

A FAUSTIAN TALE OF A DEAL GONE WRONG

MEFISTOFELE

Arrigo
Boito



March 4, 2022

7:30PM

March 6, 2022

2:30PM

KNOXVILLE
OPERA
Brian Salesky
Artistic Director

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Greetings and welcome to Knoxville Opera's first full-scale production since the beginning of the pandemic. We are so glad to be back, and I know it will be an incredible performance. While unable to produce main-stage shows, the company was busy with smaller-scale concerts and a wide range of *Knox Opera for All* activities. Hopefully, you were able to join us at some of those events.

We also have been hard at work preparing to embark on a new and exciting chapter in our evolution as an artistic entity. As most of you are aware, Jason Hardy will officially become our CEO & General Director on July 1st of this year. Joining Jason will be a new artistic team: Dean Anthony as producing director, Elizabeth Moore as music coordinator, and Keturah Stickann as artistic advisor. These artists combine broad experience in producing opera with a passion for developing young artists and connecting audiences with opera. We believe they will be a major asset to our company and the Knoxville community.

Our plans for the 2022-2023 season include a production in conjunction with the Medal of Honor Convention in September, a significant collaboration with the UT Opera Theatre program, and a masterpiece not seen on the KO stage in 20 years. We will continue the *Knox Opera for All* events as well as expand our educational outreach to include the Neighborhood Choir after-school program and a new digital opera, specifically written for young audiences, that will be distributed to area elementary schools. *Stay tuned for more details...*

Finally, as you also are most likely aware, this is Brian Salesky's 17th and final season with Knoxville Opera, and while he won't like the attention, we would be remiss to not highlight some of the amazing accomplishments during his tenure. Brian inherited an operation that was deeply in debt and sorely lacking in direction, and turned it into a respected, profitable organization that is positioned extremely well for the future. Under his leadership, KO produced almost 40 operas and concerts, led 14 Rossini Festivals, and orchestrated 1,000+ educational/community engagement programs. For all you have done, Maestro Salesky, we are forever grateful.

Thank you for your continued support of Knoxville Opera, and I look forward to seeing you at our Puccini Gala Concert and the Rossini Festival in April.

Frank Rosamond
KO Chairman




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Knoxville Opera Presents
Puccini Gala Concert
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SATURDAY,
APRIL 30, 2022



MEFISTOFELE

Music by Arrigo Boito

Libretto by Arrigo Boito based on Goethe's play *Faust*

Premiere performance: March 5, 1868, Teatro alla Scala, Milan

Friday, March 4, 2022 at 7:30 and Sunday, March 6, 2022 at 2:30
Tennessee Theatre, Knoxville, Tennessee

Conductor & Production Designer	Brian Salesky
Stage Director	Brian Deedrick
Choreographer	Brynn Yeager*
Lighting Designer	John Horner

Cast in order of vocal appearance

Mefistofele, the Devil	Hidenori Inoue*
Dr. Heinrich Faust, a scholar	Kirk Dougherty
Wagner, Faust's assistant	Tim Pope
Margherita, a young girl	Abigail Santos Villalobos*
Marta, Margherita's neighbor	Allison Deady

*Knoxville Opera debut

This production features members of

Knoxville Opera Chorus	Knoxville Symphony Orchestra
Don Townsend, Chorus Master	Aram Demirjian, Music Director

Knoxville Choral Society	Momentum Dance Lab
Dr. John Orr, Conductor	Gururas Khalsa, President

Knoxville Opera Youth Choir
Edie Taylor, Choral Director

Pellissippi State Variations Ensemble
Meagan L. Humphreys, Choral Director

There will be one intermission after Act I of this 2½ hour performance.

SYNOPSIS

Prologue: In Heaven

A celestial choir praises God the Creator. Mefistofele scornfully declares that he can win the soul of Faust. His challenge is accepted by the Forces of Good.

Act I; Scene 1: Easter Sunday, Frankfurt, Germany, 16th century

The aged Dr. Faust and his assistant Wagner observe the holiday celebrations. Faust senses that they are being followed by a mysterious friar.

