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the Brightness of Light

BY KEVIN PUTS

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The Brightness of Light

Saturday, October 8, 2022, 7:30 p.m.

Renée Fleming, *soprano*
Rod Gilfry, *baritone*
Enrique Mazzola, *conductor*
Lyric Opera Orchestra

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APPROXIMATE TIMING
2 hours with a 25 minute Intermission

Program

The Brightness of Light

Music and libretto by **Kevin Puts**

Projection design by **Wendall K. Harrington**

Introduction	RENÉE FLEMING
First Correspondence	RENÉE FLEMING / ROD GILFRY
A Soul Like Yours	ROD GILFRY
Ache	RENÉE FLEMING / ROD GILFRY
Georgia and Alfred	ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE
Violin	RENÉE FLEMING
Faraway	ROD GILFRY
Taos	RENÉE FLEMING
The Thing You Call Holy	RENÉE FLEMING / ROD GILFRY
The High Priestess of the Desert	ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE
Friends	RENÉE FLEMING
Sunset	RENÉE FLEMING

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Premiere: July 20, 2019 at Tanglewood Music Center

Lyric

Program

continued

"Almost Like Being in Love"
from *Brigadoon* (Alan Jay Lerner & Frederick Loewe)

RENÉE FLEMING / ROD GILFRY

"Some Enchanted Evening"
from *South Pacific* (Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein II)

ROD GILFRY

"Till There Was You"
from *The Music Man* (Meredith Willson)

RENÉE FLEMING / ROD GILFRY

The Sound of Music Overture
(Richard Rodgers)

"Hello, Stanley, Do You Mind?"
"You Should Just Know The Line"
from *A Streetcar Named Desire* (André Previn)

RENÉE FLEMING / ROD GILFRY
ROD GILFRY

"The Diva"
(Andrew Lipa)

RENÉE FLEMING

"Joey, Joey, Joey"
from *The Most Happy Fella* (Frank Loesser)

ROD GILFRY

"Winter/Love and Love Alone"
from *The Visit* (John Kander & Fred Ebb)

RENÉE FLEMING

"People Will Say We're in Love"
from *Oklahoma!* (Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein II)

RENÉE FLEMING / ROD GILFRY

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Renée Fleming and Rod Gilfry appear by arrangement with IMG Artists, www.imgartists.com.
Ms. Fleming is an exclusive recording artist for Decca and Mercury Records (UK).
Ms. Fleming's jewelry is by Ann Ziff for Tamsen Z. • www.reneefleming.com

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This program would not have been possible without the extraordinary archival resources and generous cooperation
of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

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From the composer

In 2015, I received the honor of a commission from my alma mater, the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. The school's orchestra was planning a trip to perform at Lincoln Center and wanted to include a new work written by an alumni composer to feature an alumni performer. The performer they had in mind was Renée Fleming and—to my great excitement—she accepted the offer, thereby initiating one of the most treasured collaborations of my career.

We wanted to focus on an iconic American woman as the subject, and I happened on a quote by Georgia O'Keeffe: "My first memory is of the brightness of light, light all around."

I could imagine this line sung right at the start. I learned that O'Keeffe had written thousands of letters over the course of her lifetime, many of them to Alfred Stieglitz, the renowned photographer and art curator who became her husband. Sarah Greenough's indispensable two-volume *My Faraway One* (Vol. 2 forthcoming) includes the complete correspondence between O'Keeffe and Stieglitz from their first contact in 1915 until Stieglitz's death in 1946. With intense emotion—and often humor—these letters chronicle O'Keeffe's journey from a young artist enthralled by and indebted to the older Stieglitz to her complete immersion in the North American Southwest where she lived alone for many years, finding inspiration for her best-known works. The letters themselves are the property of the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University, and I am deeply grateful for the right they granted me to craft a "libretto" made of excerpts from the letters. *Letters from Georgia* was premiered by Ms. Fleming and the Eastman Philharmonia at Alice Tully Hall on November 14, 2016, with Neil Varon conducting.

Having wholeheartedly embraced the role of O'Keeffe, Renée proposed expanding the work to include an equal part for Stieglitz. I welcomed the challenge of creating a larger work which would encompass their years both together and apart, from the first cautious exchanges between the two artists, through their impassioned and complicated relationship, to the years long after Stieglitz's death, when I imagine O'Keeffe writing to him even still.

