

Opera at USC Presents

# The Overture

Come see **La Périchole**

November 6th and 7th at 7:30  
and 8th at 3:00



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Purchase Tickets for *La Périchole* online or by calling 803-777-5369 Limited tickets available at the door.

# Meet the Director

By: Aubrey Nelson



Opera at USC is excited to welcome guest director Garnett Bruce on board for *La Périchole*! Mr. Bruce has a rich body of work to his credit, having led productions for such companies as Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Washington National Opera, and numerous others, including a production of *Turandot* for the Teatro di San Carlos in Naples, Italy. Mr. Bruce sat down with the *Overture* team to talk about the upcoming show, his beginnings and experiences as an opera stage director, his advice to aspiring opera directors and performers, and more.

## **What excites you about *La Périchole*? What potential do you think it has on the Opera at USC stage?**

Knowing *Tales of Hoffmann* very well, I've long been curious about Offenbach's other pieces and their wild

success with Parisian audiences. The opportunity to re-evaluate a piece of the standard rep is very exciting - especially being fed by the fresh imagination and talent of students today. So, that very energy within the opera being brought to vivid life by the USC cast promises an amazing evening in the theater.

## **How did you get your start directing opera? What made you decide to choose this profession?**

Opera has always been part of my life - appearing onstage in my choirboy days of Wolf Trap (Opera) and Kennedy Center - and then a curiosity about how opera has been presented through various eras. My first production experience came at the Santa Fe Opera, and it was a production of Handel's *Ariodante* that changed my life: 48 scene changes with each da capo aria that upgraded or downgraded the acting space based on the character's journey. Fascinating design, amazing cast, demanding production, and wild success. From there, I started putting pieces together to get more hands-on experiences bringing music, theater, and opera together.

**You've led productions for many professional opera companies, including Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, and San Francisco Opera, to name a few. What is different and unique about working with students?**

Balancing my professional work with student work has been a great part of this career. In a sense, we're all students: asking questions about pieces old and new. But with energetic first-timers, I'm challenged to reflect and refine my understanding of a piece to explain it in fresh terms, and to be open to both listening and responding to what today's emerging artists have to say about our lives, our society, ourselves. This becomes a foundation for taking opera back into the professional realm and helping re-animate something someone may have done 100 times. The best performances are when audience and artists are living in the moment.

**Any funny/embarrassing moments directing opera you'd like to share?**

I'm sure you'll see it before I do. I don't make small mistakes - I make great big ones. The lesson: Don't make the same mistake twice (and take ownership of your errors!)

**Your list of accomplishments is now long, but if you could rewind the clock and be a student again - freshly entering the world of opera - what would you pay attention to? What would you try to absorb?**

I should have had more language experience early on. Learning German so late in life means that I have the vocabulary of a 12-year-old! I try to expand every time I'm there, but it just doesn't stick very well anymore. Become an expert in another language in your 20's. Really.



# Featured Students!

By: Brittany Stone

## Meet Kayla Fore!

### What brought you to USC?

I met Ms. Hopkins, my current voice teacher, at a competition when I was in high school. I knew I would learn a lot, and would really enjoy studying with her!

### What did you do over the summer?

I spent the summer in Salzburg, Austria, playing the role of Susanna in Le Nozze di Figaro. It was amazing to sing one of Mozart's most loved operas in the city he was born in.

### When did you decide you wanted to pursue music a career?

I've always enjoyed singing! I knew from a very young age that I wanted music to be a big part of my life, so I'm making it my career.



### Who are your inspirations?

My mom, Marie Curie, and Beyoncé.

### What have you enjoyed the most about Opera at USC?

We always have fun. Even when I'm tired and grumpy, when I walk into rehearsal, I can put my worries aside and just create!

## Meet Davis Dykes

### What brought you to USC?

A chance to have great opportunities, like roles in Opera at USC productions and the big college experience.

### Aren't you studying abroad next semester?

Yes, the USC school of music has a partnership with The National University of Ireland at Maynooth. I am excited to spend a semester living in Europe and exploring.

### When did you decide you wanted to pursue music as a career?

When I was young my mother would sing all the time and always encouraged and supported me.

### Who are your inspirations?

Ana Netrebko, Diana Damrau, (I really love sopranos) and my mom!

### What have you enjoyed most about Opera at USC?

The dynamic between the company and how much fun we have at every rehearsal.



## After Opera at USC....

### **Diana Amos**

Graduated from the University of South Carolina with a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 2015. She is an Assistant Professor of Voice and Music Program Coordinator at Columbia College, SC. Following a twenty-year career as a coloratura soprano in Germany, Dr. Amos joined the Columbia College faculty in 2011, where she has directed the musicals *Beehive*, *Respect*, and *Jerry's Girls*. She was recently the featured soloist with the Brevard Philharmonic Orchestra, directed by Dr. Donald Portnoy, and with the Lake Murray Symphony Orchestra, directed by Dr. Einar Anderson.



### **Jami Rhodes**

Dr. Rhodes is currently teaching at East Carolina University, where she teaches applied studio voice, conducts the ECU Women's Choir, and coordinates the vocal pedagogy program. Recent and upcoming appearances include the premiere of Michael Daugherty's *All I Have to Bring Today*, as well as performances of Dominick Argento's critically acclaimed song cycles *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* and *Miss Manners on Music*, along with many others.

### **Serena Hill**

An active performer, Dr. Hill has recently been featured in works such as Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation* and *Seasons*, Brahms's *Requiem*, Vaughan William's *Dona Nobis Pacem*, and Handel's *Samson*. Currently, she is Instructor of Voice at Coker College, where she teaches applied voice, diction, and vocal pedagogy. Her past performances include, Dominick Argento's *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* with Opera at USC, Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* with Greenville Light Opera, and Poulenc's *Gloria* with the Coker Singers.



## Welcome Back Kaley Smith!

Kaley graduated from USC in 2014 and is back to Stage Manager and Assistant Director Le Périchole! Since she graduated Kaley has been Assistant Director for Gianni Schicchi (Quisiana), Jack and the Beanstalk and Petunia (FBN Productions, Inc.), Le Nozze di Figaro (Opera on the James), Opera Outdoors Concert Series (Opera Omaha), and La Périchole (Opera at USC). She has been Production Stage Manager for Holidays in the Heights Revue Show (The Second City Touring Company), Così fan Tutte (Opera at USC), Le Nozze di Figaro (Opera on the James), Don Quixote and the Duchess and The Prodigal Son (Central City Opera), and La Périchole (Opera at USC).



We are so excited to share all of our hard work with you November 6th, 7th, and 8th! Come have a drink at the three cousins tavern in Peru as Opera at USC Presents Offenbach's charming comic opera. Watch the journey of two street singers who are unable to afford a marriage license get entangled with the viceroy of Peru. Offenbach's exciting music won't disappoint, especially his can-can! We look forward to seeing you soon!



If you are interested in purchasing Opera at USC merchandise, please contact Jake Rothman at [iakerothman@comcast.net](mailto:iakerothman@comcast.net)