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Act I; Scene 2: Faust's study

Faust is disturbed by the appearance of the sinister friar, now recognized as the Devil (Mefistofele). Faust is intrigued and agrees to give his soul to the Devil upon his death in return for youth and pleasures for the remainder of his life.

Act I; Scene 3: A garden

Now restored to his youth, Faust has infatuated Margherita, an unsophisticated village girl. She is unable to resist his seductive charms and agrees to drug her mother with a sleeping potion and meet him for a night of passion. Meanwhile, Mefistofele amuses himself with Marta, another village girl.

Act II; Scene 1: Brocken Mountain

Mefistofele brings Faust to witness the Witches' Sabbath. During the celebration, Mefistofele proclaims his contempt for the world. As the orgy nears its climax, Faust sees a vision of Margherita.

Act II; Scene 2: Margherita's prison cell

Margherita has been imprisoned for poisoning her mother and for drowning the baby she has had with Faust. Faust begs Mefistofele to help her escape. Margherita's reunion with Faust turns to horror when she recognizes Mefistofele as the Devil. Refusing to succumb to evil, the girl begs for divine forgiveness and dies as the celestial choir proclaims her redemption.

Epilogue: Faust's study

Once again an old man, Faust reflects that neither in the world of reality nor illusion was he able to find his desired perfect experience. Sensing his impending death, but desperate for a final victory, he considers embarking on more exotic quests with Mefistofele. However, Faust suddenly seizes his bible and cries out for God's forgiveness. The thwarted Mefistofele disappears as Faust dies and the celestial choir once more sings of ultimate redemption.



This year marks **BRIAN SALESKY's** 17th and final season as Knoxville Opera's Artistic Director having served as its Executive Director from 2005 to 2020. His administration has been marked by great artistic growth, a tremendous expansion of the company's 100 annual Education-Community Engagement programs, the creation of a \$1+ million Operating Reserve, and 15 consecutive years of debt-free operations. For

Knoxville Opera Mr. Salesky has conducted over 90 performances, produced 43 operas, 5 Gala Concerts, a Mostly Mozart Festival, 19 Rossini Festivals, 11 Knoxville Opera Goes to Church concerts, an African-American Voices Series, and appeared in over 1,000 Education/Community Engagement programs including 10 in-school operas for over 50,000 students.

His tenure has been highlighted by significant new company repertoire (*La Forza del Destino*, *The Girl of the Golden West*, *Manon*, *Mefistofele*, *Norma*, *I Puritani*, *Maria Stuarda*, Covid-cancelled *Harriet Tubman*) and the company debuts of many exciting and diverse artists such as J'nai Bridges, Jonathan Burton, Meryl Dominguez, Joyce El-Khoury, Rachele Gilmore, Othalie Graham, Donovan Singletary, Noah Stewart, Kevin Thompson, and Talise Trevigne...all who have gone on to international success.

Mr. Salesky has conducted a vast repertoire of traditional and contemporary works during a versatile, international career with symphonic/chamber orchestras and festivals, opera/operetta/ballet/modern dance companies, and musicals on Broadway. During his five decades in the performing arts, he has also engaged in a wide variety of work as a producer/manager of concerts, opera, television, radio, and videos, and has distinguished himself as an accompanist, music arranger,

fund-raiser, educator, lecturer, author, and consultant. Mr. Salesky first won critical plaudits during his six-year tenure as a resident conductor and administrator with the New York City Opera. With the company in NYC and on tour in Los Angeles, Washington, and Mexico, his 25-opera repertoire included *Falstaff* and the "Live from Lincoln Center" telecast of *La Cenerentola*. He also served as the director of the NYC Opera National Company, conducting *Carmen* and *La Traviata* in 45 cities. The conductor has also appeared with the opera companies of Barcelona (*L'Elisir d'amore* with Alfredo Kraus, *Madama Butterfly* with Catherine Malfitano), Australia (in Sydney and Melbourne), Chicago (Lyric), Spoleto (Italy), Cincinnati, Kennedy Center, Atlanta, Dayton, Central City, and Montana. Mr. Salesky has led the leading symphony orchestras of Chicago, Madrid (with soloist Renata Scotta), Winnipeg, Peru, Denver, San Diego, Syracuse, the Kennedy Center, Grant Park (Chicago), Napa, South Bend, Greensboro, Utica, and Greeley, and the chamber of orchestras of Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, and Woodstock. In his native NYC, Mr. Salesky has served as the Music Director of the Broadway revival of *Man of La Mancha* (starring Raúl Juliá) and as Resident Conductor of the Tony Award production of *On Your Toes* in addition to Director positions with the Congress of Strings and the Jamaica Symphony Orchestra. During his career, he has accompanied hundreds of distinguished artists including Joan Sutherland, Richard Tucker, Sherrill Milnes, Robert Merrill, and Carlo Bergonzi.

