



D U K E M U S I C

Duke Opera Theater  
David Heid, director

## Once upon a time.....

Daniel Seyfried, piano

April 21, 2023

3:00pm

Baldwin Auditorium

### *Rusalka*

Ho, ho, ho

Antonín Dvořák

Wood sprite I	Lauren Tse
Wood sprite II	Julia Leeman
Wood Sprite III	Faye Hardek
Water-gnome	Grant Bryden
Rusalka	Francesca Herrera

### *Cendrillon (Cinderella)*

We are overwhelmed to see....

Pauline Viardot

Translated by Rachel M. Harris

Armeline	Sophia Leeman
Maguelonne	Melissanthi Guthold
Cinderella	Seneca Russell
Messenger	Devon Carter
Baron	Oliver Hess
Fairy	Madeleine Collier

### *Alice, An Operatic Wonderland*

The Mad Tea Party

Amy Scurria (Ph. D. Duke 2015)

Mad Hatter	Robert Miron
March Hare	Devon Carter
Alice	Claire Hardek

### *Cendrillon (Cinderella)*

Jules Massenet

Father	Oliver Hess
Cinderella	Claire Budzik
Fairy	Madeleine Collier
Spirit I	Dolce Feenaghty
Spirit II	Abigail Pickens
Spirit III	Helena He
Spirit IV	Melissanthi Guthold
Spirit V	Lauren Strauch
Spirit VI	Amanda Treston
Prince Charming	Julia Leeman

## Director's Notes

The grand world of opera includes source material from a wide variety of places. From adapted Shakespeare works, to stories of betrayal and love to the recounting of political intrigue, the blending of theater and heightened music truly lends itself to so many stories. Tonight we explore the use of Fairy Tales in operatic literature.

When planning this program, I was actually surprised at how frequently Fairy Tales were reborn as operatic works. While you will experience 4 of those works tonight, the operatic landscape contains many more including the most famous of Cinderella settings (Rossini), The Magic Flute (Mozart) and Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck).

Music itself can be so magical sounding that perhaps its not much of a stretch to see these fantastical stories set by the greatest composers. (As a side note, we are proud that two of our four scenes tonight were composed by women and one of them is a former Duke Ph. D. student!).

The stories of Cinderella and Alice in Wonderland are well-known to most American children. Rusalka is based on Slavic legend, although the story of a water sprite (Rusalka) who has fallen in love with a human and wishes to leave her home in the lake only to be met by her furious father, will sound reminiscent to fans of The Little Mermaid.

We visit Rusalka at the very opening of the opera. At dawn, the wood sprites are just stretching awake in the trees and greet the Water Gnome as he emerges from the water. Much as the Water Gnome attempts to maintain his stern presence, he can't help but smile at the adorable and energetic sprites. Rusalka tries to speak with her father about her quandary but is met by his rage and fury. In her despair, she spots the moon still in the early morning sky and begs the moon to tell the human Prince of her love in the famous "Hymn to the Moon."

The two Cinderella stories stick fairly close to the version of the story we learn in America. The Cinderella legend has seemingly endless retellings throughout the globe, with alterations both minor and major. In the Viardot presentation, there is no wicked step-mother but instead a step-father of questionable ethics. He proudly boasts in his aria of all the shady things that he's done including a stint in prison. Cold to Cinderella, he forbids her even refer to him as father. The opera opens with Cinderella caught giving a beggar a coin which enrages her self-centered sisters. Despite their yelling and insults, Cinderella remains a sweet and loving soul who locks eyes with a strange messenger delivering invitations to the ball held for Prince Charming. She doesn't yet know that this messenger is the Prince himself in disguise. Exhausted by her chores and battles, Cinderella falls off to sleep only to be visited by her fairy godmother.

The father in the Massenet is much kinder and remorseful that he has not done a better job protecting his daughter. Their reconciliation takes place following the ball where Cinderella has met the Prince but lost her glass slipper. After the father/daughter reconciliation, the Fairy appears and calls her spirits to come out and play. Together they erect a magical barrier that prohibits Cinderella and Prince Charming from seeing each other. Only after the Fairy is satisfied by the sincerity of Charming's affections does she relent and allow them to be joined.

The section of Alice that we visit this evening is the Mad Tea Party at the end of Act I. Alice has stumbled upon the Mad Hatter and March Hare, stuck for eternity at their tea party due to a broken pocket watch. More on the opera from composer Amy Scurria:

***ALICE, An Operatic Wonderland*** began as a collaboration between composer Amy Scurria (Duke, PhD. 2015) and soprano, dramaturg, producer, and founder of Music Off Main, Kelly Balmaceda. The first draft of the opera was shaped as a literal and more serious adaptation of Lewis Carroll's book. And then, the pandemic struck, closing concert halls, shutting down performances, and leaving the creators with nothing but time. Scurria and Balmaceda partnered with Zane Corriher to create a new libretto. Finding themselves needing to laugh, ALICE took on a comedic tone with a focus on the theme of identity. Lewis Carroll himself included jokes throughout his original story that were relevant for his time and culture. Carroll was, incidentally, also a fan of opera. ALICE received its staged workshop premiere in January of 2022 at the Maguire Theatre at Arts of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City, NC. ALICE will receive its opera festival premiere in July of 2023 at the Red River Lyric Opera in Wichita Falls, TX with chamber orchestra, and its university premiere at the University of Utah with full orchestra and full chorus in the spring of 2024. The composer is proud to have her music return to Duke for this performance of The Mad Tea Party (from the end of Act One).

