



**DER KAISER
VON ATLANTIS**

VIKTOR ULLMANN

Kallisti /Spring 2012/ Chamber Opera
May 30, June 1-2, 2012
7 pm
Conrad Prebys Music Center

DER KAISER VON ATLANTIS oder Die Tod-Verweigerung, op. 49 (1943)

The Kaiser of Atlantis or Death's Refusal
An opera in one act

music by Viktor Ullmann (1898 - 1944)
libretto by Peter Klein

Producer/Stage Director: Susan Narucki
Music Director/Conductor: Steven Schick

Lighting Designer: Nicholas J. Patin
Scenic Designer: Gaeun Kim
Costume Designer: Orli Nativ

Assistant Conductor: Jonathan Hepfer
Musical Preparation/Rehearsal Pianist: Stephen Lewis

Production Manager: Jessica C. Flores
Stage Manager: Megan Sprowls
House Manager: Heather Grindstaff
Follow Spot Operator: Amy Chiang
Backstage Crew Member: Susan Park
Assistant Costume Designer: Erica Oneto
Costumes Assistance: Danita Lee, Erica Oneto, Lily Keiting
Scenery Construction: David Weiner, Tom Lucenti, Preston Spence,
Mason Peterson, Tyrone Meservy

Special thanks: Deering Banjo (www.deeringbanjos.com)
for providing the superb Eagle II model banjo played by Pablo Gomez-Cano

DER KAISER VON ATLANTIS is supported by The Department of Music and The Division of Arts and Humanities at the University of California, San Diego. It is presented in cooperation with the Department of Theater and Dance at UCSD.

Cover Photos: Jim Carmody

CAST

KAISER OVERALL
DIE LAUTSPRECHER
DER TROMMLER
HARLEKIN
DER TOD
BUBIKOPF
SOLDAT

VINCE B. VINCENT
RYAN REITHMEIER
TIFFANY DU MOUCHELLE
ALICE TEYSSIER
PHILIP LARSON
BONNIE LANDER
GERALD SEMINATORE

PALIMPSEST

PETER CLARKE, VIOLIN
KIMBERLY HAIN, VIOLIN
LINDA PIATT, VIOLA
JENNIFER BEWERSE, CELLO
SCOTT WORTHINGTON, DOUBLE BASS
RACHEL BEETZ, FLUTE
SCOTT PAULSON, OBOE
CURT MILLER, CLARINET
DAVID BORGIO, SAXOPHONE
CALVIN PRICE, TRUMPET
PABLO GOMEZ-CANO, GUITAR AND BANJO
KYLE BLAIR, CEMBALO, PIANO, SYNTHESIZER
LOUISE DEVENISH, PERCUSSION
STEPHEN SOLOOK, PERCUSSION

SYNOPSIS

In the prologue, The Loudspeaker enters and introduces himself and each character in the opera, including Kaiser Overall, who has shut himself away from his people throughout a fifteen year war.

In the first scene, Death and Harlekin lament the changes that the modern life has brought each of them. People have lost their ability to laugh, so Harlekin has no audience. Death remembers the good old days, when soldiers and rulers respected him. The Drummer Girl arrives with a new proclamation from the Kaiser: a declaration of total war - and attempts to bully Death into leading the charge. Death is infuriated and decides to go on strike.

In the second scene, the Kaiser sits in his office, managing his campaign over the telephone. He hears of his own troops under siege, and of towns being destroyed. Methodical in his destruction, he asks about one particular enemy, who has been hung, but who can't seem to die. Gradually, he becomes aware of a mysterious change: no one is able to die. Though completely bewildered, he attempts to take credit for this.

In the third scene, a soldier and a young girl meet on the battlefield. The terrified girl has only known war. The soldier is full of compassion, and will not kill her. The Drummer Girl attempts to seduce the soldier back to the fight. But the soldier and the girl have found a new possibility: hope and love.

