

EKLUND OPERA PROGRAM

Postcard from Morocco

An opera by Dominick Argento

Composed by Dominick Argento

Libretto by John Donahue

April 21-23, 7:30 p.m.

April 24, 2 p.m.

Music Theatre

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Stage Director | Leigh Holman |
| Music Director | Nicholas Carthy |
| Set and Projection Designer | Ron Mueller |
| Lighting Designer | Jon Dunkle |
| Costume Designer | Ann Piano |
| Wig and Makeup Designer | Sarah Opstad Demmon |
| Production Director | Ron Mueller |
| Assistant Director | Sarah Cain |
| Production Assistant | Christie Conover |

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*This production runs approximately
110 minutes, including one
15-minute intermission.*

PLEASE NOTE

- Masks are optional in public indoor spaces on the CU Boulder campus as of March 7, 2022.
- Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house manager.
- Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere. CU Boulder is a smoke-free campus.

Cast

| Role | Thursday/Saturday Cast | Friday/Sunday Cast |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| A Lady with a Hand Mirror; | | |
| An Operetta Singer | Alice Del Simone | Dawna Rae Warren |
| A Lady with a Cake Box | Kyrie Laybourn | Melissa Lubecke |
| A Lady with a Hat Box; | | |
| A Foreign Singer | Gabrielle Razafinjatovo | Gloria Palermo |
| A Man with Old Luggage; | | |
| First Puppet; | | |
| An Operetta Singer | Ryan Frenk | Miguel A. Ortega Bañales |
| A Man with a Paint Box | | |
| (Mr. Owen) | Paul Wolf | Ben Boskoff |
| A Man with a Shoe Sample Kit; | | |
| Second Puppet | Brandon Tyler Padgett | Antonio Esposito |
| A Man with a Cornet Case; | | |
| A Puppet Maker | Jack Harless | Kane White |
| Mime | Olivia Russell-Botto | Olivia Russell-Botto |
| Mime | Eli Harvey | Eli Harvey |

Orchestra

Violin

Mary Evans

Viola

Allyson Stibbards

Double bass

Eleanor Dunlap

Clarinet / Alto Sax / Bass Clarinet

Jason Olney

Trombone

Darian Freeman

Guitar

Andrew Wilder

Piano / Celesta

Nathália Kato

Percussion

Christopher Martin

Synopsis

Set in a train station at the turn of the 20th century, *Postcard from Morocco* examines the depths of the human mind through the experiences of seven travelers, identified by their most prized possessions: a lady with a hand mirror, a lady with a hat box, a lady with a cake box, a man with old luggage, a man with a shoe sample kit, and a man with a cornet case. The only named character of the opera, Mr. Owen, owns a paint box.

While the mysterious travelers await the next train's arrival, they each share tales from their lives, spanning from the mundane to the miraculous, and from reality to fantasy. Intermingled with entertainment from puppets and mimes, each traveler takes special care to guard their possessions—as well as their secrets—until heart-wrenching truths are suddenly revealed.

Stage director's notes

This opera is one I first heard about back when I attended the Eastman School of Music as an opera performance student. I remember that my opera director Richard Pearlman was somewhat obsessed with the opera. For some reason though—probably casting or some other practicality—we did not perform it while I was completing that master's degree. In the years since, I have remained interested in diving into it. It is a different sort of piece, unique in every way. It is an opera for the intellectually curious. Musically, just when you think that you cannot seem to find the center of the tonality, it comes together in such beautiful ways that it harmonically uplifts while it simultaneously settles you back home.

This surrealistic opera represents the flights of fancy of our personal thoughts. It's in these moments where we find the characters lost in their own worlds, awaiting the arrival of their train. At times, they connect; at other times, they seem to drift off again into memories, imaginations and fantasies. When the characters come together to interact, seemingly interested in the other, we witness a sense of community—or do we? We begin to become aware that each depicts a certain self-protection, an armor if you will. Their odd suitcases, cornet cases, hat boxes, cake boxes, paint boxes, shoe boxes and mirrors represent their inner secrets and lies.

Oxford Dictionary defines surrealism as a “20th-century avant-garde movement in art and literature which sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind, for example by the irrational juxtaposition of images.” This certainly defines the bent of this story. I ponder my own myriad unrelated thoughts, surprising connections with others, fantasies of grand travels, hallucinations and individuality all juxtaposed to create that which is the makeup of my human mind. The human mind seems to guide me as a puppeteer might manipulate.

