

Don Pasquale

Music by **Gaetano Donizetti**, Libretto by **Giovanni Ruffini**

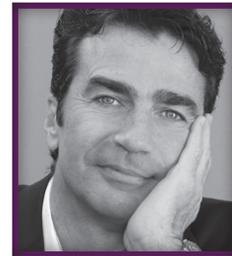
Performances Friday, July 28 and Monday, July 31 at 7:30 p.m.

The opera community, and especially the Chautauqua Opera Company, lost a dear friend and special artist in February with the passing of stage director and choreographer Bill Fabris. Bill was a regular presence with Chautauqua Opera from 2000 through 2009. His work on *The Barber of Seville*, *The Mikado*, *The Merry Widow*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Music Man*, *The Gondoliers*, *Once Upon a Mattress*, *La Traviata*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*, as well as his many brilliant musical theater revues, lit up Norton and Lenna Halls and entered the hearts of the entire Chautauqua Community. Bill's infectious smile and *joie de vivre* are legendary. All of us at the Chautauqua Opera Company continue to send love to Bill's family. We would like to dedicate these performances of *Don Pasquale* to his memory.

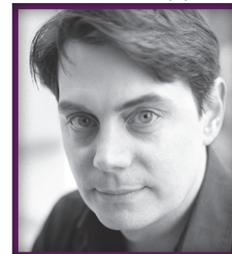
— Steven Osgood



David Schweizer



Stefano de Peppo



Kyle Pfortmiller



Laura Soto-Bayomi



Arnold Livingston Geis

CAST

Don Pasquale

Stefano de Peppo+

Doctor Malatesta

Kyle Pfortmiller

Norina

Laura Soto-Bayomi*

Ernesto

Arnold Livingston Geis*

Notary

Spencer Reichman*

Servants

Chelsea Bolter*, Kameron Lopreore*,
Jacob Ryan Wright*

Chorus

Chautauqua Opera Young Artists

+ Chautauqua Opera Debut

* 2017 Chautauqua Opera Young Artist

CREDITS

Orchestral materials owned by Chautauqua Opera Company; Scenery constructed by Local #266 I.A.T.S.E.; Lighting provided by Advanced Production Group; Costumes constructed by the Chautauqua Opera Costume Shop; Wigs provided by Martha Ruskai

CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION

Conductor

Steven Osgood

Stage Director

David Schweizer

Lighting Designer

Michael Baumgarten

Set Designer

Caleb Wertenbaker

Costume Designer

B. G. FitzGerald

Wig/Makeup Designer

Martha Ruskai

Chorus Master

Carol Rausch

Assistant Director

Jason Aaron Goldberg

Assistant Conductor

Daniela Candillari

Coach/Accompanist

Dorothy Randall

Diction Coach/Supertitles

Allison Voth

Technical Director

John P. Woodey

Properties Master/Scenic Artist

Theresa Pierce

Stage Manager

Catherine Costanzo

Lead Assistant Stage Manager

Anna Reetz

Assistant Stage Managers

Miriam Michaels

Patricia Garvey

Vahn Armstrong

Concertmaster

CHAUTAUQUA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Vahn Armstrong,
Concertmaster
David Hult, *Assistant*
Concertmaster
Erica Robinson
Lenelle Morse
Amanda Gates
Anton Shelepov

Violin II

Simon Lapointe, *Principal*
Margaret Cooper,
Assistant
Jonathan Richards
Adrienne Finet

Viola

Christopher Fischer,
Principal
Eva Stern, *Assistant*
Karl Pedersen

Cello

Peter Anderegg, *Principal*
Igor Gefter, *Assistant*
Jeffrey Szabo

Bass

David Rosi, *Principal*
Peter Haas, *Assistant*

Flute

Emma Moon, *Principal*
Kathy Levy (piccolo)

Oboe

Joan Wright, *Principal*
Jason Weintraub

Clarinet

Daniel Spitzer, *Principal*
William Amsel

Bassoon

Benjamin Atherholt,
Principal
Martha Sholl

Horn

William Bernatis, *Principal*
Donna Dolson
Charles Waddell
Mark Robbins

Trumpet

Leslie Linn, *Principal*
Peter Lindblom

Trombone

Christopher Wolf, *Principal*

Timpani

Brian Kushmaul, *Principal*

Percussion

Thomas Blanchard,
Principal

Guitar

Mike Moser

SYNOPSIS

Act I, Scene I

The elderly bachelor Don Pasquale impatiently awaits his friend Dr. Malatesta, whose help he has obtained in finding himself a wife so he can disinherit his nephew, Ernesto. Malatesta arrives and tells him of a beautiful, pure young girl who he declares to be his own sister.

Ernesto refuses Don Pasquale's offer to wed him to a wealthy lady; he is in love with Norina — whom Pasquale considers unworthy. Pasquale disinherits him and orders Ernesto to move out.

