



MERCURY OPERA ROCHESTER
PRESENTS

SHOW BOAT

FRIDAY, JUNE 1 · SATURDAY, JUNE 2 · SUNDAY, JUNE 3
EASTMAN THEATRE



presents

SHOW BOAT

The great American stage work of the 20th Century

Music by Jerome Kern
Book and Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II
Based on the novel "Show Boat" by Edna Ferber

Gerard Floriano – Artistic Director & Conductor
Barbara Montgomery – Stage Director
Leslie Dockery – Choreographer
Dennis Hinson – Assistant Director

Accompanied by the
Mercury Opera Rochester Orchestra

Scenery provided by Gateway Playhouse, Bellport, NY
Lighting designed by Nic Minetor

There will be one 20-minute intermission.

Show Boat is presented through special arrangement with R&H Theatricals,
1065 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 2400, New York, NY, 10018.
www.rnhtheatricals.com

Scene

The action begins in Mississippi in the late 1880's, moves to Chicago beginning in the 1890's and progresses through time to the final scene which takes place on the Show Boat in the late 1920's.

Synopsis of Scenes & Musical Program

Act I Scene 1: The levee at Natchez on the Mississippi River in the 1880's.

"Cotton Blossom" Ensemble
Show Boat Parade and Ballyhoo..... Cap'n Andy & Ensemble
"Only Make Believe" Ravenal & Magnolia
"Ol' Man River"..... Joe

Scene 2: The kitchen pantry of the "Cotton Blossom" 5 minutes later.

"Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" Julie, Queenie,
Magnolia & Joe

Scene 3: The stage of the "Cotton Blossom" an hour later.

Scene 4: The box office of the "Cotton Blossom" three weeks later.

"Life Upon the Wicked Stage" Ellie & Ensemble
Ballyhoo and Dance..... Queenie & Ensemble

Scene 5: The auditorium and stage during the 3rd act of

"The Parson's Bride" that evening.

Scene 6: The top deck later than night.

"You Are Love"..... Magnolia & Ravenal

Scene 7: The levee at Greenville the next morning.

Finale..... Ensemble

— 20-Minute Intermission —

Act II Scene 1: The Midway of the Chicago World's Fair in 1893.

"At the Fair" and Dance: Congress of Beauties..... Ensemble
"Why Do I Love You" Magnolia, Ravenal &
Ensemble

Scene 2: A room on Ontario Street in Chicago in 1904.

Scene 3: Rehearsal room, Trocadero Music Hall a few days later.

"Bill" (Lyrics by P.G. Wodehouse &
Oscar Hammerstein II)..... Julie

Reprise:"Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" Magnolia

Scene 4: Saint Agatha's Convent at about the same time.

Service Music..... Ensemble

Reprise:"Only Make Believe" Ravenal

Scene 5: Trocadero Music Hall, New Year's Eve 1905.

"Goodbye My Lady Love" (by Joe Howard)..... Frank & Ellie

"After the Ball" (by Chas. K. Harris)..... Magnolia

Scene 6: Stern of the Show Boat in 1927.

Reprise:"Ol' Man River" Joe

Scene 7: Top deck of the "Cotton Blossom" that night.

Reprise:"Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" Julie

Reprise:"You Are Love" Ravenal

Scene 8: The levee at Greenville the next night.

