

INTERMOUNTAIN

OPERA

CHAMBER ENSEMBLE
presents

The Old Maid and the Thief

by
Giancarlo Menotti



~ PLUS ~

Sweet Betsy
from

PIKE

~ by MARK BUCCI ~

~ Bozeman ~

~ Missoula ~

~ Helena ~

The Old Maid and the Thief

*A grotesque Opera
in fourteen scenes*

Cast

Miss Todd	Lisa van der Ploeg
Laetitia	Sadie Dawkins
Miss Pinkerton	Cassandra Norville
Bob	Jeff Petryk

Synopsis

Place - A small American town • Time - 1939

Miss Todd, a middle-aged unmarried woman is a prim and proper, upstanding member of her small town society of church, lady's bridge clubs and the Prohibition Committee. Her neighbor, Miss Pinkerton stops by occasionally for tea and gossip. They lament over their old lost loves in a poignant duet. Laetitia, Miss Todd's young chambermaid, worries that she will end up lonely and bitter like her mistress. So when a handsome young vagabond knocks at the back door in search of a little charity, Laetitia is instantly attracted to him and sees a possible way out. Miss Todd is also anxious to get rid of the nosey Miss Pinkerton so she can get a look at the visitor. Laetitia shows the attractive stranger in and the two women are smitten. Bob is smothered with kindness by Laetitia and Miss Todd, and he entertains them with his witty jokes and stories. They agree to ask him to stay for a week.

The next day, Miss Todd meets Miss Pinkerton on the street. She is all abuzz with the news that a criminal has just escaped from the county jail and has been seen in their neighborhood. Miss Todd can't hurry home quick enough, for the similarity of Bob's appearance and the description Miss Pinkerton gave of the escaped criminal has given her plenty of cause for alarm. Afraid for her life, she insists that they get rid of Bob immediately. But Laetitia (with her great powers of persuasion) convinces Miss Todd that Bob can be reformed, and that he may show some interest in her if she were to give him some money. Claiming that she is too poor for him to be interested in her, Miss Todd refuses. Laetitia suggests that Miss Todd "borrow" the money from her various club treasuries. Shocked at this, Miss Todd is about to reject the plan when Bob comes downstairs. She and Laetitia are so in love that they will do anything to keep Bob their guest, even raid the liquor store when he requests "something to drink".

A week has gone by, and Miss Todd has been an active thief, giving all the money to Bob. Miss Pinkerton bursts in with news that the thief is still at large and has robbed many houses in the neighborhood, some of the women's clubs and Sunday church collections. She has also heard the alarming report of a midnight raid on the liquor store. Afraid of being detected, Miss Todd plays innocent, when Bob, from the upstairs bedroom, is heard singing a drinking song at the top of his lungs before he collapses with a heavy thud. When Miss Pinkerton has left, Miss Todd and Laetitia go upstairs to check on Bob and discover him passed out on the floor. They revive him and insist that he make his getaway to avoid being caught by the police. Bob claims that he has done nothing wrong, and the two women tell him that they know he is the escaped thief from the county jail. When Bob reveals that he is NOT the thief, Laetitia and Miss Todd confess their own crimes with a bit of bravado. When Bob scolds them, the shocked Miss Todd asks, "So, is your love for me so small you won't stand by?" Bob laughs, "Small? I don't love you at all!" Crushed and defeated, Miss Todd flies into a rampage claiming to call the police and, using her influence in the town, accuse Bob of every crime in the book.

We see that this was all part of Laetitia's plan, and now is the moment for her to take control of the situation, convincing Bob that the only reasonable plan is to run away with her. He finally agrees, saying, "As long as I'm taking the blame, I'll live up to my fame and steal everything she possesses!" Miss Todd returns to find her house ransacked and empty, her safe looted and her car stolen. She collapses as Miss Pinkerton (who has let herself in) looks on.

Sweet Betsy from PIKE

A Horse Opera

Cast

Narrator	Lisa van der Ploeg
Betsy	Cassandra Norville
Ike	Jeff Petryk

Synopsis

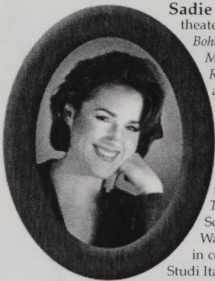
A Narrator presents this saga which she wrote - a saga about the colorful Betsy and her less than bright husband Ike, on their way West to find gold. Crossing the prairie, Betsy and Ike are threatened by a band of "Indians", a posse and the Cavalry (the Cavaleeria), all of whom are chasing the desperado Dirty Dan, Betsy's former lover.

