

DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC'S

UWOpera Workshop
presents

TOO MANY SOPRANOS

LIBRETTO by Miki L. Thompson **MUSIC** by Edwin Penhorwood

DIRECTOR: Sophie Louise Roland **MUSIC DIRECTOR:** Mark Payne

Althouse College Theatre, The University of Western Ontario

March 20, 2009 at 8pm

March 21, 2009 at 2pm & 8pm

March 22, 2009 at 2pm



Director's Message



The creation of the libretto of *Too Many Sopranos* came about to solve the problem indicated in its title. A college soprano found herself rarely used in her university's opera department and decided to write a libretto reflecting her pains... A story took shape around a group of sopranos trying to get into Heaven, but there is no more room in the Heavenly Choir. So, something has to be done, and it looks like some will be sent to Hell!

She contacted Dr. Edwin Penhorwood, composer and coach from Indiana University to write the music to this opera. Penhorwood could not have been more suited to the composition of this project since he spent a portion of his life traveling from opera house to opera house with his wife, internationally renowned soprano Costanza Cuccaro, coaching and being surrounded by opera singers. An accomplished musician and composer himself, he embraced the task at hand.

The opera was premiered at Indiana University in 1997 with piano accompaniment before receiving a commission for its orchestration. Its full premiere took place in 2000 at Cedar Rapids Opera (Iowa) Since then the work has had more than 30 productions, including performances by the Baltimore Opera, Light Opera Oklahoma (Tulsa), Midwest Lyric Opera (St. Louis), and at conventions of both the National Opera Association (New York City) and the National Association of Teachers of Singing (Philadelphia).

As you will witness tonight, each character represents a voice type or someone related to the world of opera. Penhorwood brilliantly captured the essence of each of the stereotype singers after which each role is modeled. His writing for the voice is spectacular as he understands the intricacies of each of the voice types perfectly. The score includes references to music from Wagner to Rossini, with Donizetti, Puccini, as well as gospel, tango, habañera, and much, much more.

To those who understand and are familiar with the world of opera, I hope that you enjoy its caricature and that you recognize yourself in one or more characters. And to those who watch opera from the outside, I hope that you enjoy an evening of behind-the-scenes farce, comedy and operatic bloopers. The truly fun part about this opera is that it's not so far from the truth. There will always be too many sopranos...Enjoy the performance!

Sophie Louise Roland, D.M
Director

Production Biographies

Sophie Louise Roland (Director)

Hailed for her "excellence, purity of voice and emotional intensity," Sophie Louise Roland recently sang the roles of Madonna Capuleti and Tebaldo in the International Opera Theater's world premiere of *Romeo e Giulietta* in Citta della Pieve (Italy), Carmen with both American Opera Theater (Baltimore, MD) and Opera Lirica Italiana, Nicklausse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* with Opera Brasov, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* with Opera Lirica Italiana, as well as the title role in *Carmen* with both Janiec Opera Company and Indiana University Opera Theater. Ms. Roland's lush voice, dazzling coloratura, engaging stage presence, and deeply expressive musicality have captivated audiences throughout North America and abroad. Ms. Roland has appeared in concert with ensembles such as the Guelph Chamber Choir, the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra, The Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, Symphony Hamilton, London Fanshawe Symphonic Orchestra, the Windsor Symphony and the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Mrs. Roland was chosen to participate for the celebrations in honor of Marilyn Horne's 70th birthday at Carnegie Hall. Ms. Roland holds an Honours BMus from Wilfrid Laurier University, an MA in Musicology and MMus in Vocal Performance from the University of Western Ontario, and recently completed a DM in Voice Performance at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. In addition to maintaining an active directing career, Ms. Roland currently holds the rank of Assistant Professor of Music in the Don Wright Faculty of Music at the University of Western Ontario.

Mark Payne (Music Director/Head Coach)

Mark Payne is a sought-after pianist, vocal coach, and conductor from London, Ontario, where he is the music director and head coach for the opera program at University of Western Ontario. In addition,

he is chorus master, répétiteur, and pianist for Orchestra London. Mark appears regularly on stage as a solo pianist, orchestral keyboardist, and plays regularly as a member of "Triofus" (along with fellow colleagues Robert Riseling, and David Haward). Mark has also worked with The San Francisco Opera, Calgary Opera, The Stratford Festival, The Windsor Symphony, Pacific Opera Victoria and The Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Most recently, Mark was the featured soloist for Gubaidulina's Concerto for Piano and String Orchestra, with Orchestra London.