In the fourth scene, the Kaiser becomes increasingly unnerved by the reports of chaos and suffering. Harlekin reminds the world of the lost simplicity of childhood; the Drummer Girl vows to keep the Kaiser's terrible deeds a secret - and breaks down. The Kaiser and Death meet. The Kaiser asks Death to resume his work; Death agrees on one condition - that the Kaiser will be the first to die. Realizing that this represents the only hope for humanity, the Kaiser agrees.

PROGRAM NOTE

To some, the life of composer Viktor Ullmann was one of unfulfilled promise. Born in Teschen, Austria in 1898, and raised in Vienna, Ullmann initially pursued a comprehensive study of history, literature, philosophy and music. After serving in the First World War, he returned to Vienna to focus on composition. He was accepted as a student by Schoenberg and quickly found his way into the periphery of this elite circle. Through the influence of Zemlinsky, he found work as an opera coach at the Deutsches Theater in Prague. He conducted small choral societies, and rose to the post of music director at an opera company in the small town of Aussig. But his appointment lasted only one season; Ullmann's insistence on programming modern music proved to be too much for his conservative audience. He spent the next few years travelling between Switzerland, Germany and the Czech Republic. His interest in the work of Rudolf Steiner led to a job in the Anthroposophical Society bookstore in Stuttgart from 1931 to 1933. After Hitler's rise to power, the bookstore was shuttered, and Ullmann returned to Prague, cobbling together a meager living as a teacher and freelance music critic.

Ullmann was transported to the concentration camp Terezin in September, 1942. Terezin served a dual purpose: it was intended as a transit camp for Jews from Central Europe. It was also designed to deflect attention from the reality of the Final Solution. The prisoners in the camp were allowed a certain degree of self-governance by the Nazis; and cultural events were organized regularly. Upon his arrival, Ullmann was appointed the camp's official music critic, a relatively easy task. For the first time in his life, he was able to concentrate on composing. In the span of two years, Ullmann was able to complete several piano sonatas, a string quartet, some songs and the opera *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*.

That Ullmann was able to produce so many works at such a high artistic level in such circumstances was a testament to his deep spiritual resolve. In his diary, we find the following entry: "By no means did we sit weeping on the banks of the waters of Babylon...our endeavor with respect to art was commensurate with our will to live." He took his inspiration from Goethe ("To live in the moment is to live in eternity") although he surely was aware of how fragile that moment was.

It is at this point that the history of *Der Kaiser Von Atlantis* becomes more difficult to trace. We know that Ullmann collaborated with Peter Klein, a poet interred in the camp. Ullmann wrote for the resources that he had. We can speculate about the range of instruments he had available at his disposal (his unusual orchestration includes a saxophone, banjo, harpsichord and harmonium). We can only assume that there were a number of well-trained opera singers on hand, able to execute a demanding score. What we know for a fact is that during rehearsals, an S.S. officer happened by and called everything to a halt. Ullmann and his family were not heard from again, but somehow the manuscript of the score survived.

What did the officer hear? Thinly veiled references to the atrocities of the Nazi regime are present throughout the score. Kaiser Overall's proclamation of all-out holy war throughout his kingdom is set to a minor-key version of the German National Anthem "Deutschland über Alles." That the insanity of war has driven Death to go on strike and that a strange suspension of the natural order of life is the only way to unseat the Kaiser's power was surely an infuriating and incendiary statement.

But there are so many more messages that Ullmann has embedded in this astonishing work. From the very outset, we hear Death and Harlekin lamenting their grey existence, in a world that has no place for laughter or ritual. The Kaiser's willful disregard of human suffering, reducing everything to a quantifiable victory, and the Drummer Girl's ferocious and predatory behavior are terrifying portraits of a society gone mad. But there are other moments of heart stopping beauty in which the characters dare to hope. They turn to love to light their lives.

