

Dear Students,

This year we welcome Jonathan Eaton as our new Director of Opera, and we all look forward to working with him, learning from him, and him learning from us!

This letter comes to you from Jonathan and Stephen Dubberly, Opera Music Director.

### **Program**

We have an exciting program lined up for you. Our goal this year is to do three staged productions, a concert opera, plus the scenes program. We want to offer you more coaching and rehearsal time per production than last year, use as many of our students as we can, featured in appropriate roles, and optimize the program so that it supplies a good range of teaching opportunities. We think we have an excellent spread this year. The three mainstage shows are: *Magic Flute* sung in German with dialogue in English, a crossover 'Broadway opera' in English with *Street Scene*, and a condensed staged production of *Faust* in French without chorus. The concert opera will be an unstaged chamber version in Italian of Handel's *Alcina*. In addition there will be the Directors' Scenes Program. It is an ambitious, but we believe manageable program, which any college opera program in the country would be proud of.

### **Opera Directing and Acting Classes:**

Just so that you know, Jonathan has put a cap of 7 on the opera directing class, and 25 on the opera acting classes.

### **Auditions**

Very many thanks to those who came to sing for us at the informal auditions at the end of last term. This helped us choose our repertoire for the season with the certainty that we can cast and perform our shows well. We felt that we should not finalize casts then, and instead give everybody who wants to be involved in opera the chance to sing at the formal auditions on August 26 and 27. While we have encouraged a couple of last year's singers to prepare certain repertoire for auditions in advance, all roles in all operas are currently still open and uncast except for Tamino, which we have pre-cast. So you all get the opportunity to sing for pretty much everything! For these auditions we may also ask you for some spoken dialogue. Please see a separate document outlining what you should prepare to sing. Apologies if we don't hear everything you will have prepared...

## Guidelines for participation

While we will try to be flexible and accommodate individual's important conflicts and other class schedules as best we can, we want to set out some guidelines for the benefit of the productions and all involved in them. We have talked with voice and choral faculty a good deal about this, and plan to put the following proposal into practice this year:

- 1) **Rehearsal schedules:** Our pledge to you: we will set out the complete regular schedule for rehearsals for each production at the beginning of the year. These will be the times you are expected to commit to, if you accept any assignment in any opera. If you anticipate major clashes, don't accept the opera assignment! Please note that, *as a rule*, you are expected to participate in [and register for] UNT Opera for the entire year (both fall and spring semesters).
- 2) **Clashing classes:** You need to be responsible to sign up for classes that don't clash with standard opera times for a show in which you are cast in a named role (any role of any size). You can't accept a solo role in a main show and also accept assignments in clashing classes. The only exception to this rule is Collegium on Friday afternoons (and selected Thursdays), which does overlap with opera rehearsal. For students in both activities the faculty will endeavor to minimize clashes on the students' behalf. For opera chorus assignments (as opposed to solo roles) however, rehearsal schedules are much less intensive. Please check the master schedule.
- 3) **Church choirs:** We understand many of you rely on singing in church choirs to help you pay your way. We support this. We will never call Sunday morning rehearsals and will not usually call Wednesday evening rehearsals. A major exception to this rule is the Wednesday night before each show opens, which is always a dress rehearsal. The four Wednesdays in question are: November 1 (*Magic Flute*); January 17 (*Alcina*); February 21 (*Street Scene*); and April 4 (*Faust*). If you are in the cast or crew of a show, you are *not* excused from the Wednesday night dress rehearsal because of a church job or obligation. If you are double-cast, you must attend the Wednesday night dress rehearsal even if your double-cast colleague is scheduled to perform that evening. Please clear this with your church director now. Also, please note that Wednesday afternoon rehearsals last until 6:15 p.m. As a rule, you must remain for the entire rehearsal. If your church job requires that you leave early, please request this formally at the beginning of the school year. We encourage you to join church choirs that don't mean you need to leave regular rehearsals early.
- 4) **Individual N/As (non-availabilities):** No absences from any opera rehearsal will be allowed for named roles for any reason beginning on the Thursday *two* weeks before opening night for the three mainstage productions. We will call it the "N/A embargo" period. See below for clarification, as well as embargo dates for the scenes program and for *Alcina*. Please check the master schedule carefully before accepting a role.

- 5) **N/As prior to the two-week embargo:** Otherwise requests for N/As must be made a *minimum* of one week in advance by e-mail. We recommend you apply well before this deadline, however. Please send a copy of the request to Jonathan, Stephen, and Hilary. Please do not commit to another obligation until you have received an official written release.
- 6) **Opera Scholarships:** If you are a holder of an opera scholarship, of whatever size, you effectively pledge to be an integral part of the opera program. If you are unable to observe the participation guidelines above, your opera scholarship will be in jeopardy and may be allocated to someone who is available to participate more fully in the program. You are also expected to be a positive role model to our other students in work ethic, attitude, and collegiality.
- 7) **Your acceptance:** When you initial your acceptance of any role assignment for an opera program activity, you are also indicating that you understand and accept these guidelines.

### **N/A embargo dates**

These are the dates after which N/As will not be granted:

#### ***Mozart's Magic Flute:***

No N/As from and including Thursday 19 October  
Performances November 3, 5, 10, and 12, 2017

#### ***Directors' Scenes Program***

No N/As from and including Thursday 16 November  
Performance November 20, 2017

#### ***Handel's Alcina***

No N/As from and including Thursday 11 January  
Performances January 19 and 21, 2018

#### ***Weill's Street Scene***

No N/As from and including Thursday 8 February  
Performances February 22, 23, 24, and 25, 2018

#### ***Gounod's Faust***

No N/As from and including Thursday 22 March  
Performances April 5, 6, 7, and 8, 2018