



THE SACRED IN OPERA

A PROJECT OF THE NATIONAL OPERA ASSOCIATION

NOA CONVENTION

SIO SESSION JANUARY 10, 2015

FEATURING

BONHOEFFER BY ANN GEBUHR
SIMEON BY DWIGHT GUSTAFSON

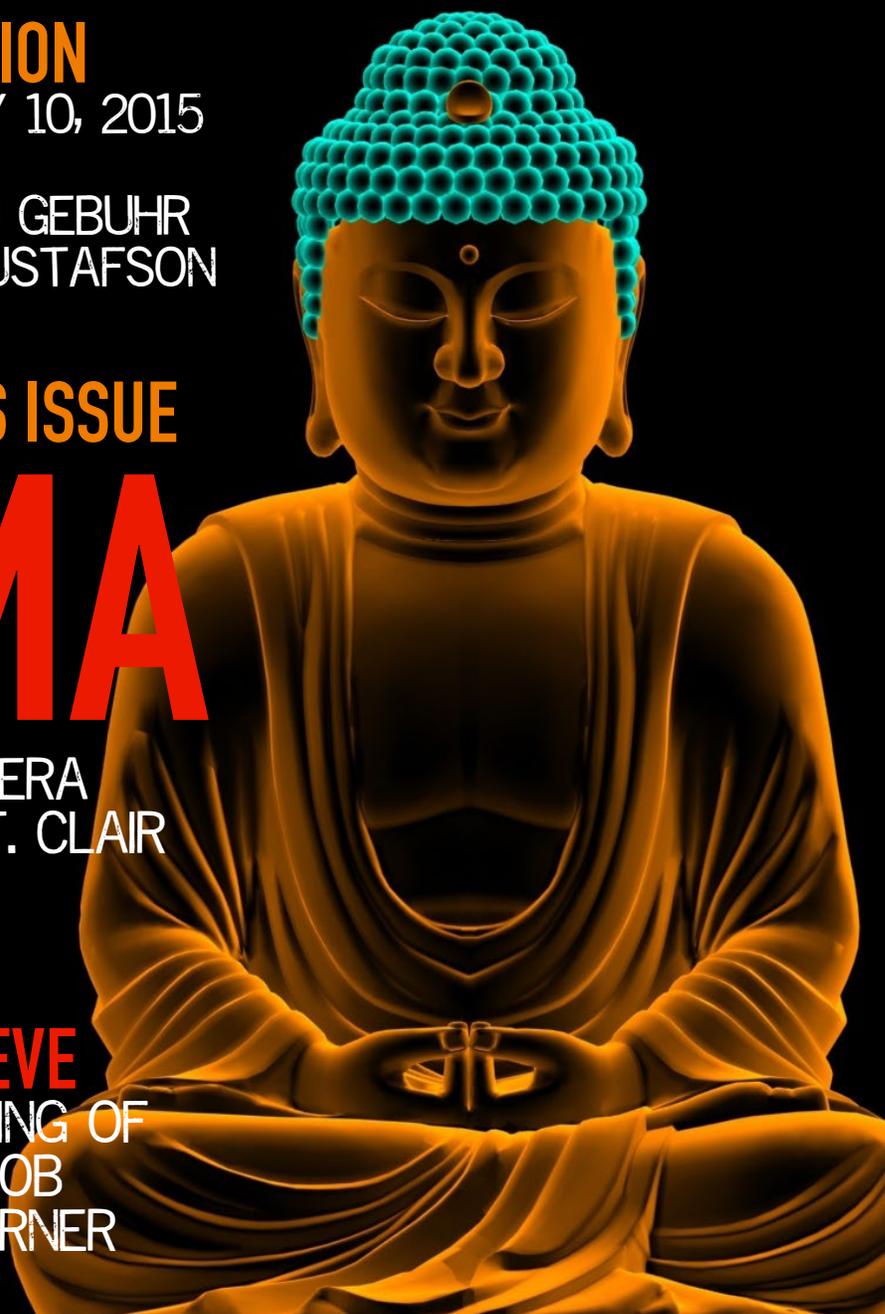
FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

TAEMA

A BUDDHIST OPERA
BY DR. RICHARD ST. CLAIR

AND

HARD TO BELIEVE
A MUSICAL RETELLING OF
THE BOOK OF JOB
BY JONATHAN TURNER



From the Editors

John Pfautz
Kurt-Alexander Zeller

The Sacred in Opera Project through the National Opera Association has been in existence for more than a decade. During this time we have recognized outstanding leaders in the field of Sacred in Opera including our first and second Lifetime Achievement in Sacred in Opera recipients Evelyn Swensson and Carl Gerbrandt. We have held annual NOA conference session presentations that have highlighted people and works within the field of Sacred in Opera. And, the Newsletter has been faithful to the mission of the project in making readers aware of accessible musical dramas that are focused on either sacred stories, themes or prominent religious leaders.