Der Kaiser von Atlantis was reconstructed from the surviving manuscript and source materials by musicologists Henning Brauel and Andreas Krause. The work had its premiere at the Netherlands Opera in 1975, almost thirty years after it was written. Whether or not it fulfills the composer's vision is not something we are able to know, but perhaps it is beside the point. *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* is a miracle. Surely Ullmann knew the risks involved. But he chose to affirm his life through art. The message that he shares against all odds is one we ought heed: never to forget.

- Susan Narucki

kallisti

Susan Narucki, artistic director

kallisti is dedicated to presenting modern music for voice in an intimate setting. Established in 2009 by soprano Susan Narucki, its singers are drawn from the graduate program in Contemporary Music Performance at UC San Diego in collaboration with distinguished guest artists.

kallisti made its debut in May 2010, presenting the West Coast premiere of Pascal Dusapin's chamber opera *To Be Sung* in the Experimental Theatre at Conrad Prebys Music Center. Recent projects included Instant Operas, world premieres of six fifteen-minute operas; and *a sound, vast and summerlike*, an original music-theater production juxtaposing concert works of Eric Satie and Morton Feldman.

During the 2011-12 season, kallisti performed Steve Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians*, with Bang on a Can at Disney Hall, The Pierrot Project: Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* alongside four world

premiere companion pieces by composers Paul Hembree, Aaron Helgeson, Andrew Allen and Yeung-Ping Chen, and Viktor Ullmann's *Der Kaiser Von Atlantis* conducted by Steven Schick. Future projects include the world premiere of Anthony Davis' chamber opera *Lear on the Second Floor*.

Soprano Tiffany Du Mouchelle (Der Trommler) is well known for her musical versatility, electric stage presence and exceptional dramatic sensibilities. She is most recognized for her fearlessness in exploring new and challenging repertoire, featuring over 20 different languages (including: Arabic, Japanese, Mian, Russian, and Swedish. In November 2006 she made her Lincoln Center debut as a soloist at Alice Tully Hall, performing *Shadowinower* and *Black Anemones* by Joseph Schwantner, with the Mannes Orchestra under the baton of Maestro David Hayes, as the grand-prize winner of the Mannes College Concerto Competition. As a concert artist, her broad spectrum of repertoire includes: Baroque cantatas; new music premiers; Art Song by such composers as Rachmaninoff, Strauss, Ravel, and Bellini; folk songs from around the world; musical theater ballads; cabaret theater works; and opera arias. Her performances span the globe from NYC to California, Egypt, Iceland, and Papua New Guinea. She is currently a DMA candidate at UC San Diego in the studio of Susan Narucki.

Gaeun Kim (Scenic Designer) is a UC San Diego third-year MFA Scenic designer. Originally from Korea, she holds a BFA in Scenography and Production design from Sangmyung University in Korea. UC San Diego credits: Dance Theatre - *Live in the Wake* (2012), Dance Theatre - *Rest is Silence* (2012), *The Storm* (2011), *Small Prophecies* (BNPF 2011), *Salamander Leviathan* (BNPF 2011), *Kasimir & Karoline* (2010), *New Directions* (2010), *Phantom Band* (BNPF 2010), and *Winter Works* (2010). ASD credit: *Milk Like Sugar*, *The Revenger's Tragedy*, *La Mandragola*, and *House of Bernarda Alba*. Other SD credits: *Thistle* (2012) (La MaMa, NYC), *Dido and Aeneas* (2011) (Rancho Santa Fe Art Center, SD).

