

EASTMAN OPERA THEATRE

HERE BE SIRENS (SUITE)

Music by Kate Soper
Text by Various Sources

PROVING UP

an opera

Based on a short story by Karen Russell

Music by Missy Mazzoli
Libretto by Royce Vavrek

LINDSAY WARREN BAKER, Director
TIMOTHY LONG, Conductor

November 4, 5, 6, 2021 | 7:30 PM
November 7, 2021 | 2:00 PM
Kilbourn Hall



UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Eastman
School of Music

100 YEARS | 1921-2021

ARTISTIC TEAM

Artistic Director

Steven Daigle

Assistant Director for “Sirens”

James Kenon Mitchell

Costume Designer

Carly Holzwarth

Assistant Director for “Proving Up”

Madeleine Snow

Assistant Music Director for “Sirens”

Georgia Mills

Lighting Designer and Photography

Nic Minetor

Assistant Conductor for “Proving Up”

Matthew Straw

Fight Director

Adriano Gatto

Scenic Designer

Charles Murdock Lucas

Sound Designer

Rich Wattie

PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director

Mark Houser

Production Stage Manager

Josh Lau

Scenic Construction

Shelbie Colombo

MaryPat Frohm

Nicole LaClair

Jose Maisonet

Ramon Rivera

Assistant Stage Manager

Rachel Singh

Tech Crew

David Hennen

Ori Marcu

Andrea McGaugh

Isaac Pendley

Logan Simpson

Scenic Paint Charge

Nicole LaClair

Props

James Kenon Mitchell

Mark Houser

Audio Engineer

Gregory Thompson

Hair and Makeup

Renee Tychoniewicz Proulx

Nicole LaClair

Costume Construction and Wardrobe

Leah Camilleri

Claudette Hercules

Ashlyn Spanarella

Graduate Opera Assistants, Pianists

Maeve Berry, Jenny Kirby, Ava Linvog,

Cynthia Chun Hsin Liu, Guhan Peng

CAST

November 4, 7:30 PM

November 6, 7:30 PM

November 5, 7:30 PM

November 7, 2:00 PM

HERE BE SIRENS (SUITE)

Libby Clark

Peitho

Guo Wu

Alexandra Rose Hotz

Phaino

Sofia Scattarreggia

Katrina Kirby-Kopczynski

Polyxo

Ella Torres

PROVING UP

Alexander Nick

Miles Zegner

Adam Catangui

Kevin Spooner

Mr. Johannes “Pa” Zegner

Robbie Raso

Brittney Bryanna Burgess

Mrs. Johannes “Ma” Zegner

Gia Pappas

Samantha Sosa

Littler Daughter

Jenna Rose Cipolla

Madelin Morales

Taller Daughter

Lily Bogas

Broderick Brown

Peter Zegner

Broderick Brown

S. Joshua Sheppard

Sodbuster

Peter Schoellkopf

ORCHESTRA ENSEMBLE

Timothy Long, *Conductor*

Flute/Piccolo

Jenn Kim

Percussion

Ethan Hall

Violin I

Andres Carrero

Clarinet/Bass Clarinet

Jason Gluck

Piano

Jenny Kirby

Violin II

Henry Rublein

Bassoon/Contrabassoon

Matthew Boice

Harp

Elizabeth Mayo

Viola

John Ryan

Horn

Gretchen Berendt

Cello

Anna Groesch

Trumpet

Katie Hillstrom

Double Bass

Christina Gangi

SETTING & SCENES

HERE BE SIRENS (SUITE)

Setting

An island somewhere around the Mediterranean. A washed-out, bright grey day.

Time

The pre-archaic Greek past and the post-apocalyptic U.S. future.