Finale..... Ensemble

Cast

In order of appearance

Steve Baker , leading man on the “Cotton Blossom”	Marc Falco
Queenie , the cook on the “Cotton Blossom”	Kimberley Michaels*
Pete , engineer on the “Cotton Blossom”	Andrew Hammond*
Windy McLain , pilot of the “Cotton Blossom”	Aaron Netsky
Mincing Misses	Laura Szymanowicz & Lisa Rosenbauer
Parthy Ann Hawkes , matriarch of the troupe	Joan Harkenrider Floriano
A Boy	Ryan Nation
Cap’n Andy , her husband, the captain	Frederick Nuernberg*
Two Girls	Norma Butikofer & Sarah Rychlik
Ellie May Chipley , lead dancer and comedienne	Deborah Lifton
Frank Schultz , her partner in their act & often plays the villain	Daniel Gurvich
Rubberface , producer of special effects for the troupe	Robert Holmes
Julie LaVerne , leading lady and Steve’s wife	Karen Holvik
Gaylord Ravenal , a dashing young river traveler	Bray Wilkins
Ike Vallon , sheriff of Natchez	James Pike
Magnolia Hawkes , daughter of Parthy & Cap’n Andy	Hallie Silverston
Joe , stevedore on the “Cotton Blossom” & Queenie’s husband	Derrick Smith
Backwoodsman , man buying tickets to the show	Andrew Hammond
Jeb , his friend	James Pike
Ellie’s “Wicked Stage” Dancers	Sheila Sullivan Buck, Norma Butikofer, Sarah Rychlik, Laura Szymanowicz (& Anna Battaglia)
Ballyhoo Dancers	Terrence Ashford, Marcus Goodwine, Jason Holmes, Dante King, Krystal Lawton, Sheltiere Lee, Christiana Shorter, Kyla Skrine, Nicole Thomas, Shirlyn Washington
Seth Purdy , audience member	Nathan Oakes
Barkers at the World’s Fair	Lindsay Holmes & Bill Hearne
Congress of Beauties	Norma Butikofer, Krystal Lawton, Kyla Skrine, Laura Szymanowicz, Sarah Rychlik, Nicole Thomas, Tiffany Young
Ethel , the maid	Christiana Shorter
Landlady	Sheila Sullivan Buck
Trocadero Dancers	Norma Butikofer, Sarah Rychlik, Laura Szymanowicz
Jim Green , the director at the Trocadero	Dennis Rosenbaum
Jake , the pianist	Arthur Williford
Joe , man auditioning with guitar	Nathan Oakes
Charlie , the doorman	Bill Hearne
Mother Superior	Pat Fussell
Nuns	Holley Shafer & Lindsay Holmes
Kim , daughter of Magnolia & Gaylord	Maria Floriano
Cap’n Andy’s Trocadero Girls	Stacie Henshaw, Lori Romaniw, Lynn Zicari
Dancing Patron	Alex MacDonald
Radio Announcer	Gerry Floriano
Man	Ben Kneeland
Old Lady on the Levee	Mary Menzie

Chorus of Stevedores, Gals, Townspeople, Sightseers & Trocadero Patrons

Terrence Ashford, Anna Battaglia, Sheila Sullivan Buck, Norma Butikofer, Kathy Damann, Joanne Dennstedt, Pat Fussell, Marcus Goodwine, Jared Grant, Bill Hearne, Stacie Henshaw, Jason Holmes, Lindsay Holmes, Robert Holmes, Bionka Jackson, Dante King, Denise Kless, Ben Kneeland, Craig Larson, Krystal Lawton, Sheltiere Lee, Alex MacDonald, Jocelyn Mack, Mary Menzie, Aaron Netsky, Nathan Oakes, James Pike, Colin Porter, Gary Rawls, Lori Romaniw, Lisa Rosenbauer, Dennis Rosenbaum, Sarah Rychlik, Holley Shafer, Christiana Shorter, Kyla Skrine, Laura Szymanowicz, Nichole Thomas, Shirlyn Washington, Andrew White, Tiffany Young, Lynn Zicari

Children

Jalyn Cox-Cooper, Alexander Christie, Emily Folan, Marguerite Frarey, Ryan Nation, Xavier Peterson, Lily Smith, Mimi Smith, Wyatt Smith

Featured Dancers

Norma Butikofer, Ben Kneeland, Alex MacDonald, Sarah Rychlik

Cover for Mr. Smith Colin Porter

**The actor appears through the courtesy of Actors Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

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Mercury Opera Orchestra

Violin

Lee Wilkins, *concertmaster*
Geoffrey Jones
Sherry McCarthy
Theresa Johnson
Janet Milnes
Margaret Leenhouts
Betsy Sprague
Sarah Comesano

Viola

Janeen Wilkins
Joanne Lowe
Shana Hobin Stewart
Jacinda Dudley

Cello

James Kirkwood
Janneke Hoogland
Lisa Caravan
Sandra Halleran

Bass

Jeff Weeks

Flute/Piccolo

Diane Smith

Oboe

Allison Franco

Clarinet

Margaret Quackenbush
Jun Qian

Bassoon

Kirsta Rodean

Horn

Mary Hunt
Colleen Wolf

Trumpet

Barbara Hull
Steven Marx

Trombone

Christopher Van Hof

Percussion/Timpani

Jim Tiller

Keyboards

Arthur Williford

Guitar

John Weisenthal

Banjo

Leah Zicari

Orchestra Manager

Joanne Lowe

Production Staff

Artistic Director & Conductor.....	Gerard Floriano
Stage Director	Barbara Montgomery
Choreographer.....	Leslie Dockery**
Assistant Stage Director.....	Dennis Hinson
Stage Manager.....	Rachael Kipphut
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Chorus Preparation.....	Gerard Floriano
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Audio Engineer	Nic Marinaccio
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This production is funded in part by grants from the Arts and Cultural Council for Greater Rochester, the New York State Council on the Arts, The New York State Music Fund, and the New York State Legislature.

