuse Giovanni of all of his crimes. Giovanni and Leporello are briefly surprised but manage to slip away.

ACT 2: Later that same night, Leporello swears to leave Giovanni forever. But, the Don bribes him into compliance and then explains his next planned conquest: Elvira’s maid. As Elvira appears on the balcony, Leporello and Giovanni exchange clothes so the Don can pose as a peasant to woo the maid. Leporello and Giovanni convince Elvira that Giovanni is penitent through a serenade. Next, Leporello takes Elvira away for a tryst, leaving his master free to serenade the maid. Just as the maid is about to comply with Giovanni’s advances, Masetto arrives with a band of peasants to hunt down Giovanni (who is disguised still as Leporello). After Giovanni sends the hunting party off in various directions, he beats up Masetto and escapes. Zerlina finds her bruised fiancé and comforts him with the healing power of her love. Later that night, Leporello (still believed by Elvira to be Giovanni) is surprised by Anna, Ottavio, Zerlina, and Masetto. Everyone denounces Leporello (who is still disguised as Don Giovanni). Fearing for his life, Leporello reveals his true identity to the shocked group before making his escape. Ottavio asks the others to look after Anna and then proclaims that he will take revenge on Giovanni and Leporello see the situation in the Commendatore, who warns Giovanni that by morning the Don will laugh no longer. Giovanni forces the terrified Leporello to invite the statue to dinner. The statue accepts the invitation. As the terrified pair departs, Ottavio and Anna appear, visiting her father’s grave. Anna shares all the terrifying events of the previous day with Ottavio and then declares that one day her joy will return and they will be happy together. Later that night Giovanni feasts in his palace. Elvira arrives and makes a last desperate attempt to persuade him to change his ways, but he only laughs at her. After Elvira exits, the figure of the Commendatore enters, now a living statue, and asks Giovanni to repent. When he boldly refuses, Don Giovanni is consigned to an eternal torment.

CAST:

Actress

GIOVANNI

LEPORRELLO

DONNA ELVIRA

DONNA ANNA

OTTAVIO

Since Giovanni is a man of dual personality, both roles have been performed by the main male cast member (usually the same one).
JON TRUITT, director

Baritone and Stage Director Jon Truitt has established a national presence as a performer in the United States, having recently directed professional productions of Barber of Seville, Die Fledermaus, South Pacific, Madama Butterfly, La Traviata, Hansel and Gretel, Pagliacci, Suor Angelica, the Merry Widow, Le nozze di Figaro, La Bohème, Don Giovanni, The Elixir of Love, and Die Zauberflöte. His professional production of Die Zauberflöte was featured in Opera America magazine and has been remounted multiple times around the country. An actively performing baritone, Dr. Truitt also appears regularly with professional opera companies across the United States, including the New Orleans Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Asheville Lyric Opera, Muddy River Opera Company, Mobile Opera, Pensacola Opera, St. Petersburg Opera, Opera Illinois, the Crested Butte Music Festival, Jacksonville Opera, Soo Opera Theatre, and the Jefferson Performing Arts Society. He has appeared as Germont in La Traviata, Figaro in Barber of Seville, Marcello in La Bohème, Don Giovanni in Don Giovanni, Guglielmo in Così fan tutte, Eisenstein in Die Fledermaus, Ford in Falstaff, and more than forty other roles in the baritone repertoire. On the concert stage, he has sung with many regional symphonies and in numerous public solo recitals. Dr. Truitt additionally serves as the director of opera and associate professor of music at Ball State University. He also co-directs an opera young artist program each summer with his wife, soprano Elizabeth Truitt, for Asheville Lyric Opera in North Carolina. He is a two-time apprentice artist with the Des Moines Metro Opera, a Metropolitan Opera Regional finalist, and a NATSAA Indiana State Winner.

