November 12-13, 2010 7:30 p.m.
Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall
Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center

present

A Salute to American Opera
Luana DeVol, director
Cherié Roe, piano

PROGRAM
George Gershwin
(1898 - 1937)

Douglas Moore
(1893 - 1969)

Carlisle Floyd
(b. 1926)

Jack Beeson
(1921 - 2010)

Aaron Copland
(1900 - 1990)

Gian Carlo Menotti
(1911 - 2007)

John Corigliano
(b. 1938)

Mark Adamo
(b. 1968)

Thomas Pasatieri
(b. 1945)

Leonard Bernstein
(1918 - 1990)

Porgy and Bess
Song Selections

Ballad of Baby Doe
Act I, Scene 2

Susannah
Act II, Scene 3

Of Mice and Men
Act II, Trio
“You fellas buyin’ a farm?”

Lizzie Borden
Act I, Scene 2

The Tender Land
Scene from Act 2,
“Try makin’ peace”

The Old Maid and the Thief
Scenes XI and XII

The Ghosts of Versailles
Act I, Scene 3
“Come now my darling”

Little Women
Act II, Scene 3
“She’s asked for you”

The Seagull
Act I
“Alas, the stage”

Candide
Finale
“Make our Garden Grow”
**PROGRAM NOTES**

**Porgy and Bess** (1935)
Librettist by DuBose Heyward and Ira Gershwin

Claire
- Cecilia Lopez

Jake
- Brian Myer

Serena
- Martha Bunda

Porgy
- Genesis L. Brown

Bess
- Amanda Mura

Sportin' Life
- Jahmaul Bakare

Debut Heyward's novel, *Porgy*, deals with African American life in the early 1920s on Rainbow Row, a street in Charleston, South Carolina. In 1926, composer George Gershwin read *Porgy*, and several years later he collaborated with Heyward and Gershwin's brother, Ira, to create what he called an "American folk opera." *Porgy and Bess* has its first performance in New York in the fall of 1935. The opera opens on "Catfish Row". Claire sings a hallelujah to her baby, "Summertime." Jake, Claire's husband, sings his own version of a hallelujah, "A Woman is a Sometime Thing." An argument ensues during a corn起初, and Robbins is killed by a bully named Crown, who flies the scene. Serena assures her husband singing "Bally Man's Gone Now." Porgy gives Bess, Crown's woman, shelter. In a scene from Act II, "Sportin' Life" is on the street selling drugs, and offers to take Bess to New York with him. Porgy drives him off and begins the duet, "Bess, You is my Woman Now." In Act III, Crown makes a beeline to Catfish Row to claim Bess. In a fight, Porgy kills Crown. Detectives arrive but the neighbors refuse to incriminate Porgy. Someone must identify the body, and Porgy is taken to the police station. "Sportin' Life" takes the opportunity to tell Bess that Porgy will be gone a long time and convinces her to leave with him. "There's a boat dat's leavin' soon for New York." Porgy returns from the police station to find Bess gone. He calls for his goat cart, and leaves for New York to find her.

**Ballad of Baby Doe** (1945)
Librettist by John Latouche

Sarah
- Ossie Gardner

Effie
- Erin Kennelly

Sam
- Erikson Freeman

Barney
- Michael Elliott

Agatha Tabor
- Amanda Mura

Augusta Tabor
- Lilia Jackley

Horace Tabor
- Jonathan Napior Morales

Baby Doe
- Sherrodah McKee

The Ballad of Baby Doe is loosely based on the life of Elizabeth McCourt (1854 - 1895) and premiered with the Central City Opera in Colorado in 1956. Horace Tabor, after years of struggling in the Colorado silver mines, has struck it rich in Leadville. He seems to have all that life could offer, but his marriage to Augusta, is troubled. He's been a petty young woman, newly arrived in Leadville, and he is astroturf to her. After that evening's opening performance, the Tabor's are taken leave of their guests. Augusta goes abroad to return to the hotel, while Horace lingers behind. Two "ladies of the night" have the chesron hotel are gossiping about the newcomer. Baby Doe. The strains of an old folk song are heard as Baby Doe sings the "Willow Song," and Horace is drawn closer. He tells Baby Doe that her singing is making him recall old dreams and longings of things he once desired. Augusta calling for Horace interrupts their awakening love.