By design, all the music from *Letters* found its way into *The Brightness of Light*. Ironically perhaps, it was the vivid, poetic language of these two artists best known for their visual art which I found most inspiring in the creation of these works.

It has been a great privilege to work with the baritone Rod Gilfry who brings his tremendous gifts to the role of Stieglitz. I am grateful to Wendall Harrington for creating the projections which accompany the work, to Bette and Joseph Hirsch for their generous support of the work's first incarnation, and to all the co-commissioners who have made its creation possible.

–Kevin Puts

Artist profiles



RENÉE FLEMING | SOPRANO

Previously at Lyric: 10 roles since 1993, most recently Hanna Glawari/*The Merry Widow* (2015/16), *The Countess/Capriccio* (2014/15).

World-renowned American soprano Renée Fleming is one of the most highly acclaimed singers of our time, performing on the stages of the world's greatest opera houses and concert halls. Honored with four Grammy awards and the U.S. National Medal of Arts, Fleming has sung for momentous occasions from the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony to the Diamond Jubilee Concert for Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace. In 2014, she brought her voice to a vast new audience as the first classical artist ever to sing *The Star-Spangled Banner* at the Super Bowl. She became Lyric Opera's first-ever creative consultant in December 2010. At that time she was elected to the Board of Directors as a vice president, and three years later she was named adviser to the Ryan Opera Center.

Fleming's recent concert schedule has taken her to Paris, London, Vienna, Berlin, and Los Angeles. In September, *Renée Fleming's Cities That Sing*, a series of IMAX films highlighting the music and culture of legendary cities, was launched in IMAX cinemas around the world, with a first episode featuring Paris. In November, she will star in the Metropolitan Opera's world premiere staging of *The Hours*, a new opera by Kevin Puts. Known for bringing new audiences to classical music and opera, Fleming has starred in and hosted an array of television and radio broadcasts, including *The Met: Live in HD* and *Live from Lincoln Center*. Her voice is featured on the soundtracks of Best Picture Oscar winners *The Shape of Water* and *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. This 17-time Grammy nominated artist has recorded everything from complete operas and song recitals to jazz and indie rock.

Among Fleming's most significant projects at Lyric have been: serving as curator of Jimmy López's *Bel Canto*, Lyric's tenth new-opera commission, premiered in 2015; initiating the relationship between Lyric and *The Second City*, a collaboration that resulted in two cabaret productions, *The Second City Guide to the Opera* and *Longer! Louder! Wagner!*; and spearheading Chicago Voices, a groundbreaking Lyric Unlimited initiative during 2016 and 2017 that engaged audiences through participatory arts experiences and dynamic cross-genre programming. Fleming was artistic director, as well as a featured artist, for the Chicago Voices Gala at the Lyric Opera House in 2017.

In 2019, Fleming appeared opposite Ben Whishaw in *Norma Jean Baker of Troy* to open The Shed in New York City. Later that year, she starred in the London premiere of *The Light in the Piazza*, bringing the acclaimed production to Los Angeles and Chicago in the autumn. Fleming earned a Tony Award nomination for her performance in the 2018 Broadway production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*.



ROD GILFRY | TENOR

Previously at Lyric: 3 roles since 1994, most recently Marcello/*La bohème* (2001/02), *Figaro/Il barbiere di Siviglia* (1994/95.)

A two-time Grammy nominee, singer, and actor, Gilfry has performed in all the world's music capitals and appears on more than 30 recordings. He is acclaimed worldwide in opera, musicals, recitals, and cabaret. His 75-role repertoire includes 13 leading roles he has created in new operas. Recent performances include David Lang's solo opera *the loser*, Matthew Aucoin's *Crossing* at LA Opera, and Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life* at San Francisco Opera. He recently created the role of Claudius in Brett Dean's *Hamlet* at the Glyndebourne and Adelaide Festivals, a role he reprised in the 2021/22 season at the Metropolitan Opera. Other appearances include the Marquis de la Force in Houston Grand Opera's *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and Robert McNamara in the world premiere of Huang Ruo and David Henry Hwang's *The Rift* at the Washington National Opera. In 2019, he began a tour of Kevin Puts's *The Brightness of Light* with Renée Fleming at the Tanglewood Festival, later performing with the National Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Upcoming engagements include Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* with Dallas Opera, Scarpia in Houston Grand Opera's *Tosca*, and Claudius in Dean's *Hamlet* and Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera. He is a former member of the Frankfurt and Zurich Opera ensembles, and is in his 14th year as a professor of vocal arts at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music.



