Postcard from Morocco

Music by Dominick Argento
Text by John Donahue

Postcard from Morocco premiered at the Minnesota Opera on October 14, 1971, in Minneapolis, MN.

Director
Joshua Major

Conductor
Douglas Kinney Frost

Assistant Conductor‡
Mark Latham

Scenic Design
Vincent Mountain

Costume Design
Rachel Laritz

Lighting Design
Joseph R. Walls

Wig & Makeup Design
Dawn Rivard

Diction Coach
Timothy Cheek

Repetiteurs
Kevin Miller, Jeremy Reger

Stage Manager
Brett Finley

Setting:
A train station, 1914

Postcard from Morocco is performed without an intermission.

‡ Mark Latham will conduct the performance on March 23, 2008.

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The School of Music, Theatre & Dance acknowledges the generosity of McKinley Associates, Inc. whose support has helped make this production possible.
CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARCH 20 & 22, 2008
Coloratura-soprano ... A Lady with a Hand Mirror, An Operetta Singer .................. Jennifer Rosetti
Soprano .................. A Lady with a Cake Box ................................................. Jody Doktor
Mezzo-soprano ....... A Lady with a Hat Box, A Foreign Singer .................. Jennifer Trombley
Lyric Tenor ............. A Man with Old Luggage, An Operetta Singer .......... Dustin L. Scott
Tenor .................. A Man with a Paint Box .................................................. Steven Tompkins
Baritone .................. A Man with a Shoe Sample Kit ............................. George Cornelius
Bass .................. A Man with a Cornet Case, A Puppet Maker ............... Edward Hanlon
Mimes .................. Entertainers ......................................................... Janai Brugger, Jonathan Christopher

MARCH 21 & 23, 2008
Coloratura-soprano ... A Lady with a Hand Mirror, An Operetta Singer .................. Kelly Holst
Soprano .................. A Lady with a Cake Box ................................................. Leonora Green
Mezzo-soprano ....... A Lady with a Hat Box, A Foreign Singer ........ Cynthian Brundage
Lyric Tenor ............. A Man with Old Luggage, An Operetta Singer .......... Bernard D. Holcomb
Tenor .................. A Man with a Paint Box .................................................. Brian Tanner
Baritone .................. A Man with a Shoe Sample Kit ............................. Wes Mason
Bass .................. A Man with a Cornet Case, A Puppet Maker ............... Andrew Munn
Mimes .................. Entertainers ......................................................... Janai Brugger, Jonathan Christopher

Violin ................................................................. Jacqueline Nutting‡
Viola ............................................................... Lauren Borden
Double Bass .............................................................. Keith Miller
Clarinet ................................................................. Lucie McGee
Alto Saxophone .......................................................... Jonathan Yanik
Trombone ............................................................ Patrick Montgomery
Guitar ................................................................. Matthew Ardizzone
Piano/Celesta ......................................................... Kevin Miller (Thur., Sat.), Jeremy Reger (Fri., Sun.)
Percussion .............................................................. Brian Baldauff

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The Orchestra are members of the University Philharmonia Orchestra.

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Assoc. Dir. of Orchestras ........................................................... Andrew George
Managing Director ................................................................. David Aderente
Personnel Manager ................................................................. Erin Nelson
Equipment ................................................................. Landres Bryant, Christopher Hernacki
‡ Concertmaster
SYNOPSIS

A small group of people wait in a railway station. One of them sings about the hand mirror she carries. The passengers ask Mr. Owen, a man with a paint box, what he does; before answering, they are distracted by a puppet show. One of the passengers talks about his luggage. Another man has a cornet case, but will not open the case. Another traveler makes hats for the movies, but is misunderstood by the rest. One passenger reveals that he is a shoe salesman, but also refuses to open his case. Mr. Owen is asked about his painting. One of the ladies has a cake box, in which she says she keeps her lover. Mr. Owen talks about a magical ship he imagined when he was younger. A puppet maker appears, talking about all of the things that go into puppet making. Mr. Owen is asked to paint a group portrait of the passengers. As they wonder about his paint box, they bully and jostle him as they are scrambling for position in the portrait. His box falls open, revealing that it is empty. The puppet show concludes, and everyone but Mr. Owen leaves. He sings about the ship of his childhood dreams.

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DIRECTOR’S NOTES

Imagine looking through an old box of photographs or postcards from another time and place that are out of order. The sense of time is unclear. The relationships between the people in the photos are unknown. Yet, somehow a story emerges. It is with this idea that one must watch Argento’s poignant work. Questions of identity, fear, destiny and human connection are brilliantly considered in this opera. Why are we so afraid of each other? Why is it so difficult to express mercy and love, and to be selfless? Why is it so hard to be vulnerable, to accept ourselves and each other? Indeed, we are masters of our own destiny, and have the power to steer through our lives and negotiate the magic that is all around us. At the end of the opera, the Tenor, vulnerable and empowered, offers these words:

We sail this summer morning, set sail this summer morning, we sail new waters, uncharted seas, with new stars on high and new sea-beasts at our side. But do not fear. The boat is magical, made out of glass and ice. We’ll sail through fire and clouds. We’ll anchor in a flower’s bell. The birds will guide us home. Their wings will be our sails, for this is my ship, my ship, I’m captain of this magic ship.