Movements

I. Prologue

II. O Sailor

III. Across the Turbid Waves/In a Silent Valley

IV. Here to Me from Krete

V. Naufragium

~ There will be one 15 minute Intermission ~

PROVING UP

Setting

A homestead in Nebraska, circa 1870

Scenes

Prologue*

Part 1: The Settler's Scar

Part 2: Miles will Prove Up

Part 3: How Pa Obtained the Glass

Part 4: Strange Dreams

Part 5: Nore at a Soft Canter

Part 6: Sodbuster

Part 7: Epilogue

* Prologue Lyrics to "Uncle Sam's Farm" by Jesse Hutchison, Jr. (1850)

Synopsis

Proving Up is an opera about the American Dream, told through the story of Nebraskan homesteaders in the 1870s. A family dreams of "proving up" and obtaining the deed to the land they've settled. They obsessively list the requirements of the Homestead Act: five years of harvest, a sod house dwelling, and perhaps the most elusive element—a glass window. With their eldest son incapacitated, Ma and Pa Zegner send their youngest living child Miles on a mission to share the valuable commodity with their distant neighbors who are expecting a visit from a government inspector. Miles mounts his gray mare with the window wrapped in burlap and gallops across the land. The elements, natural and otherwise, have other plans, and Miles comes face to face with a strange man, driven mad by the requirements of "proving up." The willowy figure knows all too well the cost of the American Dream, and the window soon becomes a broken mirror reflecting great tragedy.

PROGRAM NOTES

"Here Be Sirens" is a phrase used as cartographical notation on medieval maps, scrawled over uncharted water to signify dangerous unknowns. It is also the name of an opera in which these creatures struggle to investigate their own convoluted origins, desires, sorrows and fears through the one medium they control utterly: song. The Suite culls from the full-length opera a few of the Siren's specialties--ethereal medieval chant, gentle otherworldly melody, and the terror of the sublime--to present an exquisite corpse-like portrait of these beloved and familiar monsters in all their murderous and irresistible glory.

—Kate Soper

www.katesoper.com

Kate Soper HERE BE SIRENS SUITE

Texts by Plato, Theobaldus of Cambridge, Homer, Dante, Milton, Sappho

(trans. Anne Carson), Erasmus, and Kate Soper

Used by arrangement with Schott Music Corporation, New York, NY

Proving Up: When Washington National Opera first asked me to create a new chamber opera, my librettist Royce Vavrek and I set out to find a story that was timely, unusual, and uniquely American. We found the perfect inspiration in the writing of Karen Russell, who in 2013 published the short story on which the opera is based. Russell's story is a surreal and haunting commentary on the American dream as experienced by the Zegners, a fictional family of 1860s homesteaders. This narrative feels newly relevant at this fraught moment in my nation's history, when people are examining and reevaluating the achievability of the American Dream. The Zegners are a family that does everything "right" and are still undermined by forces beyond their control. These characters have parallels in our contemporary world: a mother who tries to maintain control through domestic order, a father who turns to the bottle under the pressures of supporting a family, children forced to take on responsibilities beyond their years, a lone, deranged man who resorts to violence and destruction. These are ordinary people in an impossible situation, a brutal world where dead children sing, pigs and horses become the audience for one's deepest secrets, and zombie-like sodbusters wander the desolate prairie. Pushed to the edge by poverty and ultimately undermined by fate, the Zegners' fixation on "*proving up*" never wanes. The story's surrealism suggested to me a music unmoored from time; the score includes imagined fiddle tunes, Baroque gestures, scrap metal percussion, seven acoustic guitars, eight harmonicas and harpsichord in addition to the chamber ensemble.

—Missy Mazzoli

www.missymazzoli.com

PROVING UP, an Opera based on the short story by Karen Russell,
by composer Missy Mazzoli and libretto by Royce Vavrek, presented under license from
G. Schirmer Inc. & Associated Music Publishers, Copyright Owners.