 Arts & Cultural Council
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Biographies



Gerard Floriano, Artistic Director/Conductor

Emerging American Conductor Gerard Floriano is equally accomplished in both the operatic and orchestral arenas. As Artistic Director of Rochester Opera Factory, he led the rise of this ambitious company, conducting full-scale critically acclaimed performances of Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*, Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, and Puccini's *Suor Angelica*. As Co-Artistic Director of Mercury Opera Rochester, Dr. Floriano led Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz* and Donizetti's *Elixir of Love* in the company's inaugural season, and Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in the company's second season. Writing about *L'Amico Fritz*, D&C music critic John Pitcher wrote "Floriano proved to be nothing less than a virtuoso conductor... He led his fine orchestra with color, precision and a welcome degree of sweep... ushering in a New Age of Good Opera" in western New York. In December of 2005, Dr. Floriano led the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra in holiday concerts throughout the area and in March 2006 made his Carnegie Hall conducting debut with the Greater Buffalo Youth Orchestra. A regular guest conductor in Europe, Dr. Floriano has led performances in Krakow, Warsaw, Prague, Barcelona, Florence and Leipzig. He recently conducted the Orchestra di Vicenza and Venice Opera in a spectacular performance of Mozart's *Requiem*. Dr. Floriano is acclaimed as an innovative programmer and dedicated educational conductor. Under his leadership, the Greater Buffalo Youth Orchestra has become a premiere training orchestra for the most talented young musicians in western NY. Dr. Floriano is Director of Choral Activities at the SUNY Geneseo and Resident Conductor at the Brevard Summer Music Festival, where in the summer of 2007, he will conduct a production of Bernstein's *Candide* with the Janiec Opera Company. He is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music with Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees in Conducting.



Barbara Montgomery, Stage Director

Barbara Montgomery's fantastic theatrical journey began in the early off-off Broadway movement of the mid-60's at The Old Reliable Theater, Café LaMaMa, Joseph Papp's Public Theatre, The WPA, and Negro Ensemble Company, after which she performed at regional theaters throughout the country: Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Arena Stage in Buffalo, Cricket Theatre, Coconut Grove Playhouse, Yale Repertory Theatre, A Contemporary Theatre, and Long Wharf Theater, in productions of Genet's *The Blacks*, *No Place to be Somebody*, *The Amen Corner*, and *Oedipus Rex*. She toured internationally with La MaMa Tours from locations as far distant as Spoleto, Italy to Persia in productions of *A Rat's Mass*, *As You Like It*, *Macbeth*, and *The Cotton Club*. On Broadway, Ms. Montgomery has appeared in *Raisin: The Musical*, *My Sister, My Sister*, *The First Breeze of Summer*, *Kennedy's Children*, *Inacent Black*, and *The Tap Dance Kid*. In 1983 she co-founded and was Artistic Director of Black Women In Theatre, Inc, where she compiled and directed *The Actress*. On television, she has appeared as series regular on "Amen" and "Married People", and movies of the week "Evergreen", "Women of Brewster Place", "Polly", and "Polly One More Time", and as a guest artist on "Fresh Prince", "Living Single", "Women of the House", and "Dave's World." Ms. Montgomery directed *Out of the South* and *Hymn to the Raising Sun* at La MaMa ETC, conceived, wrote and directed *Cacao Dolce*, and conceived and directed *Linizo del Dolore* at La MaMa Umbria. She has been Director in Residence for Opera Ebony for two seasons, and there directed *The Meeting*, *Harriet Tubman/Frederick Douglas*, and *Blues in a Broken Tongue* written by Leslie Lee. Ms. Montgomery continues to conduct acting workshops and looks forward to directing her first film, "Mitote" and the documentary "Hendy: The Life of Jeanine Hendy, an African-Italian."



