VCU OPERA
CELEBRATING 66 YEARS
PRESENTS

A DATE
WITH
DESTINY
GALA OF OPERA SCENES

Friday, November 18, 2016 · 8 p.m.
Saturday, November 19, 2016 · 4 p.m.

Co-Directors
MELANIE Kohn DAY & KENNETH WOOD

Lighting Designer
CURT BLANKENSHIP
About VCU Opera

Founded in 1950 by L. Wayne Batty, award-winning VCU Opera has been directed by Melanie Kohn Day since 1983. In 2008, Dr. Ken Wood joined the VCU voice faculty and also assumed the position of Stage Director.

VCU Opera has the longest-running tradition of annual full-scale productions in the state of Virginia. We produce a fully-staged gala of opera scenes and arias in the fall and in the spring, VCU Opera presents a full-scale production with scenery and costumes in collaboration with the VCU Symphony.

VCU Opera is proud of its long-term relationship with Virginia Opera, which includes regular field trips, workshops and master classes with staff and artists.

With a significant emphasis on the holistic training of the complete singer-actor, VCU Opera has prepared numerous students who have been awarded significant scholarships to The Manhattan School of Music; Peabody Conservatory; Eastman School of Music; New England Conservatory; The Curtis Institute of Music; The University of Maryland; Westminster Choir College Conservatory; Boston University; Cincinnati Conservatory of Music; Arizona State University and San Jose State University as well as a large number who regularly are accepted to major summer music festivals and programs in the USA and abroad. VCU Opera has an impressive history of alumni career success stories! Our alumni are singing in opera houses all over the world!
THOUGHTS on L. WAYNE BATTY
by MELANIE KOHN DAY - Director, VCU Opera

Wayne Batty was an indomitable force in the arts life of VCU and of The City of Richmond. As a rigorous teacher, Wayne had extremely high expectations. He ‘set the bar high’ KNOWING the students would rise to meet it. And they did. To the consternation of the trepidacious or faint-hearted, Wayne expected each student to have (or to develop) a tough skin—you might say a ‘coat of armor.’ It is imperative in this business, and he understood that. He considered it his moral duty to prepare the young singers to withstand this in preparation for the professional world. His mode of training was all about tough love. But the ‘love’ was always there. So many, many of his students went on to have tremendously successful careers in opera, in musical theatre, as public school music educators, as freelance teachers, and also as actors.

Wayne’s legacy is enormous. He was TRULY INSPIRATIONAL. He was an ICON! Wayne’s teaching spanned opera, chorus, orchestra, art song, musical theatre, acting—both at VCU and for many area theaters and for The City of Richmond. He masterminded over 1000 productions of opera and musical theatre in Richmond as well as countless choir concerts, etc. He touched thousands of lives in a lasting, deeply meaningful way. Wayne taught his singers discipline and to be generous and to be dedicated 100% to any endeavor they might undertake. He taught folks to care — to care deeply. Wayne Batty’s essence will forever permeate VCU Music. He gave it his all.

For me personally, one of the most extraordinary things I admired about Wayne was his love for and dedication to his wife, Jane—a remarkable person and gifted musician herself. Jane’s spirit of humanity is simply beautiful. Wayne worshipped her—as she did him. Their relationship was profoundly beautiful and inspiring to others.

In closing, Wayne Batty will continue to nurture all of us who worked with him forever. So many lessons — about music AND life. He taught students to be independent and strong and true. I loved and respected this man with all my heart. We are so happy that after 66 years, VCU Opera continues to flourish through his inspiration!

Melanie Day
Director, VCU Opera

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Recitative and Sextet from Act III (performed in English)
Don Curzio, a judge
Marcellina
Figaro, valet to the Count
Count Almaviva
Dr. Bartolo, a doctor from Seville
Susanna, the Countess’s chambermaid
Micah Baldwin
Ella Mort
Shyheim Hinnant
Anthony Anderson
Aaron Frisbie
Tiun Duong

DON PASQUALE
Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)
Recitative and Duet-Finale, Act I (performed in English)
Norina, a young widow
Dr. Malatesta, Don Pasquale’s friend
Tess Ottinger
Alan Chavez

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR
Otto Nicolai (1810-1849)
Act I, scene 1 Duet (performed in English)
Mrs. Ford
Mrs. Page
Emily Nesbitt
Jaylin Brown

DIE ZAUBERFLOTE (THE MAGIC FLUTE)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Act II, Recitative and Duet (performed in German)
Papageno, a birdcatcher
Papagena
Anthony Anderson
Savannah Whittenburg

TARTUFFE
Kirke Mechem (b. 1925)
Act I Duet
Dorine, chambermaid to Mariane
Mariane, young daughter of Orgon
Tess Ottinger
Ella Mort

PORGY & BESS
George Gershwin (1898-1937)
Act II, scene 1 Duet
Porgy
Bess
Shyheim Hinnant
Jaylin Brown

