LOPER OPERA PRESENTS

American Voices

NOVEMBER 6, 7:30PM  UNK Fine Arts Recital Hall
NOVEMBER 7, 3:00PM

Music from works by Aaron Copland, Ricky Ian Gordon, Jake Heggie, Jennifer Higdon, and Kurt Weill
Down in the Valley (1945)  
Kurt Weill (1900-1950)  
“Brack Weaver, my true love”  
“Hop up my ladies”  
Jennie Parsons: Emma Jahn  
Brack Weaver: Zachary Allen  
Jennie’s Father: Maximus Wohler  
Choreographer: Noelle Bohaty

Three Decembers (2008)  
Jake Heggie (b. 1961)  
“What do you remember about dad?”  
Beatrice: Hannah Petersen  
Charlie: Steven Boldt

The Grapes of Wrath (2007)  
Ricky Ian Gordon (b. 1956)  
“I like to keep my nose clean” (Act I)  
Tom Joad: Maximus Wohler  
“The Zephyr/One Star” (Act I)  
Connie Rivers: Maximus Wohler  
Rosasharn: Hannah Petersen  
“The Creek/I can Be a Help” (Act II)  
Noah Joad: Zac Ochsner  
Ma Joad: Sharon O’Connell Campbell
**Cold Mountain** (2015) Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)
“Orion” (Act II)
Ada Monroe: Hannah Petersen
W. P. Inman: Steven Boldt

“Ada’s Aria” (Act II)
Ada Monroe: Katherine Ridder

“Our Beautiful Country” (Act II)
Ghosts of Confederate Soldiers:
UNK Men’s Chorus
Dr. Alison Gaines, Conductor

**The Tender Land** (1954) Aaron Copland (1900-1990)
“Laurie’s Song” (Act I)
Laurie Moss: Daisy Hawkins

“The Promise of Living” (Act I)
Grandpa Moss: Zac Ochsner
Martin: Maximus Wohler
Laurie Moss: Daisy Hawkins
Top: Steven Boldt
Ma Moss: Rochelle Hazelton
Dr. Alison Gaines, Conductor
ZACHARY ALLEN (Brack Weaver) Zachary is excited to be a part of his first Opera Workshop! Typically, Zachary is performing on “the other side of the hall” with the theatre department. You may recognize him from precious roles such as Duperret in Marat Sade and Clotaldo in Life is a Dream. Later this month Zachary will be performing in the next main stage production at UNK as Frank in The White Liars & Black Comedy. When Zachary is not onstage, he is working in the shop as the charge artist for the theatre department. Zachary is also a member a committee chair for the local Alpha Psi Omega chapter.

STEVEN BOLDT (Charlie/Inman/Top) is a Musical Theatre and Theatre major from Amherst, Nebraska. At UNK he has appeared on stage in Orphan Train: the Musical, Ghost Sonata, I Love You Because, and Life is a Dream, (for which he received an Irene Ryan Award nomination). He has also helped backstage in She Kill Monsters and Nightfall with Edgar Allen Poe, and will be operating the soundboard for Black Comedy/White Liars. At KCT, Steven has appeared as Laurie in the musical, Little Women and Billy in On Golden Pond. Steve is an optimistic realist who dreams big of one day acting in and directing movies. Steven’s last appearance was in Crane River Theater’s Cinderella last summer.

SHARON O’CONNELL CAMPBELL (Ma Joad) mezzo-soprano has performed opera roles with companies including Santa Fe Opera, The Lyric Opera of Kansas City and Civic Opera Theater of Kansas City. She has soloed in works including Handel’s Messiah, Bach’s St. Matthew Passion, Vivaldi’s Gloria, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, and Beethoven’s Mass in C. She earned the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Vocal Performance from University of Kansas, the M.M. from the Conservatory of Music at University of Missouri-Kansas City and the B.M. from University of New Mexico. A Professor of Music, Campbell has taught at University of Nebraska Kearney since 2008.
DAISY HAWKINS (Laurie Moss) is a sophomore Music Education major from Kansas. Last spring, she appeared as Rosaura in Life is a Dream, for which she received an Irene Ryan Acting Award nomination. In high School, Daisy appeared in Beauty and Beast Jr. and The Jungle Book Jr. At UNK, Daisy is a member of Collegium and on the drumline of the UNK Marching Band. This is Daisy’s first production with Loper Opera.