In the nick of time, a tornado scoops up Betsy and Ike out of harm's way and it eventually deposits them in a Western town. Undaunted by their 36-hour flight, they convert their small bit of gold dust into cash and go inside the Silver Penny Café where they greet assorted Western types and drink Red-Eye.

While Ike chats with some cronies to one side, Betsy overhears that her old flame Dirty Dan is in town. This unnerves her because she's not completely sure her love for Dan is dead. The tension mounts as she drinks more Red-Eye. Suddenly Dan appears and he sweeps her into a tango. Though she sings, "Let me go, Dan!" she doesn't mean a word of it.

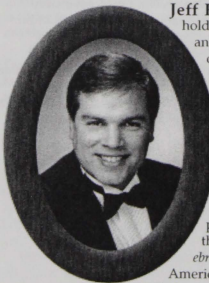
Ike finally sees what's going on and challenges Dan to a gun duel. Betsy's allegiance is torn between the two men as they fight. Dan fires at Ike but misses. Ike shoots Dan several times, ostensibly killing him. However, unknown to Betsy and Ike, Dan's final act is to raise his gun to shoot at Ike - but the bullet hits Betsy instead.

Ike rescues her from a long, staggering tailspin, but alas, she's moribund and "goin' fast." Nevertheless she manages to sing her death aria ("Don't cry for me, Ike, or I'll cry for you") and reviving herself with a few last sips of Red-Eye, she launches into the Credenza ("Goodbye...!"). As Betsy hits the last note, she falls stiff as a board into Ike's hands and dies. Weeping manfully, he drags her off and the Narrator, moved to tears, respectfully ends her masterpiece.



Sadie Dawkins, a native of Montana, is a versatile performer in musical theater, opera and concert stage. Favorite roles include Musetta in *La Bohème*, Lisette in *La Rondine*, Elle in *La Voix Humaine*, Marian in *The Music man*, Josephine in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, and the female chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia*. Ms. Dawkins has been the recipient of numerous awards from such organizations as the Metropolitan Opera Council, The National Association of Teachers of Singing, and the Pi Kappa Lambda Honorary Music Society. While attending the Cleveland Institute of Music, she was awarded both the Italo Tajo and the Max Berman prizes in Opera. Also while in Cleveland, Ms. Dawkins apprenticed with Lyric Opera Cleveland, appearing there in mainstage productions of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Finta Giardiniera*, and *The Rape of Lucretia*. In 1994 she was chosen to participate in the Art Song Festival, singing in master classes led by Warren Jones, Sarah Walker, Roger Vignoles and Olaf Baer. Recently Ms. Dawkins appeared in concerts of opera and musical theater throughout Italy with Centro Studi Italiani. Currently she is working towards her Master's degree at the Gallatin School of Individualized Study at New York University.

Cassandra Norville grew up in Billings and received a bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Montana. Graduate studies took her to the Atlantic coast where she completed a Master's degree at the New England Conservatory in Boston. While there, she was heard as the Queen of the Night, as Rodelinda in Handel's *Rodelinda*, and as Elena in Nino Rota's *The Italian Straw Hat*. The Ohio Light Opera featured her in several roles including Adele in *Die Fledermaus* and Rosie Flynn in Victor Herbert's *Eileen*, which was recorded and released in 1998 under the Newport Classics/Sony label. She has performed with Opera Colorado, Central City Opera, Prism Opera, and the Cambridge Lieder and Opera Society. Additional roles include Lucia, Micaëla, Violetta, Konstanze, Musetta, Pamina, Cleopatra, Gilda, Susanna, and Lauretta. She has also performed in Germany, Austria, Ireland, Scotland, Poland, and Hungary. Cassandra has recently returned to the U.S. after living and working for two years in Hamburg, Germany, and currently lives in New York City. She is delighted to have this opportunity to return home and share her talent with the people who have always been such a great support to her career. She dedicates these performances to her father, T.J. Norville.

