

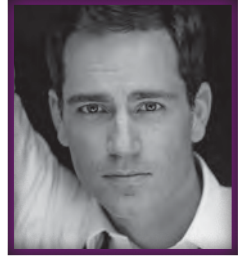
Eugene Onegin

Lyric Scenes in Three Acts

Music by **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** • Libretto by **Konstantin Shilovsky**, after the novel in prose by **Alexander Pushkin** • English Translation by **David Lloyd-Jones**



Peter Leonard



Matthew Worth



Elizabeth Baldwin



Richard Bernstein



Clara Nieman



John Riesen

New Production

Performances July 31 and August 3, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

Premiere Performance Moscow, March 29, 1879
Previous Chautauqua Performances: 1978

Chautauqua Opera dedicates this performance to the Chautauqua Opera Guild. The generosity of Guild members comes to us in so many ways - the Adopt-An-Artist program, Master Classes, Operalogues, Young Artist Scholarship Awards, and their incredible enthusiasm. The entire company thanks you for your love and encouragement.

The 2015 Chautauqua Opera season is dedicated to the many guest artists, young artists, staff, teachers, stage crew and musicians of the Chautauqua Opera whose gifts and unflagging devotion over my 21 years here have made our thrilling productions possible. Thanks also to the Chautauqua Community for sustaining opera at Chautauqua for 87 years so far. – Jay Lesenger

CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

Mme. Larina, a country widow
Rachel Arky*

Filipyevna, an old nurse
Chelsea Bolter*

Tatiana, Mme. Larina's daughter
Elizabeth Baldwin**

Olga, Mme. Larina's daughter
Clara Nieman*

Peasant Soloist
Elliott Paige*

Lenski, a young poet and Olga's fiancé
John Riesen*

Eugene Onegin
Matthew Worth+

A Captain
Robert Nicholas Boragno*

Monsieur Triquet, a Frenchman visiting the village
Peter Lake*

Zaretsky, a nobleman
Isaiah Musik-Ayala*

Guillot, Onegin's valet
Shawn Sprankle

Prince Gremin
Richard Bernstein

Dancers
Lydia Everett, Madeline Jones, Paul Mockovak
Telly Ortiz, Shawn Sprankle, Megan Stefanik

Peasants; Guests
Chautauqua Opera Young Artists

+ Chautauqua Opera Debut
* 2015 Chautauqua Opera Young Artist
** Former Chautauqua Opera Young Artist

CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION

Conductor	Peter Leonard
Director/Choreographer	Jay Lesenger
Associate Choreographer	Lee Heinz
Chorus Master	Carol Rausch
Set Designer	Ron Kadri
Lighting Designer	Michael Baumgarten
Costumer	B. G. FitzGerald
Wig/Makeup Designer	Georgianna Eberhard
Assoc. Wig/Makeup Designer	Philip Plowman
Coach/Accompanists	Emily Jarrell Urbanek Miriam Charney Jamison Livsey
Diction Coach/ Supertitles	Allison Voth
Technical Director	Stephen M. Bush
Properties Master	Amanda Williams
Production Stage Manager	Peggy Imbrie
Assistant Stage Director	Justin Griffith Brown
Assistant Stage Managers	Cirby Hatano Anna Reetz Liv Scott
Concertmaster	Vahn Armstrong

CREDITS

English translation by David Lloyd-Jones, by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., publisher and copyright owner

Orchestral reduction provided by Kozinski Musical Archives

Scenery constructed by Local #266 I.A.T.S.E.

Lighting provided by Advanced Production Group

Costumes supplied by Malabar, Ltd., Toronto

Wigs provided by Philip Plowman

SYNOPSIS

Act I, Scene I – A garden on Mme. Larina’s country estate – Russia, 1810’s

As Mme. Larina, a country widow, prepares preserves with the help of the old nurse Filipyevna, her daughters Tatiana and Olga sing a duet about unrequited love. The older women recall past loves and happiness replaced by habit and duty. A group of peasants return from the harvest and entertain the women with a dance. The peasants’ songs remind Tatiana of romantic dreams, while Olga confesses they make her want to dance. The others notice that Tatiana is greatly moved by the novel she is reading. Larina’s consoling words to her daughter are interrupted by the entrance of Olga’s fiancé, Vladimir Lenski, and his friend Eugene Onegin. Tatiana recognizes in Onegin the personification of her romantic ideals; Olga comments that local gossips will certainly link Onegin and Tatiana romantically; and Onegin remarks to Lenski that he finds Tatiana’s temperateness much more interesting than Olga’s surface gaiety. Onegin engages Tatiana in conversation, while Lenski renews his vows of love to Olga. After they all enter the house, the old nurse notes Tatiana’s agitation.