ROCHELLE HAZELTON (Ma Moss) is a senior Music Education major where she will graduate in May with a double principal in voice and viola. Rochelle has received support for two university funded research projects and presented the results of this research through the National Council for Undergraduate Research (2021 virtual presentation) and the Undergraduate Research Day at UNK. Rochelle has participated in Choraleers, Kearney Symphony Orchestra, and the Thornton String Quartet. She looks forward to graduation and pursuing teaching, with plans to eventually attend graduate school. This is her first appearance with Loper Opera.

EMMA JAHN (Jennie Parsons) is no stranger to the UNK stage. As a middle schooler, she appeared in the musical How I Became a Pirate (Jeremy Jacob) and as a Gingerbread girl in Hansel and Gretel. A junior at Kearney High School, Emma is a veteran of over 30 productions. She has appeared onstage with the Minden Community Players and at Kearney Community Theatre. In addition to singing, Emma studies dance, piano and harp. She most recently appeared in The Woman in Black with Crane River Theater. Emma is the daughter of Eileen and Mick Jahn.

ZAC OCHSNER (Noah Joad/Grandpa Moss) is a Senior Music Education student. A participant in numerous vocal ensembles at UNK, Zac has also placed in state and regional competitions of NATS. A Thompson scholar at UNK, Zac hopes to study abroad this spring and complete his student teaching next fall. Zac hails from North Platte.
HAHNNAH PETERSE (Beatrice/Rosasharn/Ada) is a Musical Theatre major/Dance minor Senior, who made her Loper Opera debut in The Old Maid and the Thief (Miss Pinkerton) last year. Hannah recently appeared in Nightfall with Edgar Allan Poe. She has also appeared in several one-act plays and the mainstage show, Life is a Dream (dancer/various roles). Hannah has been seen as a dancer and choreographer in annual Spring Dance Concerts, and was co-choreographer in the Fall 2020 musical I Love You... Because. As a recent concerto-aria winner, Hannah will sing with the Kearney Symphony Orchestra this spring.

KATHERINE RIDDER (Ada) is a 2017 graduate of UNK (BM-Music) who is currently working on a Master’s Degree in Music Education. At UNK, she appeared as Rosalinda (Die Fledermaus), Farm Wife (Orphan Train: The Musical) and numerous opera scenes programs. She is active onstage at Kearney Community Theatre, recently performing in Beauty and the Beast (Mrs. Potts) and in Leading Ladies (Audrey). She has also performed with Theatre Cedar Rapids and Spotlight on Opera in Texas. Katherine works in the UNK Admissions Office. In her free time, she continues to work on building her repertoire and appearing in shows.

MAXIMUS WOHLER (Tom Joad/Connie Rivers/ Martin/ Jennie’s Father) returns for his third production with UNK’s Loper Opera. His debut operatic performance was The Old Maid and the Thief (Bob). Most recently, Maximus appeared in Nightfall with Edgar Allan Poe. Other credits include Marat/Sade (Marquis de Sade), I Love You Because (Jeff Bennett), Tuck Everlasting (Jesse Tuck), and appearances with Crane River Theater. A winner of UNK’s Concerto-Aria Competition, Maximus will appear as soloist with KSO this spring. A senior Musical Theatre major, after graduation, he hopes to pursue a career in singing, acting, and voice work.
NOELLE BOHATY (Choreographer) is an Associate Professor and the Director of Dance at University of Nebraska-Kearney. She holds an MFA from The Ohio State University with an emphasis in choreography and performance. Her research interests include dance, theatre, text and site-specific performance. Originally from Nebraska, Noelle has taught dance for more than 2 decades, including a year-long residency with 80+ middle and high school students from across the state at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln. She was a guest instructor at American College Dance Association and Lecturer of Dance at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Bohaty earned her B.A. in Dance and Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology from Washington University. (2008).