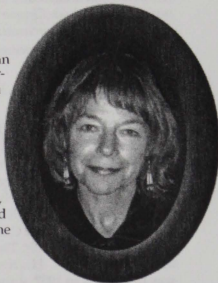


Jeff Petryk began performing on the live stage at the age of eight. He holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in media, vocal performance and musical theory from Seattle Pacific University and the University of Washington. He has also studied vocal performance at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria and was nominated semifinalist in the Friedrich Schorr Memorial Performance Prize in Voice. He has performed principal roles in numerous Broadway musicals and in operas such as Toreador in *Carmen*, Dapertutto in *Les Contes de d'Hoffman*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* and Mikado in *Mikado*. Jeff performed for the first time with the Intermountain Opera Company in 1998 as Baron Douphol in *La Traviata*. Jeff's rich lyric baritone has charmed audiences around the world with his splendid agility to perform a wide variety of musical styles other than the ever-popular operatic genre. Jeff's experience on the stage has also included the production of his own stage shows *America's Music of the West*, *Celebrate America!*, *Music*, *Magnificent Music!* which have taken him across America and throughout western Europe, Russia, Australia and Canada. Jeff also produces and stars in his annual benefit show *Christmas in Montana*, now in its 8th season. He has likewise appeared in numerous concert forums. He is currently producing a pilot for radio, television and the live stage entitled *Give Him the Glory!*



Lisa van der Ploeg is a Danish-American mezzo-soprano who made her west coast debut singing Carmen with the San Francisco Opera Center's Merola Program and the toured nationally with the Western Opera Theater. Among her first professional appearances were with Raymond Leppard and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra in *The Barber of Seville* and *The Three-Cornered Hat*. A prizewinner at the Ellen Faull Gordon Competition, Ms. van der Ploeg also was a MET regional finalist representing Indiana for three consecutive years. Among the operatic roles she has performed are Orlando, Witch, Geneviève, Maria (in Bolcom's *McTeague*), Auntie, Orpheus and Suzuki. Though a native Californian, she moved to Nykøbing F, Denmark when she was three years old. After finishing high school in Denmark she returned to California where she began her vocal studies at Yuba College in Marysville, and then continued on to study at the University of the Pacific in Stockton. She is a graduate of Indiana University and a student of soprano Constanza Cuccaro.

Judith Diana, coach and accompanist, is a graduate of Manhattan School of Music (N.Y.C.) in Accompanying. As soloist, she has performed with the South Shore Symphony of Long Island and with the University of N.Y., Fredonia Symphony, where she completed her undergraduate work in music education. Working Summers have been spent at the Colorado Opera Festival, Colorado Springs, Colorado; Boris Goldowsky Workshops in Port Townsend, Washington; and The American Institute of Music in Graz, Austria. Currently Judith is employed by Opera Colorado in their Artist Center and has been preparation accompanist for *Il Tabarro*, *The Impresario*, and *Los Bohemos*. She is responsible for outreach productions, and accompanies mainstage production preparation, and performs at the keyboard with orchestra in Opera performance.



David Cody (Director) received his training from Truman State University and the Indiana University School of Music, where he recently received his Doctorate in Vocal Performance. His professional credits include several leading roles with the Ohio Light Opera, America's premier company specializing in operetta. He has also performed with the Opera Theater of St. Louis, Rimrock Opera, and Intermountain Opera, for which he has served as chorus master since 1996. A popular performer in the state, he has been a featured soloist with the Bozeman Symphony, the Glacier Orchestra, the Missoula Symphony, Great Falls Symphony, Billings Symphony, and the String Orchestra of the Rockies. He was a member of the Montana State University music faculty for five years, and now teaches at The University of Montana in Missoula, with his wife, Anne Basinski.

Anne Basinski (Guest Director-Sweet Betsy from Pike) is currently Associate Professor of Music at the University of Montana. She has a Master's degree in Stage Direction for Opera from Indiana University as well as a Master's in Vocal Performance. She has sung with the Indianapolis Opera as Barbarina in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, and with the Ohio Light Opera as Patience in *Patience*, Annina in *A Night in Venice*, Galatea in *My Fair Galatea*, Josephine in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, Mi in *The Land of Smiles*, Angele in *The Opera Ball*, Maritza in *Countess Maritza*, and Arsena in *The Gypsy Baron*. Anne has also sung with Intermountain Opera as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, and with Rimrock Opera as Rosina in "The Barber of Seville. She has appeared with various organizations around the state, including the Glacier Symphony and the Missoula Symphony Orchestra and Chorale, and Helena's "Song for Life" series.