My deepest thanks to designers Ron Mueller, Ann Piano, Jon Dunkle and Sarah Opstad Demmon for collaborating with me on a visual concept inspired by Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, and the absurd characteristics of Dadaism—a movement that sought to push back against traditional styles of art. In our concept, we chose to

identify the individuality of each character through the use of color. Our play is presented in no particular period of time or place. While we are waiting for the arrival of the train, it is up to us to participate in the journey of our own unconscious minds.

Music director's notes

Postcard from Morocco is, along with *Powder her Face*, one of a number of dizzyingly virtuosic (both music and text) operas that took chamber opera to new heights toward the end of the 20th century.

The libretto, by John Donahue, is based (extremely) loosely on *A Child's Garden of Verses* by Robert Louis Stevenson. But it owes much more to the Jungian dreams and frustrations of *The Magus* and *The Unconsoled*, distorted through the Beckettian lens of *Godot*, than it does to a 19th century book of children's poems. The opera is a meditation on the existential, transitory nature of humanity, set in a train station in 1914. There is no real plot, and most of the characters do not even have a name. What they do have is luggage, and this luggage serves for each one of them as a vessel to carry and to hide their secrets. The characters are all suspicious of one another, which gives the puppeteer, who seems to live in the station, the means to try and control them, with varying degrees of success. The opera seems to be a metaphor for the transitory nature of belonging and belongings; but the train station, the symbolic imagery of luggage and secrets, and a manipulating force using suspicion of the other as a weapon, reminds us, maybe, of a much darker time in 20th-century Europe, and of the fundamental rhythming of history.

Argento's music is equally fecund. Alongside music of dazzling originality, there is a whole scene devoted to Wagner (a delicious cabaret parody involving themes from his operas), nods to Strauss (both Johann and Richard), as well as Lakme, and the bel canto composers. The opera gives us the impression of *déjà vu*, that we are experiencing a world that is half-remembered, half-forgotten—but instantly recognizable.

Personnel

BRANDON TYLER PADGETT (A Man with a Shoe Sample Kit; Second Puppet) is currently in his second year of the Artist Diploma program in vocal performance under the tutelage of Andrew Garland. Padgett has also received a Master of Music from CU Boulder. Padgett's recent performance credits include Germont in *La Traviata*, Claudio in *Agrippina*, Vater in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Mr. Potter in *It's a Wonderful Life*, and the title role in *Eugene Onegin*. Padgett is excited to be a part of Eklund Opera's *Postcard from Morocco*, a work which has proven to be fascinating, challenging and virtuosic.

BENJAMIN BOSKOFF (A Man with a Paint Box - Mr. Owen), tenor, is a graduate of the University of Michigan School of Music (MM) and is currently working on his doctorate under John Seesholtz. An active vocal artist, Boskoff is engaged in productions, recitals, new music and chamber concerts in the United States and abroad. Highlights include Peter Quint in *The Turn of the Screw* with Red River Lyric Opera, Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville* with Light Opera of New Jersey, Prince Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* with Opera MODO, and Count Ory in *Le Comte Ory* with Lawrence University as a guest artist. In 2019, Boskoff was a resident artist with Opera North and, while in Houston, a primary soloist for the Bach Society Houston. For more information please visit benjaminboskofftenor.com.

ALICE DEL SIMONE (A Lady with a Hand Mirror; An Operetta Singer) received her BA in voice performance from the University of California, Davis. She is currently pursuing an MM in voice pedagogy and performance at the University of Colorado Boulder, studying under Andrew Garland. Del Simone enjoys performing varied repertoire including an upcoming appearance as Gilda in *Three Feathers* (Laitman) with Opera Steamboat. Recent appearances include *La Princesse, Le Rosignol, and Le Feu* in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (Ravel) with Boulder Opera, *La Féé* in *Cendrillon* (Viardot) with Loveland Opera's Educational Outreach, and *Poppea* in *Agrippina* (Handel) with Eklund Opera. Del Simone taught music theory and vocal pedagogy for the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir and she currently maintains a small private voice studio.

ANTONIO ESPOSITO (A Man with a Shoe Sample Kit; Second Puppet) is a first-year master's student studying under the tutelage of Julie Simpson at the University of Colorado Boulder. Esposito received his bachelor's degree in vocal performance at Rollins College in 2020. Previous roles include Javert in *Les Misérables*, the Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Marchese in *La Traviata*. He will also be joining Opera Steamboat over the summer as Paul in their production of *Company*. He currently teaches voice at Dana V Music. He loves sharing his knowledge with others and is constantly looking to learn from his peers and mentors.

