

PUBLIC WORKSHOP OF SELECTIONS FROM

UNTIL THE WAR IS OVER

AN OPERA IN ONE ACT

BASED ON H.D.'s *BID ME TO LIVE*

LINDSAY CONRAD AS H.D. (HILDA DOOLITTLE)
STEFAN BARNER AS D.H. LAWRENCE

MUSIC: BETH WIEMANN
LIBRETTO: JENNIFER MOXLEY

DIRECTED BY TOM MIKOTOWICZ
CONDUCTED BY PATRICK VALENTINO



THURSDAY, JUNE 23RD, 2016
7PM PRE-PERFORMANCE LECTURE BY JENNIFER MOXLEY
7:30 PERFORMANCE OF MUSICAL SELECTIONS
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

BLACK BOX THEATRE, SECOND FLOOR
CLASS OF 1944 HALL
SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE, ORONO, ME

LIZ DOWNING, FLUTE
GLEN SARGENT, ALTO SAXOPHONE
JAMES ADAMS, DOUBLE BASS
LAURA ARTESANI, PIANO

BIRDIE SAWYER, ALEX COLON, SOUND AND LIGHTING
DAN BILODEAU, GROUNDPLAN

SYNOPSIS

1917 London. Due to the exigencies of WWI, English writer D.H. Lawrence, his wife*, and a young American artist named Bella* are living with American poet H. D. (Hilda Doolittle) and her husband, Richard Aldington* in their flat in Mecklenburgh Square, London.

*These characters do not appear in the selections to be performed

SCENE ONE

Aldington is away at the front. Hilda and Lawrence, alone in the sitting room of the flat, are preoccupied with their own troubles. Hilda can't stop thinking about the child she lost to miscarriage, or of the fact that a nurse told her not to try to for another until the war is over. Lawrence is angry because the authorities have confiscated his manuscripts and kicked him out of his Cornwall cottage, ostensibly for showing a light, but more likely because his wife is German. The two writers have an assumed intimacy, for they have been corresponding and sending drafts of their work to each other for some time. Hilda has sent Lawrence a copy of her poem "Eurydice." Lawrence has written to her of the "Druid sun-circle" and mystical beauty of the Cornwall landscape in words that "flamed alive" like "blue serpents on the page." Hilda tells Lawrence that her husband has become bellicose since the war and intimates that he's having an affair with Bella.

This is where selections to be performed begin. Lawrence laughs off Hilda's concerns by reassuring her that Aldington will return to her "frozen altars," and reprimands her to "stick to the woman's part" – as if her artistic overstepping has damaged her sexual allure. Impervious to his disparagement, Hilda attempts to appeal to Lawrence as a fellow artist. She remembers that he stuck by her after she lost her child, an act of kindness that makes her believe that he is the only one who can save her. Is Lawrence the Orpheus to her Eurydice? A man who can rescue her from this emotional hell? Lawrence, realizing that she might be in love with him, becomes frustrated by Hilda's intellectual "dream," as well as her refusal to play the "woman's part." He entreats her to "come down to earth," and to "kick over her tiresome house of life."

SCENE TWO (no selections from this scene will be performed)

Aldington is home on leave. It's early morning and he is due to return to the front. He makes tea for Hilda while she's still in bed. He discovers her poem "Eurydice." He accuses her of writing it for Lawrence and critiques the poem's quality. He tells her that he is glad the Lawrences will soon be gone. The couple argues over his infidelity and Hilda's coldness. Aldington tells Hilda he *loves* her but he *desires* Bella. Bella appeals to him in a purely physical way. He would give Bella "a mind," and Hilda "a body." He complains that he never knows what she is thinking. Hilda reminds him that she is mourning the lost child, and that she has spared him her pain. There are "no words to sing of my agony," she says. Aldington gives Hilda his army watch, which is far too big for her wrist. Hilda wants to go with Aldington to the train station, but he refuses her request.

SCENE THREE

Hilda and Bella spend an afternoon drinking vermouth and talking. Bella remembers her time in Paris, when she had an abortion. Now she wants to have Aldington's child. She accuses Hilda of standing between her and Aldington, and of tyrannizing his soul. Hilda admonishes Bella to be careful about their affair, and to hide it from the other tenants. She suggests they use her bed in the main room, and that the decision about the child be left up to Aldington. "He can't have it both ways," Bella responds, "He must decide when he comes back" from the front. Bella then stumbles, drunk, to her upstairs room.

This is where selections to be performed begin. Bella has left the room and Hilda, stricken by the possibility that Aldington might never come back, drifts into a reverie of a happier time. The two are in Paris, on the *Ile de France*. Young and in love, they are playfully being artists and poets together.