Leslie Dockery, Choreographer

Leslie Dockery made her Broadway directing debut with *Rollin' on the T.O.B.A.* Her other director/choreographer credits include, the revival of *Don't Bother Me I Can't Cope* (Tony Award Season/Crossroads Theater), *Broadway Melody, Raising Hell* and the original workshops of *Beehive* and *Smokey Joe's Café*. Off-Broadway, Ms. Dockery's choreography for both *Little Ham* and *From My Hometown* received Audelco Award nominations. Although her work has become a staple for the European tours of the Harlem Gospel Singers with Queen Esther Morrow, Ms. Dockery

and David Tobin's own original Pure Gospel franchise shows include *A Pure Gospel Christmas*, *A Pure Gospel Valentine* and *A Pure Gospel America*. Her newest project aiming for Broadway is as choreographer for Lee Summers' 70's funk musical, *The Funkentine Rapture*. As a performer, Ms. Dockery appeared in the Broadway productions of *Eubiel!*, *Sophisticated Ladies*, *The Tap Dance Kid* and *Amen Corner*, and with Cab Calloway in *Bubbling Brown Sugar*. Ms. Dockery teaches dance at Essex County College in Newark, NJ and is choreographer for Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International Scholarship Competition.



Dennis Hinson, Assistant Director

Dennis M. Hinson earned a Bachelor of Music in vocal performance in 1989 from the North Carolina School of the Arts, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He has been traveling the world with Queen Esther Morrow and The Harlem Gospel Singers for the past seven years working in varying capacities. He has worked with Leslie Dockery, Cerise Johns, Mercedes Ellington and David Bell on this particular production. Mr. Hinson made his directorial debut in the International Fringe Festival directing a new musical "The New Bohemia." He thanks the casts

and production team for all their hard work on launching the "Show Boat."



Marc Falco, Steve Baker

Baritone Marc Falco, a native of Rochester, recently completed his Master of Music degree at Ball State University in Muncie, IN where he most recently performed the role of Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*. While in Indiana he also taught voice at Indiana Wesleyan University, was a soloist with the Warsaw Symphony Orchestra and was the Minister of Music at Alexandria First Church of the Nazarene. Mr. Falco sang several roles with Rochester Opera Factory including Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Poo Bah in *The Mikado*, and Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*. He

has portrayed roles in a variety of musical theater and operas including Don Alfonso in *Così fan Tutte*, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Daddy Warbucks in *Annie*, Mack in *Annie Get Your Gun*, and Billy Bigelow in *Carousel*. Mr. Falco is a graduate of Houghton and Roberts Wesleyan Colleges.

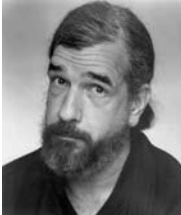


Daniel Gurvich, Frank Schultz

Baritone Daniel Gurvich has performed with the Boston Lyric Opera, the National Opera Company, Long Island's Ridotto Opera, Virginia's Ash Lawn-Highland Festival, The Bronx Opera Company, and Boston University's Opera Institute. Opera performance highlights include the title role in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Count Almaviva in Mozart's *Figaro*, Dandini in Rossini's *Cenerentola*, Don Andes in Offenbach's *La Perichole*, Gideon March in *Little Women*, and Roderick in Debussy's *La chute de la maison Usher*. Musical theatre highlights include the Viceroy in *La*

Perichole, El Gallo in *The Fantasticks*, and the Rabbi in *Fiddler on the Roof*. An avid performer of song and concert repertoire, Mr. Gurvich has been a fellow of the Tanglewood Music Center and the Aspen Music Festival Vocal Chamber Music programs. He was a Bach cantata soloist with the Tanglewood Music Center orchestra conducted by Seiji Ozawa. Mr. Gurvich's presentation of Mauricio Kagel's Prince Igor, Stravinsky, at Tanglewood's Festival of Contemporary

Music was described as “fearless and solidly-grounded” by The Boston Globe. A Boston-area winner of the NATS competition, Mr. Gurvich holds a Master of Music degree from Boston University, where he also attended the Boston University Opera Institute and studied with Phyllis Curtin. While Living in New York City, Mr. Gurvich taught as an adjunct instructor of voice in the Department of Music and Performing Arts at New York University. Mr. Gurvich was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, attended high school in Brighton, and currently lives in Ithaca. He is thrilled to be performing with his wife, Deborah Lifton.



Andrew Hammond, Pete and Backwoodsman

Rochester-based actor Andrew Hammond has toured nationally with Richard Kiley in *South Pacific*, with John Raitt in *Man of LaMancha*, and as Buffalo Bill with Bonnie Franklin in *Annie Get Your Gun*. He has appeared as Captain Hook in *Peter Pan* for Candlewood Playhouse, as Moonface Martin in *Anything Goes* for Cohoes Music Hall, and worked as Jose Ferrer’s understudy in the Papermill Playhouse’s revival of *Fanny*. Mr. Hammond appeared in the premiere of *Mowgli* for the American Music Theatre Festival, and created the role of Jack Kehoe in the new

musical *The Molly Maguires*, and has done many readings and workshops in New York including *Kevorkian Cafe*, *Houdini* and *Hagar the Horrible*. Mr. Hammond was just seen here in Rochester with Rochester Children’s Theatre at Nazareth College as Long John Silver in the new musical *Treasure Island*.



