

AM AHL
& the
Night Visitors

BY
GIAN CARLO MENOTTI



OPUS
CONCERT
THEATRE

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ENCORE PERFORMANCE DECEMBER 17TH



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PRESENTS

GIAN CARLO MENOTTI'S

A M A H L
& the
Night Visitors

DECEMBER 1, 2 & 3, 2017 AT HCCA

AND 17 DECEMBER AT GERMANO'S

DIRECTED BY **Kevin Crysler and
Gregory Scott Stuart**
MUSIC DIRECTOR/CONCERT PIANIST **Aejin Kim**

AM AHL **Lawren Palmer**
MOTHER **Diana Cantrelle**
KING KASPAR **Jim Li**
KING MELCHIOR **Elliot Matheny**
KING BALTHAZAR **Leroy Andrew Smith**
PAGE **Gregory Scott Stuart**

ENSEMBLE ARTISTS (SHEPHERDS)

SOPRANOS **Juliet Rose Beach**
Mattie Newgent, Dancer
Valerie Smith
Elena Wenderoth, Dancer
Emily Zimmer

ALTOS **Amanda Leininger**
Nichole Propst
Chrissy Updike, Dancer

TENORS **Ruh Elswick, Dancer**
Jeff Houston
Inge Hyder

BASSES **Les Gesell**
Clark Pickett
David Smith
Jered Wenderoth

STAGE MANAGER **Dr. Anne Ballenger**

SOUND VIDEO EDITOR **Jonathan Levine**
VIDEOGRAPHER **Ron Israel**

Notes from the Artistic Director

Welcome to Opus Concert Theatre's second show of our second season!

After the success of our *Carmen: Vive la Liberté*, we are proud to present the fully staged production of *Amahl & the Night Visitors* by Gian Carlo Menotti.

I prefer to let the story unfold naturally before you. However, here is a wee synopsis: A poor widow and her young, disabled son Amahl are on the verge of starvation. Suddenly, a knock at the door reveals three Kings, each bearing gifts as they follow a mysterious star in the East. When Amahl and his mother learn the purpose of the Three Wise men's journey, lives are changed forever.

Menotti was commissioned by NBC back in 1950 to write an opera for television—this new medium that was becoming a part of everyone's home. *Amahl & the Night Visitors* made its premiere by the NBC Opera Theatre on 24 December 1951, was broadcast live, and conducted by Arturo

Toscanini. *Amahl*, the first opera composed for television, was the debut production of the Hallmark Hall of Fame, the longest running primetime television show, winner of eighty Emmy Awards, twenty-four Christopher Awards, eleven Peabody Awards, nine Golden Globes, and four Humanitas Prizes.

I have always loved the works of Menotti, sung in English (his second language) and relatively easy to produce. He is an inspiration to me as a singer and composer. He writes heartfelt lyrics, chooses interesting subject matter and is challenging musically, without being impossible to sing. Menotti embraces an elegant combination of modern 20th century atonality with lyrical, soulful melodies.

Thank you for continuing to support your opera company and the incredible talent right in your own backyard! Opus Concert Theatre—Bringing Voice to Great Music!

GIAN CARLO MENOTTI'S

AM AHL & the Night Visitors

~Diana Cantrelle

Who's Who

Aejin Kim, (Music Director/Concert Pianist) was born in Seoul, South Korea, began studying piano at the age of five and started accompanying at the age of 12 with prominent musicians. She received bachelor of music and master of music in piano performance and instrumental accompanying from Temple University Boyer College of Music and Dance (Philadelphia, PA). At Boyer, she studied with world- renowned Lambert Orkis. While at Temple, she accompanied over 50 recitals, juries, and numerous lessons. She taught college level piano as a graduate teaching assistant and a member of *Pi Kappa Lambda* National Music Honor Society. Moreover, she was hired as an accompanist for "University Singers" (conductor; Dr. Jeffery Cornelius), one of the big choirs of Temple University. As a very talented accompanist, she had many concerts in central Philadelphia including Kimmel center, Billy Graham Center, Tomlinson Theater, Lincoln center, and so on. Also, she joined the committee for student hospitality for annual piano competition at Old Dominion University (Norfolk, VA). She managed this big event every year successfully with Dr. Harold Protsman from year of 2004 to 2007.