SCENE FOUR

Hilda returns and hears, behind the Chinese screen, that Aldington and Bella are in bed together. Lawrence comes into the sitting room and installs himself in an armchair. The lights go down. When the lights come back up, Hilda and Lawrence are alone.

This is where selections to be performed begin. Hilda tells Lawrence that Aldington has agreed to give Bella a child. Lawrence dismisses the gravity of the situation by mocking Bella. Hilda attempts to confess to Lawrence how emotionally and intellectually drawn to him she feels, but he interrupts her by announcing that he and his wife will be leaving for Kent soon. He offers her the cottage in Cornwall and encourages her to go away. Hilda, frustrated, tells Lawrence that

her (feminine) "hell" is no worse than his (masculine) one. Then, desperate for comfort, she risks a physical connection. Lawrence recoils from her touch. Hilda, stunned at first, becomes enraged. She feels like Eurydice after Orpheus has, with a glance, sent her to her second death. She realizes that Lawrence wants her only to be a reflection of his ego. His rejection has cast her back with her dead, and denied her a chance to once again walk among "live souls."

SELECTIONS TO BE PERFORMED:

SCENE 1, "there is no use trying to believe"

LAWRENCE: There is no use trying to believe
That all this war really exists.
It really doesn't matter.
We must go on.

HILDA: Richard enjoys it. Going on about
How "we have the on the run"
Like some boastful Roman.

Oh, but what does it matter.
Something is being severed,
Cut in half. Smashed to bits.

LAWRENCE: Does our languid lily
Nod perilously
near the pit?

HILDA: I wish they would just leave me alone.

LAWRENCE: Is this room be the crucible
Of a cerebral woman?

HILDA: A phantom woman
who cannot feel,
That is what Richard says.
That is what my husband says,
That I cannot feel anything at all.

"Your hands are always so cool,"
he tells me. "Like cold flowers,"
"Hilda with hands like cold flowers."

LAWRENCE: Our languid lily
Does nod perilously.
Don't fret, Richard will return
to your frozen altars.

Remember what I told you:
Stick to the woman's part
Do not try and understand the man's.

HILDA: There has been something between us
A ghost that will not die.
His intermittent light
A ghost that will not die.

I am changed, but Richard is the same.

LAWRENCE: Stick to your woman-consciousness,
You woman's intuitive genius,
You can't deal with both:
Man-is-man, woman-is-woman.

HILDA: So you wrote to me
Of my poem "Eurydice"
"stick to the woman's part."
Stick to the woman's vibration, you said.

LAWRENCE: How can you know what Orpheus feels?

HILDA: But Orpheus was an artist,
A child of eternity
As a woman might be an artist . . .
A child of eternity.

And long ago you wrote to me
that we would go away together
to the place where the angels
come down to earth.

The child was still living
when you touched me.

Richard is the same,
But I am changed.
Things were so different between us
Before the war . . .

LAWRENCE: Perhaps you should take
Our cottage in Cornwall.
You can still see the rocks
Of the sun-circle and the ancient path
Down to the sea . . .

SCENE 1, "so you wrote to me"

HILDA: So you wrote to me
Of these eternities . . .

Your words flamed alive
Blue serpents on the page
The blaze and blue-flame of the sun-shelf.

You suddenly appeared
At the threshold, after my death,
The death of my child
At the threshold
Of my pit of darkness.

You said nothing
But you knew
You, Lawrence,
were the only one
who knew.

Something died that was going to die
It was long ago, I know,
But I am still at war,
And now I am shuttered in.

So you wrote to me
Of these eternities . . .
You words flamed alive
Blue serpents on the page.

I had my crucifixion
I can't go back
I cannot step over my own corpse
You were at the threshold, after my death
You told me that my coronal
Was made of asphodel.

Flowers from the underworld

You, Lawrence,
were the only one
who knew.

So you wrote to me
Of these eternities . . .
You words flamed alive
Blue serpents on the page.

And now I wear a coronal
Of asphodel.
Not even a ghost
With ghost limbs,
Who might walk a moment
In moonlight.

SCENE 1, transition, "my coronal woven"

HILDA: My coronal woven
From the flowers of Dis.

LAWRENCE: *Isis the mystery
Must be in love with me.*

SCENE 1, finale, "Kick over your tiresome house of life"

HILDA: Your genius flames out
From another dimension.

LAWRENCE: You are entangled in your own dream, Hilda
A living spirit
In a living spirit city.
Come away to the place
where the angels come down to earth.

HILDA: Could I be something that is wanted?

