

GUERRILLA OPERA

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GUERRILLA OPERA ANNOUNCES 2008-2009 SEASON

TWO WORLD PREMIER OPERAS:

WE ARE SONS, BY RUDOLF ROJAHN AND RUMPELSTILTSKIN, BY MARTI EPSTEIN

(BOSTON – June 22, 2008) Guerilla Opera announces their 2008-2009 Season, to be presented at the Zack Box Theater at The Boston Conservatory: Rudolf Rojahn's *We Are Sons*, a provocative social commentary about the nature of guilt and regret, and the classic fairy tale by The Brothers Grimm, *Rumpelstiltskin* by Marti Epstein.

The extensive mission of this company is to revitalize opera by commissioning and performing newly composed chamber operas which require the highest level of virtuosity and musicianship equally from singers and instrumentalists, while simultaneously creating and championing an accessible and artistically progressive form of avant-garde theater. All of this is accomplished without the use of a conductor, in the true style of chamber music and in Black Box Theater settings which heightens the intimacy between the audience and the drama of the score. While the length and scale of Guerilla Opera's productions are smaller, the artistic integrity and value are on the same level as conventional opera

Founded in May 2007 by Artistic Directors Mike Williams and Rudolf Rojahn, Guerilla Opera commissioned and produced two successful operas in their 2007-2008 Season; *Heart of a Dog* by Rudolf Rojahn and *No Exit* by Andy Vores.

As a repertory theater company you can expect to see the return of Guerilla Opera's founding artists and core members Aliana de la Guardia, Soprano; Leslie Ann Leytham, Mezzo-Soprano; Mike Williams, Percussion; and Kent O'Doherty, Saxophone, but also some new blood to the Guerilla stage: Matthew Truss, Male-Soprano (*Angels in America*, American Repertory Theater, 2005); actor De'Lon Grant (*Dessa Rose*, New Repertory Theater, 2008); Kathryn Johnson, Dramatic Soprano; Jennifer Rizzo, Soprano; Brendan Buckley, Tenor; Jonathan Nussman, Baritone; Javier Caballero, Cello; and Jessi Rosinski, Flute. This season will also feature Greg Smucker in his Guerilla Opera debut as director, and the return of Sally Stunkel directing her third.

Sally Stunkel is a highly respected and accomplished director and acting coach and will soon begin her second year at The Boston Conservatory as the Director of Opera Studies. Her directing credits include Sacramento Opera, Tulsa Opera, Opera Theater of St. Louis, Skylight Opera, and Aspen Music Festival.

Greg Smucker studied with the late Wesley Balk, a leading authority in the field of singer-actor training. Mr. Smucker has directed productions for Minnesota Opera, Northstar Opera, the New Opera Music Theatre Initiative, Underground Railway Theatre, Stoneham Theatre, Centastage, Loring Playhouse, Red Eye Collaboration, University of Minnesota, Goshen College, and St.

Cloud State University. He served as managing director of Theatre for Young America in Kansas City, and was a co-founder and artistic director of 15 HEAD - A Theatre Lab, a critically acclaimed experimental theatre company in Minneapolis specializing in company-created productions.

World renowned baritone, Sanford Sylvan, now on the board of directors for Guerilla Opera, hails this group as "...*the future of opera. Brilliant composers and performers committed to their vision of music theater which is dynamic, flexible and deeply compelling. I have collaborated with most of these gifted artists myself and am convinced that they will carry us forward to new operatic heights.*" (August 2007)

In a commentary about Guerilla Opera's production of *No Exit* by Andy Vores, April 2008, Lloyd Schwartz of The Phoenix states "*I can't imagine anyone left the theater unshaken.*" (April 29, 2008)

2008-2009 SEASON

We Are Sons, music and libretto by Rudolf Rojahn
Directed by Sally Stunkel
Zack Box Theater, The Boston Conservatory
September 2008

The second work by Rudolf Rojahn to be premiered by Guerilla Opera. In a small South Carolina town, as the Vietnam War draws to a close, the return of a long absent resident begins to raise questions. As the lies surrounding the prodigal son's return fall away the community is confronted with its own dark past. An overbearing mother, her damaged son, a sputtering, sweat-drenched Minister, a young prostitute and her alcoholic father are just some of the characters in this black farce about the nature of guilt and regret.

Rumpelstiltskin, by Marti Epstein
Adapted from the Brothers Grimm Tale
Directed by Greg Smucker
Zack Box Theater, The Boston Conservatory
May 2009

This collaboration between Marti Epstein and Greg Smucker is their Guerilla Opera debut. While in the original Grimm fairy tale character motivation remains ambiguous, Marti's modern fairy tale takes a closer look in attempts to reveal true intent, particularly in the title character of *Rumpelstiltskin*.