As a piano teacher since the year 2000, she exactly knows how to make lessons both educational and interesting for individual student. Due to the result of her efforts to be a great teacher, she was elected by both students and parents as a best teacher in Symphony school of music, PA (2011). Also, she obtained Master degree and Graduate Performance diploma in vocal accompanying major at Peabody conservatory in Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD) as she is widening her music fields into accompanying focused on vocal music. She previously played in Towson University for solo and ensemble music festival and Howard Community College for "*Hansel and Gretel*" opera. In addition, she performed and did a vocal coaching for *Falstaff*, *Cendrillon*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Magic Flute*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Currently, she is a member of MTNA and HCMTA.



Lauren Hill, (Soprano, Amahl) hails from Western Maryland and currently holds teaching positions at both Frostburg State University and St James Academy, as well as maintaining a large private studio of voice and piano students. Miss Hill is a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music (MSM) where she received a Master of Music degree in Vocal and Opera Performance, and of Shepherd University where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Vocal Performance.

Recent performances include Fanny Wiggins in Sousa's *Chris and the Wonderful Lamp*, Mabel in *Pirates of Penzance* with Way Off Broadway. While at MSM, she was seen on the main stage in their production of *Corigliano's Ghosts of Versailles* under the direction of Jay Lesenger, featured in the scenes program "Loved Delayed and Love Lost" (directed by Richard Gammon), and with the Discover! Opera (Mark Janas) and Contemporary Opera (Miriam Charney) ensembles. Miss Hill's previous credits include an appearance in the ensemble for Odyssey Opera's production of *Sir John in Love* as the soprano soloist in Poulenc's

Who's Who

Gloria with the Masterworks Chorale of Massachusetts, Sophie in *Werther* (Boston Opera Collaborative), Josephine in *HMS Pinafore* (Ohio Light Opera) Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* (Shepherd University), Sarah Brown in *Guys and Dolls* (SU), and Cinderella in *Into the Woods* (SU) and the soprano soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Masterworks Chorale (SU). She has also been a soloist with the Maryland Symphony Orchestra and performed with the enCanta Collective in New York City. Scene work includes *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Lakmé*, and *Carmen*.

Lawren enjoys musical outreach, including serving as the music director for the Rural Artists Project in Bristol Bay, Alaska, and various outreach performances all over Manhattan for children and the elderly.



Diana Cantrelle, MM, (Dramatic Mezzo-Soprano, Mother) is at home in opera, oratorio, TV & film. Critical reviews say, "Cantrelle is Carmen...sounds & looks great in the role...superb acting & singing." "Her deep rich voice gives new meaning to the words and her voice has vibrant vocal color & style." "Cantrelle's interpretation of French repertoire, Verdi & Oratorio provides high points to performances where she shows delicate vocal warmth as well as her acting talent." "Cantrelle is a smart choice with her ability to give emotional depth to the opera's score." Diana Cantrelle has performed at the Hippodrome

Theatre; Vocalypse Productions in Nova Scotia; The Lyric in Baltimore; Wolf Trap; Peabody Opera Theatre; Kennedy Center; Washington Savoyards; L'Alliance Française; Divertimento Orchestra in Canada; Silesian State Theatre in Czech Republic; Cincinnati Opera; Capitol Operas NY & PA; Townsend Opera Players; Pittsburgh Undercroft Opera; Opera Santa Barbara.

Recent works include: *The American Prize* for Opera & Oratorio 2017-18; *Carmen* in *Carmen-Vive la Liberté*; Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*; *Vive la France—A Celebration of France & Friendship* CD Release/Recital 2017; *Witch* in *Hänsel und Gretel*; *Azucena* in *Il Trovatore*; *Suzuki* in *Madame Butterfly*; *Charlotte* in *Werther*; *Aldonza* in *Man of La Mancha*; *Mother* in *Amahl & the Night Visitors*; *Madame Flora* (Baba) in *The Medium*; *Adalgisa* in *Norma*.