LAWRENCE: You are entangled in your own dream, Hilda
A living spirit
In a living spirit city,
A priestess at a frozen altar
You must kick over your tiresome house of life!

Kick over your tiresome house of life!
You are entangled in your own dream
A living spirit
In a living spirit city,
The priestess of a frozen altar
Stick to the woman's consciousness
The intuitive woman-mood is what matters,
What can you know of the man's?

You are entangled in your own dream, Hilda
A living spirit
In a living spirit city,
A priestess at a frozen altar

HILDA: Seek not to wake what is forgotten.
Your genius flames out
In luminous phrases,
Look not back
Go on into the upper land of light.

Touch not your lyre
Seek not to wake what is forgotten.

LAWRENCE: Come with me up to the light.
Kick over your tiresome house of life!

HILDA: Yes, one might be an artist,
A form of pure being,
A child self without sex.

Why can't women write of men
And men of women,
As you do. Your genius
Burning through
This moment . . .

Beyond the never-ending wars
The blaze and blue-flame of the sun-shelf
Not an intermittent flame
But a light that burns always.

LAWRENCE: Kick over your tiresome house of life!

SCENE 3, "If he comes back"

HILDA: If he comes back.
 If he comes back.

I remember the summer pinks
on the *Ile de France*
On the cobble stones
In the shade
By the river.

I sketched the ornamented head
On the edge of the bridge.

You scribbled a poem (whose poem?)
on the back of old envelope.
Singing to passing barges:

"Come and kiss me, pretty sweeting,
journeys end in lovers meeting."

I sketched a stone face
At the bridge's edge.
Blocking it with my outstretched hand,
Just like a real artist.

You wrote a poem (whose poem?)
And sang to the passing barges:

"Come and kiss me, pretty sweeting,
journeys end in lovers meeting."

When I squinted at my pencil
I saw not the stone face
But a definition of space
In which I might exist

I drew a circle with a compass
And put myself inside it.

"Come and kiss me, pretty sweeting,
journeys end in lovers meeting."

There were summer pinks
And a stone face . . .

By the banks of the Seine
In Paris before the war.

I drew a circle with a compass
And put myself inside it.

You, Richard, wrote another man's poem
On the back of an envelope
And dropped it at my feet.

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,"

SCENE 4, "He has decided"

HILDA: He has decided.

LAWRENCE: Who has decided?

HILDA: Aldington.
Bella wants a child.

LAWRENCE: She is suffering from suppressed hysteria.

HILDA: It's as if Bella completes him
In some purely physical way.

LAWRENCE: Bella is a lacquer box.

HILDA: And you, in some emotional-intellectual way complete. . .

LAWRENCE: Frieda and I have found lodgings
A friend has offered us her Kent cottage.

SCENE 4, "What are you looking for"

HILDA: What are you looking for?

"my hell is no worse than yours
though you pass among the flowers and speak
with the spirits above earth."

So, you are going away?

Locked and shuttered. About to part on carnage . . .

"We will go away," you once wrote to me . . .
And that my "Orpheus" was "written in blood for all eternity."

LAWRENCE: It was your "Eurydice."

HILDA: You and I are in another dimension
Starkly separate from this room
Where there is no confusion.

This room is no longer my own
Strange cross-currents have been at work on it.

LAWRENCE: Did you get rid of the Orpheus bit,
Eurydice was enough, the woman's part.

HILDA: Yes, you were right.
You can't light fire on an altar
Unless the altar is there.
Man-is-man, woman-is woman,
You were right about that.

You said I was a living spirit,
But I wasn't living until you wrote to me . . .

LAWRENCE: Why don't you take our cottage.
You see, everything is there.
We'll go up to Kent,
And you can stay at our cottage
In Cornwall.

HILDA: Go away?

LAWRENCE: It would make a difference,
Don't you see that?

HILDA: Why did you turn away?
My hell is no worse than yours,
Though you pass among the flowers
And speak with the spirits of the earth.

SCENE 4, "When I looked back"

LAWRENCE: When I looked back
The light from my face crossed yours
I saw the fire of my own face
Reflected in yours
Your face was a mirror
A light by which to see
A frozen lily.

Do not seek to please me,
Leave me be.
Your face is but a mirror,
A light by which to see.

Do not seek to please me,
Leave me be.
Your face is but a frozen lily,
a mirror, a light
by which to see.