Bonnie Lander (Bubikopf) is a vocalist who specializes in the performance and presentation of contemporary music. She has collaborated with many composers, improvisers, computer musicians, jazz musicians, rock musicians, and classical musicians with the belief that no one genre can be responsible for the growth and forward motion of amazing new music. She is a founding member of Baltimore-based chamber group Rhymes With Opera - whose mission is centered on the commission and premiere of new vocal repertoire from young, emerging composers. Currently a DMA candidate at UC San Diego in the studio of Susan Narucki, Bonnie has also received an MM and a GPD at Peabody Institute for Voice and Computer Music Performance studying under Phyllis Bryn-Julson and Dr. McGregor Boyle, as well as a BM in voice from the University of Miami Frost School of Music in the studio of Dr. Esther-Jane Hardenbergh. She is the only graduate who has twice received the Phyllis Bryn-Julson Award for the Commitment to and Performance of 20th/21st Century Music at the Peabody Institute.

Bass-baritone **Philip Larson** (Der Tod) studied at the University of Illinois and received a degree in vocal performance. He was a founding member of the Extended Vocal Techniques Ensemble, one of the first groups dedicated to the performance of vocal music featuring extended techniques. In 1977 Larson, with Edwin Harkins, founded [THE], a composing/performing duo that performed at international festivals and collaborated with John Cage, Toru Takemitsu, Anthony Braxton and media artist Vibeke Sorenson. As a concert soloist, Larson has appeared with the Ensemble Intercontemporain, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Handel and Haydn Society, Metropolitan Chamber Orchestra, red fish blue fish percussion ensemble, and Speculum Musicae under the direction of such conductors as David Atherton, James Levine, and David Robertson. Larson is Professor of Music at the University of California San Diego.

Susan Narucki (Producer/Stage Director) has appeared as a soloist with conductors James Levine, Pierre Boulez, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Michael Tilson Thomas, Reinbert de Leeuw and Oliver Knussen, with the Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, MET Chamber Ensemble, Netherlands Opera, on the Great Performers Series at Lincoln Center, and at Carnegie Hall. Her extensive discography includes a Grammy award for George Crumb's *Starchild* and a Grammy nomination (Best Classical Vocal Performance) for Carter's *Tempo e Tempi*, both on Bridge Records. Ms. Narucki was appointed Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego in 2008. In 2009, she formed the ensemble kallisti, whose mission includes presenting chamber opera and modern works for voice in an intimate setting.

Orli Nativ (Costume Design) is a second year Costume Design MFA student at UC San Diego. UCSD Credits: *June Moon*, winterWORKS 2012 (*You May Be Tempted to Cancel*), *The Machine Stops* (Collaborator), *Small Prophecies* (BNPF 2011), *The Threepenny Opera* (ACD), *Kasimir & Karoline* (ACD). New York credits include: *Until We Find Each Other* (Midtown International Theatre Festival), *Tartuffe* (Beyond the Walls Productions) and Spring EATFest 2010 (Emerging Artist Theatre). She also designs for burlesque, and her millinery and wardrobe design work has been seen in the New York Times *Style* section, Metromix.com and *TimeOut New York* online. She holds a BA in history, costume design and imaginary anthropology from Hampshire College.

Nicholas J. Patin (Lighting Design) has degrees in History and Theater from the University of California, San Diego. He has served as lighting designer for kallisti chamber opera projects since 2009. He wishes to extend his thanks to the fabulous production team and crew at the Department of Music, and we wish to extend our everlasting gratitude to him for his dedication and outstanding artistry.

Baritone **Ryan Reithmeier** (Die Lautsprecher) has emerged as a versatile singer-actor, he consistently performs in a variety of styles and genres that include oratorio, opera, musical theatre, and recital. He recently won the Southern California round of the NATSAA 2012 competition and

is a two-time winner of the prestigious Beverly Hills Consortium Auditions. Recent and upcoming guest appearances have included those with the La Mirada Symphony, Pacific Symphony's Rising Superstars Concert, Manhattan Beach Previews, Classical Encounters of Orange County, Sundays at 2 (Rolling Hills), Operetta Archives, Hemet Community Concert Series, Opera San Luis Obispo, Pacific Opera Project, and the St. John's Cantata Vespers (Orange). Ryan holds degrees from Concordia College in Moorhead, MN and California State University, Fullerton with further training with OperaWorks and CoOPERAtive.

