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Fall Opera Workshop - Suor Angelica

St. Norbert College Music Department

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**Opera Workshop Annual Performance
2016**

Sister Angelica

By Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

Director: Dr. Yi-Lan Niu

Accompanist: Mrs. Elaine Moss

Costume and Lighting Design: Professor April Beiswenger

Props: Dr. Yi-Lan Niu, Elizabeth Dannecker, and Lauren Wargin

Saturday, November 19, 2016

2:00pm

Dudley Birder Hall, St. Norbert College

Performers

The Abbess - Kiera Matthews (Mezzo-Soprano)
Sister Angelica - Hannah Knutson (Soprano)
Sister Dolcina - Elizabeth Dannecker (Soprano)
Sister Genevieve - Maria Sausen (Soprano)
The Mistress of the Novices - Megan Schirger (Soprano)
The Monitor - Megan O'Neil (Soprano)
The Nursing Sister - Kirstin Duprey (Soprano)
The Novice - Lauren Wargin (Soprano)
Sister Osmina - Carly VanLaarhoven (Soprano)
The Princess - Linda Feldmann (Mezzo-Soprano)
The Tourières - First- Emily Rosenfeldt (Soprano)
Second - Angie Danowski (Soprano)

Director's Note

Sister Angelica (Suor Angelica, Orig.) by Giacomo Puccini (1859-1924) is selected from a triptych which includes three operas: *Il Tabarro* (The Cloak), *Suor Angelica* (Sister Angelica) and *Gianni Schicchi*. The idea of combining a collection of short one-act operas had been on the composer's mind for a while, but was put on hold because Puccini had no idea what the companion pieces were going to be after he finished the first piece in 1916. Although the creation of the operas was a struggle at first, Puccini was able to quickly complete the other two pieces in 1918 after being given the libretti from his friend Giovacchino Forzano (1883-1970). The first performance of this triptych was presented in 1918 at the Metropolitan Opera Theater in New York City and since then it has continued to receive positive feedback from American audiences. *Sister Angelica* was Puccini's personal favorite among his other famous operas.

This is my ninth year serving as the opera director at St. Norbert College. I have had great experiences producing music with Norbertine priests, faculty, staff and students, and I always want to give my appreciation back to this community. After talking to the senior advisor to the President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Amanda Kim, we decided to create a music project that celebrates the College's tradition as well as recognizes women's love and strength in Catholicism. I am very grateful that our creative and talented singers can support us to accomplish such a meaningful project. Angelica, a noble woman with an illegitimate son, is taken to a convent to become a nun. Being imprisoned by social circumstances and judged by her family, Angelica prays for repentance in the hope that her sin and embarrassment might be washed away and she can meet her son again. Unfortunately, her son dies from an unknown

decease. Angelica commits suicide. She receives redemption from God and finally becomes reunited with her son at the end of the opera. *Sister Angelica* is not just an opera where fat ladies sing; it is a music drama that shows us that love is stronger than hate, faith is greater than thoughts. This production is a group effort as we received a great deal of support from the CEDI - Women's Committee, both the Music and Theater Departments, and the Office of Communications.

- Yi-Lan Niu

Synopsis

Place: A convent

Time: 1910

The opera begins with the sisters singing hymns in the garden. The Monitor scolds Sister Osmina and the other sisters for having too much fun in the courtyard. The Mistress of Novices later explains that this is the first of three evenings that occur each year when the setting sun strikes the fountain so as to turn its water golden. The nuns rejoice; however, this event reminds them of Bianca Rosa, a sister who has died. Sister Genevieve suggests they pour some of the “golden” water onto her tomb.

The nuns share their thoughts and desires with each other. The Monitor suggests that having desires is not proper for a nun. Sister Genevieve confesses that she wishes to see lambs again because she used to be a shepherdess when she was a girl. Sister Dolcina wishes that she has good food to eat! Sister Angelica claims to have no desires, but the nuns begin to gossip. They know that Sister Angelica is not telling them the truth. There are rumors that she was sent to the convent as punishment by her wealthy, noble family. Angelica's desire is to see her family who she lost contact with seven years ago.

As Nursing Sister and Sister Angelica discuss the making of herbal medicine to help the other nuns who are hurt by the wasps, the tourières arrive and bring food and supplies to the convent. One of them sees a grand carriage parked outside the convent. Sister Angelica becomes nervous and disturbed, suspecting perhaps her family members have come to visit her. The Abbess advises Sister Angelica to not have such inappropriate excitement. She also announces that the visitor is the Princess, Sister Angelica's aunt. The Princess states that Angelica's sister is getting married and Angelica must sign a document to change her claim to her inheritance. Angelica replies that she has repented for her sin, but she cannot offer up everything in sacrifice to the Virgin — she still remembers her illegitimate son, who was taken away before she was sent to the convent seven years ago. She continuously asks about her son. The Princess refuses to answer at the beginning, but finally admits that Angelica's son died of fever two years ago. Shocked and devastated, Angelica signs the documents in tears, and then the Princess leaves. Angelica starts to hallucinate. She believes that by killing herself she will be able to meet her son in paradise. She peacefully prepares the herbal poison and drinks it. As she kills herself, she realizes that she has committed a mortal sin and has damned herself to eternal separation from her son! She begs for mercy and has a miraculous vision: the Virgin Mary appears to embrace her.

Performers and Student Director's Bios – In order of the Appearance

Elizabeth Dannecker is a sophomore music education student from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and is excited to perform in her first full opera. Elizabeth has been acting, singing, and playing the violin in performances for many years, and she is looking forward to someday teaching the next generation of musicians. Outside of music, Elizabeth runs track for the college.

Angie Danowski holds a Bachelor's Degree in Applied Vocal Music and Arts Management from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. She is currently an office assistant at Brook Park Apartments, cantor at St. John the Evangelist Church, and a private voice teacher. Her performance credits include Olympia from *Contes d'Hoffman*, and workshops at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay.

Kirstin Duprey is a sophomore music education triple certification major (general music, choral and instrumental education) from Manitowoc, Wisconsin. She has been involved in many productions before, participating in pit orchestras, stage crews, tech crews, and acting. A few shows she has been in are *A Christmas Carol*, *Les Miserables*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Children of Eden*, and *Chicago*. This is Kirstin's first full opera production.

Linda Feldmann (Mezzo-Soprano) earned her Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from UW- Oshkosh and her Master's degree in Opera Performance from The Boston Conservatory. She has soloed with the Boston Metro-West Symphony, Green Bay Civic Symphony, Fox Valley Symphony, Oshkosh Chamber Singers and White Heron Chorale. She is also a frequent soloist with the Dudley Birder Chorale -- most recently performing the Vivaldi Gloria in the "All Saints Day Concert". Her opera credits include the roles of "Maurya" in *Riders to the Sea*, the "Witch" in *Hansel and Gretel*, "The Opera" in The Construction of Boston and "Mrs. Gross" in *Turn of the Screw*. Ms. Feldmann is an Adjunct Instructor of Music at St. Norbert College and also teaches private voice at the Birder Studio and at her studio in Appleton. She is delighted to be onstage with this talented group of young singers in this Opera Workshop production of *Sister Angelica!*

Hannah Knutson is a junior at St. Norbert College from Greeneville, Tennessee, double majoring in Vocal Performance and Communications with a Media Studies concentration. The most current production she has been in was Birder Production's of *CATS* playing the role of Cassandra. She has also played the character of "Liz" in Knight Theater's production of *Chicago* as well as the character of "Connie McKenzie" in Birder Production's production, *A Chorus Line*. Her opera performances include singing the aria Ah! Non Credea, Ah! Non Giunge from the opera *La Sonnambula*, and part two of act one of *Falstaff* playing the role of "Meg". Hannah is very excited to embody Sister Angelica on stage this semester.

Kiera Matthews is a sophomore from West Bend, Wisconsin. She is a Music Education: Choral and General Music major with a Spanish minor and is currently enrolled in the Honors Program here at St. Norbert. Kiera is involved in Abbey Singers, Knight Theatre, Knights on Broadway, Opera Workshop, and the SNC Collegiate Chapter for the National Association for Music Education among several others. Her past musical roles included Rose Alvarez in *Bye Bye Birdie*, June in *Chicago*, and the Sour Kangaroo in *Seussical*. See her next as Paulette Bonafonte in Knight Theatre's production of *Legally Blonde* in January 2017.

Megan P. O'Neil (SNC Junior, Music Education Major) is delighted to be part of this production of *Sister Angelica!* While this is just Megan's second appearance in a staged opera, she brings a unique preparation

to this experience. Her previous productions include the role of a Nun, in the Benet Academy presentation of *The Sound of Music* and the role of Electra, in the Birder Studios presentation of *CATS*. Megan has been involved in numerous choral groups over the past 12 years. At SNC, she is currently a member of Chamber Singers, Concert Choir, Mass Choir, and Madrigals. In addition to the Benet Choral Program, she was a member of the Anima – Glen Ellyn Children’s Chorus for six years. Her Anima tenure was highlighted by frequent performances with both The Chicago Symphony Orchestra and The Lyric Opera of Chicago in works such as Mendelssohn’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and Berlioz’s *The Damnation of Faust*. Very recently, she was named the recipient of “The Peg Egan Endowed Music Scholarship Award”.

Maria Sausen is a junior vocal performance and communication double major from Green Bay. She studies with Dr. Yi-Lan Niu and is thrilled to be a part of SNC Opera for the second time! Maria is involved in many ensembles on campus, such as Chamber Singers and Abbey Singers. Off campus, she is a member of Daddy D Productions Dinner Theater and Knots and Bows Children’s Entertainment. She cantors at St. John the Evangelist Church and the St. Norbert Abbey, and sings at weddings and other church events throughout the year. She also teaches voice lessons and is a guest vocal coach at Southern Door High School for their fall musical.

Emily Rosenfeldt is a sophomore choral/general education major from Oconto, Wisconsin. Her previous productions include *Annie*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *The Addams Family*. Emily is excited to be in an opera production for the first time.

Megan Schirger is a junior at SNC, studying choral and general music education. Her hometown is Grafton, Wisconsin. Megan studies voice in the studio of Dr. Yi-Lan Niu. This is her second year being involved in the opera production. In 2015, she performed the famous aria from Beethoven’s opera *Fidelio* as well as played the role of Sandman in a scene from the opera *Hansel and Gretel*. Last fall, Megan participated in a Song and Shadow Production on campus where she performed “Someday My Prince Will Come” from the musical, *Sleeping Beauty*. She is involved in both Women’s Chorus and Chamber Singers here on campus as well. Besides performing, Megan is also currently the vice president of the NAFME (National Association for Music Educators) chapter here on campus.

Carly VanLaarhoven is playing Sister Osmina in her first year of participating in SNC Opera. She is from Freedom and is currently in her junior year as a music education student at SNC. In the past, Carly enjoyed taking an active role in her high school theatre program. She began as the Red Queen in the play *Alice in Wonderland*. Later, she worked as a stunt double in the musicals *Beauty and the Beast*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Honk*. Her largest role was playing Willy Wonka in the musical *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. In 2015, Carly participated in St. Norbert College’s first Shadow Puppet Show by performing a piece from the musical *Cinderella*.

Lauren Wargin is a sophomore Music Education Major from Two Rivers, Wisconsin, studying with Dr. Yi-Lan Niu. Although this is her first Opera Workshop performance, prior to attending St. Norbert College, Lauren has performed in productions of *Anything Goes*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and *Shrek the Musical*.

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*St. Norbert College Music Department
Fall 2016 Events*

November

20 Nicholas Carncross, Senior Trumpet Recital, Birder Hall, 1:00 p.m.*

December

- 2 Festival of Christmas Concert & Dessert Reception, Walter Theatre, 7:30 p.m.**
3 Brass and Organ Christmas Spectacular, St. Norbert Abbey, 7:30 p.m. Goodwill Donation
9 Dudley Birder Chorale, Holiday Pops, Weidner Center, 7:30 p.m.**
10 Dudley Birder Chorale, Holiday Pops, Weidner Center, 2:30 p.m.**
15,16,17, 19, 20 Christmas with the Knights on Broadway, Birder Hall **

*Free Admission

**Special Ticket Pricing

For Tickets: www.snc.edu/performingarts



Festival of Christmas

Concert and Dessert Reception

Friday, December 2nd 7:30pm

Walter Theater

Tickets are on sale now



<http://www.snc.edu/tickets/>

920-403-3950



Brass & Organ Christmas Spectacular

St. Norbert Abbey

Saturday, December 3rd, 7:00 p.m.

Goodwill Donation