Joan Harkenrider Floriano, Parthy Ann Hawkes

Soprano Joan Harkenrider Floriano, a frequent performer on the musical stage, most recently sang the roles of Mother Hawkins in the premiere of *Treasure Island – The Musical* (directed by Brett Smock) and Madame de la Grande Bouche in Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast*, both with Rochester Children’s Theatre. Roles include Lucy in Rochester Opera Factory’s production of Menotti’s *The Telephone*, Sister Mary Amnesia in *Nunsense*, Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Silberklang in Mozart’s *Impresario*, Laura in the Hudson-Kaplan musical, *Main-Travelled*

Roads, Galatea in Handel’s *Acis and Galatea*, Julie Jordan in *Carousel*, leading roles in *Perfectly Frank* and *Cole*, Jeannie in *The Stephen Foster Story*, and Mert in *Peppermint Bear*. Oratorio credits include Handel’s *Messiah*, Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio*, *Magnificat*, and *Cantatas*, Faure’s *Requiem*, and Schubert’s *Mass in G* (recorded under MARK Label.) Ms. Harkenrider Floriano received her Master’s degree in Voice from Eastman and currently teaches voice and Foreign Language Diction at Nazareth College.



Karen Holvik, Julie La Verne

Soprano Karen Holvik brings a wealth of experience in a wide range of musical styles to her performances. Since earning a master’s degree and performer’s certificate in opera at the Eastman School of Music, Ms. Holvik has pursued an eclectic musical path, building a large repertoire of concert music, oratorio and operatic roles. Highlights of her work include appearances with Houston Grand Opera’s Spring Opera Festival, Skylight Opera, Opera Festival of New Jersey, Opera Illinois, Anchorage Opera, Texas Opera Theater, and Western Opera Theater, singing roles

including Constanze, Lucia, Juliet, Adina, Micaela, Marzelline and Baby Doe. She has toured extensively in the United States, and has appeared in Canada and Western Europe singing both popular and classical repertoire. She has been successful in many competitions, including the American Opera Auditions, Liederkrantz Foundation, Oratorio Society of New York, Carnegie Hall International American Music Competition, and Joy in Singing, which sponsored her debut recital at Alice Tully Hall. The Richard Tucker Gala Concert marked her Avery Fisher Hall debut, and she made her Carnegie Hall debut singing Handel’s *Messiah* with the Masterwork

Chorus and Orchestra. Ms. Holvik has premiered works by John Musto, Ricky Ian Gordon, Aaron Jay Kernis, James Sellars, Stewart Wallace, Richard Wilson and Tom Cipullo. She has appeared on television, radio and in concert with the New York Festival of Song, and appears with baritone William Sharp and pianist Steven Blier on a NYFOS recording released by Koch International, *Zipperfly & Other Songs* by Marc Blitzstein. After teaching at Vassar College and New York University, in September of 2004 she joined the faculty of the Eastman School of Music.



Deborah Lifton, Ellie May Chipley

A recent winner of the 2007 Joy in Singing Competition and the David Adams Art Song Competition, Soprano Deborah Lifton is equally at home in opera, song recital, and musical theatre. Recent operatic appearances include both Susanna and Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Valencienne in *The Merry Widow*, Beth in *Little Women*, Elisa in *Il Re Pastore*, and Catherine in *A Death in the Family* (Albany Records), as well as the title roles in *Bastien und Bastienne*, *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, and *Armida*. Ms. Lifton has appeared in concert at Trinity Church, the

Kosciuszko Foundation, the Yamaha Showroom, and many other venues in the Tri-State area, including performances with the Long Island Philharmonic. She has also been a fellow of the Aspen Music Festival and a Resident Artist with the Ash-Lawn Highland and Natchez festivals. Ms. Lifton regularly performs on sound tracks for documentaries and nationally televised commercials. She holds degrees from the University of Michigan and the Manhattan School of Music, and is currently an Assistant Professor of Voice at Ithaca College.