Miss Cantrelle studies with Carmen Balthrop and coaches with Susan Morton, Michael Adcock, John Astin, Garnett Bruce, and Roger Brunyate, François Loup & William Sharp. She earned a Masters of Music in Voice Performance/Vocal Pedagogy with Composition Studies from Peabody Conservatory of Music in 2012. www.dianacantrelle.com or www.youtube.com/dianacantrellediva

Jim Kuang-cheng Li, (Baritone, King Kasper) was born in Taiwan, graduated from Peabody conservatory, a student of Stanley Cornett. At Peabody, he has performed Don Basilio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, the Evangelist in *The Christmas Story* by Heinrich Schütz, soloist in Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*, Monostatos in *Magic Flute* and as a Sailor in *Dido and Aeneas* by Henry Purcell. His Recent opera activities includes as a doctor in Augusta Read Thomas' *Ligeia*, which



Who's Who

took place in Evian, France, commissioned by Mstislav Rostropovich; as well as Ferrando in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at Seagle Colony, up-state New York; Emperor in Charles Strous' *Nightingale* with Opera Theatre of Northern Virginia, Lindoro in Rossini's *An Italian Girl in Algiers* with Mount Vernon Place Music Theater in Washington, DC. and as Tinca in Giacomo Puccini's *Il Tabarro*, as Don Basilio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Cassio in Verdi's *Otello* with Opera International in Washington, DC. Soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* with Mt. Vernon Place Methodist Church choir and orchestra. He also frequently performs in oratorios like *Messiah* with Harford Choral Society, Frederick Arts Council, the soloist in Sergei Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil* with Baltimore Choral Arts Society, as well as a frequent guest soloist with The Christian Oratorio Society of Greater Washington, DC.



Elliot Matheny, (Baritone, King Melchior), is described as possessing "a powerful stage presence as well as a profound quality to his voice," by Metropolitan Arts Reviews. A frequent performer in the DMV, recent roles include Marcello (*La Bohème*), Sharpless (*Madame Butterfly*), Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*), Belcore (*L'Elisir D'Amore*), Ford (*Falstaff*), Morales (*Carmen*), and Melchior (*Amahl*). Mr. Matheny was a Young Artist of The Castleton Festival (2012-2015), where he covered roles and sang in several operas and concerts under the baton of Lorin Maazel, and studied with opera legends James Morris,

Denyce Graves, and Richard Stilwell. Born and raised in Las Vegas, Nevada, Elliot was a Young Artist of Opera Las Vegas (2013-2014). He studied Vocal Performance at Gonzaga University (2008-2012), and was a Young Artist of Spokane Opera (2009-2012). Elliot has placed in several NATS competitions, was a recipient of Thomas Hampson's SMC Young Artist Award at the 2012 Musicfest Northwest competition, and was a semifinalist in the Professional Division of the 2016 Classical Singer Competition.

Leroy Andrew Smith, (Tenor, King Balthazar)

born and raised in Baltimore City where he currently resides. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Voice from the Sunderman Conservatory of Music at Gettysburg College. He currently teaches first-grade special education at KIPP DC in Washington DC. Leroy is known for his eclectic and diverse musical background encompassing classical music, gospel, R&B, jazz, and alternative music. Some of his



former roles include Indio in *West Side Story*, Goro and Prince Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly*, and the Sailor in *Dido and Aeneas*. He is a member of Opus Concert Theatre and the Baltimore City College Alumni Master Chorale where he enjoys singing with his fellow musicians. Leroy believes that music is both an experience and the bond that holds together societies.



Kevin Cryslar, M.B.A. (Co-Director) is the president of Opus Concert Theatre. Previously, he had an extensive

Who's Who

career as an actor, director, designer and producer in opera, theatre, television and film. He has narrated concerts for the Atlanta Opera and The Atlanta Symphony, and was the preview lecturer for Opera Pacific in Orange County California for nine years. He has taught acting for singers in the MFA program at Cal State Long Beach and has taught opera appreciation courses at University of California, Irvine and Saddleback College. He is currently the owner of Mr. Handyman in Anne Arundel County and a resident of Columbia.