The Indiana University Phi Beta Kappa graduate's range of activities have included positions with the Colorado Symphony, San Francisco Opera, Ravinia Festival, Miami Opera, Utica Symphony, American Guild of Musical Artists, Walt Disney Studios, Indiana University, Hunter College, Israel Vocal Arts Institute, and the NYC Performing Arts Education Advisory Commission. From 1996 to 2001, Mr. Salesky served as Co-founder, Executive Producer, and fund-raiser for the Raúl Juliá Ending Hunger Fund.



L I N C O L N



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PARKSIDE DRIVE



BRIAN DEEDRICK
(Stage Director)

Knoxville Opera is delighted to welcome back international stage director Brian Deedrick following his very successful Knoxville productions of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *The Impresario/Gianni Schicchi*, *Die Fledermaus*, *L'Elisir d'amore*, *Mefistofele*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *La Bohème*, and *Maria Stuarda*. As a freelance opera and theatre director, his work takes him all over Canada and the United States, with occasional forays as far afield as Casalmaggiore, Italy and Tel Aviv. During his years as Artistic Director of Edmonton Opera, some of his favorite productions there include *Fidelio*, *Otello*, *Julius Caesar*, *Falstaff*, *Weill in Weimar*, *The Emperor of Atlantis*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, and *South Pacific*. Selected freelance opera credits have included *Turandot* and *Aida* for Fort Worth Opera, *Don Giovanni* for Austin Lyric Opera, *Otello* and *La Bohème* for L'Opéra de Québec, *Eugene Onegin* and *Tosca* for Opera Carolina, *The Flying Dutchman* for Baltimore Opera, *L'Elisir d'amore* and *The Pearl Fishers* for Arizona Opera, and *The Merry Widow* and *Don Pasquale* in Honolulu. Mr. Deedrick's most recent projects have included *Into the Woods* for Opera Nuova and *Le Comte Ory* for Edmonton Opera. Upcoming productions include *The Consul* in Edmonton and *Béatrice et Bénédict* for Opera Kelowna. When not directing, the Canadian native works as a city tour guide in Berlin, Germany.

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BRYNN YEAGER
(Choreographer)

Choreographer Brynn Yeager makes her debut with Knoxville Opera in this production of *Mefistofele* which features scenes of both period and abstract dancing. The Burlington, Vermont native grew up

in Knoxville where she has been a dancer and choreographer since early childhood. Yeager has worked with Knox County Schools, UT's BOSS dance company, and numerous studios and companies across East Tennessee. From 2016 to 2021 she served as President of Momentum Dance Lab whose dancers are featured in *Mefistofele*. MDL company members teach classes, create choreography, direct, and produce shows. Yeager also works as a trauma therapist and has integrated her work with the body into her healing practice with her clients.



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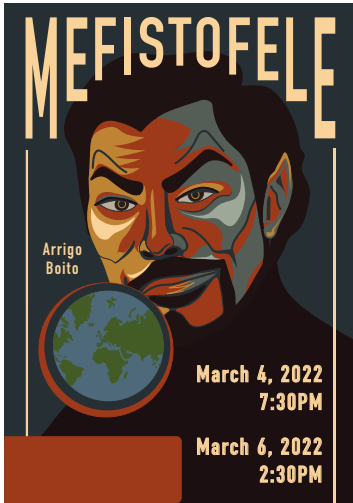
MEFISTOFELE

POSTER COMPETITION

The cover of this program's playbill has an origin unprecedented in Knoxville Opera's history. Artists and designers across our community were invited to participate in our first ever Opera Poster Contest this past October, resulting in over 100 spectacular works of art. We congratulate all our artists on a job well done!