Kimberley Michaels, Queenie

Kimberley (Scott) Michaels is pleased to be making her debut with Mercury Opera Rochester. Ms. Michaels made her Broadway debut in 1994 in the Tony Award winning musical *Show Boat* understudying Lonette McKee in the role of Julie LaVerne. Kim has sung nationally and internationally in theatrical touring productions, vocal ensembles and is proud to have performed a one-woman show on the life of Billie Holiday entitled "Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill". Kim is a native of Rochester and studies voice with Derrick Smith at the Eastman School

of Music. Kim presently works as a Crisis Counselor with the RPD FACIT team. Much love and thanks to family and friends for years of love and support. All praises and thanks to God for his promises, gifts and blessings.



Frederick Nuernberg, Cap'n Andy Hawkes

Rochester-based actor Fred Nuernberg first arrived in Rochester as a member of the Rochester Shakespeare Theatre, and has performed and directed for all the major theaters in the Rochester area. He holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from Marquette University and has done Doctoral work at the University of Michigan and Michigan State University. He has taught Theatre at Sauk Valley College in Illinois and Northern Michigan University. Mr. Nuernberg spent many years as Guest Artist and Actor /Teacher at the University of Rochester Summer Theatre. He is a avid opera fan and is very happy to be part of this production of *Show Boat* in this exciting new Mercury Opera Rochester company. Although primarily trained in Classical Theatre, Mr. Muernberg has enjoyed a wide range of acting roles. Cap'n Andy is one

such role. He hopes the joy of this production is as strong for you the audience as it is for us.

Hallie Silverston, Magnolia Hawkes

Hallie Silverston, soprano, received her Masters degree from Eastman, studying voice with Karen Holvik. A native of Los Angeles, she graduated from the University of Oregon, where she studied with Milagro Vargas. Roles there included Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*, Anne Egerman in *A Little*



Night Music, Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas*, and Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*. Other Oregon highlights include singing the soprano solos in the Bach *Magnificat* and Mozart's *C Minor Mass* under the direction of Maestro Helmuth Rilling and winning the University's Concerto Competition. Ms. Silverston made her professional debut in May 2006 as Adina in Mercury Opera Rochester's production of *L'Elisir d'Amore* and recently sang the role of Sandrina in Eastman Opera Theatre's production of *La Finta Giardiniera*. She has performed in master classes with Ruth Ann Swenson, Mira Zakai, Benita Valente, Martin Katz, John Harbison, and Jake Heggie. She was a finalist in the Los Angeles Music Center Spotlight Awards and

the Friends of Eastman Opera Competition, and she recently placed third in the Lotte Lenya Competition, an honor which culminated with a performance in Lincoln Center. Upcoming engagements include the role of Julie Jordan in *Carousel* with the Bay View Music Festival.



Derrick Smith, Joe

Baritone Derrick Smith has emerged as a rising vocal sensation, singing with distinction in theaters around the world. Mr. Smith sang the role of Joe in *Show Boat* at its 50th Anniversary performance at the California Musical Theater in Sacramento. He performed the same role at the Marriott Lincolnshire Theatre's performances in Chicago, receiving jubilant praise from critics and standing ovations from the audience. He has triumphed equally performing the roles of Porgy, Jake and Crown in *Porgy and Bess*, and Leporello in *Don Giovanni* with the Malmo Sym-

foni Orkester in Sweden. Mr. Smith more recently appeared with Opera Ebony in the debut performance of original opera *Harriet Tubman* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, performing the principal role of John Tubman. He repeated the role of John Tubman both at the Arturo Schomberg Center in New York and at the Metro Theater in Syracuse. Mr. Smith has also performed as a soloist with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the Rochester Oratorio Society, Rochester Chamber Orchestra, Corning Philharmonic, Geneseo Symphony and Chorus, the Long Island Symphony, Virginia Consort, and the Chamber Group of the Toronto Symphony. He has performed in Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, and Russia, Sweden, Brazil, Estonia, and Italy. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, Mr. Smith participated in the Glimmerglass Opera Young American Artist Program and the Brereton International Music Symposium in England. He currently teaches voice in the Community Music School at Eastman.



Bray Wilkins, Gaylord Ravenal

Bray Wilkins, tenor; originally from Monroe, Louisiana, is a graduate of the University of Idaho. While there, he sang Basilio in the *Marriage of Figaro*, Marco Palmieri in *The Gondoliers*, and Frederic in *Pirates of Penzance*. Mr. Wilkins was also a member of the 2003 College Light Opera Company, MA, where he performed the roles of Anthony Hope in *Sweeney Todd*, Paul Berthalet in *Carnival*, and Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls*. He was district winner of the Northwest Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions in 2004, and again in 2007 for the Midsouth region, where he placed 3rd in the Regional Finals. Other awards include prizes in the clas-

sical division at NATS competitions in 2001-2003, winner of the Washington-Idaho Symphony Young Artists Competition, and the recipient of the 2006 Lys Symonette Award for Outstanding Performance of an Individual Number at the Lotte Lenya Singing Competition. Mr. Wilkins had the privilege of being under the tutelage of Marilyn Horne at the Music Academy of the West in CA in 2005, and will be returning for the 2007 Summer Festival.