****Content Advisory****

These productions contain: theatrical fog/haze, lightning effects, stage blood, sounds of extreme distress, alcohol misuse, and scenes of violence.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Eastman Opera Theatre's fall double-bill of *Here Be Sirens (Suite)* and *Proving Up* is a unique way to kick off the 2021-2022 "Mythos/Veritas" season. By putting these two pieces together in one evening of opera, we highlight a motif of acute longing and humans' need to attach meaning to the unexplainable.

Siren mythology, while most often associated with ancient Greece and Homer's *Odyssey*, in fact appears throughout time and across cultures. Sirens can appear bird-like or as mermaids. They can be monstrous or beautiful. Regardless of their physical form, their power is in their music. Kate Soper's full opera, *Here Be Sirens*, examines the siren origin story, causing the characters to re-evaluate their existence and purpose. In determining how to stage the *Suite*, we used the full opera as a jumping off point to present a "day in the life" of Phaino, Polyxo, and Peitho – identifying their individuality as well as their bond – as they come together in five movements to do what they do best: sing. However, the music is not just the medium through which the Sirens communicate. It is, in essence, another character. Their relationship to the music they create is as important as their relationship to each other and the sailors who happen to cross their path.

In *Proving Up*, the focus shifts from the "magical call" to those who heed it. The opera is set during the period of "westward expansion," when the United States government actively promoted the American Dream through legislation like the Homestead Act of 1862. Over the five years that the Zegner family establishes their homestead, they face numerous hardships. Yet the Zegners continue to pursue the dream, determined to Prove Up. It is this determination in the final stage of achieving the goal, that creates the commentary, causing us to ask – "At what cost?" and, perhaps more importantly, "At whose expense?"

By examining the "Mythos" and "Veritas" of *Here Be Sirens (Suite)* and *Proving Up*, we can learn about and from our history. What does it mean to be "a land of infinite beginnings?" Are we the "masters of our ships," or are our successes and failures out of our control?

—Lindsay Warren Baker, stage director

Special Acknowledgements

Michael Jones
Jules Corcimiglia
Deirdre Graves
Danielle Suhr

FRIENDS OF EASTMAN OPERA DONOR LIST

The Friends of Eastman Opera gratefully recognizes and deeply appreciates the generosity of the following donors whose contributions benefit students, programs and productions of the Eastman Voice, Opera and Vocal Coaching Department. This listing includes gifts received and recorded for the past eighteen months, i.e., between October 1, 2020 and September 30, 2021.

Luminary \$1,000 and above

Dr. Jody C. Asbury '94W (EdD) and
Dr. Robert F. Asbury '79M (Flw)
Stephanie C. Cooper-Clarke
Warren Crandell
Ronald F. Dow and Susan W. Dow
Peter T. Elliott
Dr. Winston E. Gaum and
Gail H. Gaum
Suzanne Gouvernet
Rose-Marie B. Klipstein
Christine Long '92M (MPH) and
Dr. Udo Fehn
Christine R. McAvoy P'18E and
William M. McAvoy P'18E
John S. Muentner
Dr. Keith S. Reas '84E (DMA) and
Dr. Tomás C. Hernández
Jon L. Schumacher and Katherine T.
Schumacher
Harvey D. Simmons '62S (MS)
Leonard S. Simon and Elaine Simon
Paul O. Stuart '92E (MM) and
Karin M. Stuart
John C. Williams and Chuck Lundeen*

Benefactor \$600 - \$999

Dr. Gloria J. Baciewicz '74, '82M (Res)
Ruth Freeman
Rob W. Goodling '80E
Marjorie F. Grinols
Dr. Joseph G. Kelly
Daniel M. Meyers
David and Marjorie Perlman
Suzanne B. Seipel and Donald Seipel
Suzanne M. Spencer
Dr. A. Louise Trucks '92E (PhD) and
Dr. H. Kenneth Cohen '74 (PhD)
Dr. Kristen E. Willmott '13W (PhD)
and Benjamin Willmott
Craig J. Zicari and Anne C. Coon