RYAN FRENK (A Man with Old Luggage; First Puppet; An Operetta Singer) is a singer-actor praised by the Houston Chronicle for "his voice clear, sweet and cutting all at once." His previous CU appearance was in *La Traviata* as Giuseppe. Credits include Luke Sheridan (*Double Vision*, regional premiere, Chicago New Musical Festival); Raj/Utkarsh (*Working*, Main Street Theatre); Peter (*Jesus Christ Superstar*, Bayou City Theatrics, Broadway World Houston nomination); The Magician (*Consul*, Transgressive Opera Theatre), NVA Commanding Officer (*Amelia*, regional premiere, Moores Opera Center). Frenk has been a member of Chicago's The Marion Consort, debuting at the Milwaukee Early Music Now! Festival in 2019, and was a singer and board member of Cantare Houston for the 2013-15 seasons. He is currently taught by Abigail Nims.

JACK HARLESS (A Man with a Cornet Case; A Puppet Maker) is in his final year of his bachelor's degree at CU. He is a student of John Seesholtz. His other roles during his time at CU include Chorus (*It's a Wonderful Life*), Don Pedro (*Béatrice et Bénédict*) and Dottore Grenvil (*La Traviata*). He also appeared as Dottore Grenvil (*La Traviata*) at La Musica Lirica Young Artist Program this past summer.

KYRIE LAYBOURN (A Lady with a Cake Box), soprano, will be graduating this spring with her Master of Music in vocal performance. She has spent her time at CU Boulder under the mentorship of John Seesholtz. Previous Eklund Opera roles include Annina (*La Traviata*), Gertrude (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Beatrice (*Three Decembers*),

and the title role in Barber's *Vanessa*. Next up, she will be seen in CU NOW's upcoming production of *Joan in the City*, Opera Steamboat's production of *Company*, and as artist-in-residence with Tri-Cities Opera. Follow her on Instagram @kyrielaybourn.

MELISSA LUBECKE (A Lady with a Cake Box) is thrilled to join the Eklund Opera Program in its presentation of *Postcard from Morocco*. She received her Bachelor of Music Performance from Baylor University in 2013, and completed her Master of Music Performance in 2018 under the tutelage of Diana Allan. Currently, Lubecke studies with John Seesholtz, and supports the school of music at CU Boulder as a teaching assistant. Her most notable roles include Mdme. Silberklang in Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor*, Knitter #3 in Seymour Barab's *A Game of Chance*, and Rosalinde in Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*.

MIGUEL A. ORTEGA BAÑALES (A Man with Old Luggage; First Puppet; An Operetta Singer), lyric tenor, is a second-year graduate student at the University of Colorado Boulder, where he has received an assistantship to earn a master's degree in vocal performance and pedagogy. He obtained his bachelor's degree in music performance from Berea College, during which he held a position as vocal TA and served as a piano collaborator for the Berea College Music Department. Ortega has been distinguished with the Metropolitan Opera National Council's "Middle Tennessee District Winner" prize in 2020, the "Gina Scaggs Epifano Audience Favorite Award" in 2018's National Association of Teachers of Singing vocal competition in Kentucky, as well as the "First Place Winner Classical Adult" prize in three consecutive editions of Kentucky's NATS vocal competition during 2017, 2018 and 2019.

GLORIA PALERMO (A Lady with a Hat Box; A Foreign Singer) is a first-year Artist Diploma student at CU's Eklund Opera Program. Last Fall she sang the role of Flora in Eklund Opera's *La Traviata*. Prior to attending CU she completed two seasons with Opera Orlando as a studio artist, where she sang the role of Hansel (*Hansel and Gretel*), Mercédès (*Carmen*), Ida (*Die Fledermaus*), and Wowkle (*Girl of the Golden West*). Other past roles performed include Bradamante (*Alcina*), Béatrice (*Béatrice et Bénédict*), and La Badessa (*Suor Angelica*). She holds a Master of Music

from the University of Southern California and Bachelor of Music from Rice University. She has received additional training at Tanglewood Music Festival and Aspen Music Festival, and will be an apprentice artist this summer at Santa Fe Opera. She is a student of Abigail Nims.