Suzy Smith (Pianist)

Suzy Smith has a Master's in Accompaniment from the University of Western Ontario, studying under John Hess, and an Undergraduate Degree in Solo Piano from the University of British Columbia, with Jane Coop. Suzy has been a participant at the Banff Center Keyboard Festival, Opera NUOVA, and the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California, run by Marilyn Horne and Warren Jones. She is an active vocal coach and instrumental accompanist in the Southern Ontario area. This summer she will participate in the Merola Opera Program in San Francisco.

Sarah Neiman (Stage Manager)

Sarah is pleased to be returning to UWOpera's 2009 season. Her past credits include stage manager for the UWOpera Gala 2007/8 and UWOpera's 2008 production of *Street Scene*. She is an active part of her artistic community in Fort McMurray, Alberta, working at Keyano Theatre as a contract stage manager and performing in local recitals and Improv companies. In her fourth year of a Bachelor of Music at Western, Sarah is looking forward to graduation and would like to thank the Music faculty for such a wonderful experience.

MICHEAL MARINO

Enrolled in: MMus (I)
 Hometown: London
 Past performance credits: UWOpera – Street Scene (Sam Kaplan), Gianni Schicci (Pinnelino), Merry Widow (St. Brioche)
 Message: Micheal would like to say hello to his grandmother: "Hi Nanerz!"

ADAM MAROSTICA

Enrolled in: MMus (I)
 Hometown: Winnipeg, MB
 Past performance credits: Banff Centre Opera – A Midsummer Night's Dream (Peter Quince), Opera Nuova – Die Fledermaus (Falke), A Midsummer Night's Dream (Bottom), Royal Winnipeg Ballet – Die Zauberflöte (1st Priest), Manitoba Opera – La Bohème (Il Sargente)

KARIANNE PASMA

Enrolled in: MMus (II)
 Hometown: Woodstock
 Past performance credits: Opera Nuova – Hansel und Gretel (Sandman & Dewfairy), Die Fledermaus (chorus), UWOpera – Street Scene (chorus), Opera Gala, Calvin College – Falstaff (Alice)
 Message: Karianne would like to thank God for the gift of music, and her family and friends for their unflinching belief and support.

SHANTELE PRZYBYLO

Enrolled in: BMus Performance (IV)
 Hometown: Markham
 Past performance credits: UWOpera – Street Scene (US Rose), Suor Angelica (chorus), Aurora Opera Company – Pirates of Penzance (Edith), Opera Buffa Opera Company – Anne of Green Gables (Anne), Orpheus and Euridice (Euridice)
 Message: We have really enjoyed putting this opera together and we hope you enjoy it as much as we have. A huge thanks goes to my parents for always supporting me in my endeavors.

TIMOTHY CLARENCE RICHARD

Enrolled in: MMus
 Hometown: London
 Past performance credits: UWOpera – Street Scene (Frank Maurant), Smokey Joe's Café, Mozart Gala
 Message: Thank you for all the support! Please continue to support the arts, both locally and nationally. This is our legacy.

MICHAEL JAMES RUSNAK

Enrolled in: MMus
 Hometown: Thunderbay
 Past performance credits: Opera Nuova – Die Zauberflöte (Papageno), La Cerentola (Don Magnifico)

PAUL ELIO SILVESTRI

Enrolled in: MMus in Musical Theatre
 Hometown: Toronto
 Past performance credits: UWOpera - Smokey Joe's Café (Chorus), Street Scene (Abraham Kaplan)
 Other roles include the Exhibitionist, The Last Night on Earth; Toby, the Medium; A-rab, West Side Story; Sir Despard Murgatroyd, Ruddigore; Kansas, Gypsy.

RACHEL WOOD

Enrolled in: MMus (II)
 Hometown: London
 Past performance credits: UWOpera – Street Scene (Mrs. Jones), Suor Angelica (Suor Osmina), UofM Contemporary Opera Lab – Naomi's Road (Naomi)

YOUNG YI

Enrolled in: MMus
 Hometown: Vancouver, BC
 Past performance credits: UWOpera – Street Scene (Lippo)

SUZANNE AMEY

Assistant Stage Manager
 BMus (Education)
 Hometown: Ottawa
 Past performance credits: Pacific Opera Victoria – Madama Butterfly (chorus), Die Zauberflöte (chorus), UWOpera- ASM for Smokey Joes and Mozart Gala

LIDA SZKWAREK

Assistant Stage Manager
 BMus (Education)
 Hometown: Winnipeg
 Past Performance credits: UWOpera – Mozart Gala (Queen of the Night), Street Scene (Chorus)