Rachael Kipphut, Stage Manager

Ms. Kipphut has Stage Managed dozens of musicals and operas and is delighted to be joining Mercury Opera Rochester. A native of Rochester, she is also a Stage Manager for the Augusta Opera and the la Chat Noir in Augusta, Georgia, and has worked on productions for Geva

Theatre Center and Busch Gardens Williamsburg. A graduate of Brigham Young University, she has studied theater and film production in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

Nic Minetor, Lighting Design

Lighting designer/director for theater, film and TV, Nic Minetor has been resident designer for more than 40 productions of Eastman Opera Theatre, including *Candide*, *La Bohème*, *The Medium*, *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, and *Sweeney Todd*, and many Opera Theatre of Rochester and Geva Theatre productions, including *A Christmas Carol*. His work is also seen at NTID, SUNY Brockport, Elmira and Nazareth Colleges.

Nellica Rave, Wardrobe Coordinator

Nellica Rave has her MFA in Costume Design from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Favorite projects include *West Side Stories* for New World Theater, *Blithe Spirit* for Pioneer Valley Summer Theater, and costume shop for the Paralympics Opening Ceremonies in 2002. She has worked locally for the JCC, Eastman Opera Theatre, RIT, Irondequoit Theatre Guild and TYKES.

Matthew Scheidt, Technical Director/Production Manager

A native of Rochester, Matthew Scheidt has been building scenery and working in production management for Eastman Opera Theatre for the last six years. He has worked in the local theatre scene of over 15 years as stagehand and audio engineer. Mr. Scheidt has built the sets for Mercury Opera Rochester's productions of *L'Amico Fritz*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, and *Abduction from the Seraglio*.

Arthur Williford, Accompanist

Pianist Arthur Williford, originally from Houston TX and a graduate of Eastman is an active pianist, accompanist, and chamber musician. He is the recipient of several prizes from the Eastman School's composition department, and was recently nominated for Eastman's Accompanist Prize. Mr. Williford is pursuing a career in collaborative piano. This is also his debut in a vocal on-stage role.

Production Notes

Perhaps the most influential musical of the twentieth century, **Show Boat** combined the talents of Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, both of whom had felt for some time that Broadway musical theatre was suffering from a lack of depth and needed to steer away from the fluffy musical comedies and melodramatic operetta that it was accustomed to. After choosing for their subject Edna Ferber's sprawling novel of life on the Mississippi, Kern and Hammerstein set out to deal with issues such as failed marriage, alcoholism, and racial prejudice.

Originally produced by Florenz Ziegfeld, **Show Boat** opened at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York City on December 27, 1927, and ran for 572 performances. Since then, beside innumerable regional productions, it has had 11 revivals in New York and three London productions, the most recent of which ran for 910 performances. Three films were made of it, including a scarcely seen 1929 version, the classic 1936 version starring Irene Dunne with Paul Robeson as Joe (the most faithful to the original show,) and the 1951 MGM version starring Ava Gardner and Howard Keel with Rochester's own William Warfield as Joe.

The story, which spans almost fifty years, deals primarily with the fortunes of an impressionable young woman named Magnolia Hawkes, her father who owns a show boat named the *Cotton Blossom*, and a troubled riverboat gambler and sometime actor named Gaylord Ravenal. Several sub-plots address the social issues of miscegenation (interracial marriage), "passing," racial stereotypes, marital abandonment and commitment, loyalty, and gambling and alcohol addiction. **Show Boat** boldly portrayed racial difficulties, and for a 1927 show it was quite progressive in doing so. It was the first racially integrated musical, in that both black and white performers appeared on stage together. It was also the first musical with a substantial plot in which the songs furthered the action and grew directly out of the dramatic situations – a radical departure from the plotless reviews, vaudevillian follies, and fluffy girlie shows which were the popular style of the musical theater of the day.