Act I, Scene II – Tatiana’s room – A few days later

Filipyevna tries to comfort Tatiana with tales of her own arranged marriage. Tatiana finally admits to the old nurse that she has fallen in love and begs to be left alone to write a letter. As she writes, Tatiana confesses that her love for Onegin has been her only thought for days and prays that Onegin will not reject her. As dawn breaks, she puts down her pen. Filipyevna enters to wake her for church and is surprised to find Tatiana is still up. Tatiana begs the old nurse to take the letter to her grandson to deliver to Onegin.

Act I, Scene III – Another part of the gardens of the Larin estate – The next afternoon

A group of young girls picks berries in the distance as Tatiana anticipates Onegin’s visit. She regrets having ever written the letter. Onegin arrives and admits to being touched by her confession, but tells her that love and marriage are thoughts he has set aside.

-Intermission-

Act II, Scene I – The ballroom in Mme. Larina’s house – A few weeks later

A ball is in progress celebrating Tatiana’s nameday. As Onegin and Tatiana dance, the gossips comment. Annoyed by their chatter, he resolves to dance with Olga to get even with Lenski for bringing him to the ball. As the waltz ends, Lenski accuses Olga of faithlessness, which she denies. Their argument is interrupted by the entrance of Monsieur Triquet, a Frenchman visiting the village, who sings a couplet in Tatiana’s honor. The dancing resumes with Onegin as Olga’s partner again. The jealous Lenski accuses Onegin of first breaking Tatiana’s heart and then compromising Olga. Before Onegin can calm him down, Lenski challenges him to a duel.

Act II, Scene II – A snow-covered clearing by a stream – Dawn, the next morning

Lenski and his second, Zaretsky, wait for Onegin. Lenski meditates on his past happiness and wonders if Olga will mourn him if it is indeed he who is killed. Onegin enters with his valet, Guillot, who has come to act as his second. Lenski and Onegin hesitate, both regretting their actions, but realize that there is no turning back. Lenski is shot dead by Onegin.

-Short Pause-

Act III, Scene I – A fashionable ballroom in St. Petersburg – several years later

The guests dance a Polonaise. Onegin contemplates his past actions and present frustration. His attention is drawn to the entrance of Prince Gremin and his new wife, the former Tatiana Larin. Tatiana also recognizes Onegin and, distraught, tries to lose herself among the guests. Gremin proudly extols Tatiana’s quiet gifts and his deep love for her. Tatiana is presented to Onegin. As she leaves, Onegin realizes he loves her and resolves to tell her so.

Act III, Scene II – A reception room in Prince Gremin’s house – The next morning

Tatiana enters with a letter from Onegin, dreading his imminent arrival. When he enters, Tatiana suggests that it is her new position which now attracts Onegin. He begs her forgiveness for his past coldness and entreats her to come away with him. Tatiana refuses, leaving Onegin in despair.

—Jay Lesenger, Stage Director

Special thanks to the Chautauqua Regional Youth Ballet – Monika Alch, Artistic Director and Elizabeth Bush, Executive Director; to Steven Capone and Erhard Rom, set designers; to Opera Nordfjord, Eid, Norway: Candice Bredesen, choreographer, Michael and Kari Pavelich, General/Artistic Directors.

CHAUTAUQUA OPERA ORCHESTRA

Violins I

Vahn Armstrong, *Concertmaster*
David Hult, *Assistant*
Erica Robinson
Lenelle Morse
Ming Gao
Amanda Armstrong

Violins II

Simon Lapointe, *Principal*
Margaret Cooper, *Assistant*
Lara Sipols
Barbara Berg

Violas

Thomas Dumm, *Principal*
Eva Stern, *Assistant*
Connie Lorber
Jennifer Stahl

Cellos

Daryl Goldberg, *Principal*
Gena Taylor
Marie Shmorhun

Basses

David Rosi
Caitlyn Kamminga

Flutes

Kathryn Levy, *Principal*

Oboes

Joan Wright, *Principal*

Clarinets

Daniel Spitzer, *Principal*
Ilya Shterenberg

Bassoons

Jeffrey Robinson, *Principal*
Sarah Taylor

Horns

Roger Kaza, *Principal*
William Bernatis
Donna Dolson

Trumpets

Peter Lindblom, *Principal*

Trombones

John Marcellus, *Principal*
Aidan Chamberlain

Timpani

Thomas Blanchard, *Principal*

Harp

Beth Robinson, *Principal*

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Alexander Sergeyvich Pushkin's narrative poem in eight cantos, *Eugene Onegin*, was written between 1823 and 1831 and has remained one of the most popular novels in Russian literature. It deals with a young country girl whose romantic ideals are shattered by a man who has rejected his own emotions because of disillusionment and ennui.