Gregory Scott Stuart, (Co-Director and Page) is a man of the arts: he manages to sing several opera roles each year in addition to engagements as a stage director, actor, and church musician. He was a soloist in world premieres of Paul Leavitt's *Cantata Emmanuel*, his *Magnificat* and in premieres of his *Requiem* in Washington, Paris and at Lincoln Center, NYC and on CD. As an actor, he played in the Helen Hayes nominated ensemble of *Optimism or Voltaire's Candide* at Spooky Action Theatre and has a slew of Shakespeare roles to his credit with Shakespeare Opera Theatre, Baltimore Shakespeare Festival, Three

Rivers Shakespeare Festival, Seacoast Repertory Theatre, New England Shakespeare Festival, and has tread the boards at DC's Studio Theatre and in musicals with Pittsburgh Playhouse, Bay Theatre & Ithaca Opera, including a national tour of *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. He directed last season's US premiere of a French musical, *Bigoudi*, several operas, world premieres of Phillip Freund's *Jocasta* and Sean Pflüger's opera *Children in the Mist*. He works for Vocal Arts DC, is the Board Vice President/Artistic Director of Loudoun Lyric Opera in VA, teaches singing, theatre and yoga.

Juliet Beach is thrilled to finally take part in her first production with Opus Concert Theatre. She has been studying classical voice for close to four years now, with three of those being under Diana Cantrelle. Juliet has been heavily involved in local theatrical productions throughout Maryland since 2010. She has been accepted into numerous acting programs, including The American Academy of Dramatic Arts and the New York Conservatory for the Dramatic Arts.



Valerie Smith, (Soprano, Costume Designer) has sung in church and secular choirs all her life. Since moving to the United States from Canada in 1984, the highlights of her singing activities have included St. Andrews College Park Episcopal Church choir from 1984 to 1989, which included a week as choir in residence at Westminster Abbey in August, 1985; the University of Maryland Chorus under Dr. Paul Trayver in collaboration with the Baltimore Symphony chorus in a production of Verdi's *Requiem* in 1992. She sang in the chorus in a production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* in 2016, and *Carmen* in 2017, both with Opus Concert Theatre in Columbia. Valerie



Who's Who

continues to hone her singing skills as a regular student of Diana Cantrelle, and sings soprano in the ensemble of Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* this winter. She is an active member of her church choir at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Crownsville, MD.

Elena Patricia Wenderoth, (Soprano, Dancer) is a young girl at Wilde Lake Middle school. Eleana Wenderoth has been a part of many choirs and plays. In grades 4 and 5, she was in the Howard County Children Choir, and in grades 7 and 8, she was part of Howard County Gifted and Talented Choir. She has been in plays such as *Oliver*, in which she played the part of Nancy, and *Annie*, as the part of Miss Hannigan.



Emily Zimmer, (Soprano, Section Leader) is thrilled and honored to be performing once again for the Opus Concert Theater. Last April she played the part of the Second Witch for the opera *Dido & Aeneas*. Emily is also a member of the Showtime Singers which performs nine months out of the year in the Maryland state area. They also perform every other year at Colonial Williamsburg, Va. She is a soloist as well as a chorus member. This past April on the 22nd Emily sang as a soloist for them there at the Kimball Theater and her solo was "When you Wish Upon a Star" from *Pinocchio*. Emily has been singing in choruses

since she was in 6th grade and was in All County Chorus as well as All State. During college she was also a music major and performed in a variety of operas and ensembles. While in high school she was a member of the Peabody Preparatory Program at Hopkins University in Baltimore. Including being member of their Children's Chorus. She also took lessons at their Music Conservatory. Emily is currently taking lessons once a week with Mrs. Diana Cantrelle. She sang in *Carmen* as a member of the ensemble in the Soprano section this past Fall. She is greatly looking forward to singing as a first soprano for *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.