ALISON WONG

Assistant Director
 BMus Performance
 Hometown: Scarborough
 Past performance credits: UWOpera – Suor Angelica, Street Scene, Opera Jam /08 – Artist Educator, COC Youth Programming – Summer Opera Intensive (Associate Artist)

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Director: **Sophie Louise Roland** Music Director: **Mark Payne**

Pianist: **Suzy Smith**

Cast

	<i>March 21 (evening), March 22</i>	<i>March 20, March 21 (matinee)</i>
St. Peter	Tim Richard	Adam Marostica
Dame Doleful	Marta Herman	Rachel Wood
Madam Pompous	Amy Waller	Margie Bernal
Miss Titmouse	Shantelle Pryzbylo	Julie Grieve
Just Jeanette	Rachel Huys	Leigh Ann Allen
Nelson Deadly	Mike Marino	Young Yi
Enrico Carouser	Jeff Boyd	Kevin Lee
Unnamed Bass	Aaron Dimoff	Michael Rusnak
Guard (Orson)	Christopher Dunham	Christopher Dunham
Sandman	Karianne Pasma	Kim Hooper
Gabriel	Paul Silvestri	Paul Silvestri

Featuring special guest appearances by Paul Digout and Trevor Chartrand

Artistic Staff

Stage Director - Sophie Louise Roland

Music Director/Head Coach - Mark Payne

Repetiteurs - Jo Greenaway, Suzy Smith

Production Staff

Producer - Theodore Baerg

Stage Manager - Sarah Neiman

Assistant Stage Managers - Suzanne Amey, Lida Szkwarek, Alison Wong

Lighting Designers - Sophie Louise Roland, Anthony Gentile

Lighting Board Operator - Anthony Gentile

Spot Operator - Sarah Bayzat

Costume Designer/Co-ordinator - Julie McGill

Too Many Sopranos

The Story

Four sopranos are brought to heaven's gates, but are stopped by St. Peter. Room has opened up in the heavenly choir for only one soprano. Each auditions in her own way with an aria that exemplifies the traditions and excesses of its time. The sopranos are told that if there were more tenors and basses that were in the heavenly choir, there would be no problem in letting them in. So, the sopranos go to Hell to retrieve the men who have been condemned to eternal torment. Through a few operatic "tests" like trying to remain awake for an hour (a task made harder by a stage director boring them to sleep), all the sopranos successfully gain entrance to heaven with the men in tow.

Comments by composer Edwin Penhorwood

My musical style has been influenced by my being a pianist/organist, my interest in the voice (my wife is soprano Costanza Cuccaro), and by my ability to improvise. I improvised at the keyboard from an early age and continued to do so as a church organist. Other musical influences were the composers Mozart, Bellini, Chopin, Debussy, Richard Strauss, Barber, Britten, and Bernstein, to name a few. I have never felt an attraction for the avant garde but do employ avant garde effects as spice in my compositions.

Usually, I choose the poetry before I compose the song. There have been a few instances where the melody came first (A Lute will Lie is one) and had to wait a number of years to match up with a poem that fit. Three of these songs are set to the poetry of Callum MacColl, a poet, artist, and friend whom I have known since undergraduate days. At times, practicality takes precedence. Wild Nights was composed because my wife requested an "ender" for recitals.

I compose at the piano. After studying the poem, ideas and form come to mind, and I begin to improvise. Once a motive or musical idea comes forward that seems suitable and pleases me, things proceed, usually with a melodic and harmonic sketch. The accompaniment is usually thought out at the beginning of the composition process and written down last.

I would describe myself as a mainstream composer that allows music from the past and present to sift through my own musical personality. My musical intentions are the following: making my music connect and communicate to listeners; being careful not to get too far ahead or too far behind the listener; wanting my music to have tension and release, communicate emotions, and express beauty and drama. The creative process of bringing together the singer's voice, the composition, and the poetry is exciting and mysterious.

About Edwin Penhorwood

Edwin Penhorwood, a native of Toledo, OH, and a graduate of the University of Iowa, is a pianist, composer, organist, and vocal coach. He has taught in the International School of Zurich, Switzerland, at the Church Music Conservatory in Berlin, the University of Missouri, and Indiana University, and has accompanied singers and instrumentalists in North America and in Europe for many years. Penhorwood's songs have been broadcast by NPR, the Paris and Berlin radio networks and have been featured at Glimmerglass Opera, The Chautauqua Opera, the National NATS Convention, and Marilyn Horne's 70th Birthday Celebration. Penhorwood's compositions are published by Carl Fischer, Abingdon, Hinshaw Music, and T.I.S. Publications.

