



Livermore Valley Opera NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 14, 2023

Livermore Valley Opera Presents Carlisle Floyd's OF MICE AND MEN Opening October 7

LIVERMORE, CALIF. – The Tri-Valley's own professional opera company, Livermore Valley Opera (LVO), opens its 32nd season with Carlisle Floyd's *OF MICE AND MEN*, based on the novella by John Steinbeck. This brilliant stage production, performed by a superb cast of singers, portrays a tragic American story of shattered dreams. It opens October 7 at the Bankhead Theater, the first of four performances, and will be sung in English with English supertitles.

About Of Mice and Men

Stage Director Marc Jacobs will bring the forceful tale of two depression-era farm workers, George and Lennie, whose dream of owning their own land one day ends in tragedy. Carlisle Floyd, arguably the greatest of America's 20th Century opera composers, adapts to the operatic stage a vivid representation of John Steinbeck's story that will grip audiences with its powerful music and timeless themes. In the opinion of the late composer himself, this is his greatest operatic achievement.

Marc Jacobs makes his LVO debut staging this production, never before performed at the Bankhead Theater, with stunning sets designed by Jean-Francois Revon, and masterfully conducted by LVO's Music Director Alexander Katsman. "I am so excited about directing *Of Mice and Men*," says Jacobs. "It's a piece that is not produced often enough, being one of the great American operas. Steinbeck's story and the characters of George and Lennie are part of our national DNA. We know them from the novel (one of America's most widely read and taught) ...They are like old friends."

"For a limited engagement this October, we are proud to be partnering with Livermore Valley Opera," notes the National Steinbeck Center's Marketing Director, Tory Bright. "Featuring archival showings selected by the Steinbeck Center's archivist, Lisa Josephs, all opera attendees have an opportunity, during the intermission of each performance, to celebrate the creativity inspired by the words of Salinas native, John Steinbeck."

““What Carlisle Floyd has done with his magnificent score is to heighten every emotional moment,” adds Jacobs. “It’s an opera about loneliness, connection and the power of friendship, and it requires a cast of great singers who are also great actors. Luckily we have that in this cast.”

“We have assembled a stellar cast,” says Erie Mills, LVO’s Artistic Director, “and in the intimacy of the Bankhead Theater, you will be swept back in time.”

Tenor, **Matthew Pearce**, playing the principal role of Lenny Small, has been applauded for his “confidence,” “brightness” and “high level of control” (*OperaWire*), Returning to the LVO stage, in the role as Lennie’s traveling companion George Milton, American baritone **Robert Mellon**, has been praised not only for his "glorious voice that burst[s] out brimming with life and vigor," but also for having "immense skill as an actor."

Also making their LVO debut are tenor **Chad Somers** as Curley, along with French American soprano **Veronique Filloux**, as Curley’s wife. Of soprano Veronique Filloux, *Opera News* lauds her "dazzling coloratura and lithe stage presence [used] to piquant comedic effect" and her "expressive, lovingly shaded soprano."

The San Francisco Chronicle recognizes tenor **Chad Somers** as among the “who’s who of Bay Area operatic luminaries,” (SF Chronicle), known for his “uniquely personal and eloquent” performances (*Stage Magazine*).

“The production was to be a part of LVO’s 30th season, but was postponed due to the Covid shutdown,” adds Mills. “Based on the John Steinbeck 1937 novella of the same name, the opera combines the drama of the story with powerful music. If you liked the Steinbeck novella, you will love the opera! I hope you will join us for a moving evening in the theater.”

Tickets are available at the Bankhead Theater in Livermore. Details and other special events are as follows:

OF MICE AND MEN: by Carlisle Floyd

- Saturday, October 7, 7:30pm; Season Opening Night
- Sunday, October 8, 2pm
- Saturday, October 14, 7:30pm
- Sunday, October 15, 2pm
- Season Opening Night Dinner at Uncle Yu’s at the Vineyard, 4:00pm. (Separate ticket purchase required at a price of \$125 per person by visiting www.lvpac.org.)

Season Opening Night Dinner at Uncle’s Yu’s at the Vineyards

Before the first *Of Mice and Men* performance, join fellow opera lovers for the Season Opening Night Dinner at Uncle Yu’s at the Vineyard, conveniently located one-half block from the Bankhead Theater. Welcome reception with wines sponsored by local vintners, and appetizers begins at 4pm with dinner seating at 4:30pm. Guests will have a chance to meet the Stage Director and LVO’s Music Director, Alexander Katsman. Tickets available now online through the Bankhead Theater box office (www.lvpac.org) at a price of \$125 per person. Opera performance tickets are sold as a separate purchase.

Pre-Opera Lecture

Included in the ticket price is a pre-opera lecture held one hour prior to curtain time.

2nd Saturday Casual and Pre-Opera Meet Up on October 14th Only

By popular demand, the special LVO event called **2nd Saturday Casual** returns for the October 14th performance, when you can meet up with friends and dress up, or dress down in your favorite jeans.

Ticket Pricing

Adults \$20-\$105. Tickets can be purchased through the LVO website at www.LVOpera.com. Special ticket pricing: \$20, ages 20 and younger; \$40, ages 20-40.

Performance & Box Office Location:

Bankhead Theater
2400 First Street, Livermore, CA 94550
Bankhead Ticket Office: 925-373-6800

More About Special LVO Fundraiser Event

“3 Redneck Tenors” to perform, February 17, 2024 at the Bankhead Theater

A special, one night only concert to be held on February 17, 2024, will feature the 3 Redneck Tenors, a new breed in the “tenor genre” – their musical comedy featuring classically trained veteran artists – is written by opera-veteran (and Tri-Valley native) Matthew Lord, with music arranged by award-winning composer Craig Bohmler, and starring Mr. Lord, Blake Davidson, and female tenor, Grace Lord. The 3 Redneck Tenors were top finalists on "America's Got Talent" and have been thrilling audiences since 2006. Tickets for this evening of fabulous entertainment go on sale November 1st. Prices are \$75, \$100, \$150 and \$200. Tickets go on sale November 1, 2023, and can be purchased on the LVO website (www.LVOpera.com).

About LVO

Livermore Valley Opera (LVO) strives to enrich its community by producing world class operas and fostering the careers of professional opera singers. LVO encourages a wider appreciation of opera and the associated arts through community outreach and educational programs for youth in schools. Founded in 1992, Livermore Valley Opera presents fully-staged operas in the spring and fall at the Bankhead Theater, located in Livermore in the Tri-Valley area, just 45 miles east of San Francisco. The Bankhead Theatre features excellent lines of sight and acoustics, helping LVO to attract talented singers and stage directors. To attain its artistic goals, LVO combines the talents of professional musicians, stage directors, principal singers, and designers with the dedication and practical abilities of volunteers filling such critical roles as board members, chorus members, stage crew, and set builders.

Livermore Valley Opera is a 501(c) 3 non-profit charitable organization.

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