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Press material is available at: www.operaprojects.org/press

**AMERICAN OPERA PROJECTS AND OPERA ON TAP
BRING THE STRANGE TRUTH TO GALAPAGOS WITH
“OPERA GROWS IN BROOKLYN” - SATURDAY DEC 12, 8 PM
EXCERPTS FROM THREE OPERAS-IN-DEVELOPMENT
SEMMELEWEIS, MARYMERE, & SUCKER**

Two Brooklyn opera companies, **AMERICAN OPERA PROJECTS (AOP)** and **OPERA ON TAP**, will present the third installment of its **Opera Grows in Brooklyn** series called **OGB: *Stranger Than Fiction***, an evening of three 30-minute opera scenes and songs from composers Raymond Lustig, Matt Schickele, and James Barry – all based on true stories. The show will be held on **Saturday, December 12 at 8pm** at Galapagos Art Space in Brooklyn’s DUMBO neighborhood. Tickets are \$20 (\$15 for students/seniors) at www.galapagosartspace.com.

Opera Grows in Brooklyn is an ongoing collaboration between American Opera Projects, “known for bringing cutting-edge vocal production to the masses,” (*New York*), and Opera on Tap, “...raucous and sublime...un-elitist, imperfect, and fun...” (*NY Sun*), that presents three 30-minute selections of songs and scenes from contemporary composers in a hip, cabaret-style atmosphere. Audiences have a chance to meet the artists and composers after the performance.

American Opera Projects begins the evening with scenes from the opera-in-development *Semmelweis*. A biographical cabaret fantasia of Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis who battled the 19th-century European medical establishment and his own personal demons to convince the world he had discovered why a deadly disease was killing mothers at a horrific rate inside the world’s greatest hospital. Composer **Raymond Lustig** combines a tuneful minimalist approach with Hungarian folk music, Viennese waltz, and cabaret theater to bring to life this story that was both a high and low point in the history of medicine. Bass-baritone **Matthew Curran** (recently seen in AOP workshops for *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* and Stephen Schwartz’s *Séance on a Wet Afternoon*) sings the title role with additional performances by **Abigail Fischer** (Bronx Opera, Nico Muhly’s *Mothertongue*), **Glenn Fleshler** (*Spring Awakening*, *Guys and Dolls*), **Daisy Press**, and **Patrick Porter**. Charity Wicks music directs, with stage direction by Matt Gray.

A composer and the guitarist of an old-time string band, composer/librettist **Matt Schickele** (*Lion Air*, *Cities Filled With Lights*) uses the talents of both folk and classical musicians to tell the story of an unusual pair, out of place in America’s last frontier. His one-act opera *Marymere* tells the true story of suspected murderer John Sargent and his wealthy eccentric wife Edith trying to make their fortune in turn-of-the-20th-century Wyoming. Baritone **Jesse Blumberg** (*The Grapes of Wrath*, world premiere) and mezzo soprano **Hai-Ting Chinn** (Wooster Group’s *La Didone*) star as the fated couple. Wesley Chinn music directs, with stage direction by Jenn Foster.

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Opera on Tap will present excerpts from *Sucker*, a new opera by composer **James Barry** that mixes classical and pop music to tell the darkly dramatic and slightly comical true story of Albert Prestridge, an aging, trusting, lonely divorcee, who must endure an engagement party for his ex-wife and best friend that goes from bad to worse. Featuring singers **Amberleigh Aller, Sean Miller, Seth Gilman, Amanda Villegas, and Zack Rabin** with musical direction by Christopher Berg and stage direction by Kathleen Stakenas.

The inaugural performance of *Opera Grows in Brooklyn* at Galapagos in April 2009 represented the first time that opera took the stage in the institution's 11-year history and was called "an exciting new level of work for these young companies. Brooklyn and the rest of the city will benefit from future collaborations like these." (*The Curator*). Past *Opera Grows in Brooklyn* performances have featured music by David T. Little, Stefan Weisman, Gilda Lyons, and Jack Perla and performances by David Adam Moore, Lauren Worsham, Jonathan Hays, and Anne Ricci.

"Galapagos is about to become New York City's first LEED-certified, "green" cultural building. Director Robert Elmes is adding opera to a space known best for its Obie Award winning, progressive programming," says AOP General Director Charles Jarden. "We think it's not just cool for opera to be in a spectacular space like Galapagos, it's essential for creating new music that connects to audiences. Opera away from opera houses is the best way for the genre to thrive and grow. It is economically smart and creatively daring and the voices sound great to both new listeners and fans. If one audience member walks out with an interest in discovering music by living composers, we'll know we are on the right track."

For over 20 years, **American Opera Projects** (AOP) has been creating, developing and presenting exclusively new American opera and music theatre projects that have appeared at the Royal Opera House, London, the Lincoln Center Festival, Skirball Center at NYU, the Guggenheim Museum, Symphony Space, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and many other national and international venues. AOP, based in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, has presented over 15 world premiere operas including Lee Hoiby's *This is the Rill Speaking* (2008), Stefan Weisman's *Darkling* (2006), and Paula Kimper's *Patience & Sarah* (1998). Most recently, world premieres of AOP-developed projects include *Séance on a Wet Afternoon*, the first opera by Stephen Schwartz, at Opera Santa Barbara in September 2009 and Jorge Martín's *Before Night Falls* at Fort Worth Opera in April 2010.

Opera on Tap's mission is to bring opera to new audiences by performing in bars, rock concert halls, and other alternative spaces. Born in the backroom of a Brooklyn divebar in 2005, Opera on Tap has gained national press recognition, several performance residencies across the city, and regional chapters in New Orleans, Chicago, Ann Arbor, MI, and soon Atlanta.

Company info:

American Opera Projects: www.operaprojects.org

Opera on Tap: www.operaontap.com

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CALENDAR LISTING INFORMATION

OPERA GROWS IN BROOKLYN

featuring

Semmelweis

American Opera Projects presents scenes from new opera in development
Music by Raymond Lustig
Libretto by Matthew Doherty and Matt Gray
Performed by Matthew Curran, Abigail Fischer, Glenn Fleshler, Daisy Press, and Patrick Porter
Musical Director, Charity Wicks
Stage Director, Matt Gray
Piano, Charity Wicks

Sucker

Opera on Tap presents scenes from new opera in development
Music and Libretto by James Barry
Performed by Amberleigh Aller, Sean Miller, Seth Gilman, Amanda Villegas, and Zack Rabin
Musical Director, Christopher Berg
Stage Director, Kathleen Stakenas
Piano, Christopher Berg

Marymere

American Opera Projects presents scenes from new opera in development
Music and Libretto by Matt Schickele
Performed by Jesse Blumberg, Hai-Ting Chinn
Musical Director, Wesley Chinn
Stage Director, Jenn Foster

Saturday, December 12, 8:00pm

Location: Galapagos Art Space 16 Main Street at Water Street, DUMBO, Brooklyn, NY. Subway – F train to York Street; A/C train to High Street.
Directions: www.galapagosartspace.com

Tickets: \$20 General, \$15 Students/Seniors.
Tickets available at www.galapagosartspace.com

Visit www.operaprojects.org for press material and profiles on this event's featured artists and organizations.

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