Act I, Scene II

At home, Norina scoffs at a romantic story she's reading. She is certain of her own ability to charm a man. Malatesta arrives and tells her of the scheme he has hatched to help her and Ernesto marry: Norina is to impersonate his (nonexistent) sister, marry Pasquale in a mock ceremony, and drive him to such desperation that he will be at their mercy. Norina is eager to play the role if it will help her and Ernesto to be together.

Act II

Ernesto, who knows nothing of Malatesta's scheme, is miserable and believes he has no choice but to travel and lose himself in exotic locales.

Malatesta arrives at Pasquale's house with "Sofronia" (his so-called "sister"), who appears to be a shy, simple-minded girl. Pasquale decides to marry her immediately. Malatesta's false notary draws up the contract, making "Sofronia" mistress of the house and owner of half of Pasquale's goods. The second the ceremony is done, "Sofronia" instantly transforms from a demure girl into a domineering, spendthrift shrew. The shocked Pasquale protests, to the delight of Norina, Ernesto, and Malatesta.

-Intermission-

Act III, Scene I

Don Pasquale sifts through the mountain of bills his wife has amassed while an army of new household servants swirls around him demonstrating the purchases. Pasquale tries to stop "Sofronia" from going to the theater and she treats him harshly. He threatens her with divorce, and as she flounces out, she deliberately drops a letter. Pasquale discovers that it is a note from "Sofronia's" lover arranging a tryst in the garden that evening. Enraged at this latest insult, Pasquale calls for Dr. Malatesta, who agrees to confront the lovers in the garden that evening with Don Pasquale.

Act III, Scene II

Later, in the garden, Ernesto serenades Norina, and they sing of their love. Pasquale and Malatesta ambush them, but Ernesto escapes unrecognized. "Sofronia" denies her guilt and refuses to leave, but Malatesta persuades her that she cannot stay, as Ernesto's bride, Norina, is arriving tomorrow. "Sofronia" protests she will never share the roof with another woman. Pasquale is overjoyed and grants permission for Ernesto to marry Norina, with his inheritance. When "Sofronia's" identity is finally revealed, Pasquale accepts the situation with good humor, gives the couple his blessing, and joins the entire company in observing that marriage is not for an old man (well, maybe...)

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

Donizetti's DON PASQUALE is one hundred and seventy-four years old this year! Chock-full of youthful spirit, the opera shows its age only by becoming richer and more lively to perform. If that is AGING, then we should ALL BE SO LUCKY!

This masterpiece of Italian *opera buffa* was a huge hit from the outset. The first performance in 1843 at the Théâtre-Italien in Paris was wildly successful and the opera has never gone out of favor to this day. WHY WOULD IT? The score is beguilingly infectious, melodic, expressive — and the story, inspired by the "COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE" style of iconic theatrical clowning, never ceases to entertain —with a surprisingly touching empathy for the hilariously obsessive characters.

For me, the "COMMEDIA" influence has been the key to this production. This semi-improvised Italian performance style originated some three hundred years before "PASQUALE" was created, and by the time that Donizetti was composing his opera, there were very recognizable STOCK CHARACTERS from the commedia to reference, such as "PANTALONE," the blustery, foolish old geezer (Don Pasquale), "PIERROT," the lovesick youngster (Ernesto), "COLUMBINA," the wily femme fatale (Norina) and, crucially, the scheming, manipulative "SCAPINO" (Dr. Malatesta). The entire *opera buffa* school openly acknowledges its debt to the commedia, but DON PASQUALE seems to glory in it! The twists and turns and mistaken identities of the narrative are at once ridiculous and utterly credible to the characters who are enmeshed in it.

What kept striking me as I thought of this summer's production was the constant presence of MALATESTA, gleefully manipulating all of the characters for his own amusement. It began to seem inevitable to me that he might actually manipulate the action of the opera itself as well, as a kind of "stage manager" both inside and outside the action, devising how to make changes of setting onstage openly, or as they say, "a vista," right in front of our eyes instead of hiding the shifts of scene. Thus he becomes our master of theatrical TRANSPARENCY.

After all, what is theater, especially OPERA THEATER, but the suspension of disbelief, the willingness to allow the music and its uplifting effect to seduce us into letting go of logic, reason, the entire outside world that we brought with us into the theater?

In this affectionate edition of DON PASQUALE, Malatesta has signed on as TOUR GUIDE to shape the story for us, and we are his very willing audience, eager to take the ride with the same heightened, energized, absurdist comic vocabulary that those COMMEDIA artists created back in the 1600s. At that time they wore masks to make the action even more ridiculous. For us, our singers' own faces are the masks; their voices are the eloquent instruments that carry us into our state of very, very WILLING SUSPENSION of DISBELIEF.

We hope that you enjoy the ride.

— David Schweizer