



Presents

New York Premiere of *Hopper's Wife*

By Stewart Wallace and Michael Korie

Performances April 28, 29, 30 and May 1, 2016 at Harlem Stage

***Hopper's Wife* Inaugurates City Opera's Chamber Opera Series**

Described as "Brave, Bold and Important" by the *Los Angeles Times*

March 31, 2016 — New York City Opera presents the **New York premiere** of *Hopper's Wife* by composer **Stewart Wallace**, set to a libretto by **Michael Korie**. This production also marks the **East Coast premiere** of the opera. Performances take place at **Harlem Stage on April 28, 29, 30 and May 1, 2016**.

Michael Capasso, General Director, New York City Opera, says "I am delighted to present *Hopper's Wife* as the first work in our multi-season series of chamber operas. I was introduced to this fascinating opera when it was in development twenty years ago, and feel it is the ideal piece to launch this new series. Stewart Wallace and Michael Korie have a distinguished history with City Opera, and we are thrilled to be presenting their groundbreaking work. This production also marks the beginning of an exciting co-production relationship with Chicago Opera Theater and Long Beach Opera."

Hopper's Wife, a three-character, 90-minute chamber opera, is based on an idea inspired by both fact and fiction. Described as "brave, bold and important" by the *Los Angeles Times*, Stewart Wallace and Michael Korie's challenging, erotically-charged opera audaciously charts new territory in music drama. The work explores the dichotomies between art and obscurity, high culture and indecency through the allegory of an imagined marriage between painter Edward

Hopper and gossip columnist Hedda Hopper, juxtaposing familiar icons of Hollywood's golden age with stark depictions of desperation and depravity.

The cast, all making City Opera debuts, features mezzo-soprano **Elise Quagliata** in the title role, baritone **Justin Ryan** as Edward Hopper, and mezzo-soprano **Melanie Long** as Ava, a character inspired by the young Ava Gardner. Austrian-American director **Andreas Mitisek**, who serves as artistic and general director of both Chicago Opera Theater and Long Beach Opera, stages the work. **James Lowe**, admired for his versatility in conducting musical theater and opera, leads the **New York City Opera Orchestra**. *Hopper's Wife* is a co-production with Chicago Opera Theater and Long Beach Opera.

According to composer Stewart Wallace, "Each of the three characters is inspired by a different kind of indigenous American music. Hopper's pastoral sound conceals a barely restrained violence. Mrs. Hopper cracks and pops with the urban sound of the New York she yearns to return to. And Ava, the artist's model, has a sound that evolves from bluegrass in Act One to torchy blues as Hollywood reshapes her in its own image."

The Harlem Stage performances of *Hopper's Wife* mark its second production, after the work's premiere in 1997 by the Long Beach Opera in California.

Hopper's Wife contains adult language and nudity and may not be suitable for all audiences.

The New York City Opera season concludes with *Florencia en el Amazonas* at Rose Theater at Jazz at Lincoln Center in June 2016.

For more information about New York City Opera's season, please visit nycopera.com.

HOPPER'S WIFE

ABOUT THE CAST

Elise Quagliata has recently performed with Opera Omaha in *La Fanciulla del West* and sings the title role of *Carmen* in October at Utah Opera. She is admired for her interpretation of the music of Jake Heggie and in particular her portrayal of Sister Helen in Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* with various companies, including Des Moines Metro Opera. **Justin Ryan**'s operatic portrayals have ranged from roles in *The Magic Flute* to *The Tender Land*. During the 2015-16 season, Ryan makes his company debut with Connecticut Lyric Opera in *The Marriage of Figaro* and returns to the Featherstone Center for the Arts in Martha's Vineyard for a new production by Wendy Taucher based on Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. During the 2015-16 season, **Melanie Long** appears as Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* with the Lindal North Workshop at the Oslo Opera House and as Musetta in the British Magnetic Opera production of *La Bohème* at the 2016 Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM

Stewart Wallace's most recent opera *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, with a libretto by Amy Tan, based on her novel, was commissioned and premiered at the San Francisco Opera. In addition to *Hopper's Wife*, Wallace has collaborated with librettist Michael Korie on four operas, including *Kabbalah*, *Where's Dick?*, and *Harvey Milk*, a commission of Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, and New York City Opera. Wallace's compositions include works for orchestra, chamber music, as well as vocal and choral music, and scores for film and ballet.