In preparation for the 2015 NOA Convention Sacred in Opera session, I am happy to invite you to the session on January 10, 2015. This year's SIO session will include introductions to two very different, but both exciting contributions to the field of Sacred in Opera.

Ann Gebuhr, composer and long time member of NOA, will present information about her opera *Bonhoeffer*. Many of you will recognize the name of Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a Lutheran theologian who was eventually executed in a Nazi prison of war camp, having been accused of scheming and attempting to murder Adolf Hitler. The opera captures much of Bonhoeffer's struggle with being a pacifist, yet persuaded that it is less evil to try to kill Hitler than to allow him to continue in mass murder. Perhaps the timeliness of this presentation will inspire some performances for 2017, the 500 year anniversary of when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the church door at Wittenberg, essentially marking the start of the Protestant Reformation.

The second opera to be highlighted at the convention session is *Simeon*, composed by Dwight Gustafson, recently deceased having served many years as dean of the School of Fine Arts at Bob Jones University. Librettist David Burke and stage director Darren Lawson, both of the same university, will present their experiences with this biblical story told through opera.

Up until this edition of the SIO Newsletter, all of the stories have focused on Christian themes. Composer Richard St. Clair contacted me wondering if we would consider introducing our readers to a Buddhist opera. I am grateful that Dr. St. Clair has taken the time to share this opera with me as well as be available for conversation and interview in preparation for this edition. I suspect that you will find Richard's comments related to his inspirations and compositional process that has resulted in *Taema* to be thought provoking.

The second "first" for this issue is the introduction of a non-operatic sacred music drama. Carl Gerbrandt, our mentor and forefather in the world of Sacred Music Drama, preferred this categorization rather than the narrower – Sacred in Opera. Perhaps I should have listened to him. A musical based on the Book of Job from the Hebrew Bible, entitled *Hard to Believe*, is also introduced in this issue of the newsletter. I have seen a production of this musical and I recommend that you take a serious look at this engaging treatment of a tragic and dramatic story. You will enjoy the twists that help all of us find solid entertainment with an uplifting message.

As always, my co-editor, Kurt-Alexander Zeller, and I are always interested in highlighting the good work that you are doing in the field of Sacred in Opera. Have you composed a work in this genre? Have you directed one recently? Have you questions about Sacred in Opera? Would you like to submit an article for inclusion in an upcoming Newsletter? Let us hear from you.

John Pfautz | johnpfautz@augustana.edu

Kurt-Alexander Zeller | Zellertenor@aol.com

Hard to Believe

A Musical Retelling of the Book of Job

Jonathan Turner

Though the Old Testament story of Job has long been an inspiration to artists, authors, and composers, I did not know of any serious full-length musical stage adaptations of the dramatic tale before beginning work on one around 2001. The concept began in the mid-1990s, when Tim Stoller (then assistant pastor at a Lutheran church in Davenport, Iowa) started writing some lyrics and dialogue on the subject of Job.

The project picked up steam in 2000, when I met Tim, as I was (and still am) piano accompanist at Zion Lutheran Church. I am a classically trained pianist (Wisconsin Conservatory of Music, Milwaukee, and Oberlin, class of 1986) and a huge fan of Broadway musicals. I had written pop-style songs since high school, but always dreamed of working on a real musical.

Tim spent a lot of time studying the Book of Job, and worked on producing song lyrics, as well as the script. We collaborated, often by fits and starts, over several years, and mostly by long distance, since he was earning a graduate degree at the University of Iowa. As he would send me lyrics, sometimes just fragments, I would set them to music and flesh out complete lyrics with his input.

In 2008, a staged reading of the work-in-progress, then called "What About Job?," was performed at The Green Room Theatre in Rock Island, Ill., and after some alterations and song additions, in 2009 at Zion, re-titled "Hard to Believe" -- to reflect a new title song, and the double meaning of what Job

and his wife must endure, as well as the difficulty of maintaining faith in the face of seemingly senseless tragedy.