— Joshua Major

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John Clark Donahue (Text) has worked in the American performing arts scene for over 45 years. As a producer, director, designer, actor, choreographer, playwright and librettist, he has participated in over 250 productions in theater, dance, opera, television and film. This includes founding and artistic directorship of the world renowned Children’s Theatre Company, Associate Artistic Director of the Arizona Theatre Company, and design and direction at Guthrie Theater, The Jungle Theater, Theatre de la Jeune Lune, Mixed Blood Theatre, Great American History Theatre, Hidden Theatre, Frank Theatre, Theater Latté Da, Walking Shadow, and Minnesota Dance Theatre. Mr. Donahue is author of 22 original plays and 10 adaptations for the stage; the librettist and director (for the premiere) of Dominick Argento’s Postcard From Morocco; author and director of the film The Suitcase; and director of the award-winning TV adaptation of Hans Christian Anderson’s The Red Shoes. He is the recipient of the 2000 McKnight Theater Artistic Fellowship, the 1971 American Theatre Association Margo Jones Award (presented by Edward Albee), and the John K. Sherman Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contribution to the Arts.
The performers in this production are graduate and undergraduate students in the School of Music, Theatre & Dance. The designers are faculty and guest artists in the Department of Theatre & Drama. Scenery, costumes, properties, sound, and lighting were realized by the students and staff of University Productions, the producing unit of the School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS


About the Artists

Four Seasons Head of Music Staff/Chorus Master, Florida Grand Opera; seven seasons, Music Director, Opus Chamber Orchestra.

Rachel Laritz (Costume Designer) UM: Gianni Schicchi/Suor Angelica, La Cenerentola, The Good Person of Szechwan, Measure for Measure. Regional Theatre: Glengarry Glen Ross, Grafton City Blues, Seascape, Life Could be a Dream, Frozen, Half Life, Bad Dates, Clean House, The Goat, or Who is Sylvia? (Milwaukee Rep); The Philadelphia Story (Remy Bumppo); The Woman in Black, String of Pearls (Renaissance Theatreworks); The Tragedy of Carmen, The Last Five Years (Skylight Opera); American Players Theatre; Chicago Opera Theatre; Garsington Opera (London); Spoleto Festival. TV/Film: NBC’S Law & Order.

Joshua Major (Director) is Head of Opera and Director of the UM Opera Workshop; Artistic Director of the Pine Mountain Music Festival since 2003; Stage Director and Faculty with the Israel Vocal Arts Institute since 1993. UM: The Bartered Bride, The Coronation of Poppea, Hansel and Gretel, Gianni Schicchi, Xerxes, The Cunning Little Vixen, The Consul. Regional Opera: Michigan Opera Theatre, Cleveland Opera, Opera Omaha, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Wolf Trap Opera, Central City Opera, Opera Carolina, Jacksonville Symphony, New Orleans Opera, Kentucky Opera, Tulsa Opera and Indianapolis Opera.

Vincent Mountain (Scenic Design) is an Assoc. Professor of Design in the Dept. of Theatre & Drama. UM: J.B., Playing for Time, The Coronation of Poppea, The Hot L Baltimore, Hansel and Gretel, Jesus Christ Superstar, Suor Angelica/Gianni Schicchi, Xerxes, Hamlet, Parade, The Good Person of Szechwan, La Périchole, Falstaff. Regional Theatre: One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, Macbeth, Orpheus Descending, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Devil’s Disciple, Alley Theatre; Playland, Intiman Theatre; Roosters, Seattle Group; La Traviata, Opera Theatre of St. Louis; Little Women, Central City Opera, Opera Omaha, Chautauqua Opera. Other: MFA in Design, UCSD.

Dawn Rivard (Wig, Hair & Makeup Design) World Premieres: Ragtime, Sunset Boulevard, Showboat. International Theatre: Award winning productions of Cats, and Beauty and the Beast in Germany, Austria & Switzerland. Currently: Florentine Opera Company. TV/Film: Emmy Award for Hair and Makeup, Feast of All Saints, wig builder for Hairspray, Skinwalkers and Mike Myers production of The Love Guru. Clients have included Sir Peter Ustinov, Donald Sutherland, Neve Campbell, Stockard Channing, Shawn Ashmore & Louis Gossett Jr.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Carpenter (Power)......................Brandon Carruth
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Asst. Properties Master..............Patrick Drone
Properties Artisan....................Michelle Bisbee
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First Asst. Stage Manager...............Angela F. Kiesel
Asst. Stage Managers ....Becca Rothman, Marguerite Woodward
Assistant to the Director...............Juan Pereira
Scenery.................................Katherine Battistoni,
Andrew Gavenda, Louis Marino, Allison McDowell
Paint.......................................Joon-Young Chung, John Copley,
Adam Moskal, Laura Przybysz, Laura Riggins, Angela Sarb,
Rebecca Spooner, Laura Strowe, students of Theatre 250
Props....................................Will Burton, Christina Carter, Cassandra Flowers,
Catherine Keys, Louis King, Heather Krieger,
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Professional Stitchers.................Laurie Kantner, Taran Muller,
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Costumes.................................Joshua Beuer, Corey Davis,
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Lighting.................................Alyce Baskal, Alex Brees, Michelle Bryan,
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RUNNING CREW
Scenery..................................Nicholas Ward
Props....................................Laura Swierzbine
Light Board Operator..................Lauren Hood
Wardrobe...............................Kathleen Boyle, Claudio Nunez
Wigs/Makeup..........................Margaret Grady

* IATSE 395 ‡ Crew Head
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No food or drink is allowed in the theatre.

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As a courtesy to our audience and the performers, children under the age of three will not be admitted to performances. All children must have a ticket. If your child proves disruptive or excessively restless, you may be asked to leave by House Management.

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