The idea of turning Pushkin's novel into an opera was first suggested to Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky in 1877 by Elizaveta Andreyevna Lavrovskaya, a friend and singer, but at first he rejected the idea. After more thought, however, he was attracted by the novel's "wealth of poetry, human quality and simplicity." So enthused was Tchaikovsky with the new idea that he set about composing the Letter Scene, using the original Pushkin text before he had received so much as a word from his librettist, Konstantin Shilovsky.

In the Pushkin work, it is a bemused cynic who addresses his story to the "dear reader." The elimination of this bitter commentary in the opera, along with shortened time lapses between important actions, helps to bring characters into sharper focus. His music changes Onegin from a cold iconoclast to a credible, alive, almost sympathetic young man.

It is of more than passing interest to note certain events that occurred in Tchaikovsky's personal life during the composition of *Eugene Onegin*. Early in 1877, Tchaikovsky received a desperate letter from one of his pupils at the Moscow Conservatory,

Antonia Ivanovna Milyukova, in which she passionately declared her love for him.

In July of 1877, the composer married the unhappy girl. His motives for such an action can only be conjectured as it is a well documented fact that he did not love her. Perhaps he feared disclosure of his homosexuality. Or perhaps, due to his present involvement with Onegin, he chose to wed her rather than reject her as Onegin had rejected Tatiana. His identification with Tatiana is certain, for Tchaikovsky also searched for romantic ideals untenable in the real world. In a letter to his brother, Modest, he confessed, "I was in love with Tatiana and furious with Onegin for his coldness and heartlessness."

After only a few months, the marriage ended in emotional upheaval. Work on *Onegin* was halted for months while the composer recovered from an attempted suicide and a nervous collapse. But with his return to work, the opera was completed with "music [that] comes literally from my innermost being."

Eugene Onegin had its successful world premiere in a student production at the Moscow Conservatory on March 29, 1879. Two years later, the first professional performance took place at the Imperial Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow on January 23, 1881, signaling the royal acceptance of Russian opera over Italian repertory.

—Jay Lesenger, Stage Director

BIOGRAPHIES

Lydia Everett (Dancer)

Falconer High School, SUNY Purchase; Chautauqua Regional Youth Ballet; Chautauqua Opera Debut.

Madeline Jones (Dancer)

Maple Grove High School; Chautauqua Regional Youth Ballet, Paul Taylor Dance Company at Peabody Preparatory Summer Intensive, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet Summer Intensive, Peridance, New York Summer School of the Arts; *Macbeth*-2015.

Paul Mockovak (Dancer)

Chautauqua Regional Youth Ballet – *Nutcracker* (Drosselmeyer, Arabian), *Les Sylphide* (The Poet), *Neglia* Ballet and BPO - *Nutcracker* (Grandpa), *Romeo & Juliet* (Lord Capulet), *Giselle* (The Duke), also Ballet Randolph, Dance Miami, Greater Miami Opera, Ballet Oklahoma; Performances in Japan and Italy, Professor of Theatre & Dance/SUNY Fredonia; Chautauqua Opera/*Macbeth* and *The Merry Widow*-2002.

Telly Ortiz (Dancer)

Jamestown High School; Chautauqua Regional Youth Ballet; *Macbeth*-2015.

Shawn Sprankle (Dancer)

SUNY Fredonia; Chautauqua Regional Youth Ballet; Chautauqua Opera/*Lucia di Lammermoor* 2012, *Macbeth*-2015.

Megan Stefanik (Dancer)

Pine Valley High School; Chautauqua Regional Youth Ballet; Ray Evans Theater (Salamanca, NY); Chautauqua Opera Debut.



Macbeth, 2015 - Photo credit: Roger Coda

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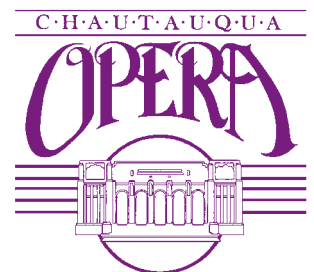
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