



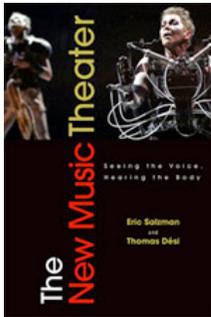
CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY OPERA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Center for Contemporary Opera Announces New Book by Artistic Director Eric Salzman plus *New Music Theater Colloquium* December 10



October 31, 2008 New York NY □ **THE NEW MUSIC THEATER: *Hearing the Body, Seeing the Voice*** □ the first comprehensive account in English of modern music theater, written by two of the leading practitioners in the field, Eric Salzman and Thomas Dési □ will be published November 9, 2008 by Oxford University Press.

A free public colloquium in honor of the new book will bring together a distinguished panel of experts to discuss the new music-theater movement on **Wednesday, December 10, 8pm** at the Center for Contemporary Opera's new home **The Cell, 338 West 23rd Street, New York City.**

The New Music Theater: Hearing the Body, Seeing the Voice is the first comprehensive attempt in English to cover this still-emerging art form in its widest range. The book provides a wealth of examples and descriptions not only of the works themselves, but the concepts, ideas and trends that have defined what may be the most vital performance art form of the post-modern world.

Authors Salzman and Dési consider the subject of music theatre from a social as well as artistic point of view, exploring how theatre works in culture, and how music works in the theatre. Alternatives to grand opera and the popular musical can be traced at least as far back as the 1912 premiere of Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire." Yet this ongoing history has never been properly sorted out, its complex ideas and philosophy as well as musical and theatrical achievements never brought fully to light.

Illuminating their discussion with illustrations from current artists and their works, ***The New Music Theater*** both describes where we have been and points the way to the future of this all-encompassing art form.

About the Authors

Composer/writer Eric Salzman, and Center for Contemporary Opera Artistic Director, is one of the founders of the new music theater, the creator or co-creator of more than two-dozen music-theater pieces for stage, recordings and media and a worldwide figure in the field. His work is innovative, involving new vocal techniques and electronic extensions, pluralistic styles and forms, as well as new media technologies.

His extensive writings include the first survey in English of the new music theater, *Twentieth Century Music*, a well-known book on 20th century music and writings on a wide variety of artistic and natural history subjects. **Thomas Dési** is an Austrian composer, director, writer and Artistic Director of Zoon Music Theater in Vienna.

"**THE NEW MUSIC THEATER: Hearing the Body, Seeing the Voice**" can be ordered directly from Eric Salzman's website www.ericshalzman.com

Related Free Public Event

Wednesday, December 10, 8pm

New Music Theater Colloquium

What is new music theater? Is it the same as opera or an alternative to it? Are we talking about musicals or something radically different?

Eric Salzman, CCO's artistic director and a long-time advocate of new forms of music theater, and Thomas Dési, Viennese composer and director welcome a distinguished panel of critics and creators to discuss the topic and throw it open to the audience for a Q & A, including:

Rinde Eckert – finalist, 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Drama; writer, composer, performer, director Rinde began writing librettos for Paul Dresher (*Pioneer, Power Failure, Slow Fire, Ravenshead*). Then wrote music for choreographers Margaret Jenkins and Sarah Shelton Mann. Recent writing credits include *Horizon* (2007-08 Drama Desk Nominations: Best Play and Best Director, Lucille Lortel Award: "Unique Theatrical Experience"); *Orpheus X* (Pulitzer Prize nomination); *Highway Ulysses* and *Four Songs Lost in a Wall* (The American Academy of Arts and Letters 2005 Marc Blitzstein Award); *And God Created Great Whales* (OBIE Award: Best Performance, Drama Desk Nomination: "Unique Theatrical Experience"); and the two, one-act plays *An Idiot Divine*. Eckert's work for the theater has been produced by American Repertory Theatre, The Foundry Theatre, Center Stage in Baltimore, Culture Project, Dobama Theatre Company and Berkeley Repertory Theater. Eckert gave the American premiere of Salzman's *Wolfman Prayer* in a CCO production at the Hamptons Music Festival in 2003.

Diane Wondisford –The New School for Drama Program Co-Director

Diane has worked with Music-Theatre Group, a pioneer organization in commissioning, developing, and producing innovative works combining music, theater, dance, and the visual arts, for 26 years. She has produced alone or with Lyn Austin, MTG's founder, more than 80 new works including Diedre Murray and Cornelius Eady's *Running Man*, finalist for the Pulitzer Prize; and Tan Dun and Paul Griffith's *Marco Polo*, winner of the Grawemeyer Award. Wondisford is vice chair of the OPERA America Board and is also a board member of ART/NY, and a former board member and chair of the American Arts Alliance.