Percussionist, conductor, and author **Steven Schick** (Music Director) was born in Iowa and raised in a farming family. For thirty-five years he has championed contemporary music by commissioning and premiering more than one hundred-fifty new works. He was the founding percussionist of the Bang on a Can All-Stars (1992-2002) and served as Artistic Director of the Centre International de Percussion de Genève (2000-2005). Schick is founder and Artistic Director of the percussion group, "red fish blue fish." Currently he is Music Director of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus and Artistic Director of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. In 2012 he became the first Artist-in-Residence with the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). He also maintains a lively schedule of guest conducting including appearances with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the Utah Symphony Nova Series. Schick founded and is currently Artistic Director of "Roots and Rhizomes," a summer course on contemporary percussion music held at the Banff Centre for the Arts. Among his acclaimed publications are a book, *The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams*, and numerous recordings of contemporary percussion music including a 3 CD set of the complete percussion music of Iannis Xenakis (Mode). Steven Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego.

Tenor **Gerald Seminatore** (Ein Soldat) pursued advanced musical training at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where he earned both the Master of Music and DMA degrees. He was an apprentice artist with the Santa Fe Opera, and further American operatic engagements followed at the Glimmerglass, Chautauqua, West Bay, Oakland, and Dayton opera companies. Gerald made his European debut at England's Aldeburgh Festival, and was a member of the ensemble at Germany's Dortmund Opera, with further appearances at the Frankfurt am Main Opera, Kaiserslautern's Pfalztheater, and the Bremen Opera. He has appeared frequently in concert works with orchestras in the United States, and performed myriad song recitals in a variety of venues. Gerald's singing has been recognized by the MacAllister Foundation for Opera Singers, the Metropolitan Opera National Council, and the Oratorio Society of New York. He is in demand as a master class teacher and performance coach, and he currently teaches at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California.

Soprano **Alice Teyssier** (Harlekin) is emerging as a young ambassador for under-represented repertoire with a commitment to both early and new music. She is a regular performer on the his-

toric Monday Evening Concerts series in Los Angeles and has collaborated with such ensembles as the Talea Ensemble, the Bang on a Can All-Stars, Bach Collegium San Diego, and the Slee Sinfonietta. She is co-founder of the ensemble for early music La Perla Bizzarra, based in Freiburg, Germany. She was recently featured as a soloist with San Diego Symphony Masterworks concert, singing Villa-Lobos and Fauré. Ms. Teyssier completed her Bachelor's and Master's of Music at the Oberlin Conservatory. After finishing a specialization diploma in Strasbourg, France under the guidance of Mario Caroli, she spent two years as a freelance musician in Freiburg, Germany. She is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts at U.C. San Diego, where she studies with soprano Susan Narucki.

Vince B. Vincent (Kaiser Overall) is quite thrilled to be performing at UCSD. Mr. Vincent recently made his debut with New York City's hottest new opera company Opera Moderne. Mr. Vincent debuted in Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari's *Le Donne Curiose* where he performed the role Lelio. Mr. Vincent was last seen in concert at the Luxembourg Cathedral in Paris, France, as Mordecai in *Esther* and The Boy in *The Magic Fish*. Mr. Vincent was Ashmenton in the performance of Anthony Braxton's new opera *Trillium J*. A graduate of Yale Opera Program where he performed the roles of Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Bustamente in *La Navarraise* and Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mr. Vincent will next be a soloist on Opera Moderne's Red Scare concert series and singing the leading role Opera Moderne's original *Opera Burlesque*. In November, Mr. Vincent will revive the role of Kaiser Overall in NYC. Mr. Vincent also serves as Chair of the Arts Department and Music Director at Oakwood Friends School.

SPECIAL THANKS

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HEARTFELT THANKS TO YOU ALL!