Through Job's trials and tribulations, the play exam-

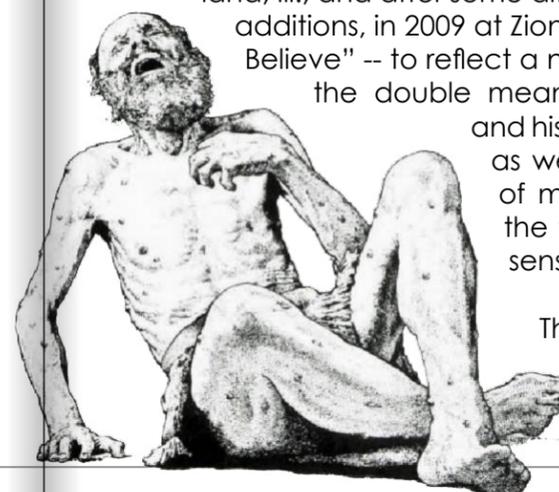
ines whether it's possible to hold onto the belief in goodness, hope in the future and love for one another, without resigning oneself to dogmatic clichés or apathetic cynicism. The fully staged version took place in September 2010 at Playcrafters Barn Theatre, in Moline, Ill., where it was seen by more than 900 people over six performances.

Although "Hard to Believe" is biblically based, I believe such a story is timeless, and was appropriately timed after the 2008 financial crisis, where so many people lost so much. Anyone who has ever lost a job, a loved one, or prized treasures in their life can relate to Job.

Tim said he was inspired by the tragedy of Sept. 11 in composing the book, which explores why bad things happen. Sometimes, we can't come up with a reason (such as pride or other character flaws). Tim -- who is now an assistant professor at State University of New York in Brockport, N.Y. -- said the musical shows us we all have a choice when confronted by tragedy: You can get on with life, or you can sit around and wait for the answer.

A journalist with 26 years experience, I have been arts and entertainment reporter at The Dispatch and Rock Island Argus (in Moline) since 2009, and play piano for a monthly variety show, for weddings, receptions, and other special events. I have also played for other musicals in the area, both community theater and high school.

I think "Hard to Believe" succeeds as a powerful piece of theatre, and not just a religious story - not geared only for churches or certain denominations. When we did this at Zion, I said a few words at the beginning that with the financial crisis, the housing crisis, unemployment, wars, and everything that's going on, I think people can really identify with this story. You don't have to have lost your family members or have gone through the scope of tragedy that Job has to wrestle with some of the same issues.



Hard to Believe/Turner

Q & A

SIO Editor John Pfautz discusses *Hard to Believe* with composer Jonathan Turner

Q: Did you find the story of Job to be particularly dramatic, suitable for coming alive on stage?

A: Of course, that's why we thought it would make an excellent subject, particularly with Tim's enlarging the role of Job's wife in the story, who is prominently featured. With God (as a strong-willed, tender-hearted woman), a cunning, conniving Satan, well-intentioned friends, and weighty issues dealt with humor, sincerity, and compassion, how can you go wrong?

Q: Do you have composers of sacred music drama that serve as inspiration?

A: Composers of the classic requiems, masses, and oratorios (such as Handel, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and Britten) are great sources of inspiration, who I could never approach with my own writing. I have long looked up to the Broadway legends as well, who were prolific in bringing stories to life on stage, including Richard Rodgers, Irving Berlin, John Kander, and Stephen Sondheim.

Q: How did you find the collaboration process with your librettist?

A: It was a challenge to work apart, but we communicated well and were on the same page (literally). There were a number of years when the project stalled and we couldn't find a way to end the show, but thankfully, we reconnected and got inspired.

Q: How would you describe your musical style?

A: I have eclectic musical tastes—enjoying everything from classical and jazz, to Broadway, rock, folk, bluegrass and beyond. I think my composing style

“It’s hard to believe that two local men have taken perhaps the most depressing story in the Bible and made it entertaining and pertinent, but Timothy Stoller and Jonathan Turner’s ‘Hard to Believe’ does just that.”

THE DISPATCH
AND
ROCK ISLAND ARGUS
(MOLINE, IL)
– SEPTEMBER 2010 –



reflects primarily a mainstream piano-based pop sound, and a theatrical voice well suited to the stage.

