



Chelsea  
Opera  
presents

The  
Parting

BY TOM CIPULLO | LIBRETTO BY DAVID MASON

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2022 - 8:00 PM

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2022 - 2:00 PM

WEST  
END  
THEATRE

NEW YORK CITY PREMIERE

# the Parting

**COMPOSER: TOM CIPULLO | LIBRETTIST: DAVID MASON**

Miklós Radnóti ..... Peter Kendall Clark  
Fanni Gyarmati ..... Laura Dixon Strickling  
Death ..... Sarah Heltzel

Benjamin Grow - Music Director/Conductor  
Jestin Pieper – Assistant Music Director/Assistant Conductor

## **CHAMBER ENSEMBLE**

Ben Russell - Violin    Ben Finland - Clarinet  
Caleb van der Swaagh - Cello    Isabel Lepanto-Gleicher - Flute  
Piano: Jestin Pieper

## **PRODUCTION TEAM**

Leonarda Priore - Producer/Properties Design  
Garrett August Heater - Stage Director/Set Design  
Benjamin Grow - Music Director/Conductor  
Jestin Pieper - Pianist/Assistant Music Director  
Andrew Hughes - Lighting Design  
Susan Berger - Costume Design  
Franco Pedicini - Dramaturg  
Deniz Khateri - Animation  
Kayla Denney - Stage Manager  
Klay Enos - Business & Grants Manager/Poster Design

Special thanks to all that have dedicated their time and efforts to this production.

Note: *The Parting* was commissioned by Music of Remembrance and was premiered on May 19, 2019 at Benaroya Hall, Seattle, WA.

**In case of emergency please follow exit signs.**

## THE ARTISTS



**PETER KENDALL CLARK** (*baritone*) most recently appeared as Fredrik in *A Little Night Music* with Union Avenue Opera and Ermano in the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon/Michael Korie's *The Garden Of The Finzi-Continis* with New York City Opera and The National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene. Other productions with NYCO: Ted Rosenthal's *Dear Erich, Candide* directed by Harold Prince, Peter Eötvös' *Angels in America*,

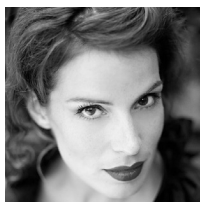
Charles Wuorinen's *Brokeback Mountain*, and Iain Bell/Mark Campbell's *Stonewall*. Previously at Chelsea Opera: Older Thompson in Cipullo's *Glory Denied*, Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and John Adams in *A Distant Love*. Companies: Caramoor Opera, Anchorage Opera, Opera on the James, Charlottesville Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Virginia Opera, St. Petersburg Opera, Syracuse Opera and Skylight Music Theatre. Roles: *Sweeney Todd*, Henry Higgins; *King Arthur*, MacHeath; Count Almaviva, and Eugene Onegin. Since May of 2020 he has given over 250 outdoor concerts in Brooklyn NYC in the series "Songs From The Ledge" which is *The New York Post* has called "the hottest ticket in town." As the "Brownstone Baritone," he has been seen on ABC News, CBS Inside Edition, Only Good Heroes for OGTV, Voice Of America, *The New York Post*, Japan's Public Television's (NHK) Catch! World Top News, and WQXR's New York in Concert. [www.peterkendallclark.com](http://www.peterkendallclark.com)



**Laura Dixon Strickling** (*soprano*) was nominated for a 2022 Grammy Award for *Confessions*—her debut solo recording of American art song. Recognized by *The New York Times* for her "flexible voice, crystalline diction, and warm presence," she is celebrated for her work performing and promoting new music, with an emphasis on new additions to the contemporary art song canon. She created the role of Fanni Gyarmati in the world

premiere of *The Parting* with Music of Remembrance in Seattle and San Francisco in 2019. Her performance of the Dew Fairy in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* with the Berkshire Opera Company was praised by *Opera News*: "Laura Strickling offered the creamy, clear, younger-sister-of-Eva-Pogner instrument ideal for singing the role over full orchestration." She appeared as Pamina in the Metropolitan Opera Guild's touring production of *The Magic Flute*. Ms. Strickling's operatic roles also include Countess Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Cleopatra (*Julius Caesar*), Mimi (*La bohème*), Dinorah (Dinorah), Elvira (*L'Italiana in Algeri*), Josephine (*H.M.S. Pinafore*), Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*), and Micaëla (*Carmen*). She created the role of Muriel in the world premiere of Thomas Benjamin's *The Alien Corn* with the Peabody Opera Theater. A Chicago native, Ms. Strickling is an avid traveler, having lived in Kabul and Morocco, where she studied classical Arabic at the Arabic Language Institute of Fez. She currently makes her home in St. Thomas (U.S. Virgin Islands) where she cultivates an extensive collection of orchids and enjoys Caribbean life with her husband Taylor, their daughter Elizabeth, and Dido the Maltese poodle.