Michael Korie writes librettos for operas and lyrics for musicals. He adapted Steinbeck's novel for the libretto to *The Grapes of Wrath* by Ricky Ian Gordon and is collaborating with Michael Torke on an upcoming opera. For musical theater, Korie has created the lyrics to Scott Frankel's music for *Grey Gardens*, *Far from Heaven*, and *Doll and Happiness*. His newest work with Frankel and playwright Doug Wright is *War Paint*, which premieres in June at Chicago's Goodman Theater and features Patti Lupone and Christine Ebersole.

Andreas Mitisek serves both as general director of Chicago Opera Theater and artistic and general director of Long Beach Opera. For Chicago Opera Theater, he has staged and designed *Lucio Silla*, *La Voix Humaine*, and *Gianni Schicchi*, and *Orpheus and Euridice* by Ricky Ian Gordon. Recent productions at Long Beach Opera include *Macbeth*, *The Paper Nautilus* by Gavin Byars, and Golijov's *Ainadamar*. Mitisek makes his New York City Opera debut with this production of *Hopper's Wife*.

James Lowe is a leading conductor of opera and musical theater. For the Houston Grand Opera, he has conducted *Carmen* and *The Marriage of Figaro* as well as Jake Heggie's *The End of the Affair*. This fall, Lowe makes his San Francisco Opera debut leading performances of *Sweeney Todd*. He has led new productions of *Oklahoma!* for Lyric Opera of Chicago and *Camelot* at Glimmerglass Festival. Lowe served as music director of the Broadway revival of *Anything Goes*, starring Sutton Foster and Joel Grey.

ABOUT NEW YORK CITY OPERA

Since its founding in 1943 by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia as "The People's Opera" New York City Opera has been a critical part of the city's cultural life. During its history, New York City Opera launched the careers of dozens of major artists and presented engaging productions of both mainstream and unusual operas alongside commissions and regional premieres. The result was a uniquely American opera company of international stature.

For more than seven decades, New York City Opera maintained a distinct identity, adhering to its unique mission: affordable ticket prices, a devotion to American works, English-language performances, the promotion of up-and-coming American singers, and seasons of accessible, vibrant and compelling productions intended to introduce new audiences to the art form. Stars who launched their careers at New York City Opera include Plácido Domingo, Catherine Malfitano, Sherrill Milnes, Samuel Ramey, Beverly Sills, Tatiana Troyanos, Carol Vaness, Shirley Verrett, among dozens of other great artists.

In 1999, New York City Opera founded VOX, Contemporary Opera Lab, an annual concert series that offered composers and librettists the opportunity to hear excerpts of their works performed by professional singers and musicians. For decades New York City Opera has been committed to introducing opera to the young, bringing the art form to new audiences with educational outreach performances in New York City's public schools.

Now, having returned to the stage, New York City Opera continues its legacy at a new, state-of-the-art home at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Theater with revitalized outreach and education programs, and programming designed to welcome and inspire a new generation of City Opera audiences.

Hopper's Wife

Composer Stewart Wallace
Libretto by Michael Korie
Production Andreas Mitisek
New York City Opera Orchestra
Conductor James Lowe

Harlem Stage

150 Convent Avenue (at West 135th Street)
New York, NY
Thursday, April 28, 2016, 7:30PM
Friday, April 29, 2016, 7:30PM
Saturday, April 30, 2016, 7:30PM
Sunday, May 1, 2016, 4:00PM

For tickets to *Hopper's Wife*:

Harlem Stage Box Office
Monday-Friday, 12:00PM - 6:00PM
Telephone (212) 281-9240, ext. 19 or 20
<http://harlemstage.org/hoppers-wife/>

For more information about New York City Opera's season, please visit nycopera.com.

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