Amanda B. Leininger, (Alto, Section Leader) originally from Rochester, MN, currently resides in Baltimore, MD. A full-time nonprofit marketing and communications professional, she is thrilled to be part of her third production with Opus Concert Theatre, previously appearing in *Dido and Aeneas* in spring 2016 and *Carmen: Vive la Liberté* in summer 2017. She holds a B.A. in psychology with a minor in theatre and a M.A. in communication from The Johns Hopkins University. Her favorite roles in the theatre have included Pope Joan in *Top Girls*, Reuben's Wife in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat*, Sonia (billed as Amanda)/choreographer in *Godspell* and dance captain in *Oklahoma!*. She would like to thank her vocal coach Diana for always believing in and challenging her and the rest of the musicians, cast and crew for their commitment and dedication. Lastly, she would like to thank her family, friends and roommate for their ongoing support and tolerating her craziness and



Who's Who

singing/humming these past few weeks.



Nichole Propst, (Alto) *Amahl & the Night Visitors* marks the second Opus Concert Theatre production for Nicole Propst. Ms. Propst previously sang alto in the vocal ensemble for Opus Concert Theatre's debut production of *Dido & Aeneas* in the Spring of 2016. Having loved to sing since she discovered Disney princesses as a child, Ms. Propst grew up singing in various children's and youth choirs at her local church. At the age of 16, she was invited to join the praise and worship team as a Soprano vocalist where she regularly sang solos, duets, and ensemble pieces. She continues to regularly perform

in this capacity. Combining her love for music and children, Ms. Propst co-led a Vacation Bible School worship and motions team for 120+ children in the summer of 2014 and has previously led music for a 2s and 3s Sunday School class. When not performing, Ms. Propst enjoys studying voice under the tutelage of Ms. Diana Cantrelle and covering popular songs on her YouTube channel "Nicole Leigh". Since graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature from Stevenson University in 2010, Ms. Propst has worked in Government Contracting for the U.S. Army. Loving to help those in need, both locally and abroad, Ms. Propst often volunteers with the Route 1 Homeless Shelter in Howard County, Operation Christmas Child, and World Vision. She has also participated in Christian mission trips to West Virginia, Mexico, and the Ukraine.

Chrissy Updike, (Alto, Dancer) is a very musically inclined individual. She has a long history in the realms of performance and music. She played in Carroll County's All-County as a Bassist, and was in a production in her 7th grade year called *CSI Neverland* with stage crew. Chrissy is an aspiring vocalist and multi-instrumentalist with her EP album, "A Summer Well Spent" Debuting in Spring 2018. Chrissy brings a wealth of musical aptitude to the show.



Rue Elswick, (Dancer, Tenor Section Leader), has performed with such companies as Ocean City Repertory Theatre, Virginia Repertory Theatre, Classical Revolution RVA, Virginia Chorale, and Capitol Opera Richmond where he played the role of Alfred in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* and Lord Tollerer in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*. Rue has also held teaching positions with the Greater Richmond School of Music, Richmond Music and Arts Center, and has held section leader position is with such churches as the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and Second Presbyterian Church.

Jeff Houston, (Tenor) is thrilled to be making his debut in the ensemble of Opus Concert Theater's production of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and looks forward to being invited back for future productions. Jeff has had a love for music and singing that goes back to his earliest memory. In his spare time, he enjoys

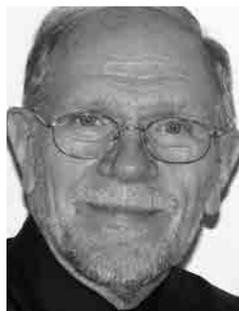
Who's Who

participating in endurance sports and hopes to run two marathons in 2018. He is also an accomplished nature photographer having won numerous awards. However, his favorite activity is volunteering as a foster parent with the Maryland SPCA, raising orphaned kittens—sometimes from the day of birth then up until they are ready to be adopted. He also volunteers with the LIVESTRONG Foundation as a LIVESTRONG Leader, raising awareness of cancer programs available to all those affected by cancer.