**Susannah** (1955)
Sung in English and Hebrew

Olin Biltch
- Cecilia Lopez

Susannah Polk
- Ariela "The Trevor on the Mountai"n

Olga Blitch
- Genesis L. Brown

Clark Gordon
- Emily

Bob
- John Mancheni

Narrator
- Laurie's Mother

While a member of the piano faculty of Florida State University, Floyd adapted the Apocryphal tale of Susannah and the Elders into his third opera, *Susannah*. The opera received its world premiere at the University in 1955. Susannah lives alone in the mountains of Appalachia with her brother Sam. By chance, the young and beautiful girl is seen bathing naked in a secluded creek by the Elders of the community church. The sight of the innocent Susannah has aroused them and they condemn her as a sinner. At the revival meeting that evening, Reverend Biltch, a traveling preacher, has been influenced by the Elders and their wives, and leads the community in demanding that Susannah repent. Knowing that she is innocent, Susannah refuses and flees to the safety and comfort of her cabin. She sings an old folk tune taught to her by her dead Mother. Blitch arrives and, intent on saving her soul emotionally exhausts Susannah. Blitch preys to his own feelings and seduces her.

**Of Mice and Men** (1979)
Adapted from John Steinbeck

Lennie
- John Mancheni

George
- Michael Elliot

Candy
- Brian Myer

Floyd's fifth opera was composed in 1969 and first performed in 1970 by the Seattle Opera Company. George, a seasoned ranch hand and farm worker, has befriend Lennie, a mentally retarded young man of great strength. They are working and saving toward settling down on their own farm one day. Candy, another itinerant farm hand, overhears them discussing their venture, wants to join them, and puts up his savings with the others. Together, they believe they just might have enough money to "swing her!"

**Lizzie Borden**
Librettist by Kemond Elmslie

Margaret
- Charlie Rollion

Lizzie
- Isabella Ivy

Based on the real-life case of Lizzie Borden and the double-axe murder of her parents, Bessen called his opera a "Family Portrait." The opera was commissioned by the Ford Foundation and was premiered on March 25, 1965 by the New York City Opera. The Borden sisters, Lizzie and Margaret, have a dominating father and a new young stepmother, Abigail, who is continually tormenting the sisters. Lizzie has a suitor, a young sea captain named Jess. Lizzie is glad for her sister's happiness, but the suspicions of pending interference from a jealous and vengeful Abigail. Margaret fears Lizzie's increasing hatred for her father and stepmother. Yet, this hatred propels Lizzie out of the house to help Margaret escape.

**The Tender Land** (1954)
Librettist Horace Everett (aka Erik Johns)

Grandpa
- Jonathan Napior Morales

Laurie
- Erin Kennelly

Ms Moss
- Nicole Harris

Elkan
- John Mancheni

In 1954 the opera was criticized for a weak libreto. The party to celebrate Laurie's graduation from High School is going on. Laurie thanks the guests, and calls for a fond eye in the direction of Martin, one of two itinerant workers hired for the harvest. Ms Moss, Laurie's brother, provides a distraction by challenging everyone to a dance.

**The Old Maid and the Thief** (1939)
Librettist Liberto Horace Everett (aka Erik Johns)

Miss Pinkerton
- Sherrodah McKee

Miss Todd
- Amanda Mura

Laurita
- Charlie Rollion

Copland's numerous and influential works encompasses the Pulitzer Prize winning ballet score for Martha Graham's *Appalachian Spring* (1944) and the Academy Award winning film score for *The Heiress* (1949). Copland's second opera, *The Tender Land*, was commissioned by Rogers and Hammerstein. It was originally planned for the NBC Television Opera Workshop, however the opera was rejected by the television producers. At its premiere with the New York City Opera in 1954 the opera was criticized for a weak libreto. The party to celebrate Laurie's graduation from High School is going on. Laurie thanks the guests, and calls for a fond eye in the direction of Martin, one of two itinerant workers hired for the harvest. Ms Moss, Laurie's brother, provides a distraction by challenging everyone to a dance.