GABRIELLE RAZAFINJATOVO (A Lady with a Hat Box; A Foreign Singer), mezzo-soprano, is a second-year master's student at CU Boulder pursuing an MM in voice performance and pedagogy. A student of Abigail Nims, she won second place in the CU Honors Competition, and has twice been a finalist in the DLOG Competition. Originally from North Dakota, she earned a BA in voice and piano from Minot State University in 2017. Past roles include Flora in *La Traviata* and Narciso in *Agrippina*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Mercedes in *Carmen* and Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*.

DAWNA RAE WARREN (A Lady with a Hand Mirror; An Operetta Singer), soprano, is an Artist Diploma student at CU Boulder under the tutelage of Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson. Her most recent credits include Abigail in *The Crucible*, Atalanta in *The Tale of Serse*, Barbarina in *Figaro in Four Quartets*, Lucy in *The Threepenny Opera*, Papagena and Königen der Nacht in *Die Zauberflöte* and Peep-Bo in *The Mikado*. On the concert stage she has appeared with the Baldwin Wallace Bach Choir in the *St. Matthew's Passion*, *St. John's Passion*, and Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, as well as with Cleveland City Music in Verdi's *Requiem*.

KANE WHITE (A Man with a Cornet Case; A Puppet Maker) is a first-year master's student in vocal performance. He studies with Andrew Garland. He received his Bachelor of Music in vocal performance from the University of Montevallo in May 2021. He has worked with Leigh Holman, assistant directing 2021's *La Traviata* and 2022's *Guys and Dolls* in collaboration with the BM/MT Program. His current aspirations including performing and directing in the future!

PAUL WOLF (A Man with a Paint Box - Mr. Owen), tenor, is working on his DMA at CU Boulder studying with Matthew Chellis. Wolf's past engagements include Nero in Eklund Opera's *Agrippina*, Spoletta in Opera Birmingham's *Tosca*,

and Tamino in Seagle Festival's *Die Zauberflöte*. Wolf is a former Seagle Festival Fall Artist, a young artist apprentice with Charlottesville Opera, and member of Opera Roanoke's Young Artist Apprentice Program. Wolf was the 2019 NFMC Young Artist Man's Voice Winner from their 60th Biennial Competition in Jacksonville, Florida. He also placed second in the 2016 MTNA National Young Artist Vocal Competition in San Antonio, Texas.

SARAH CAIN (Assistant Director) is currently pursuing the Doctor of Musical Arts in vocal pedagogy and performance at CU Boulder under the tutelage of Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson. She is an alumna of the University of Central Arkansas, holding a Bachelor of Music in vocal music education and a Master of Music in vocal performance. In 2020, she assisted with the direction of Eklund Opera's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, however, all performances were canceled due to the pandemic. Her most recent stage credits with Eklund Opera include Agrippina in Handel's *Agrippina* and Mutter (Mother) in *Hänsel und Gretel*.

NICHOLAS CARTHY (Music Director/Conductor) is now in his 18th season with Eklund Opera. He studied at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. He served as musical assistant to Bernard Haitink and Sir Georg Solti at the Salzburg Festival and to Daniel Barenboim in Paris, Chicago and Bayreuth. Carty has conducted opera productions in Vienna, Salzburg, Oslo, Stockholm, Winterthur, Milan, Rome, Naples, Bonn, Eugene and Tel Aviv. He has conducted orchestras, including the Colorado Symphony, Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, Orchestra RAI di Torino, Orchestra San Carlo di Napoli and the Accademia Filarmonica Roma. As a collaborative pianist he has performed in many of the world's great halls, including Carnegie Hall, Suntory Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Bolshoi Theatre and the Musikverein Vienna. He is music director of the Helgeland Sinfonietta and the Toppen International Summer School in Norway. He is well known for his public lectures at the University of Colorado and beyond, and is occasionally to be heard on the radio, spreading around his uncurbable enthusiasm for music and history.

JON DUNKLE (Lighting Designer) is a Colorado-based designer, manager and educator with credits and professional connections on Broadway and Off, with national and international tours, dance companies, concerts, special events, television and architecture. His work has been seen locally at Curious Theatre Company, LOCAL Theatre Company, Colorado Shakespeare Festival and Opera Colorado. Prior to arriving in Colorado, he was a member of the Production and Design faculty at NYU Tisch School of the Arts and was production manager at NYU's Jack H. Skirball Center for the Performing Arts. He is also the production manager of the Colorado Shakespeare Festival.