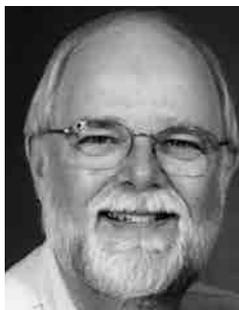


Inge Hyder, (Tenor) began singing practically non-stop since she met Bill, her husband-to-be, in the chorus of *The Mikado* at Queens College in New York in 1948. Many years later she and Bill were active members of the Comic Opera Company of Baltimore, putting on Gilbert & Sullivan operas annually for many years. Inge has also sung with the Handel Choir, the Baltimore Symphony Chorus, the Laurel Oratorio Society, the Columbia Choral Society, and the Columbia *Pro Cantare*. Presently she is a member of Encore Chorale, the UIUC (Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia) choir, and the Bain/HCC chorus. She is enjoying her second production with Opus Concert Theatre.

Les Gesell, (First Bass) a bass in the ensemble, has sung in a number of choruses of high quality. These include singing, as an undergraduate, in the Capital University Chapel Choir. Les recently sang with Columbia *Pro Cantare* Chamber Singers as well as in the full chorus. He currently sings with the Baltimore Choral Arts Society which frequently sings in concert with Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Les is currently taking voice lessons with James Bailey at Howard Community College.



Clark Pickett, (Bass, Section Leader) has been involved in musical activities practically since birth. He participated in both vocal and instrumental music activities from elementary through high school. He also played French horn in the Flint, MI Youth Symphony Orchestra for several years. He received a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal School Music from Michigan State University in 1971.



Following college, he taught public school vocal music for one year, where he directed the choral portion of the school musical production of *Mame*. He then began a 42 year career with the Social Security Administration in offices in Michigan, and, from 1986 until he retired in 2015, at SSA headquarters in Woodlawn. Since moving to the Baltimore area, he has sung in several musical groups. For 8 years, he sang in the Christian ensemble "*Joy and Devotion*." For the last 4 years, he has been a member of the Baltimore Choral Arts Society, where he has sung in the Symphonic Chorus, Full Chorus, and Chamber Chorus.

Who's Who

Mr. Pickett also regularly sings in the choir and worship team at his church, as well as acting in a number of musical productions there over the years.



David Smith, (Basso Profundo) was an enthusiastic participant in choral singing and musical theatre through high school. He allowed life to intervene until recently, when he resumed singing in his church choir. *Dido and Aeneas* was his first foray into opera and now he enjoys singing in *Carmen*, *Vive La Liberté* and helping his fellow singers.

Jered Wenderoth, (First Bass, Second Tenor) is an amateur opera and work commute singer from Columbia, Maryland. He has been described as "one of the top four singers in the Wenderoth

household." Mr. Wenderoth is performing in the bass section of the ensemble of the Opus Concert Theatre production of *Carmen: Vive la Liberté* in order to support and spend time with his musical prodigy daughter Elena. He previously performed in the Opus production of *Dido & Aeneas* also to support his amazing daughter and to be able to shock people with his claim of having performed in an opera. Jered has no other current productions in the works and no plans to go professional ever.



Stacy Brocker is a local portrait and mural artist who started scenic set painting two years ago, in order to join her daughter in her love of theater, and has since painted over two dozen sets for several local venues. She loves supporting the local arts and having her work be a visual part to showcase the amazing singing and acting talents on the stage. Her very active and creative five children enjoy having a mom who can face paint on a whim anything they can dream up and personalize their rooms with murals. www.stacybrockermurals.com



Anne M. Ballenger, PhD (stage manager) is an active Opus Concert Theater Board Member. She has been active in musical theater since 1980 and performed as actor/singer at the collegiate level under the direction of Michael Ellis-Tolaydo and Larry Vogt at St. Mary's College of Maryland. After earning her doctorate in anthropology from Catholic University of America in 2009 and opening a floral business, Ballenger Floral Design, in 2015, Dr. Ballenger has returned to her love of theater as stage manager for Opus Concert Theatre's productions.

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