[www.laurastrickling.com](http://www.laurastrickling.com)



**SARAH HELTZEL** (*mezzo soprano*) “Vocally striking and visually appealing” (*The New York Times*), Heltzel consistently “sets the stage ablaze with her vocal and dramatic pyrotechnics” (*Houston Chronicle*). Ms. Heltzel debuted with Seattle Opera as Siegrune and Flosshilde in their acclaimed *Ring* cycle. Recent performances include Offred in *A Handmaid’s Tale* (Melbourne, Australia), *Carmen* (Wichita Grand Opera), Rossini’s *Stabat Mater* (Dartmouth), and Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* (Carnegie Hall). A frequent collaborator and interpreter of new works, Heltzel appears this season in Paul Vasile and Karin Coonrod’s *Judith*, as Caroline Herschel in the world premiere of Zaid Jabri’s *Southern Crossings* (Center for Contemporary Opera/Barnard), and as Olga Finzi-Contini in the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon’s *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* (New York City Opera). Select credits include Eboli in *Don Carlo* and Maddalena in *Rigoletto* (Wichita); Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* (Indianapolis, Amarillo, Syracuse, Nevada, Opera on the James); Jo in *Little Women*; Musetta in *La Bohème*; Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* (Opera on the James); Komponist and Dryade in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Winter Opera St Louis, Toledo); and Lola and Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Amarillo, String Orchestra of Brooklyn). [www.sarahheltzel.com](http://www.sarahheltzel.com)

## WHO’S WHO



**TOM CIPULLO** (*composer*) Hailed by the American Academy of Art & Letters for his music of “inexhaustible imagination, wit, expressive range and originality,” Cipullo is the winner of numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship (2012) the Arts & Letters Award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters (2013), and fellowships from Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and the Liguria Study Center (Italy). *The New York Times* has called his music “intriguing and unconventional,” and *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* has called him “an expert in writing for the voice.” Cipullo’s music is recorded on the Naxos, Albany, CRI, PGM, MSR, GPR, Centaur, and Capstone labels, and is published by E.C. Schirmer, Oxford University Press, and Classical Vocal Reprints. His critically acclaimed *Glory Denied* is one of the most frequently performed 21st-century operas.



**DAVID MASON** (*librettist*) served as Colorado Poet Laureate from 2010 to 2014. His books include *The Country I Remember*, *Arrivals*, *Sea Salt: Poems of a Decade*, *The Poetry of Life and the Life of Poetry*, *Ludlow: A Verse Novel*, *The Sound: New and Selected Poems*, *Voices, Places: Essays*, and *Davey McGravy: Tales to be Read Aloud to Children and Adult Children*. Mason has also written the libretti for operas by composers Lori Laitman

and Tom Cipullo, available on CD from Naxos. His poems, essays, translations and reviews have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *Harper’s*, *The Hudson Review*, *Poetry*, *The Sewanee Review*, *The American Scholar*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Irish Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Image*.

**GARRETT AUGUST HEATER** (*stage director/set designer*) is the producing artistic director of Chelsea Opera and the former Artistic Director of Syracuse Opera, Syracuse Summer Theatre at The Oncenter, and The Covey Theatre Company. Recent credits include operas *The Medium* (director/designer, Chelsea Opera & Syracuse University) and *Sidewalk Serenade* (librettist/director, Chelsea Opera), plays *Rom-Com*, *My Life as a Soprano*, and *The Dunes* (author/director, Wunderbar), musicals *Damn Yankees* and *Pippin* (director, Syracuse Summer Theatre) and the Mansion on James event “Gatsby Garden Party” (creator/director).

**LEONARDA PRIORE** (*producer/properties design*) is a well-known and versatile artist who has appeared at Carnegie Weill Recital Hall and Carnegie Hall’s Isaac Stern Auditorium and at the Vatican in Rome as a featured soloist, and has also performed opera, jazz, sacred, classical and popular genres with many companies and orchestras throughout the United States and in Europe. She has performed professionally with many symphony orchestras including Centre Symphony, 5 Towns Symphony and the New Amsterdam Symphony. Leonarda is also the co-founder/president of Chelsea Opera. She continues to perform and present performances of opera, jazz and dramatic works honoring the memory of her brother Nicholas S. Priore, Esq. Funds raised by these concerts go to the Nicholas S. Priore New Possibilities Fund with Chelsea Opera. These funds help mount new ventures and to assist artists in these challenging financial times.