SCENE 4, "So you have swept me"

HILDA: So you have swept me back,
I who could have walked with the live souls
Above the earth,
I who could have slept among the live flowers
At last;

So you have swept me back,
Where dead lichens drip
Dead cinders upon moss of ash;

I who could have walked with live souls
And slept among the live flowers
Have been swept back
Where dead lichens drip
Dead cinders upon moss of ash;

So for your arrogance
I am broken at last,
Where dead lichens drip
Dead cinders upon moss of ash.

SCENE 4, end

LAWRENCE: When I looked back
The light from my face crossed yours.

I heard you singing in a dream
And woke to find my face wet with tears.

THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

PATRICK VALENTINO – CONDUCTOR

Patrick Valentino's conducting has been called "stirring," "original" and "achieving wonderful results from the orchestra." He currently serves as Artistic Director of the Boston New Music Initiative, an innovative organization that pairs the traditional concert season of a professional performing ensemble with the networking possibilities of an international collective of composers and performers. He is also the Music Director at St. Mary Star of the Sea Parish, where he leads the renowned choir from the newly restored 1915 Hook-Hastings organ, and is the Founder and Director of the Stella Concert Series.

Patrick has served as Assistant Conductor for the Ithaca College Orchestras, and made his operatic conducting debut in 2013 in Puccini's *Suor Angelica*. He has conducted the Monmouth Symphony, Cornell Symphony Orchestra, Symphony NOVA, the Mihail Jora Philharmonic, Massive Brass, the Tempus Chamber Orchestra, and the St. Petersburg Music Society, among others. He has served as Assistant Conductor for the Ithaca College orchestras, the Westfield Symphony and Symphony NOVA, and worked as production manager for Boston Musica Viva, the oldest new music group in Boston.

Recent premieres include his first opera *Monuments Men*, as well as *An American Fanfare*, which was selected for the opening dedication concert of Leshowitz Hall at the John J. Cali School of Music. His music has been performed by the Nashua Symphony, Monmouth Symphony, Central New Jersey Symphony, Oak Ridge Community Orchestra, the Brevard Music Center, Ariel String Quartet, and the brass ensembles of the Moscow Conservatory, among others. Patrick holds degrees from Ithaca College, New England Conservatory, Montclair State University, and has studied at the Moscow Conservatory in Russia.

TOM MIKOTOWICZ –DIRECTOR

Tom Mikotowicz is professor of theatre at UMaine and has staged many productions in professional, educational, and community theatres throughout the country. His eclectic productions include Euripedes' *The Women of Troy*, Aristophanes' *The Birds*, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *The Tempest*, Gogol's *Marriage*, Brecht/Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, Lapine/Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, Kander/Ebb's *Chicago*, Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, Mozart/Da Ponte's *The Marriage of Figaro*, and Sater/Sheik's *Spring Awakening*, which won the university/college division Moss Hart Award from the New England Theatre Conference. He has also written and directed several industrial videos for NYU and NBC television

in Manhattan. His new play, *The Duke of Saddle River* had a reading at the La Mama Theatre in NYC last year. In addition, he has acted in many productions, including Shakespeare, however he was most recently seen in *One Blue Tarp* at the Penobscot Theatre and in the trailer for a proposed Public Television series, *Gray Ledges*. In addition, he has published extensively on performance, including two books, essays in several books, and journal articles, as well as serving as Theatre in Review Editor of the *New England Theatre Journal*.

LINDSAY CONRAD – SOPRANO

Lyric soprano Lindsay Conrad is an emerging young artist, described by the Boston Globe as a “breathtakingly solid soprano that soars and trills,” and by the Boston Phoenix as possessing “a powerful, bright, three-dimensional tone.” She is quickly becoming a main-stay on Boston stages, with companies such as Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Boston Midsummer Opera, Monadnock Music Festival, Odyssey Opera, New Repertory Theatre, OperaHub, Boston Opera Collaborative and Boston Classical Orchestra. Recent performances include Electra in *Idomeneo*, Musetta in *La Bohème*, Sharon in *Masterclass*, Muffy in John J. King’s award winning re-working of *Der Vampyr*, and Mabrouka in the Boston premiere of Mohammed Fairouz’s *Sumeida’s Song*.

Ms. Conrad’s has been featured as the soprano soloist in Messiah, Lord Nelson Mass, Saint-Saën’s Oratorio de Noël and Ein Deutches Requiem around the Boston and New England area. She has been featured in recordings with Odyssey Opera and Boston Modern Orchestra Project, including *Four Saints in Three Acts*, *A Midsummer Marriage* and the upcoming *A Fisherman and His Wife*. In her native Ohio, Ms. Conrad was a featured soloist in the Lord of the Rings Symphony Experience premiere conducted by Howard Shore and Video Games Live.

