



PROJECT PROPOSAL

Fresh Squeezed Opera's Production of

HERE BE SIRENS

Music and Book by Kate Soper

Direction by Amber Treadway

Contact Information:

Jillian Flexner, Director

jflexner@freshsqueezedopera.com

(919) 272-7645

Production Summary:

Instruments: Prepared piano – lid removed

Musicians: 3 sopranos

Projection Video

Length: Approx. 110 minutes

No Intermission

Production History:

FSO's production was premiered at National Sawdust on Sunday, January 28, 2018 to a completely sold out house (approx. 175 attendees).

A workshop of the production was performed at Williams College on Friday, January 12, 2018, with an open rehearsal prior and a question/answer session following.



Description of Event:

Fresh Squeezed Opera's production of *Here Be Sirens*, with direction by Amber Treadway.

Described by the New Yorker as "erudite, hilarious, furiously inventive," "Here Be Sirens" presents the daily life of three sirens, who kill time on their island as they await an endless procession of doomed sailors. Peitho revels in the luxurious sensuality of their rite; Phaino stonily enacts the ritual with no inner feeling; and Polyxo longs for escape into the world of the real, delving into centuries of scholarship and research on her species in an attempt to untwist their circumstances. As the opera goes on, the sirens re-enact the abduction of Persephone, encounter (and battle) their favored sisters the Muses, and leave no rock unturned to plumb the depths of their own origins in this work of "audacious, genre-bending music theatre" (Wall Street Journal).

**Roles:**

PEITHO - soprano. A Pre-Raphaelite, early Romantic-era-type siren. Actually in love with every sailor who washes up.

PHAINO - soprano. The earliest recorded version of the Siren archetype, a mythological blank slate with no human feeling or characteristics.

POLYXO - soprano. Your emcee for the evening. Trying to get off the goddamned island: trying not to understand how impossible this is.

Media:

Photos from the January 28 performance can be found [here](#).

Video from the January 28 performance can be found [here](#).

Program Specifics:

PROLOGUE

1. "The Myth of Er": text by Plato
2. "Concerning the Siren": text by Bishop Theobald
3. "Song"

SCENE 1: SIRENS BREAK RANK

4. "Sirenbraid": texts by Homer (abridged Soper) and Carl Jung
5. "Naufragium 1": text by Erasmus

SCENE 2: POLYXO EXPLAINS IT ALL

6. "Altas Undas/Furtivus Amor": texts by Raimbaut de Vacqueiras and Tibullus
7. "Phonebook Aria"
8. "Naufragium 2": text by Erasmus

SCENE 3: ORIGIN SPECULATION 1

9. "Witch-Wife": text by Edna St. Vincent Millay
10. "Naufragium 3": text by Erasmus

SCENE 4: THE ABDUCTION OF PERSEPHONE

11. "The Abduction of Persephone"
12. "Hymn to Neptune": text by Thomas Campion
13. "Naufragium 4": text by Erasmus

SCENE 5: ORIGIN SPECULATION 2

14. "Muses Entra'ct"
15. "Siren Nomenclature"
16. "O Sailor":
17. "Naufragium 5": text by Erasmus

SCENE 6: THE CONTEST OF THE MUSES AND THE SIRENS

18. "The Muzes Elyzium": text by Michael Drayton
19. "Pythagorus 1": text by Iamblicus
20. "Across the Turbid Waves": text by Dante (trans. Soper)
21. "In a Silent Valley": text by John Milton
22. "Pythagorus 2": text by Iamblicus
23. "Naufragium 7": text by Erasmus

SCENE 7: PEITHO RISING

24. "Sappho Fragments": text by Sappho (trans. Anne Carson)
25. "Here to Me from Krete": text by Sappho (trans. Anne Carson)
26. "Naufragium 7": text by Erasmus

SCENE 8: A CYCLE COMPLETES

27. "Song to Odysseus": text by Homer

Artist Bios:

KATE SOPER (COMPOSER) is a composer, performer, and writer whose work explores the integration of drama and rhetoric into musical structure, the slippery continuums of expressivity, intelligibility and sense, and the wonderfully treacherous landscape of the human voice. Upcoming projects as performer/composer/writer include a new work for soprano and large ensemble, a cabaret song on the first metaphysical poem, and a new opera with original libretto based on the medieval French allegory *The Romance of the Rose*. Kate is a member of the Wet Ink Ensemble, and is the Iva Dee Hiatt Assistant Professor of Music at Smith College.

VICTORIA BENSON (POLYXO) received her musical degrees from Ithaca College and West Minister Choir College. Since moving to New York, she has performed with several regional companies, and studies with Kate Johnson. She now performs with and directs for Fresh Squeezed Opera.