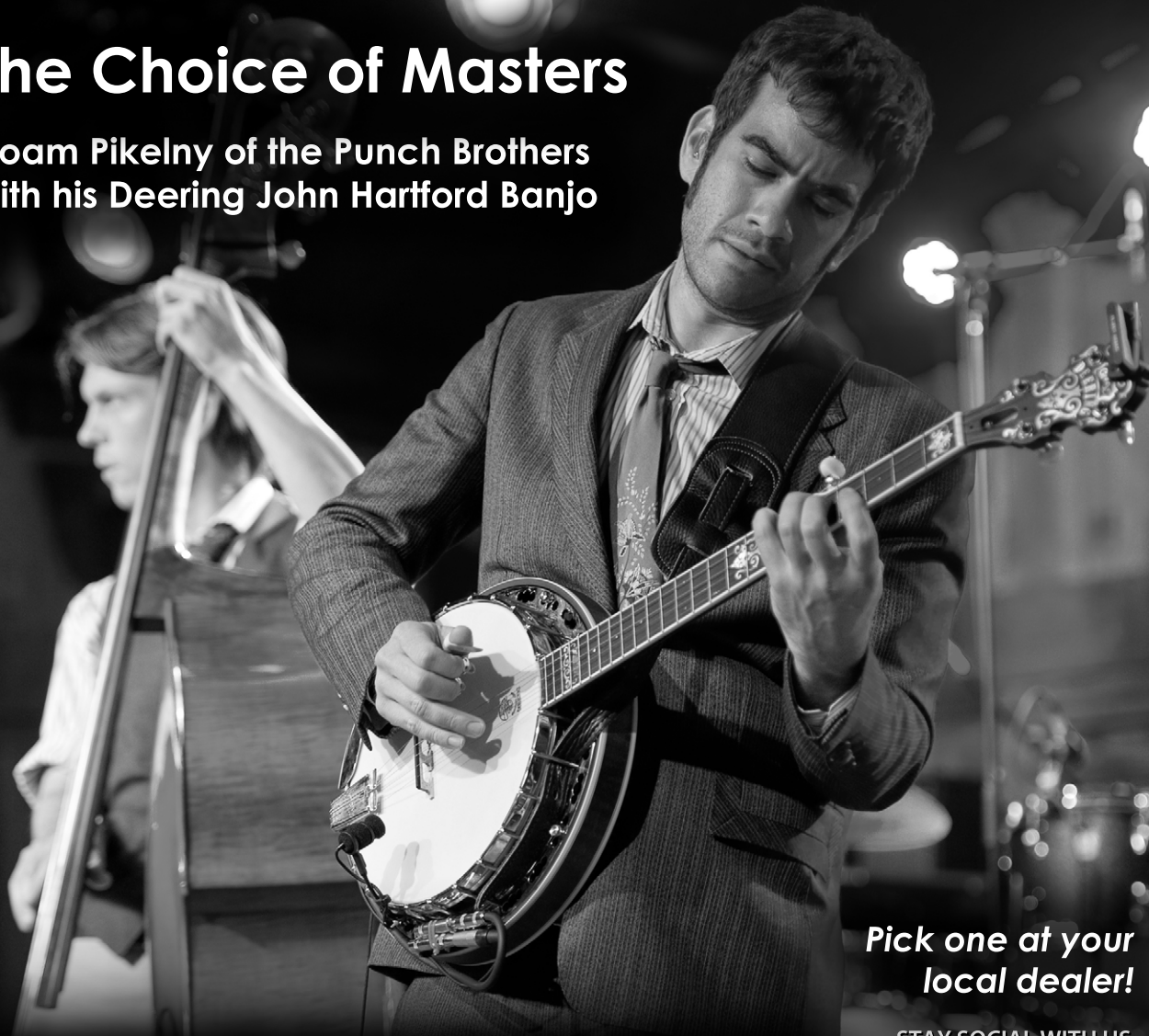
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