DOUGLAS DROSTE, conductor

Douglas Droste is artistic director of the Muncie Symphony Orchestra, director of orchestras at Ball State University, and conductor of the Music for All Summer Symposium Youth Orchestra. Droste’s guest conducting appearances include the INSO-Lviv Symphony (Ukraine), and the orchestras of Kansas City, Indianapolis, Columbus, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Midland-Odessa, Fox Valley (IL), Chappaqua (NY), and Amarillo Virtuosi. A dedicated advocate of music education, Mr. Droste regularly conducts youth orchestras and is active as a clinician and adjudicator throughout the country. He has conducted the all-state orchestras of Missouri, Minnesota, Louisiana, Alaska, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and the Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute. Droste is a Yamaha Artist and Master Educator. A talented violist, Mr. Droste has performed with the orchestras of Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Nashville, Memphis, Lubbock, and the Lancaster Festival. He is also skilled on viola, trumpet, and as a tenor. Mr. Droste holds degrees from The Ohio State University and Texas Tech University.

KERRY GLANN, chorus master

Kerry Glann serves as associate director of choral activities at Ball State, where he conducts the Concert Choir and Women’s Chorus, prepares opera choruses, and teaches conducting and graduate choral literature. He previously taught at Kent State University, the University of North Texas, and in the public schools of Ohio. He holds degrees in music education and conducting from Bowling Green State University, Kent State University, the University of North Texas. Dr. Glann is also conductor of the Evansville Philharmonic Chorus, artistic director of Muncie’s Masterworks Chorale, and director of music at First Presbyterian Church in Muncie. Collegiate choirs under his direction have appeared at conferences of the Indiana Music Education Association, Ohio Music Education Association, and American Choral Directors Association. An experienced theatre conductor, Dr. Glann spent seventeen seasons as musical director of The Huron Playhouse, a professional-grade summer theatre in Huron, Ohio, where he led performances of over thirty productions. He is now on the directing staff of the Bigfork Summer Playhouse in Bigfork, Montana. While running the opera program at Kent State University, he conducted both university and professional opera productions.

CARA CHOWNING, vocal coach and répétiteur

Equally at home in vocal and instrumental repertoire, Cara Chowning is in demand as a coach and collaborative artist. She has performed extensively throughout the United States, South America, and Europe as duo partner, chamber musician and orchestral pianist. She has served on the accompanying faculties of the Cleveland Institute of Music and the American Institute of Music Studies in Graz, Austria as well as the faculties of Simpson College, Oklahoma City University, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and currently at Ball State University. She returns this season to the Bar Harbor Music Festival and Illinois Theatre (UIUC) as pianist and music director and was the invited collaborative pianist for the 15th Festival Internacional de Flautistas ABRAF in São Paulo, Brazil this fall. As music director, conductor and pianist, Dr. Chowning has prepared opera and musical theater productions at the professional, young artist, and collegiate levels. She has served on the music staff of Cleveland Opera, Lyric Opera Cleveland, Opera Cleveland, and the Bar Harbor Music Festival in the capacities of assistant chorus master, staff pianist, coach, and musical director. Dr. Chowning’s former students and singers from her private coaching studio can be heard in opera houses across the United States. Dr. Chowning is a frequent guest on recital series throughout the Midwest and Northeast Ohio and has been broadcast on WFMT, WCLV and Iowa Public Radio. She has performed at the National Flute Association’s Convention and the International Double Reed Society Convention as competition pianist and recitalist. Dr. Chowning holds performance degrees in piano and collaborative piano from Northwestern University and the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Doctor of Musical Arts in accompanying and vocal coaching from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
CAST BIOGRAPHIES

MARCEL RAMALHO, baritone (Don Giovanni)
Marcel Ramalho is a third-year doctoral student in music at Ball State University. A recipient of several academic awards and scholarships, he was recently featured in Ball State Opera Theatre’s productions of Humperdinck’s Hansel and Gretel (Peter), Puccini’s Gianni Schicchi (Leporello). He has participated in the chorus for Die Fledermaus and a number of other roles including Colas in Il trionfo dell’ onore, Béatrice et Bénédict (Don Pedro). Mr. Ramalho has also recently appeared as the bass soloist in Süss-musik’s Bach’s cantatas Ich habe genug (BWV 82), Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir (BWV 38), Christ lag in Todesbanden (BWV 4), and Weinen, klagen, sorgen, zagen (BWV 12), W. A. Mozart’s Freimaurerkantate, and G. Fauré’s Requiem. Other operatic roles include scenes from Mozart’s Le nozze di Figaro (Count Almaviva), Rossini’s La Cenerentola (Dandini), Donizetti’s L’elisir d’amore (Belcore), Moore’s The Ballad of Baby Doe (Horace Tabor), Copland’s The Tender Land (Top), and Gounod’s Roméo et Juliette (Grégorio).