CLAIRE MYERS McCORMICK (PEITHO) has performed as a soloist in operatic and concert settings across the country. Highlights include performances of excerpts from *Here Be Sirens* by Kate Soper, Micaela in *Carmen*, Sally Mae in the NYC premiere of *Baby Shower* with Fresh Squeezed Opera, the title role of *Suor Angelica* and a summer with the Caramoor Music Festival. Claire is a member of the Metropolitan Opera Extra Chorus, and an active choral singer and teacher in New York City. A graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy, she received her B.M. from the University of Colorado, and her M.M. at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

DEVONY SMITH (PHAINO) is a versatile soprano excelling in both contemporary and traditional repertoire with her “sensuous” and “strong” voice (New York Times). Ms. Smith makes her mark on New York City as a professional member of Musica Viva NY, where she recently performed Ernest Chausson's “Chanson Perpetuelle” with the Aeolus Quartet, and the soprano solos for *Carmina Burana*, and Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*. Smith spent her summer in fellowships at both Songfest in Los Angeles and Ravinia Steans Music Institute. She recently participated in the prestigious Song Continues Workshop at Carnegie Hall lead by Marilyn Horne, Renée Fleming, and Graham Johnson. Smith relishes the opportunity to perform new works and has recently performed premieres by Ben Moore, John Musto, Daniela DeMatos, and Shawn Jaeger.

AMBER TREADWAY (DIRECTOR) recently directed the NY Premiere of Griffin Candey's *Sweets by Kate* at the Stonewall Inn for OperaRox Production, for which she also directed their inaugural production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* in 2015. Other directing credits include: *Mud, Not Not Not Not Not Enough Oxygen*, and *Frogs (Remix)*, her original adaptation of Aristophanes' *The Frogs* (Columbia College Chicago). As a stage manager: Bolcom's *Lucrezia*, and a site-specific *Turn of the Screw* in a lakeside mansion (Chicago Fringe Opera). Amber holds a BFA in Directing at Columbia College Chicago. An Ozarks native, she is delighted to now reside in New York Cty.

LIENE DOBRAJA (COSTUMES) is a Latvian-born costume designer for theatre and film. She has worked in Europe, Russia, and North America, and now works and resides in New York. Trained as a Fine Artist and a graduate of the prestigious Academy of the Arts in Riga, Latvia, Liene has found her place in costume and art design, and has been designing for theater, opera, film and advertising since 2008. She holds an MFA from NYU Tisch School of the Arts in Costume Design for Stage and Film

MATTHEW WASSER (PROJECTIONS) is a video designer working in New York, London, and Mumbai. He studied Theatre Design and Physics at the College of the Holy Cross, and has an MA in Collaborative Theatre Production and Design from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Recent credits include: *Fuck la Vie d'Artiste* (Eccentric Theatre Company, USA); Literature Live Festival and Thespo 19 (QTP, India); *Under the Gypsy Moon* (AKVarious, India); *At Home in Gaza and London* (Station House Opera, UK); *Playtime* (Generating Company, FR)

About Fresh Squeezed Opera:

Supported by a strong community of composers and performers, FSO presents genre-pushing new works of the highest caliber that explore the depths of operatic music. We believe that collaboration across disciplines, fields, and media pushes the genre of opera forward. FSO connects singers and composers, and gives them the resources to collaboratively create new work and grow professionally. There is a role for opera in contemporary society, and we present operas that current audiences and New York communities can connect and engage with.

Founded in 2013, Fresh Squeezed Opera dedicates itself to providing composers with a platform to present their new music, specifically focusing on vocal works and fully-staged opera. In our five years of operation, we've proudly presented over 25 composers' works, with consistently sold-out houses as a testament to the power of new music.

Fully staged operatic productions include *Here be Sirens* (Kate Soper), *Scopes* (Spencer Snyder)*, *Prix Fixe* (Kevin Wilt)†, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (Whitney George)*, *Baby Shower* (Bruce Trinkley)†, and *La Zombiata* (Jillian Flexner)*. Forthcoming fully-staged performances include *Knot an Opera*, (Constantin Basica)†, *The Switch* (John Aylward)†, *Bound* (Huang Ruo)†, and *Self.Fembot* (Jillian Flexner)*. (* Indicates World Premiere; † Indicates New York Premiere)



Photos:



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TECH RIDER

Musicians:

Victoria Benson, soprano - Polyxo

Claire Myers McCormick, soprano - Peitho

Devony Smith, soprano/piano – Phaino

Production Personnel:

Amber Treadway, Director

Matthew Wasser, Projection Designer/Operator

Jillian Flexner, Stage Manager

Provided by Fresh Squeezed Opera:

All props and scenery

All Costumes

Piano preparations

Musicians

Projection and Projectionist

Not provided by Fresh Squeezed Opera

Piano (grand or baby grand) with the lid removed

Lighting operator

Stage Requirements:

Minimum area of 24' x 11'

Lighting Requirements:

Required: Ability to blackout; access to projector

Preferred: 3 different lighting moods, as instructed by the Director; dimmable house lights

Audio Requirements:

Preferred: Access to house speaker for ambient sounds prior to performance (audio provided by FSO)

Hospitality Requirements:

Access to a dressing room for the duration of the time in the venue; 3 bottles of water

Stage Plot:

