Fresh off its double win at the 2015 National Opera Association Collegiate Opera Scenes Competition (in both opera and musical theatre categories), UNLV Opera is ready for an exciting new season. The year begins November 12-13 with a double bill of one-act operas: a Gilbert and Sullivan classic (\textit{Trial by Jury}) with a contemporary work by Boston-based composer Dan Shore (\textit{The Beautiful Bridegroom}). Then on December 3, Opera Workshop presents \textit{Viva Italia: Scenes about Italy.}

The highlight of the spring semester will be Puccini’s beloved \textit{La bohème}, playing March 17-19. Finally, the season concludes with a scenes program on April 22 called \textit{Crossing Over}, which asks the question: is it an opera or a Broadway musical? Join us for a season of silly Savoyards and passionate Bohemians as we showcase the many talented singers of the UNLV School of Music.
A pair of bridal-themed one-act operas will be featured in UNLV Opera’s November 12-13 performances in Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall. Gilbert and Sullivan’s Trial by Jury tells the story of abandoned bride Angelina (Heather Elise and Olivera Gjorgoska) who takes her groom (Gianni Becker and Alex Price) to court. The Judge is played by Phillip Harris and Christopher Withrow, while Christophe Kennedy sings the Usher, Rabuel Aviles is the Counsel to the Plaintiff, and Jesse Law is the Foreman. Barry Abarquez, Daveon Bolden, and Kurt Sedlmeir serve on the jury, while Angelina’s bridesmaids are Kelly Hawes, Dawn McCollum, Crystal Miller, and Jasmine Walker. Pianist Jae Ahn-Benton and Assistant Director Bonita Bunt round out the student production staff for this Savoyard endeavor.

The Gilbert and Sullivan will be joined by Dan Shore. Based on a Danish play by Ludvig Holberg, Shore’s The Beautiful Bridegroom is a charming neo-classical pastiche piece with an amusing plot twist. Widow Terentia (Nichole Jarlson) seeks help from matchmaker Madame Kirsten (Eliysheba Anderson and Breanna Leslie), ostensibly for her daughters Laurentia (Bethany Smith) and Leonora (Lacy Burchfield). The plot thickens, thanks to the machinations of their sassy maid Pernille (Bonita Bunt) and the arrival of the beautiful bridegroom himself, Captain Frands von Frauenliebe (Maia Thielen and Nicole Thomas). Paying delightful homage to Mozart, Schumann, Strauss and others, Shore’s music and libretto won the 2009 National Opera Association Chamber Opera Competition.

Faustino Solis conducts the instrumental ensemble while Aldo Perrelli serves as Assistant Director. Composer Dan Shore will be an Artist-in-Residence at UNLV during production week, giving students the important opportunity to work with a living operatic composer.

Nicole Thomas (Captain von Frauenliebe)
UNLV Welcomes New Opera Coach Dr. Christina Wright

UNLV Opera is pleased to welcome Dr. Christina Wright-Ivanova to the faculty. Hailed by critics as “a brilliant collaborative pianist” (Wiener Zeitung) and “an ideal partner” (Huffington Post), Christina Wright-Ivanova is a pianist, vocal coach, and chamber musician. She was a faculty member and vocal coach at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute in the summer of 2015. She was previously on faculty at the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria and the Franco-American Vocal Academy (FAVA) in Salzburg, and was a vocal coach at Boston University.

As an opera pianist, she has worked with Boston Opera Collaborative, Commonwealth Lyric Theater in Boston, Handel & Haydn Society, and Pacific Opera Victoria. She will continue to serve as the Artistic Director for the North End Performing Arts Concert Series in Boston in the 2015/16 season. The 2015/16 season includes an all Schubert-Beethoven Lieder recital, a Trio recital featuring Czech and Slavic music at Boston’s Steinert Hall, and a song and piano duo recital pairing food and wine with music. In 2016, she will appear for the second time as a Crear Scholar in Scotland with Malcolm Martineau, focusing on opera and art song, and will perform in New York, Massachusetts, Canada, Greece, Bulgaria and Italy. Her writings include The Total Janáček in Pohádka: Function of Theatrical and Musical Structure in A Fairy Tale. She holds degrees from the University of Texas at Austin (DMA), New England Conservatory (MM) and the University of Victoria, Canada (BM).

Viva Italia: Opera Workshop Scenes about Italy December 3

Viva Italia! Long live Italy and its operatic inspiration. Our opera workshop performance on December 3 in Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall at 7:30 pm will be a tribute to the country where opera began. The Italian tour begins in Florence, with scenes from Gianni Schicchi including the famous soprano aria “O mio babbino caro.” Naples is the setting for operatic excerpts from Rossini’s Il turco in Italia and Donizetti’s Il campanello, while we travel to Rome for scenes from Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito and Robert Ward’s Roman Fever. Italy has also been the muse for composers of operetta (the Italian Street Song from Victor Herbert’s Naughty Marietta) and musicals. Adam Guettel’s The Light in the Piazza transports us back to Florence, in a Broadway musical that is sung partly in Italian. Don’t miss this musical treat and trip through Italia.
UNLV Opera Theater's 2015 production of Le nozze di Figaro:
Sheronda McKee as the Countess and Christopher Withrow as the Count

(Photo by Shamith Dilan Gamage)

Fall 2015 Performances

November 12-13  UNLV Opera Theater:
Gilbert & Sullivan's Trial by Jury
Dan Shore's The Beautiful Bridegroom

December 3  UNLV Opera Workshop:
Viva Italia

UNLV Opera Theater's 2015 production of Le nozze di Figaro:
Sheronda McKee as the Countess and Christopher Withrow as the Count

(Photo by Shamith Dilan Gamage)