**BENJAMIN GROW** (*music director/conductor*) has worked with a wide array of ensembles in New York City and serves as co-director/conductor of the sinfonietta Ensemble Échappé, which is in residence at the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Italian Academy at Columbia University, and as the principal conductor of Chelsea Opera. He is also music director of the Southern Tier Symphony. As music director of Tom Cipullo’s acclaimed opera, *Glory Denied*, at the Prince Theater in Philadelphia, Grow “expertly coached the singers and led the orchestra” (*Broad Street Review*) in what *The Philadelphia Inquirer* said was the “most unforgettable opera” of the year. Upcoming engagements include concerts with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s. Mr. Grow teaches at The Juilliard School and has been guest conductor at the Manhattan School of Music.

**JESTIN PIEPER** (*asst. music director/asst. conductor*) is a New York City–based pianist, vocal coach, organist, conductor, and educator. An active performer, Mr. Pieper has appeared in major venues across the country and abroad including guest appearances on the Discovery Channel, WNYC, WNPR, and Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. A sought-after vocal coach and collaborator, Jestin is a member of Luminae Trio and is currently the assistant music director at Chelsea Opera. Jestin received his Bachelor of Music, magna cum laude, from Lawrence University, a Master of Music degree from the University of Texas at Austin, and a PS certificate from Manhattan School of Music. Mr. Pieper is currently the music director at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Inwood and is an adjunct professor of music at Long Island University Brooklyn Roc Nation School of Music.

**ANDREW HUGHES** (*lighting design*) is the resident lighting and sound technician at Wunderbar Syr. He is also a recent graduate of Le Moyne College, '19, where he designed lights for shows including *Bare: A Pop Opera* and the LSDC Showcase.

**KAYLA BARRETT DENNEY** (*stage manager*) has been working in opera for more than a decade. In that time she has worked for several companies and had the honor to work on multiple world premiere projects. She is excited to return to Chelsea Opera to be a part of Tom Cipullo's *The Parting*.

**SUE BERGER** (*costume designer*) has done costuming for the Syracuse Summer Theatre: *Cabaret*, *Spring Awakening* (SALT Award nominee), *Pippin* and *Damn Yankees* (Salt Award nominee).

**FRANCO PEDICINI** (*dramaturg*) is a member of Actors' Equity, a drama teacher for middle school students in Brooklyn, and a big fan of dramaturgical research.

**DENIZ KHATERI** (*animation*) is an actor, director, playwright, shadow puppetry artist and animator based in New York. Her works experiment with form and focus on memory, grief, immigration and the concept of home. [www.denizkhateri.com](http://www.denizkhateri.com)

**DIANE JONES** (*pre-show host*) is the midday host and program manager on WCNY-FM, Central New York's classical radio station, and the host and producer of "Feminine Fusion," a nationally syndicated weekly program highlighting women in the classical music world, reaching more than 20 million listeners across the country. As a composer, she has received commissions from Melomanie, Trio Casals, the Syracuse International Film Festival, and more. Her music is featured on nine CDs, with another slated for recording and release this year. She performs with Samba Laranja, the Central New York Flute Choir, and is a core member of the 315 Ensemble, a group that "blurs the boundaries between industrial and organic, soothing and suspenseful, introspective and anxious."