**Duo Man**
Copland's second opera, *The Tender Land*, was commissioned by Rogers and Hammerstein. It was originally planned for the NBC Television Opera Workshop, however the opera was rejected by the television producers. At its premiere with the New York City Opera in 1954 the opera was criticized for a weak libreto. The party to celebrate Laurie's graduation from High School is going on. Laurie thanks the guests, and calls for a fond eye in the direction of Martin, one of two itinerant workers hired for the harvest. Ms Moss, Laurie's brother, provides a distraction by challenging everyone to a dance.
The Ghosts of Versailles (1991)
Rosina Casey Gardner
Cherubino Cady Marshall
Marie Antoinette Wendy Moss

Beaumarchais Jonathan Napier Morales
King Louis XVI Erikson Franco
Ghosts Students of the Opera Workshop

The Metropolitan Opera Company commissioned the opera for its 100th Anniversary. After missing the planned premiere, it was finally produced on December 19, 1991. The ghosts of the court of Louis XVI have been haunting the palace of Versailles since their demise by guillotine during the French Revolution. Marie Antoinette is a sad ghost, and Beaumarchais has a plan to cheer and beguile the queen. He presents a flashback of the mutual seduction of Rosina and Cherubino in the gardens of Aquas Frescas in Seville, twenty years before the French Revolution. As Rosina and Cherubino move closer and closer together, Beaumarchais draws nearer to the queen. Rosina and Cherubino consummate the quartet with a kiss but the jealous husband and King Louis interrupts Beaumarchais and Marie Antoinette.

Little Women (1998)
Adapted from Louisa May Alcott
Gideon Genesis L. Brown
Jo Belinda Jackley
Beth Beverly Taflinger

Family Members and Chorus Students of the Opera Workshop

The Houston Grand Opera commissioned Mark Adamo to compose an opera for its young artist program. The studio performances were so successful that the opera appeared as part of the Houston Grand Opera’s regular season in 2000. In his composer’s notes to the HGO program, Adamo describes his music as reflecting his love of “fioratura” vocal writing, pan-chromatic harmony, and American theater-song forms. And also, “for those scenes driven by language and story, rather than music and psychology, I concocted a variant of 18th-century recitative... crisply minimal, but made from a twelve-tone melody...” These he used extensively for the role of Jo. In this scene, Jo has been called home to the bedside of the seriously ill Beth.

The Seagull (1974)
Anton Chekhov, adapted by Kenward Elmslie
Constantin Brian Myer
Nina Sarah Fulco
Arkadina Amanda Mura
Shemrayeff Jonathan Napier Morales

Sorin Genesis L. Brown
Dr. Dora Erikson Franco
Pauline Nicole Harris

The Seagull had its world premiere at the Houston Grand Opera on March 5, 1974. Pasatieri made revisions for a production at the San Francisco Opera Center on April 23, 2004. In this scene, we are on the country estate of Sorin, whose sister, Arkadina is a former actress. Arkadina’s son, Constantin, has written and directed an unconventional play that is being presented to guests staying at the estate. The play stars Nina, a young girl from a neighboring estate, as the “soul of the world.” Arkadina laughs at his attempt to find a new theatrical form, finding it ridiculous and incomprehensible, while Constantin storms off in disgrace.

Candide (1957)
Adapted from Voltaire
Candide Jahmaal Bakare
Cunégonde Wendy Moss
Paequette Isabella Ivy
Old Lady Belinda Jackley
Governor Erikson Franco

Maximilian Michael Elliot
Pangloss Brian Myer
Chorus Students of the Opera Workshop
UNLV Chamber Chorale

After surviving a series of misadventures, Candide and his cousin Cunégonde decide to settle down and buy a farm. Dr. Pangloss, their tutor, has convinced them that everything turns out for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

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Randy Hughes – Stage Manager
Cheré Ro and Karen McCann – Musical Preparation
Danielle Toscano – Poster Design
Cady Marshall and Librarians Cheryl and Kathleen – Music Material
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