MATTHEW KOSIN, baritone (Leporello)
Originally from Brighton, Matthew Kosin received his undergraduate degree in vocal performance from the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. During his time there, Matthew sang the role of General Rodimarte Bomburda in the opera Il trionfo dell’ onore by Alessandro Scarlatti as well as the role of Colas in the early Mozart opera Bastien e Bastienne. Just after graduating, Matthew sang in the chorus as well as understudied the baritone soloist for the Chicago Sinfonietta’s production of Carl Orff’s Carmina Burana. Matthew also has the opportunity to sing onstage with the Rolling Stones in 2013 for their 60th anniversary tour. In 2015 Matthew attended the Asheville Lyric Opera’s Young Artist Program, where he sang the bass/baritone lead in Haydn’s Creation with the Waynesville Symphony Orchestra. Matthew sang the role of Dr. Falke in Ball State University’s production of Die Fledermaus by Johann Strauss as well as the role of Count Almaviva in BSOT’s productions of Mozart’s Le nozze di Figaro.

ZAC BIDDLE, bass (Il Commendatore)
Zachary Biddle is a basso profundo under the instruction of Dr. Craig Priebe, with whom he has been taking lessons since 2016. Zac’s involvement with the Ball State Opera Theatre goes back to 2016 beginning with his premiere with the program in the chorus of Die Fledermaus. Zac has participated in the chorus for Die Fledermaus, Beatrice et Benedict, and Le Nozze di Figaro before earning roles both HMS Pinafore and Gianni Schicchi. The Commentatore marks Zac’s third operatic role since initially joining the program.

JULIANNA SHAMEL, soprano (Donna Elvira)
Senior Julianna Shamel is thrilled to join the performers of Ball State Opera Theatre once again. She has been involved with BSOT since her sophomore year, and was last seen as Gretel in Hansel and Gretel and as La Ciesca in Gianni Schicchi. She is so humbled to be performing as Donna Elvira with an exceptional cast of colleagues in Don Giovanni. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science in music media production and a Bachelor of Music in vocal performance at Ball State University where she is a student of Elizabeth Truitt. She would like to thank her family and close friends for supporting her passions and endeavors.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

RORY WALLACE, tenor (Don Ottavio)
Praised for his natural stage presence, clear diction, and exceptional musicianship, Rory Wallace is garnering recognition for his “clarity and richness of tone” (Trinidad Newsday) in his performances on both operatic and concert stages. Rory’s opera credits include Luigi (Il tabarro), Gherardo (Gianni Schicchi), Ralph Rackstraw (H.M.S. Pinafore), Don Basilio and Don Curzio (Le nozze di Figaro), Benedikt (Béatrice et Bénédict), Cofennille and Frantz (Tales of Hoffmann), Eisenstein (Die Fledermaus), Aeneas (Dido and Aeneas), Tamino (The Magic Flute), St. Brioche (The Merry Widow), Giuseppe (La Traviata), and Tommy in the world premiere of It Could Be, part of Bowling Green State University’s MicroOpera program. He is also the first-place winner of the Picoplats Music Development Foundation’s fourth annual music competition in Trinidad. He enjoys producing and performing in his own recitals in Washington D.C., United States and in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Don Ottavio is his final role at Ball State University. Rory holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in music and theatre from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh and a Master of Music in vocal performance from Bowling Green State University.

MINDY WESLEY, soprano (Donna Anna)
Mindy is a second-year master’s student at Ball State studying voice performance with Dr. Jon Truitt. During her studies at Ball State she has performed the roles of Euridice in Gluck’s Orfeo ed Euridice, Contessa Almaviva in Mozart’s Le nozze di Figaro, Josephine in Gilbert and Sullivan’s H.M.S. Pinafore, Lauretta in Puccini’s Gianni Schicchi, and The Whitch in Humperdinck’s Hansel and Gretel. Outside of Ball State, Mindy has performed the role of Pamina in the Ji Eun Lee Music Academy’s performance of Mozart’s Die Zauberflöte, and the role of Security Officer in the Opera Steamboat Opera Artist Institute’s production of The Proposal by Milton Grainer. She will be working with Opera Steamboat again this summer in their mainstage production of Rusalka by Antonín Dvořák as a cover of the Foreign Princess.