About the Composers

MARK BUCCI

An American composer with Italian heritage (his grandfather was a bassoonist in Toscanini's Metropolitan opera orchestra), Mark Bucci has written one of the most popular and funniest American operas of the last four decades, *Sweet Betsy From Pike*, a favorite of his one time mentor and publisher, Frank Loesser. An abbreviated list of his accomplishments include a Lincoln Center opera commission, co-winner of the "Italia Prize" (an international TV award for opera), two Guggenheim fellowships, a National Institute of Arts and Letters grant, a Gregor Piatigorsky Award at Tanglewood where he studied with Aaron Copland, the Irving Berlin Scholarship (funded by Rodgers & Hammerstein) at the Juilliard School where he studied with Vittorio Giannini. Besides being an accomplished opera composer, Bucci has several musicals published (*Cheaper by the Dozen*, Thurber's *The Thirteen Clocks*, and others) has done film and TV scores, orchestrated for all media, is a published playwright and has written the libretto for Dr. Philip Springer's opera *Myron*.

GIAN CARLO MENOTTI

Gian Carlo Menotti was born on 7th July 1911, the ninth of ten children in Cadegliano, Italy. At the age of six he began to compose songs, and by the age of eleven he had written his first opera. In 1923 he began his formal musical training at the Verdi Conservatory in Milan. Following the death of his father, his mother sought the advice of the conductor Arturo Toscanini and took Gian Carlo to the United States, where he was enrolled at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music. There he completed his musical studies, studying composition under Rosario Scalero. His first mature work, the one-act opera buffa, *Amelia Goes to the Ball*, was premiered in 1937, a success that led to a commission from the National Broadcasting Company to write an opera especially for radio, *The Old Maid and the Thief*, the first such commission ever given. His first ballet, *Sebastian*, followed in 1944, and for this he wrote the scenario as well as the score. After the premiere of his *Piano Concerto* in 1945, Menotti returned to opera with *The Medium*, shortly joined by *The Telephone*, both enjoying international success. *The Consul*, Menotti's first full-length work, won the Pulitzer Prize and the New York Drama Critics Circle award as the best musical play of the year in 1954. By far Menotti's best-known work is the Christmas classic *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, composed for NBC-TV in 1951. This beloved opera celebrates the 50th anniversary of its premiere in 2001.

Menotti writes the text to all his operas. Recent operas include *The Singing Child* (1993) and *Goya* (1986), written for Plácido Domingo and given its premiere by The Washington Opera. In 1984 Menotti was awarded the Kennedy Center Honor for lifetime achievement in the arts. He was chosen the 1991

"Musician of the Year" by Musical America, inaugurating worldwide tributes to the composer in honor of his 80th birthday. His music has been published by G. Schirmer since 1946.

1958 saw the opening of Menotti's own festival, the Festival of Two Worlds, in Spoleto, Italy. Devoted to the cultural collaboration of Europe and America in a program embracing all the arts, the Spoleto Festival has gone on to be one of the most popular festivals in Europe.

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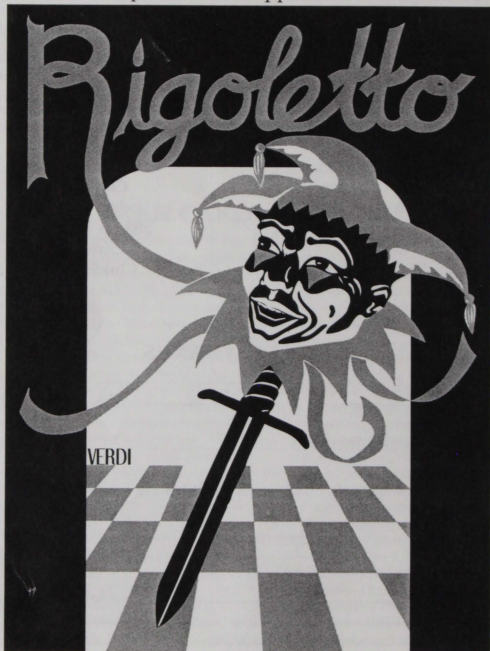
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