## SPECIAL THANKS FROM THE DIRECTOR

This production moves quickly through various locations and times at the end of Radnóti's brief life, demanding a production that moves away from the literal and toward the figurative. The collaboration of several artists helped to achieve this goal, including the dramaturgical work of Franco Pedicini, whose meticulous research on the art and artistry surrounding Radnóti brought inspiration to myself and our animator, Deniz Khateri. Deniz drew inspiration from a period Hungarian stained-glass window when designing the animations for the opera. These projections provide visual facets of warmth and color to Radnóti's pastoral poetry, refracted by lighting designer Andy Hughes' ability to show the shadow of life across time and space. Further, I am grateful for Leonarda Priore's invitation to direct this important piece in New York City.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When approached to direct *The Parting*, I was unfamiliar with both Radnóti and his poetry. I will not complain too much about this fact, as it only heightened the experience of becoming acquainted with his work. His pieces are valuable not only for their first-hand account of the Holocaust, but for the total sensory experience he invokes in each work. In 1944, the year of his death in the hills of eastern Serbia, Radnóti composed the poem "Root." In his late pastoral style, he brings the reader deep into the earth. Allusions to life and death are inextricably interwoven, with the author as a tree root, pulsing with life among voracious weevils and worms. Already dead and buried in his mind, Radnóti's terror of being forgotten by future generations rings out in the closing line: "overhead, the saw now grieves" [transl. F. Jones]. Compare this to his 1933 work "Like a Bull," wherein the poet, with early pride, states "the district will treasure my bones for future generations" [transl. T. Ország-Land]. What happened to turn this once proud bull into a hacked-down tree? His suffering at the hand of fascist leaders. When the Jewish-born Catholic convert was executed following a forced march from his third labor camp, he questioned in his poems whether he would be remembered. And remember we do. Cipullo and Mason's sensitive and surreal work declares that Radnóti is not forgotten. Thanks in no small part to the efforts of his wife Fanni, Radnóti achieved remarkable success posthumously, his words a succor to surviving countrymen and beyond. I invite you, following this performance, to walk around inside his poems. You will experience overwhelming joy tinged with creeping grief, stark accounts of vicious inhumanity balanced against the warm memory of his wife. You may find, as I did, that Radnóti's voice rings clearly through the decades to our current state of affairs: at turns a warning and a call to find our common humanity.

**CHELSEA OPERA** is a professional opera company currently in its 17th season producing fully staged operas with chamber orchestra, a concert series, and other musical endeavors. Founded in 2004 by professional singers Leonarda Priore and Lynne Hayden-Findlay, Chelsea Opera serves many constituencies, including singers and opera audiences. For singers, Chelsea Opera has given hundreds of artists the chance to work their craft in a supportive professional setting in a NYC venue with chamber orchestra. For audiences, Chelsea Opera's productions of new and classic repertoire provide enthusiasts and newcomers the chance to see high-quality productions with chamber orchestra in a relaxed and welcoming setting, with ticket prices affordable to a broad spectrum of the community. Performances take place in locations where the intimacy and superior acoustics make the experience exceedingly attractive for all. [www.chelseaopera.org](http://www.chelseaopera.org)

### CHELSEA OPERA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Leonarda Priore - President/Artistic Director

Lynne Hayden-Findlay - Treasurer

Larry F. Beers - Vice-President/Secretary

Directors - Gerald Potter; Garrett A. Heater; Richard Hobson;

Anne Carlone Elacqua



This production made possible with funding from



Council on the Arts

jetBlue AIRWAYS

The Alice M. Ditson Fund  
Bettina Baruch Foundation

...and generous donations from our supporters!



*bending*  
**TOWARDS**  
*the Light*  
*a Jazz Nativity*

Chelsea opera presents

**INSPIRED!**  
at Inspiration Hall

Enjoy selections from musical theater and the operas that inspired them!

La bohème	RENT
Verdi's Aida	Elton John's Aida
Madama Butterfly	Miss Saigon
La traviata	Moulin Rouge
Carmina	Carmina Burana
The Beggar's Opera	The Threepenny Opera

Featuring performances by Julia Ebner, Dominick Corbacio, Bianca Hallett, Tyler Ianuzi, CJ Roche, & Ceara Windhausen, with pianist John Krause

For \$20 tickets visit [ChelseaOpera.org](http://ChelseaOpera.org)

**Bending Towards the Light... A Jazz Nativity**  
Utica, NY (Free!): Tue, Dec 13, 2022 - 7PM  
Mt. Carmel/Blessed Sacrament Parish: 648 Jay St  
NYC: Sun, Dec 18, 2022 - 5PM  
St. Paul & St. Andrew: 263 West 86 St, NYC

**Inspired! at Inspiration Hall**  
Friday, November 18, 2022 - 7:30PM  
Inspiration Hall  
709 James St, Syracuse, NY

Visit [www.ChelseaOpera.org](http://www.ChelseaOpera.org) for ticket information and to sign up for our mailing list.  
“LIKE” Chelsea Opera on Facebook & follow us on Instagram: @Chelsea\_Opera



This performance is presented in loving memory of Louise Kinsey Clark (August 10, 1930-September 24, 2022), a long-time Chelsea Opera fan and supporter, and loving mother of one of our favorite baritones.

**Louise Kinsey Clark**  
**August 10, 1930-September 24, 2022**