ENRIQUE MAZZOLA | CONDUCTOR

Lyric's Music Director—only the third in the company's history—is renowned as an expert interpreter and champion of *bel canto* opera and a specialist in French repertoire and early Verdi. He opened Lyric's 2022/23 season with *Ernani*, continuing the company's Early Verdi Series, and later this season he will be on the podium for *Don Carlos* and *Le Comte Ory*. Lyric audiences first experienced the Italian conductor's artistry in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 2016/17, and subsequently in Bellini's *I puritani* in 2017/18. During 2019/20, he led Verdi's *Luisa Miller*. Mazzola's first opera as Lyric's music director, Verdi's *Macbeth* in Sir David McVicar's new production, opened the 2021/22 season, followed by Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* as well as *Verdi Voices* and *Rising Stars in Concert*. Mazzola is Principal Guest Conductor at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and served as Artistic and Music Director of the Orchestre National d'Île de France from 2012 to 2019. Symphonic guest work has included the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Philharmonia Orchestra, Vienna Symphony, London Philharmonic, and Brussels Philharmonic. He has conducted *bel canto* works for the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and the major houses of Florence, Strasbourg, Berlin, Zurich, Moscow, and Tokyo, in addition to a historic Meyerbeer cycle for Deutsche Oper Berlin. Past major European festivals have included Glyndebourne (including DVD releases of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *Poliuto*), new productions in 2019 for Bregenz (*Rigoletto*) and Salzburg (*Orphée aux Enfers*), Pesaro (Rossini Opera Festival), Venice, and Aix-en-Provence. Mazzola was born in Barcelona, Spain, into a musical family, and grew up in Milan, where he studied violin and piano, earning diplomas in composition and orchestral conducting at the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi of Milan. *Enrique Mazzola is supported by the John D. and Alexandra C. Nichols Endowed Chair.*



KEVIN PUTS | COMPOSER

Winner of numerous prestigious awards, including the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for his debut opera, *Silent Night*, the composer's works have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by leading ensembles and soloists throughout the world, including Yo-Yo Ma, Jeffrey Kahane, Dame Evelyn Glennie, the New York Philharmonic, the Tonhalle Orchester (Zurich), the St.

Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Miro Quartet, and the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Cincinnati, Detroit, Atlanta, Colorado, Houston, Fort Worth, St. Louis, and Minnesota. His orchestral work, *The City*, was co-commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in honor of its 100th anniversary and by Carnegie Hall in honor of its 125th anniversary. *Silent Night*, commissioned and premiered by Minnesota Opera, has been produced at Fort Worth Opera, Cincinnati Opera, the Wexford Opera Festival, Calgary Opera, Montreal Opera, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City, with upcoming productions at Atlanta Opera, Opera San Jose, and Detroit Opera. In 2013, his choral works *To Touch The Sky* and *If I Were A Swan* were performed and recorded by Conspirare. His second opera, *The Manchurian Candidate*, based on the novel and commissioned by Minnesota Opera, had its world premiere in 2015, and his first chamber opera, *Elizabeth Cree*, commissioned by Opera Philadelphia, premiered in 2017. *The Brightness of Light* received its premiere in 2019 at Tanglewood Music Center. His fourth opera, *The Hours*, received its concert premiere in March 2022 at the Philadelphia Orchestra, and will be staged at the Metropolitan Opera in November 2022.



WENDALL K. HARRINGTON | PROJECTION DESIGN

Previously at Lyric: *A View from the Bridge* (1999/2000)

Harrington's career has embraced diverse disciplines including concerts, theater, publishing, and production. Along with more than 35 designs for Broadway, projection designs for opera include *Werther* at the Metropolitan Opera, *The Ghosts of Versailles*, *Rusalka*, *Nixon in China*, *Die tote Stadt*, *The Girl of the Golden West*, *Brundibar*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Morning Star*, *The Photographer*, and *Transatlantic* as well as sets and projections for Ricky Ian Gordon's *Rappahannock County* as well as Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* at LA Opera. For her extensive work in the theater, Harrington is the recipient of the Drama Desk Award, the Outer Critics Circle Award, the American Theatre Wing Award, the TCI Award for Technical Achievement, the Obie Award for Sustained Excellence of Projections, the Michael Merritt Award for Collaboration, Ruth Morely Design Award, USITT education award, the Players Club Theatre person of the year, and Lifetime Recognition from the Knights of Illumination. She heads the Projection Design concentration at the Yale School of Drama. [L](#)