LEIGH HOLMAN (Stage Director) balances a teaching and professional stage directing career in the United States and abroad. In recent years, she has made directing debuts at the Pafos Aphrodite Festival in Cyprus, L'Opéra de Montréal and Florida Grand Opera. Recent CU Boulder productions include *West Side Story*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Ariodante*. As well-suited to new operatic works as she is to traditional works, Holman has produced and directed workshops of operas in association with composers and librettists, including Jake Heggie, Gene Scheer, Mark Campbell, Mark Adamo, Colm Toibin, Kirke Mechem, Libby Larsen, Lori Laitman, Herschel Garfein, Robert Aldridge, Daniel Kellogg, Alberto Caruso and Dave Mason. As the founder and artistic/general director of CU Boulder's New Opera Workshop (CU NOW), she continues to passionately promote the creation, collaboration and production of new American works.

JENNIFER MELCHER GALVIN (Properties Designer/Scenic Artist), MFA, joined Eklund Opera at CU Boulder in 2007, and she has considered it her professional home ever since. She is originally from Lenexa, Kansas, where she visits her family often. Galvin's graduate work was a study of scenic design and painting at Illinois State University, during which time she was blessed to intern with Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago. Locally, Galvin has also worked for BETC, Local Theatre Company, BDT Stage, Chataqua Auditorium and Macky Auditorium. Her hobbies include fiction, needlecraft and hiking. In 2010, Galvin walked 400 miles of an ancient pilgrimage road across Northern Spain called the Camino de Santiago. She thanks her cat Nutmeg and husband Peter for their love and support.

SARAH ANNETTE OPSTAD DEMMON (Wig and Makeup Designer) returns to the College of Music after designing *Agrippina*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *It's a Wonderful Life* for Eklund Opera. Recent works include: wig and makeup supervisor for the Colorado Shakespeare Festival; building and designing Long Beach Ballet's *Cinderella*; designing for Opera Steamboat: *Rusalka*, *Frida*, *Hansel and Gretel*; associate wig and makeup coordinator for Opera Colorado's last 17 seasons and assistant designer for *Barber of Seville*; and wig mistress and special effects makeup artist for Colorado Ballet's *Don Quixote*, *Nutcracker*, *Wizard of Oz*, as well as Washington Ballet's *Dracula* at the Kennedy Center. Designed for Castleton Opera, Finger Lakes Opera, Opera Theater of The Rockies, SRT and Utah Opera. Demmon has worked for the following companies: Central City Opera, Opera Omaha, Minnesota Opera, Opera Carolina, Atlanta Opera, Denver Center, Arvada Center, North Carolina Theatre Company, Hartford Stage, South Coast Repertory, CNN, Fox News DC, CW2 Denver and The History Channel. This very special show is for B.P.

ANN PIANO (Costume Designer), costume coordinator for Opera Colorado since 2003, has designed costumes for *Don Giovanni* (2013), *Carmen* (2014) and *The Magic Flute* (2015). She has designed over 100 shows for Denver area opera, theatre and dance companies. In 2012, she won a True West "Best Costume Design" award for The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity at Curious Theatre. Most recently, she designed *Tosca* at Bravo! Vail and *Agrippina* for the Eklund Opera Program. Piano has a BFA in fashion design from Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri, with a minor in fine art.

JIMMY JESTER (Stage Manager) is a recent graduate of Coastal Carolina University, with a bachelor's in theatre and a minor in Spanish. He hails from Rock Hill, South Carolina, and has lived there since birth. Some of his recent stage management credits include *Godspell* at Long Bay Theatre in Myrtle Beach and *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* at Opera Steamboat in Steamboat Springs. He would like to thank his family and friends for their support and hopes you enjoy the show!

EKLUND OPERA PRODUCTION TEAM
Stage Manager
 Jimmy Jester
Assistant Technical Director
 Jeff Rusnak
Master Carpenter
 Ben Smith
Carpenters
 Dan Sjastaad
 Eric Botto
Properties Designer
 Jennifer Melcher Galvin
Scenic Artist
 Jennifer Melcher Galvin
Asstistant Scenic Artist
 Lelah Radostis
Draper
 Kelly Gregson
Stitcher
 Domino Douglas
Wardrobe Supervisor
 Carolyn Miller
Wig and Makeup Assistant
 Jenny Hager

MUSIC STAFF
Head Vocal Coach/Chorus Master
 Jeremy Reger
Vocal Coach
 Mutsumi Moteki
Assistant Conductor
 Miguel A. Ortega Bañales
Rehearsal Pianists
 Chen-Fang Hsu
 Xi Zhang