ANNE FORADORI (Director) has appeared in recital, concert and opera in the U.S. and Central America. She has performed premières of songs cycles by Lori Laitman, Darleen Mitchell, and Deanna Walker. She has presented at several national conferences sponsored by MTNA, NATS, and NOA. She has performed at the CMS international conference, (Costa Rica), and made her NY debut at Symphony Space in 2007. Dr. Foradori has published in the Journal of Singing. She holds the DMA from The Ohio State University. Dr. Foradori is Professor of Voice at the UNK where she teaches voice, opera, and musical theatre, and has served as director, musical director/conductor for 30 + productions.
MIRIM KIM (*Collaborative Pianist*) is in her first year as Collaborative Pianist at UNK. She holds a MM in Piano Performance from Indiana University, and a MM and DMA in Collaborative Piano at The University of Texas at Austin, where she served as a Teaching Assistant. Her career as a collaborative pianist includes duo recitals, studio recitals, masterclasses, concerto competitions, ensemble concerts (choir, band, and orchestra), opera, and musical theater productions. Dr. Kim has collaborated with all the instruments, including harp and marimba. She was a collaborative pianist for many music festivals, including Domaine Forget International Festival, Castleman Quartet Program, SongFest, and Music Academy of The West.

JOHN MARTIN PETZET (*Conductor, “Our Beloved Country”*) is Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at the University of Nebraska-Kearney where he conducts the Choraleers, Collegium, Men’s and Women’s Choruses, and teaches Secondary Choral Methods and Choral Conducting. Dr. Petzet has conducted honor choirs and workshops, and presented sessions in a dozen states, as well as conduct at La Universidad Autónoma De Ciudad Juárez in Mexico. As a singer performing with the Kansas City Chorale, he sang on the Chandos recording of *Grechaninov: Passion Week* which won a Grammy for Best Engineered Classical Album. He resides in Kearney, Nebraska with his lovely wife Jennifer and his 3 children: Zachary, Andrew, and Catherine.

ALISON GAINES (*Conductor*) Music Director and Conductor of the Kearney Symphony Orchestra, Dr. Alison Gaines holds the DMA degree in orchestral conducting from the University of Kansas. Her professional conducting experiences include Breckenridge Music Festival, Iowa State University, and College of DuPage. She has served as a clinician and guest conductor for music festivals throughout the Midwest, has held music director positions in Kansas and Missouri and has guest conducted various Midwestern orchestras from Arkansas to Nebraska. Upcoming conducting engagements include work as a cover conductor for Orchestra Iowa and the Apollo Chorus of Chicago as well as substitute conducting work at Fordham University and with the Lincoln Center Chamber Players. Dr. Gaines holds the Ronald J. Crocker Chair in Orchestra at UNK.
**Down in the Valley** was written by Kurt Weill to a libretto by Arnold Sundgaard. Originally conceived as a radio opera (1945), it was rewritten for the stage and received its première performance in 1948 at Indiana University.

The action begins in a jail the night before an execution and is told in flashback form. Brack Weaver, a teenager, falls in love with a girl, Jennie, after an Appalachian prayer meeting. But her father wants her to go to a dance with his unsavory creditor, Thomas Bouché, who the father thinks will bail him out of his money troubles. Jennie disobeys and goes to the dance with Brack ("Hop up my Ladies").

At the dance, the villain gets drunk and threatens the hero with a knife. The two fight and the villain dies (by his own weapon). Brack is condemned to be hanged. Jennie is pining for Brack, and argues with her father, ("Brack Weaver, my True Love").

**Three Decembers** was composed by Jake Heggie with a libretto by Gene Scheer, based on an unpublished play by Terrence McNally, *Some Christmas Letters*. The three parts of the opera are set in the month of December in the years 1986, 1996 and 2006 and it tells the story of a famous actress, Madeline, and her two adult children as they struggle to know and love each other. “It is the universal story about the family we wish for and the family we wind up with” (Heggie). “What do you remember about dad?” is sung by siblings, Charlie and Beatrice in the first scene (1986), when Bea is in San Francisco visiting her brother, Charlie and his partner Burt who is ill with HIV/AIDS. Although they each have difficulty forgiving their absentee narcissistic mother, they idolize their father who died when they were 7 and 5 years old.

**The Grapes of Wrath** by Ricky Ian Gordon was written in 2007. Based on the novel by John Steinbeck, with a libretto adapted by Michael Korie, the story is a chronicle of the Joad family’s journey as sharecroppers from Oklahoma to California, during the Dust Bowl of the Great Depression in the U.S.

“I like to keep my nose clean” – (Act I) – Tom Joad has been released early from prison for good behavior. He plans to live his life, staying out of trouble, if he can. When he returns home, he sees there has been a foreclosure on the family farm and he travels west for new opportunities.