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO
Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)
Act IV Duet (performed in Italian)
Don Carlo
Don Alvaro
Alan Chavez
Devonte Saunders
PRODUCTION CREDITS

Director of VCU Opera & Accompanist
Melanie Kohn Day

Co-Director/Stage Director of VCU Opera & Narrator
Dr. Kenneth Wood

Lighting Designer
Curt Blankenship

Technical Director/Props Construction
Roland Karnatz

Principal Stage Manager
Tiun Duong

Assistant Stage Manager for "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Porgy and Bess"
Tylahr Dawes

Costumes & Hair/Wigs
Melanie Kohn Day

SPECIAL THANKS TO:
Dr. Darryl Harper; Curt Blankenship; Roland Karnatz; Tiun Duong; Tylahr Dawes; Linda Johnston; Amy Sheets; Anne Marie Duman; Emerson & Kathy Hughes; Dr. Velimir Luketic; Dr. Sonia Vlahcevic

WE INVITE YOUR SUPPORT!
If you have an interest in assisting VCU Opera with student scholarship funding, sponsoring a Guest Artist for Masterclasses/Workshops, helping with costumes or scenic production, we would welcome your assistance! Please contact Linda Johnston, Administrative Director for the Department of Music at 804.827.4542.

HOT OFF THE PRESS FROM VCU OPERA

PRIZES: In 2011, VCU Opera was awarded second place by The National Opera Association (NOA) for our production of Humperdinck's "Hansel & Gretel." In 2012, VCU Opera won NOA’s first place for our production of Menotti’s “The Old Maid and the Thief," as well as third place for our "Carmen" quintet scene! On November 1, 2015, we learned that our Spring 2015 full production of Gilbert & Sullivan’s “The Gondoliers” also won first place -- four prizes in four years!!!

VCU Opera is once again sponsoring an impressive roster of masterclass/guest artist events for fall of 2016. In August, VCU Opera hosted Amy Purdue, a highly regarded actress, dancer, choreographer, director and teacher for a workshop in improvisation for singer-actors. This featured a marvelous array of vocal, dramatic, and dance improvisation games and exercises. In September, we arranged "A Day in the Life of..." field trip to Virginia Opera in Norfolk. There, the students had a Q & A seminar with Matthew Burns (VCU alumus and nationally prominent bass-baritone) and soprano Anne-Carolyn Byrd (MET, etc.) about what it takes to be an opera singer. The rest of the day entailed a backstage tour and upclose observation of staging rehearsals featuring the complete cast and chorus for "Pagliacci." In October, we hosted the General Manager of Classical Singer Magazine and business expert Mark Stoddard for a fabulous seminar in "The Business of Singing-How to Market Yourself as a Singer."

VCU OPERA
dedicates these performances with profound respect, appreciation and love
to
L. WAYNE BATTY
Founder of VCU OPERA, 1950

Professor L. Wayne Batty, 94, died on September 4, 2016, in Richmond. Wayne received degrees in music education and voice from Illinois Wesleyan University (where he was also an All State basketball guard) and the Kansas City Conservatory and a master's in voice from Chicago Musical College. During World War II, he was in the U.S. Army Air Corps Stage Band and was the vocalist under the direction of fellow corpsman Henry Mancini. In 1949, he became a member of the teaching faculty at Richmond Professional Institute (later Virginia Commonwealth University), where he served as chairman of VCU's School of Music for 11 years and as head of the voice department for 12 years. In 1988, he was selected as a Cultural Laureate of the state of Virginia, and VCU presented him with the Presidential Medallion. He retired and was awarded Professor Emeritus in 2007 at age 85, earning distinctions as the longest serving faculty member at VCU and Virginia's longest serving employee, according to state records. During his 58 year tenure, he mentored generations of music students who loved him for his disciplined approach, clever wit and encouragement. Many former students have enjoyed successful careers in opera, theater and symphony worldwide and continued to stay in touch with Wayne and his wife Jane. Highlights of his career include directing the first opera performed at VCU (1952), directing musicals at the Virginia Museum Theatre (three years) and at Swift Creek Mill Playhouse for 17 years, conducting the City's annual holiday production of Amahl and the Night Visitors for 23 years and conducting the City of Richmond and Richmond Opera Company productions starting in 1965. In all, he conducted more than 1,000 performances of operas and musicals at VCU, in Richmond and around the state of Virginia. For decades, he was an active member of the music scene in Richmond and beyond, serving on the boards of the Richmond Symphony, National Association of Teachers of Singing, Richmond Opera Association, the Arts Guild (founder), and other organizations. He and Jane had a special interest in improving race relations in Richmond and were active in the NAAACP and on the Human Relation Council. He helped integrate all choral groups at VCU starting in the 1950s, as well as the Richmond Christmas Pageant Chorus, which he directed for 18 years, and the city opera production.

Posted in The Richmond Times-Dispatch: Obituaries & In Memoriam on Wednesday, September 7, 2016 12:01 am.