More at www.lindsaymconrad.com

STEFAN BARNER – TENOR

Stefan Barner is a “vocal standout, with a vibrancy of tone and an exciting delivery that serve notice that he is a gifted lyric tenor with a big future ahead.” Recently finishing his second year as a Studio Artist with Tulsa Opera, Barner played both leading and comprimario roles in Tulsa’s mainstage productions including a “marvelous, heartbreaking” portrayal of Frank Shallard in Aldridge’s *Elmer Gantry*. Barner also sang the title role of Jay Gatsby in Tulsa Opera Studio’s production of Harbison’s *The Great Gatsby*. Highlights for 2015 include a return to Tulsa Opera as Tybalt in *Romeo et Juliette* and a role and company debut as Monostatos in Salt Marsh Opera’s touring production of *The Magic Flute*. Always a proponent for contemporary works, Mr. Barner returned to Nashville Opera in a production of Philip Glass’ *Hydrogen Jukebox*. In 2016 Barner will sing Steve

Hubbel in *A Streetcar Named Desire* with Tulsa Opera, Rudolph in *Evangeline*, or *The Belle of Arcadia* with The Longfellow Chorus, and make a company debut with with Virginia Opera singing Beppe in *I Pagliacci* and Brother in Kurt Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins*.

Stefan Barner has previously performed with a number of opera companies across the United States and abroad including Nashville Opera, Knoxville Opera, Opera Columbus, Glimmerglass Opera, Greater Worcester Opera, Boston Midsummer Opera, Monadnock Music Festival, and Des Moines Metro Opera. Notable international performances include a return to the Glimmerglass Festival in 2012 as Jacey Squires in the company's touring production of Meredith Wilson's *The Music Man* performing at the Royal Opera House in Muscat, Oman. Barner made his international debut in 2009 singing B. F. Pinkerton in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* with La Musica Lirica in Novafeltria, Italy.

A native of Oskaloosa, Iowa, Barner has been selected numerous times as a finalist in both the NATS and MTNA Iowa competitions. He was awarded second place in the Baru Atlanta Competition in 2009, and in 2010 was a winner at the Metropolitan National Council Auditions, East Tennessee district. He currently resides in Boston, Massachusetts and studies with Dr. Rebecca Folsom.

BETH WIEMANN – COMPOSER

Beth Wiemann was raised in Burlington, VT. She studied composition and clarinet at Oberlin College and received her PhD in theory and composition from Princeton University. Her works have been performed in New York, Boston, Houston, San Francisco, Washington DC, the Dartington Festival (UK), the "Spring in Havana 2000 Festival" (Cuba), and elsewhere by the ensembles Continuum, Parnassus, Earplay, ALEA III, singers Paul Hillier, Susan Narucki, Di-Anna Fortunato and others. Her compositions have won awards from the Opera Vista Chamber Opera Competition, the Orvis Foundation, Copland House, the Colorado New Music Festival, American Women Composers, and Marimolin as well as various arts councils. A CD of Wiemann's music, *Why Performers Wear Black*, was released on Albany Records in 2004. Songs of hers appear currently on the Capstone, innova and Americus record labels.

JENNIFER MOXLEY – LIBRETTIST

Jennifer Moxley's poems combine lyric and innovative looks at daily life while interrogating societal comfort. Reviewing her book *Clampdown* for the *Nation*, Ange Mlinko noted, "Moxley's ethical anxieties emanate from a central unease, unease at home, and ripple out to touch nation, earth and cosmos. But . . . Moxley does not sublimate her psychology and social perspective." Moxley studied literature and writing at UC San Diego and the University of Rhode Island and

received her M. F. A. from Brown University. She is the author of six books of poetry, a book of essays, and a memoir. In addition, she has translated three books from the French. Her poems have been included in two Norton Anthologies, *Postmodern American Poetry* and *American Hybrid*. Her book *The Sense Record* (2002) was picked as one of the five best poetry books of the year by both *Stride* magazine (UK) and *Small Press Traffic* (US). Her poem "Behind the Orbits" was included by Robert Creeley in *The Best American Poetry 2002*. In 2005 she won the Lynda Hull Poetry Award from *Denver Quarterly*, and in 2015 her book *The Open Secret* was awarded the Poetry Society of America's William Carlos Williams award and was a finalist for the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award.

Moxley has been invited to perform her poems at many prestigious national venues, including the Poetry Project in NYC, the Miami International Book Fair, the Beinecke Library at Yale, Princeton, University of Chicago, University of Georgia, Bard College, and elsewhere. She has also given readings in Paris and Cambridge, UK. Her work has been translated into several languages, including French, Spanish, and Norwegian.



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