



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

The Tale of Two Women

“The Old Maid and the Thief”

“Trouble in Tahiti”

The University of Oregon Opera
Ensemble

*Special Thanks to:
Dean Brad Foley, Ann Lamon Musgrove
and the Voice Faculty of the
University of Oregon School of Music*

Recording of UO concerts and events without prior permission is prohibited.

Performances sponsored by the UO School of Music and Dance are sometimes video recorded and photographed for a variety of uses, including both live simulcast and digital archive on the UO website, or for publicity and publications. Images of audience members may be included in these recordings and photos. By attending this event, audience members imply approval for the use of their image by the UO and the School of Music and Dance.

Season 113, Program 34

Beall Concert Hall
Saturday, February 8 | 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, February 9 | 3 p.m.



A Tale of Two Women

The Old Maid and the Thief by Gian-Carlo Menotti

Miss Todd	Alyse Jamieson
Miss Pinkerton	Kathleen Murphy-Geiss
Laetitia	Sarah Benziger (Saturday, Feb. 8) Shannon McAleb (Sunday, Feb. 9)
Bob	Matthew Blumenstein
Extras	Heather Bachelder, Sarah Benziger, Katherine Curtis, Kelsey Gregory, Ray Jackson, Shannon McAleb, Timothy McCoy, Victoria McCoy, Alishia Piper,

Trouble in Tahiti by Leonard Bernstein

Dinah	Katherine Curtis
Sam	Timothy McCoy
Trio	Heather Bachelder, Alishia Piper, Raymond Jackson (Saturday, Feb. 8), Daniel Cruse (Sunday, Feb. 9)
Extras	Sarah Benziger, Matthew Blumenstein, Austin Curtis, Kelsey Gregory, Raymond Jackson, Alyse Jamieson, Shannon McAleb, Victoria McCoy, Alishia Piper, Emmanuel Zrust

ARTISTIC AND PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Director and Costume Designer | Karen Esquivel
Conductor and Musical Preparation | Vincent Centeno
Graduate Teaching Assistant | Gabriel Coehlo
Performance and Rehearsal Pianist | Gabriel Coehlo
Assistant Director and Lighting Designer | Scott Carroll
Stage Manager | April Phillips
Assistant, Program Notes | Bereniece Jones-Centeno
Poster and Program Designer | Erin Zysset
Margaret Gowen | Seamstress

PRODUCTION COMMITTEES

Set | Scott Carroll, Timothy McCoy, Ray Jackson, Victoria McCoy
Props | April Phillips, Daniel Cruse, Matthew Blumenstein
Wigs and Make-up | Alyse Jamieson, Kelsey Gregory, Sarah Benziger
Advertising | Katherine Curtis, Kathleen Murphy-Geiss, Alishia Piper, Bereniece Jones-Centano
Costumes | Heather Bachelder, Shannon McAleb

BEALL RECITAL HALL

David Mason, Rick Blake

Menotti: *The Old Maid and the Thief*

Gian Carlo Menotti (1911-2007) was born in Cadegliano-Viconago, Italy near Milan and during his teenage years he wrote his first opera. He entered the Milan Conservatory at 13 years of age, and at 17, he began studies at the Curtis Institute in the United States. While studying at Curtis, he met and forged a lifelong friendship with the composer, Samuel Barber. Later, the two would collaborate on several works, perhaps the most famous being the opera *Vanessa* by Barber with Menotti as the librettist.

Menotti did not engage in the more *avant garde* writing associated with many composers at the beginning of the 20th century. Rather, he stuck to more traditional harmonies driven by very Italianate vocal lines with dissonances employed for dramatic effect. With Italian opera as his pedigree, he seemed to be inspired by the voice and its lyricism as a guide to create his signature sound. He explained; “Melody is a form of remembrance. It must have a quality of inevitability in our ears.” He was also known for his dramatic sense for the theater. He supplied the libretto for many of his own English-language operas including a commission from NBC of the radio broadcast of *The Old Maid and the Thief* in 1939. It was the first opera ever written for the radio in the US.

The University of Oregon Opera Ensemble’s production of *The Old Maid and the Thief* takes place after the prohibition era, highlighting Miss Todd’s reaction to the loss of her long buried youthful desires. She presents a tight-lipped glance and tightly clasped hands which suggest her newly-achieved suffrage and her stand with prohibition, but there is more to her than meets the eye. When given the opportunity, she is thrilled at the possibility of adventure and romance, regardless of how far-fetched. Laetitia, feeling the press of time and life moving on without her, dreams of her own life of romance that must be realized before she suffers the potential dire consequences of joining Miss Todd in her dreaded old maid-dom. Bob is clinging to an ideal no matter how impractical it seems. While drifting along in his directionless pursuit of freedom, he ends up having his course drastically redirected by two desperate and determined women. Menotti refers to this opera as a “grotesque comedy” and behind the moments of hilarity there burns a tragic sense of loss.