REBEKAH WILSON, soprano (Zerlina)
Rebekah Willson is a soprano in Ms. Yoko Shimazaki-Kilburn’s studio at Ball State University, working toward her Master’s degree in vocal performance. She graduated in 2018 with a bachelor’s degree in music from Grove City College, Pennsylvania as part of Dr. Sasha Piastro-Tedford’s studio. While there, she also studied at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, Italy where she studied opera and performed in places like Casa di Riposo per Musicisti as well as other small locations in the city. She studied with Patrizia Zanardi. In 2017, Rebekah won Grove City’s annual concerto/aria competition and sang with the orchestra the following semester. In 2018, she performed in the Ball State Opera’s Fall Opera as Gretel in Humperdinck’s Hansel and Gretel.
ALEXANDRA BILLHARTZ, soprano (Zerlina)
Alexandra Billhartz is a native of New Baden, IL. Most recently, she has performed the roles of Gretel (Hansel and Gretel), Papagena (Die Zauberflöte), Leonora (The Beautiful Bridegroom), Giulietta (Les Contes d’Hoffmann), Kate and Isabel (The Pirates of Penzance), Sister Dolcina (Suor Angelica), and Nella (Gianni Schicchi). She was also the soprano soloist in a performance of Bach’s Aus tiefer Not BWV 38 at Ball State University and the soprano soloist in a performance of Saint-Saëns’ Oratorio de Noël at First Presbyterian Church in Muncie, IN. A winner of the Vukovich Concerto Competition, she performed with the University of Evansville Symphony Orchestra in April 2017. Ms. Billhartz has presented her literature review on opera adaptation at the Michigan Music Conference and the Ball State Research Symposium. Additionally, Ms. Billhartz has participated in SongFest, Land of Enchantment Opera Institute, Chicago Summer Opera, and the Midwest Institute of Opera. She is a member of Sigma Alpha Iota, Pi Kappa Lambda, and Phi Kappa Phi. Ms. Billhartz earned her BM in vocal performance from the University of Evansville in 2016, graduating summa cum laude. Currently, she is pursuing her MM in vocal performance at Ball State with Dr. Jon Truitt.

CARRINGTON NEAL, baritone (Masetto)
Carrington Neal is a freshman at Ball State University studying vocal performance with Dr. Jon Truitt. Before enrolling at Ball State, Carrington was involved in multiple musicals in his high school playing the role of Shrek in Shrek the Musical and Paul in Kiss Me Kate. He has participated as a chorus member in Notre Dame’s production of The Magic Flute, but this will be his debut as a principal role in an opera playing Masetto.

CAMERON CLEVenger, baritone (Masetto)
Cameron is a first-year vocal performance major under the instruction of Professor Colleen Beucher. He has formally studied classical voice for several years, though his background is in musical theatre, previously performing roles in productions such as Sondheim’s Into the Woods (the Baker), The Music Man (Harold Hill), and Fiddler on the Roof (Lazar Wolf), among others. A Muncie native, Cameron has worked as both a performer and music director for the Delta Troupers, as well as for the Muncie Civic Theatre, where he was most recently seen as a featured soloist in Bernstein’s West Side Story. Since coming to Ball State, he has performed music from Mozart’s Le nozze di Figaro (Count Almaviva), taken part in the chorus of Humperdinck’s Hansel and Gretel, and was featured in the Third Annual Opera Gala. Cameron is honored to now perform his first role with Ball State Opera Theatre.

ERIN MOODY, soprano (Zerlina Cover)
Erin Moody is a sophomore from Kokomo, Indiana, currently pursuing her Bachelor of Music in vocal performance under the instruction of Yoko Shimazaki-Kilburn. Recently Erin played Wednesday Addams for Kokomo Civic Theatre’s production of The Addams Family and was also a part of the chorus for BSOT’s production of Hansel and Gretel. She is very grateful for the opportunity to be a part of Don Giovanni and to have a cover role to learn and explore more about opera performance. She looks forward to being a part of more BSOT productions in the future.