- Amy Scurria

## ***Once upon a time.....***

Directed by David Heid, director of Duke Opera Theater

Pianist: Daniel Seyfried

Costume Coordinator: Erin M. West

Wardrobe Assistants: Elisa Jose and Pratheema Prathap Kumar

Concert Manager, lights and Livestream producer: Rick Nelson

Production Technician, Audio mix: Colin Booy

Duke Music student stagehands: David Sarda, Dianahy Lopez Valentin, Riley Palmgren, Yovana Lopez Valentin, Aditya Gupta, Samhith Karkala, Daniel Rodriguez-Florio, Antonio Marrujo, Santiago Garcia, Hiwot Shaw, Sinai Godino-Gomez, Luz Valdez, Joshua Abbas

Duke Music student ushers, Lara Breithaupt, Ishana Sen Das, Christian Chitty, Charles Chitty, Chibuike Okafor, Kellie Young, Njoki Mwangi, Damilola Adewale, Christopher Boykin

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks for the generous support of the Duke University Department of Music, the John Hanks Fund and the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation.

Opera is such a huge undertaking that it truly takes a village to produce even a modest evening of scenes. There are so many people to thank that I sometimes don't know where to start. Rick Nelson is always so supportive of our program and all the crazy extra things we require from him as the Concert Manager (painting rehearsal boxes!).

Erin West has forever changed the way we view costuming in opera theater. She has beautiful ideas and manages to interpret my rambling descriptions into the beautiful clothes you see on stage this evening. And she does it all with kindness and enthusiasm for our students and our ensemble.

The Venue and Production Management team that have embraced Duke Opera Theater. From welcoming us to the Rubenstein Arts Center for rehearsals to help with furniture and costumes, we couldn't produce without them. Special shout out to Rich Kless for the brilliant idea of the truss that literally anchors our production as well as serving as the most beautiful and dramatic background for our performance.

Thanks to David Berberian for finding the lovely wooden table for the Viardot family and a huge shout out to John Santoianni for chair repairs.

Finally thanks for my college friend Rachel Harris, who created this English translation to the Viardot Cinderella. She generously helped us with the copyright license so that we could present it for you tonight. Likewise, our deepest gratitude to Amy Scurria for allowing us to share the Mad Tea Party from her new opera "Alice," ahead of its premiere this coming season.

## **Special Thanks**

David Berberian  
John Santoianni

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## Meet the Artists

**David Heid** comes to North Carolina after a successful career in New York City as a vocal coach/accompanist. Among the many well-known singers he has performed with are Karen Beardsley, Mario Chang, Susan Dunn, Adria Firestone, Carolyn James and Christine Weidinger. Also an arranger and conductor, he made his Lincoln Center debut in Alice Tully Hall in 1994. In the summer of 1997, he was heard at both the Darling Harbor Convention Center and the historic Towne Hall in Sydney, Australia. His coaching clients include past Grammy and Tony Award winners.

David is currently on the faculty at Duke University where he is the Director of Duke Opera Theater as well as teaching piano and working with singers. He is in demand throughout the Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill area as a collaborative artist and has worked with many of the area's leading organizations including Durham Choral Society, NC Symphony, Raleigh Chamber Music Guild, Mallarme Chamber Players, The Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle, NC Opera, Theater in the Park, Thompson Theater Summerfest, Long Leaf Opera and Triangle Opera. He was previously on staff of the renowned Juilliard School in New York City.

Additionally, he has worked extensively in gospel music and recorded on a number of Christian labels. He has toured the U.S. and Canada with Jane Syftestad and directed The Voices of St. John's MCC - named in 1997 "The Best Gospel Choir in the Triangle." Their debut CD "Anywhere with Jesus" was nominated for a GLAMA award in the contemporary spiritual category.

**Daniel Seyfried** is a Staff Accompanist in the Duke University Department of Music. He is a flexible performer with broad interests including Debussy and early twentieth-century composers, jazz-influenced classical composers, and performance on the fortepiano and historical instruments. Daniel earned his D.M.A. in Piano Performance and a Cognate in Pedagogy from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) in 2017. He has had many professional engagements including a lecture recital at The University of California at Berkeley, guest performances at The Manhattan School of Music, a Steinway Spotlight Performance in North Carolina, a recital in Taipei, Taiwan, and many rewarding regional performances. Daniel has the distinct privilege of working in a dynamic music department at Duke University as a staff accompanist in the voice area, for Duke Opera Theater, and is in demand as a collaborator in the Triangle.

Cendrillon (Viardot)

English Translation by Rachel M. Harris

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