Orchestra

MUSIC STAFF

William C. Billingham
Susan Miller Hult
Keun-A Lee
Noah Lindquist
Francesco Milioto
Lee Mills⁺
Jerad Mosbey
Chris Reynolds
Michelle Rofrano
Brett Rowe
Stefano Sarzani
Madeline Slettedahl
Eric Weimer
Zoe Zeniodi

ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Robert Hanford, *Concertmaster*
John Macfarlane, *Acting*
Assistant Concertmaster
Alexander Belavsky
Kathleen Brauer
Bing Jing Yu
Laura Miller
Rika Seko^{**}
Liba Shacht
Heather Wittels

Violin II

Yin Shen, *Principal*
John Macfarlane, *Assistant*
Principal
Diane Duraffourg-Robinson
Ann Palen
Irene Radetzky
John D. Robinson
David Volfe
Albert Wang^{*}

Viola

Carol Cook, *Principal*
Terri Van Valkinburgh,
Assistant Principal
Frank W. Babbitt

Patrick Brennan
Amy Hess
Melissa Trier Kirk

Cello

Calum Cook, *Principal*
Paul Dwyer, *Assistant Principal*
Mark Brandfonbrener
William H. Cernota
Walter Preucil

String Bass

Ian Hallas, *Principal*
Samuel Shuhan,
Assistant Principal
Andrew L. W. Anderson
Gregory Bryan Sarchet
Collins R. Trier

Marie Tachouet, *Principal*
Dionne Jackson, *Assistant Principal*
Rachel Blumenthal^{**}
Alyce Johnson^{*}

Piccolo

Rachel Blumenthal^{**}
Alyce Johnson^{*}

Oboe

Paul Lueders^{**}, *Acting Principal*
Judith Zunamon Lewis,
Acting Assistant Principal

English Horn

Judith Zunamon Lewis

Clarinet

Susan Warner,
Acting Principal
Danny Mui^{**},
Acting Assistant Principal

Bass Clarinet

Danny Mui^{**}

Bassoon

Preman Tilson, *Principal*
Lewis Kirk, *Assistant Principal*

Contrabassoon

Lewis Kirk

Horn

Jonathan Boen, *Principal*
Fritz Foss, *Assistant Principal/*
Utility
Robert E. Johnson, *Third Horn*
Samuel Hamzem
Neil Kimel

Trumpet

William Denton, *Principal*
Rebecca Oliverio,
Acting Assistant Principal

Trombone

Jeremy Moeller, *Principal*
Mark Fisher, *Assistant Principal*

Bass Trombone

Mark Fry^{**}

Tuba

Andrew Smith, *Principal*

Timpani

Edward Harrison, *Principal*

Percussion

Douglas Waddell,
Acting Principal
Eric Millstein
Acting Assistant Principal

Harp

Lynn Williams, *Principal*

Librarian

John Rosenkrans^{*}, *Principal*
Crozet Duplantier^{**}, *Acting*
Principal

Stage Band Contractor

Christine Janicki

EXTRA MUSICIANS

Jennifer Cappelli, *violin*
Renee-Paule Gauthier, *violin*
Sheila Hanford, *violin*
Karyn Macfarlane, *violin*
Aurelien Fort Pederzoli, *viola*
Rebecca Swan, *viola*
Ethan Brown, *cello*
Paula Kosower, *cello*
Anne Bach, *oboe*
Trevor O'Riordan, *clarinet*
Hanna Sterba, *bassoon*
David Inmon, *trumpet*
Rich Janicki, *percussion*
Michael Kozakis, *percussion*
David Victor, *drum set*
William Billingham, *piano*

* On leave, 2022/23 Season

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Wine Auction

RETURNS MAY 11 - 13, 2023

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FRIDAY, MAY 12

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Special thanks to all of our Featured Vintners who are so generously supporting this year's auction. A complete list is available on our website.

For more information, visit lyricopera.org/wineauction
or email lyricwineauction@lyricopera.org



PICTURED: HONORED GUEST LAURENT DROUHIN OF MAISON JOSEPH DROUHIN.
2023 WINE AUCTION CO-CHAIRS SUZANNE W. MULSHINE, NANCY S. SEARLE, ERICA L. SANDNER, AND EILEEN MURPHY. PHOTO BY: JACLYN SIMPSON