Menotti: *The Old Maid and the Thief*

Gian Carlo Menotti (1911-2007) was born in Cadegliano-Viconago, Italy near Milan and during his teenage years he wrote his first opera. He entered the Milan Conservatory at 13 years of age, and at 17, he began studies at the Curtis Institute in the United States. While studying at Curtis, he met and forged a lifelong friendship with the composer, Samuel Barber. Later, the two would collaborate on several works, perhaps the most famous being the opera *Vanessa* by Barber with Menotti as the librettist.

Menotti did not engage in the more *avant garde* writing associated with many composers at the beginning of the 20th century. Rather, he stuck to more traditional harmonies driven by very Italianate vocal lines with dissonances employed for dramatic effect. With Italian opera as his pedigree, he seemed to be inspired by the voice and its lyricism as a guide to create his signature sound. He explained; “Melody is a form of remembrance. It must have a quality of inevitability in our ears.” He was also known for his dramatic sense for the theater. He supplied the libretto for many of his own English-language operas including a commission from NBC of the radio broadcast of *The Old Maid and the Thief* in 1939. It was the first opera ever written for the radio in the US.

The University of Oregon Opera Ensemble’s production of *The Old Maid and the Thief* takes place after the prohibition era, highlighting Miss Todd’s reaction to the loss of her long buried youthful desires. She presents a tight-lipped glance and tightly clasped hands which suggest her newly-achieved suffrage and her stand with prohibition, but there is more to her than meets the eye. When given the opportunity, she is thrilled at the possibility of adventure and romance, regardless of how far-fetched. Laetitia, feeling the press of time and life moving on without her, dreams of her own life of romance that must be realized before she suffers the potential dire consequences of joining Miss Todd in her dreaded old maid-dom. Bob is clinging to an ideal no matter how impractical it seems. While drifting along in his directionless pursuit of freedom, he ends up having his course drastically redirected by two desperate and determined women. Menotti refers to this opera as a “grotesque comedy” and behind the moments of hilarity there burns a tragic sense of loss.

Bernstein: *Trouble in Tahiti*

Leonard Bernstein (1918 – 1990) was a composer, conductor, teacher, administrator, author, pianist, and philosopher. His image is easily recognized today as the teacher of the network television programs “Omnibus”, “Lincoln Presents”, “Ford Presents”, and the “Young People’s Concerts” of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. He is also immortalized in footage of him conducting his own works, such as the premier of *Trouble in Tahiti*. Conducted by Bernstein, the first performance was held at Brandeis University in 1952 as a part of the inaugural Festival of the Creative Arts, now known as the Bernstein Festival of the Creative Arts.

As his own librettist for *Trouble in Tahiti*, Bernstein encouraged the audience to look at the negative aspects of suburban life. Americans had delved headlong into consumerism with the Second World War fading in the rear view mirror and it was the thing to do to buy a home in the suburbs so that you could live the “American Dream”. With the advent of the TV and President Truman’s 1951 praise of transcontinental television, it was easy to find an onscreen family to model as you set up your home decor, created the perfect look of your family portrait, and entertained your boss and co-workers on your best chinaware in your suburban home. Everybody was doing it.

In *Trouble in Tahiti*, Sam and Dinah are living that dream by all outward appearances but Bernstein’s opera exposes what is going on inside their all-too-real lives. The couple is completely unable to communicate with one another, trying to mask the pain each feels as they have drifted far apart. The protagonists escape to a fantasy world that allows them to live in the falsely advertised suburban dream they have tried to construct for themselves. The arias portray the fanciful projections of the lives Dinah and Sam long to experience: the successful businessman, the perfect garden, the winner, the tropical romantic adventure and a home that is free of strife and filled with “harmony and grace”.

Bernstein: *Trouble in Tahiti*

Leonard Bernstein (1918 – 1990) was a composer, conductor, teacher, administrator, author, pianist, and philosopher. His image is easily recognized today as the teacher of the network television programs “Omnibus”, “Lincoln Presents”, “Ford Presents”, and the “Young People’s Concerts” of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. He is also immortalized in footage of him conducting his own works, such as the premier of *Trouble in Tahiti*. Conducted by Bernstein, the first performance was held at Brandeis University in 1952 as a part of the inaugural Festival of the Creative Arts, now known as the Bernstein Festival of the Creative Arts.

As his own librettist for *Trouble in Tahiti*, Bernstein encouraged the audience to look at the negative aspects of suburban life. Americans had delved headlong into consumerism with the Second World War fading in the rear view mirror and it was the thing to do to buy a home in the suburbs so that you could live the “American Dream”. With the advent of the TV and President Truman’s 1951 praise of transcontinental television, it was easy to find an onscreen family to model as you set up your home decor, created the perfect look of your family portrait, and entertained your boss and co-workers on your best chinaware in your suburban home. Everybody was doing it.

In *Trouble in Tahiti*, Sam and Dinah are living that dream by all outward appearances but Bernstein’s opera exposes what is going on inside their all-too-real lives. The couple is completely unable to communicate with one another, trying to mask the pain each feels as they have drifted far apart. The protagonists escape to a fantasy world that allows them to live in the falsely advertised suburban dream they have tried to construct for themselves. The arias portray the fanciful projections of the lives Dinah and Sam long to experience: the successful businessman, the perfect garden, the winner, the tropical romantic adventure and a home that is free of strife and filled with “harmony and grace”.