TOP FIVE

Rebecca Branton



Ryan Colbert



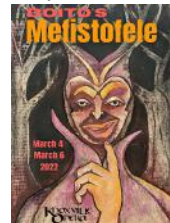
Tony Karnes



Sienna Prater

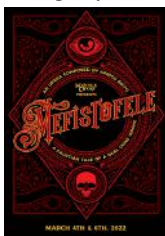


Cheryl Burchett



SPECIAL RECOGNITION

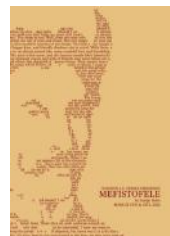
Sterling Gray



Kseniia Sulialeva



Anna Lisa Vitale



MEET THE CAST



HIDENORI INOUE

(Mefistofele; KO debut)

Birthplace: Himeji, Japan

Foreign Opera Company: More Than Musical (Hong Kong)

U.S. Opera Companies: Virginia Opera, Opera Omaha, Tulsa Opera, Anchorage Opera,

North Carolina Opera, Tri-Cities Opera, Pensacola Opera, Opera Columbus, Opera Maine, Opera Steamboat, New Amsterdam Opera, On Site Opera, City Lyric Opera

U.S. Orchestras: Spartanburg Symphony, York Symphony

Website: www.hidenoriinoue.com



KIRK DOUGHERTY

(Faust)

Birthplace: Sleepy Hollow, New York

U.S. Opera Companies: Knoxville Opera (*The Impresario/Gianni Schicchi*), Sarasota Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Wichita Grand Opera, Opera San Jose, Anchorage Opera,

Tri-Cities Opera, Opera Saratoga, Opera Southwest, Opera Delaware, Opera Las Vegas, Salt Marsh Opera, Opera Louisiane, Piedmont Opera, Opera Naples, Raylynmor Opera, Opera at Florham, Baltimore Concert Opera, Bronx Opera, Oswego Opera Theatre, Duluth Festival Opera, Teatro Grattacielo (NYC)

U.S. Orchestras and Festivals: American Symphony, Little Orchestra Society (NYC), San Jose Symphony, Garden State Philharmonic, Helena Symphony, Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra, Rhode Island Civic Chorale and Orchestra, Glacier Symphony, Orchestra of St. Peter by the Sea, Orchestra of the Bronx, New Jersey Festival Orchestra, Castleton Festival, Grand Canyon Music Festival, Belleayre Music Festival, North Shore Music Festival

Website: www.uiatalent.com/artists/kirk-dougherty



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ABIGAIL SANTOS VILLALOBOS

(Margherita; KO debut)

Birthplace: San Juan, Puerto Rico

Foreign Orchestras: NHK Symphony (Japan), Costa Rica Symphony

U.S. Opera Companies: Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, San Diego

Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Opera Unlimited

U.S. Orchestras & Festivals: Cincinnati Symphony, Wheaton College Symphony, Amadeus Chamber Ensemble, Masterworks Festival

Website: www.belmont.edu/cmpa/music/faculty/faculty-bios/villalobos_abigail.html



ALLISON DEADY

(Marta)

Birthplace: Rochester, New York

Foreign Festival: Trentino Music Festival

U.S. Opera Companies: Knoxville Opera (*Mefistofele* 2015, *Cavalleria Rusticana*), Nashville Opera, Janiec Opera, Peach State

Opera, Nickel City Opera, Hillman Opera Company, University of Tennessee Opera Theatre

U.S. Orchestras: Western NY Chamber Orchestra, Knoxville Symphony

Website: www.allisondeady.com



TIM POPE

(Wagner)

Birthplace: Memphis, Tennessee

U.S. Opera Companies: Knoxville Opera (*Roméo et Juliette*), University of Tennessee Opera Theatre, University of Memphis Opera

Website: www.timpopetenor.com/bio

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18TH ANNIVERSARY

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