Show Boat also has some of the most beautiful and memorable music in all of musical theater. Virtually every song in the score is a hit tune. Some of the most memorable songs include "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," "Old Man River," "Make Believe," and "Bill" (with lyrics by P.G. Wodehouse and Oscar Hammerstein II.) The music is also greatly important in the musical, because it helps tell the story so well. The authors also included several popular tunes of the day written by others, including "After the Ball" by Chas. K. Harris, "The Washington Post March" by John Phillip Sousa, "Goodby My Lady Love" by Joe Howard and "Georgia Camp Meeting" by Kerry Mills.

Mercury Opera Rochester chose to perform this American musical for several reasons – it is an epic, dramatic story with operatic characteristics and it requires legitimate and serious vocal performers to do it justice. It is truly the first American "verismo" opera, showing real people in true-to-life situations and difficulties. And of course the music is beautiful and compelling. In early rehearsals with the chorus for the show, it seemed that the singers would learn and memorize the music in an incredibly short time, especially compared to our last production, Bellini's *Norma* in Italian. It's not that the music is easier, or that it's in English - **Show Boat** is OUR music, our American heritage, the music that is in our bones and comes from our uniquely American experience.

We are also very fortunate to have such wonderful singing actors in our midst – classically-trained vocalists who also have the unique capacity to cross-over into jazz and pop music. Not all "opera singers" have the ability to make the transition successfully. Karen Holvik, a soprano who made her name singing the Queen of the Night aria at the Metropolitan Opera, has also sung extensively in jazz clubs and began her vocal career singing with a rock band. Derrick Smith, a baritone with almost equally lofty classical credentials, will be performing Joe for the fourth time in our production. Add to that a pair of young singers as the star-crossed lovers, Hallie Silverston and Bray Wilkins, whose promising careers are just beginning, and the magic of Kern and Hammerstein's **Show Boat** is inevitable.



The primary mission of Mercury Opera Rochester is to produce professional opera for a growing, appreciative audience, utilizing the following principles:

- Uphold high artistic standards in all endeavors.
- Maintain fiscal responsibility.
- Educate present and future audiences. We want people to enjoy and appreciate opera. This includes adult education and fun events as well as structured programs in schools and colleges.
- Provide performance opportunities for local singers, both professional and amateur.
- Collaborate with other like-minded organizations in the area.

For more information about Mercury Opera Rochester and any of our upcoming performances, call 585-473-6567 or check our comprehensive website at www.mercuryoperarochester.org. We keep patrons informed of our projects via mail and email. If you would like to be added to our private mailing list or would like to receive our newsletter, please let us know.

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Thank you to all our patrons and supporters as we conclude our second season and reassess our goals and progress. Community response has exceeded our expectations, as more people saw live professional opera here than in a long time. Because of the outpouring of enthusiasm and support, we accomplished our twin goals: to meet high artistic standards while maintaining strict fiscal responsibility. We've proven to ourselves and the community that there can be a future for professional opera in Rochester, and we're already talking about several future seasons! But opera productions are very expensive (think sets, costumes, singers, orchestra, theatre, stagehands...the list goes on and on.) Your ticket price covers less than half of our costs. We need your help to continue to make the vision of Mercury Opera Rochester a reality. If you enjoy our performance and agree with our goals, please support our future. Consider a donation to continue professional opera performances and to reach out to future opera lovers in Rochester. Tax-deductible donations are gratefully accepted by Mercury Opera Rochester, 26 Gibbs Street, Rochester, NY, 14604, and on our website at www.mercuryoperarochester.org.

Mercury Opera Rochester's Third Season

The Tender Land by Aaron Copland

Friday, Sept. 14, 2007 at 8:00 PM and Sunday, Sept. 16, 2007 at 2:00 PM

Callahan Theater at Nazareth College Arts Center

Tickets \$60, \$45, \$25, Student tickets \$15

Don Giovanni by W.A. Mozart

Friday, Jan. 18, 2008 at 8:00 PM and Sunday, Jan. 20, 2008 at 2:00 PM

Accompanied by the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Eastman Theatre

Tickets \$75, \$60, \$45, \$25, Student tickets \$15

La Bohème by Giacomo Puccini

Friday & Saturday, June 6 & 7, 2008 at 8:00 PM

Eastman Theatre

Tickets \$75, \$60, \$45, \$25, Student tickets \$15

Special Event: *Amahl and the Night Visitors* by Giancarlo Menotti

At three Rochester-area churches; dates, times and locations TBA

Season tickets are available in the lobby at intermission and from the RPO Box Office at 108 East Ave, by phone at (585) 454-2100, and online at www.rpo.org. (Some convenience fees may apply.) Single tickets and tickets to ***Amahl and the Night Visitors*** will be available this summer.



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