Grethe Holby – Producer, Director, Dramaturge

Grethe has directed world premieres of new operas by many of today's most vibrant and interesting composers, working with Lisa Bielawa, Eve Beglarian & Kitty Brazelton (*Electric Ordo Virtutum*, Lincoln Center Festival), Beglarian & Phil Kline (*Bilitis Project*, Flynn Center), Vincent Persichetti (*The Sibyl*, Pennsylvania Opera Theater), Connie Beckley, Vivian Fine, Richard Peaslee, and Ben Yarmolinsky (American Opera Projects), Joan La Barbara (*Woolfsong*, Juilliard Electric Ensemble, Issue Project) and upcoming Tania Leon and Eric Salzman; choreographed premieres by composers Leonard Bernstein (*A Quiet Place*, Kennedy Center, Houston Grand Opera, La Scala), Gian Carlo Menotti (*Bride from Pluto*, Kennedy Center), and Lou Reed (*Metal Machine Music*, The Kitchen). She has created new productions of Gounod's *Faust* (Opera Co. of

Philadelphia & PBS), Humperdinck's *Hansel & Gretel* and Verdi's *Rigoletto* (Anchorage Opera), Hayden's *The Apothecary* (Wolftrap Opera - in her own original version and translation).

Steven Osgood, Conductor

Steven was Artistic Director of American Opera Projects, (2001-08) a company dedicated to the development and production of new operatic works. With AOP he conducted the world premieres of Paula Kimper's *Patience and Sarah* at the 1998 Lincoln Center Festival, and Janice Hamer's *Lost Childhood* at the International Vocal Arts Institute in Tel Aviv in 2007. He also created the company's nationally recognized Composers and the Voice Workshop Series, which is now in its fifth season. Mr. Osgood led Manhattan School of Music's production of Lee Hoiby's rarely heard *A Month in the Country*, available on Albany Records.

Copies of their new book ***THE NEW MUSIC THEATER: Hearing the Body, Seeing the Voice*** will be available for inspection and purchase at the December 10th event. **Co-sponsored by CCO, The Cell and Oxford University Press. FOR MORE INFORMATION www.conopera.org**

What they are saying about *The New Music Theater*

"As an artist who has worked between the cracks of art forms since the 1960's, I applaud Salzman and Dési for providing a fresh and inclusive survey of the important and evolving field of new music theater—a form that continues to expand our perception of what is possible in art that lives and breathes." —Meredith Monk

"The New Music Theater traces the complicated evolution of many artistic traditions and leads to a deeper understanding of the state of new music theater today. The authors infuse their analysis with perspective that is certain to provoke debate—as well as a desire to learn more about the context and direction of new creation in the realm of singing theater." —Marc Scorca, President and CEO, Opera America

"A very good read of contemporary music history that has been missing until now. Bravo!"
—Michel Rostain, Stage Director, Librettist and Director, Scène Nationale de Quimper

"This valuable book appears like Orpheus to guide the reader through the land of that complex and unpredictable reality which is the music theater of our time. This book tells us about music theater not just as a show, but as a way of bringing onto the stage what the real world cannot show us" —Giorgio Battistelli, composer-in-residence at the Düsseldorf Opera and music director, Arena di Verona

Some Recent Work by Eric Salzman:

The True Last Words of Dutch Schultz (with Valeria Vasilevski), a gangster opera based the testament of the dying mobster, was premiered in The Netherlands and toured in Europe and first performed here in a concert version by Victoria Bond's Cutting Edge. The first U.S. production was presented by the Center for Contemporary Opera at Symphony Space's Wall-to-Wall Opera in 2007 with Dirk Weiler as Dutch and Grethe Holby directing.

Wolfman Prayer (La Prière du Loup) (with Michel Rostain) was commissioned by Un Théâtre pour la musique and premiered at the Théâtre du Cornouaille in France. The American premiere, with Rinde Eckert as Wolfman, was given by the Center for Contemporary Opera in 2003.

Jukebox in the Tavern of Love_(with Valeria Vasilevski) is a commission for a modern madrigal comedy from the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble which gave its premiere at The Flea Theater in downtown New York City in the spring of 2008. It will return later this season and also come out as a CD and a DVD.

La Bonne Ame du Setchuan (*The Good Person of Sezchuan*) music for a French translation of the Bertolt Brecht play, was performed by the Théâtre du Trident in Québec in 2004, in a production directed by Antoine Laprise. The premiere of a Suite for mezzo, two violins and accordion taken from this work is scheduled for performance this spring.

Cassandra (with Eva Salzman) is an updated telling of the Greek myth created for singer and performance artist Kristin Norderval accompanying herself on piano and computer. She has performed the work in Oslo, Vienna and Düsseldorf.

The Center for Contemporary Opera is a performing arts organization devoted to the development and production of new opera and music theater works and, working with a community of artists and a committed public, to the development and encouragement of a new operatic and music-theater culture in this country.

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