“The Zephyr/One Star” (Act I) – Rosasharn (Tom’s younger sister) and her husband Connie Rivers dream of a new life with a fancy car and a home for the child she is expecting. They wish upon a star – in the sky, and their own “star”, their unborn child – hoping their dreams come true.

“The Creek/I Can Be a Help” (Act II) – Noah Joad (the eldest son, described as “slow witted”) is showing Tom that he can tie his shoes. His impatient mother – Ma Joad – sends him with a bucket to the creek to get water for the family. Noah remembers the story of how Biblical Noah built an ark and saved his family and
the animals. He decides that he would be like his namesake and “save” his family by being one less mouth to feed. Instead of gathering water, he allows himself to be drowned in the river. Ma searches for Noah, then sings a lullaby of the innocence of children. He fades and drowns hearing his mother’s voice. Ma reaches the river and realizes that a tragedy has befallen Noah.

*Cold Mountain* is a 2015 opera by Jennifer Higdon, with a libretto by Gene Scheer. The story is based on a 1997 novel by the same name. Fatigued by the horrors of the Civil War, deserter W.P. Inman foots the arduous terrain of North Carolina toward home and the salve of his love, Ada Monroe, herself transformed by his absence. Once a Southern lady of privilege, Ada adapts to years of profound deprivation thanks to a resourceful new friend, Ruby. Inman’s odyssey home is plagued by not only the Home Guard’s marshals, but a more gruesome possibility: has the war’s violence withered his human capacity to love? And further, what truly makes a man a human? – Gene Scheer

“Orion” – Act II – Inman is traveling back roads to North Carolina to hide from the home guard. It is November and he sees the constellation “Orion” in the winter sky. Ada, at home, comes out into her yard and sees the same stars. In a duet that occupies different space, they think and wonder the same things, connected only by the stars they both see.

“Ada’s Aria” – Act II – Ruby’s abusive father, Stobrod comes to Black Cove Farm looking for food and lodging from Ruby and Ada. He is found by the home guard and shot for desertion. As he lay dying, Ada sings that she feels sorry for him because of the missed opportunity of knowing how wonderful his daughter, Ruby is.

“Our Beautiful Country” – Act II – Ruby and Ada walk among the graves of buried Confederate Soldiers. This chorus of ghosts speaks of their love of country and the beautiful homeland – the South – they have sworn to protect. They sing of their patriotism and sacrifice: “We are soldiers, sons, civilians...the unnamed tributaries of our nation’s blood, the rivers of our nation’s blood. Buried and forgotten, in our beautiful country where we lie buried. We rest beneath the ground on which you tread. Oh, beautiful country!”

*The Tender Land* was written in 1954 by Aaron Copland to a libretto by Horace Everett. The opera tells of a farm family in the Midwest U.S. after the Great Depression. In the first scene, Laurie Moss, a young girl about to graduate from high school muses about her life on the farm and the future that lies before her. (“Laurie’s Song”). At the end of Act I, the Moss family (Grandpa, Ma, and Laurie) are looking forward to Laurie’s graduation party/barn dance that evening with neighbors. They are joined by seasonal farmhands Martin and Top for the spring harvest. They all sing of the value of hard work and the family farm. (“The Promise of Living”).
PRODUCTION STAFF
Anne Foradori, Director
Mirim Kim, Collaborative Pianist and Coach
John Martin Petzet, Conductor of Men's Chorus
Alison Gaines, Conductor
Noelle Bohaty, Choreographer
Del DeLorm, Lighting and Technical Assistance
Angel Qualset, Stage Manager
Victoria Nemneh, Production Assistant
Giovanni Flores, Sound Production Manager

PERFORMERS
Zachary Allen Emma Jahn
Steven Boldt Zac Ochsner
Sharon O’Connell Campbell Hannah Petersen
Daisy Hawkins Katherine Ridder
Rochelle Hazelton Maximus Wohler

UNK MEN’S CHORUS
Reace Anderson Stephen Johnson
Bodie Belz Nathan Morris
Samuel Bojorquez Jacob Obrecht
Dakota Empfield William Otte
Oscar Erives Jaedn Robertson
Michael Frandolig Chris Schroeder
Marcus Gibson Jacob Sykes
Richard Harbols Tetsuhito Tsutsumi
Sam Heitz Jon Willis
Malcolm Hinze Maximus Wohler
Ryan Johnson