Patron \$300 - \$599

Joseph W. Blackburn '71E and
Eileen E. Buholtz '73E
Dr. Giuseppe Erba and Robert Mark
Pierzynski

Dr. Donna Brink Fox
Lawrence S. Iwan and Elizabeth B. Iwan
Dr. Robert S. Knox '58 (PhD) and
Myrta B. Knox '54E (MM)
Jaime G. Magana '86
Dr. Robert H. McIver and
Karen McIver
Dr. Philip S. Nash '73
Dr. Jamal J. Rossi '87E (DMA) and
Pamela F. Rossi
Kay Wallace '83W (MSE) and
Peter Oddleifson*
Jean G. Whitney '65W (MA), '75W
(EdM)

Sponsor \$150—\$299

Asish R. Basu and Susan Basu
Dr. Laurel H. Carney and David
Cameron
Robert M. Chapman and Susan E.
Chapman
Dr. Douglas Cline P'05 and Lorraine
Van Meter-Cline
Carol Crocca and Bill Crocca
Stephen H. Crowley and Pamela
Norton
Margaret Dundas and Peter Dundas
Dean W. Ekberg '87E (MM) and Judith
Ekberg
Cathy L. Flowers
Christine Doran
Jacqueline A. Germanow and Andrew
C. Germanow
Jane S. Gorsline '63W
George W. Hamlin IV P'00E and Mary
Hamlin P'00E
Dr. Leo R. Landhuis and Charlotte K.
Landhuis
David A. Leidig '50, P'81, P'82, P'85,
P'87
John W. May and Maureen S. May
Sanford Miller and Jill Miller
Paul F. Morgan and Helga B. Morgan
Jan Opalach and Katharine L.
Edmonds
Bliss E. Owen
Paul E. Petersen

FRIENDS OF EASTMAN OPERA DONOR LIST

The Honorable Richard D.
Rosenbloom P'91, P'95 and Beatrice M.
Rosenbloom P'91, P'95
Mark A. Smith
Helga Strasser
Professor Robert W. Swensen P'15E
and Professor Kathryn C. Cowdrick
P'15E
Joan D. Van Ness and Paul Van Ness
Gary P. VanGraafeiland and Marie Van-
Graafeiland

Friend \$75 - \$149

Dr. E. David Appelbaum '59 and
Barbara G. Appelbaum
Edwin A. Austin
Angela Bonazinga and Catherine Lewis
Judith V. Boyd
Marcia L. Elwitt
Brenda Grosswirth '79E (MM), '93W
(MS) and Raymond A. Grosswirth
Barbara Guhde and Robert Guhde
Dr. Charles E. Heckler '81 (MS), '86
(MA), '89 (PhD), P'07 and Rick Runyan
Lane Hemaspaandra and Edith
Hemaspaandra
Robert H. Ierardi
Sarah C. Jones and James D.
Aldrich-Moodie
Dr. Martin W. Korn '66M (Res), P'88
and Phyllis S. Korn
Laurence J. Kovalsky '75, P'08, P'10
and Paulina D. Kovalsky
Stephen G. Mascilo
Dr. Russell Miller
Ilene Montana
Dolores F. Parlato
Trevor Pinker
Dr. Gloria L. Pleger '65 (MS), '70 (PhD)
and Karl F. Pleger
Richard O. Reisem
John B. Rumsey
Richard W. Schaeffer and Marcella Klein
Sonja C. Shelton
Michael C. Stern '76S (MS) and
Donna F. Stern
Catharine J. Wise
Rowena Zemel '59

Associate up to \$75

Anonymous
Dr. Agneta D. Borgstedt '61M (Res)
Nancy Cangiano '62H (DPL) and
Albert Cangiano
John Casella
J. Perry Howland and Dorothy M.
Howland
Christopher J. Husson '70 (MS) and
Ruth A. Unzicker
Margaret Lausin '72
Dr. Arnold H. Matlin '71M (Res) and
Dr. Margaret W. Matlin
Mary M. Rapp '71, '79W (MA) and
Dr. Howard Kirschenbaum
Dr. Judit S. Wagner '76M (Res) and
John R. Wagner Jr.
Bernard Winterman and Carol S.
Winterman