Penhorwood has edited two volumes of Vincenzo Righini's vocal works for Southern Music. Many of these compositions received their American premières at the 2nd International Congress of Voice Teachers held in Philadelphia. Penhorwood joined the faculty of Indiana University in 1993. He is the musical director of the Graduate Opera Workshop and has taught Accompanying.



About the Cast

LEIGH-ANN ALLEN

Enrolled in: MMus (I)
Hometown: Toronto
Past performance credits: UWOpera – The Merry Widow (JouJou), Suor Angelica (Zelatrice), Street Scene (Rose), Pacific Opera Victoria – Madama Butterfly (Geisha)

MARGIE BERNAL

Enrolled in: MMus (II)
Hometown: Bogota – Columbia
Past performance credits: Summer Opera Lyric Theatre – Semele (Iris/cupid), UWOpera – Street Scene (US Anna Maurant), Caldas University Workshop – Die Zauberflote (First Lady), La Boheme (Musetta), Carmen (Micaela), Der Freischutz (Annchen)
Message: Thanks for being here. Thanks for allowing us to share part of our work with you. I hope you enjoy the show as much as we do and have as much fun as we are having.

JEFFEREY BOYD

Enrolled in: MMus (I)
Hometown: Ottawa
Past performance credits: McGill Savoy Society – Mikado (Nanki-Poo), Opera McGill – La Vie Parisienne (Brasil), L'enfant et les Sortilleges (Le Petit Viellard & Wedgewood Noir), Dido & Aeneas (the Sailor)
Message: Thank you for coming to see us and please enjoy the show!

AARON DIMOFF

Enrolled in: BMus (III)
Hometown: Owen Sound
Past performance credits: UWOpera – Street Scene (Old Clothes Man), Smokey Joes Café (Fred), Owen Sound Roxy Theatre – Music Man (Bert Dunlop)
Message: A huge thanks goes to my family for their endless support, especially my wife Anca for putting up with the late nights practicing.

CHRISTOPHER DUNHAM

Enrolled in: BMus Honours Performance
Hometown: Niagra Falls
Past performance credits: Halifax Summer Opera – The Consul (John), UWOpera – Street Scene (George Jones)

JULIE GRIEVE

Enrolled in: MMus
Hometown: London

Past performance credits: Opera Kitchener – Le nozze di Figaro (Barbarina), Banff Centre Opera – A Midsummer Night's Dream (Moth), Dido & Aeneas (1st witch), Brampton Lyric Opera – Le nozze di Figaro (Barbarina), North Toronto Players – Pirates of Penzance (Edith), UWOpera – Suor Angelica (Una Novizia)

Message: Thanks to the rest of the cast and crew for this great experience.

MARTA HERMAN

Enrolled in: BMus Honours Perf (IV)
Hometown: Toronto
Past performance credits: Opera Nuova – Hansel und Gretel (Hansel), Halifax Summer Opera – The Consul (Secretary), Die Zauberflote (Third Lady) UWOpera – Suor Angelica (Maestra della Novizie)
Message: WE've shared a lot of laughs putting this show together; now we hope you'll share some with us too!

KIM HOOPER

Enrolled in: MMus (II)
Hometown: Toronto
Past performance credits: Queen's Student Opera Company – Dialogue des Carmelites (Blanche), Orfeo ed Euridice (Chorus), L'Elisir d'Amore (Chorus), Orchestra London – Madame Butterfly (Chorus)
Message: This is the most fun I've had doing a show. Thank you to the cast and crew!

RACHEL HUYS

Enrolled in: MMus (II)
Hometown: London
Past Performance credits: Roles include Magda, The Consul; Mrs. Jones, Street Scene; Mrs. Nolan, the Medium; Countess, Le nozze di Figaro; Donna Elvira, Don Giovanni; and the Foreign Woman, The Consul. Rachel has participated in opera programs in Banff, Calgary, Halifax, Toronto, London, St. Andrews, and Bloomington, Indiana.

KEVIN LEE

Enrolled in: MMus (II)
Hometown: Burnaby, BC
Past performance credits: Halifax Summer Opera – The Consul (Magician), UWOpera – Street Scene (Mr. Buchannon), UBC Opera – The Gondoliers (Luiz), Die Zauberflote (Monostatos), Eugene Onegin (Old Man)
Message: Kevin would like to thank all his family and friends who helped him maintain his sanity for his past two degrees.