*Deceased

Memorials

In Memory of Mr. Terrance M. Carney
Harvey D. Simmons '62S (MS)
Dr. Laurel H. Carney and
David Cameron

In Memory of Mr. Daniel G. Harvey
Peter T. Elliott

In Memory of Mr. Chuck Lundeen and
In Honor of John Williams
Daniel M. Meyers

Tributes

In Honor of Mr. Stephen Carr
Bliss E. Owen

In Honor of Ms. Rose-Marie B. Klipstein,
Prof. Carol S. Webber
Christine R. McAvoy P'18E and
William M. McAvoy P'18E

FRIENDS OF EASTMAN OPERA

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this list, occasional errors and omissions may occur. The 'Honor Roll' name formats are consistent with the listing guidelines by the University of Rochester Advancement Office. FEO and UR would be happy to accommodate individual preferences. Please contact the Friends of Eastman Opera at feo1995@gmail.com with any changes or corrections. Thank you.

The Eastman School of Music gratefully acknowledges the Friends of Eastman Opera for partnering with the school to provide super-titles for the stage of Eastman Opera Theatre, state-of-the-art recording equipment for the opera department, and sponsoring master classes.

Thank you for your support!



See first hand the impact your gift makes!

Attend Virtually: Eastman Opera performances, special events, and the Annual Voice Competition are viewable at Eastman LIVEStream located at <https://www.esm.rochester.edu/live>

Meet our rising stars and world-renowned faculty.

Read the latest Eastman Opera news in FEO's semi-annual newsletter. If you are not yet a Friend of Eastman Opera and wish to be one to receive notice of special Eastman Opera events, e.g. master classes, student recitals, etc., please e-mail your contact information to feo1995@gmail.com.

For more information, please check the Eastman School of Music website at <http://www.esm.rochester.edu>.

If you would like to register to receive e-mail notification of Eastman events, please go to <http://www.esm.rochester.edu/concerts/ mailing.php>.

UPCOMING OPERA EVENTS AT EASTMAN

December 15, 2021 - January 14, 2022

POSTCARD FROM MOROCCO

Online Streaming Only

January 27-30 | February 3-6, 2022

LA CALISTO

Eastman Opera Scene Shop

Friday, February 18, 2022 at 8:00 PM

Friends of Eastman Opera Voice Competition

Kilbourn Hall

Free admission

April 7, 8, 9, 2022 at 7:30 PM | April 10 at 2:00 PM

INTO THE WOODS

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre

April 30 | May 1, 2022

L'AMANT ANONYME

Location TBD

TICKETS

ONLINE: www.EastmanTheatre.org

PHONE: (585) 274-3000

IN PERSON: 433 East Main Street,
Rochester, NY 14604

We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the "Great Hill People" and "Keepers of the Western Door" of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people on whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.

Information about upcoming Eastman concerts and events can be found at:

www.rochester.edu/Eastman/calendar



www.facebook.com/ConcertsAtEastman

Fire Exits are located along the right and left sides, and at the back of Kilbourn Hall. Hatch Recital Hall fire exits are located at the right and left rear of the hall. In the event of an emergency, you will be notified by the stage manager. If notified, please move in a calm and orderly fashion to the nearest exit.

Please note: The use of unauthorized photographic and recording equipment is not allowed in this building. We reserve the right to ask anyone disrupting a performance to leave the hall.

Restrooms are located in the Wolk Atrium near the rear doors of Hatch Recital Hall. Fully-accessible restrooms are available on the first floor of the Eastman School. Our ushers will be happy to direct you to them.

Supporting the Eastman School of Music:

For Information on Eastman's Centennial events and campaign, please visit www.esm.rochester.edu/100