Q: You score the musical for a unique set of instruments. Was this a practical decision or an artistic one?

A: We were fortunate to work with a skilled arranger (Justin Hill), who provided instrumentation. I wanted to have it a chamber musical, with a small band, which included woodwinds, percussion and a second keyboard. Ideally, further productions would include strings.

Q: Is there a character or moment that you think you captured particularly well in the score?

A: I try to identify with the Job character, though I don't know if I would have as strong a faith in his situation. There are many highlights in the show for me -- it was fun for me to write a song of visceral anger like “Curse God and Die,” the Baroque-flavored “These Petty Things,” the soaring love duet, “And I Thank God,” and the communal, choral “All I Have is a Prayer,” which seeks to provide comfort.

HARD TO BELIEVE

A MUSICAL IN TWO ACTS, BASED ON THE BOOK OF JOB

Music by Jonathan Turner
Lyrics by Timothy Stoller and Jonathan Turner
Book by Timothy Stoller

CHARACTERS:

God (written for female)
Satan/Elihu
Job
Sifis (Job's wife)
'Phaz
Zophar
Female Messengers (4)

INSTRUMENTATION:

Piano
Keyboard
Clarinet
Flute
Percussion

DURATION:
1 Hour, 52 minutes

PLOT SUMMARY:

Job is a man who God allows to be attacked by Satan, to test his faithfulness. Job loses everything important to him (save his wife), yet remains faithful to God. Through Job's trials, during which he loses his children, his servants, his animals, and his health, his wife even tells him to curse God and commit suicide, but he remains strong and faithful, saying “Everything is from the Lord's hands, the good and the bad.” Job's friends gather to comfort him and offer advice, mistakenly blaming his sufferings on his personal sins, rather than God testing him. God restores and heals Job, blessing him with more than he had before his trials began, advising all to “trust your heart” when making decisions.

SONGS:

“These Petty Things” (Satan)	“It's Just a Habit” (Satan, God)	“Dare I Not Even Question” (Job)
“What About Job?” (God)	“Curse God and Die” (Sifis)	“Pride Comes Before a Fall” (Zophar)
“Satan's Wager” (Satan)	“We're Here to Help You Out” (Friends, Messengers)	“What Can We Know?” (Elihu)
“And I Thank God” (Job, Sifis)	“Dread the Day” (Job)	“All I Have is a Prayer” (Job, Sifis, Friends)
“Tragic News” (Messengers)	“Bad Things Come to Bad People” (‘Phaz)	“Trust Your Heart” (God, Messengers)
“Hard to Believe” (Job)	“God Does as God Wants” (Bildad)	“Finale” (Full Cast)
“Blessed Be the Name of the Lord” (Messengers, Job)		

Hard to Believe/Turner

Biographies

JONATHAN TURNER graduated from Oberlin College in Ohio with a bachelor's in music, and earned a master's in music education from Indiana University. Since 1995, he has written for The Dispatch and Rock Island Argus daily newspapers in the Quad-Cities along the Mississippi River, covering a wide variety of beats, including city government, business, and arts/entertainment since January 2009. He has served as piano accompanist at Zion Lutheran Church (Davenport, Iowa) since 1999, for which he wrote a contemporary musical setting of the liturgy, "River Praise," which has been performed many times at church. He has served as music director for a Harold Arlen revue, "Sweet & Hot" at Playcrafters in Moline, Ill., and the new musical, "Journey for a Reason" at New Ground Theatre, and accompanied productions of "Chicago" and "Thoroughly Modern Millie" for Pleasant Valley High School in Bettendorf, Iowa. He lives in Bettendorf with his wife Betsy, and has two sons, Alex (20) and Josh (14).



Jonathan Turner

Timothy Stoller

DR. TIMOTHY T. STOLLER is visiting assistant professor at The College at Brockport (SUNY) in Brockport, N.Y.. He teaches in Brockport's Delta College, a general education program for a small, select learning community. He has written a number of plays, three of which have been produced on stage. He holds a bachelor's degree in German from Wheaton College (IL) and a Master of Divinity degree from Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary (MN). He received his Ph.D. in religious studies from the University of Iowa in 2011. He is married to Michaela Stoller, a German native, and has three grown children.

Photos & Videos

2010 Production at Playcrafters Barn Theatre, Moline, IL



Wendy Czekalski as God and Paul Workman as Satan

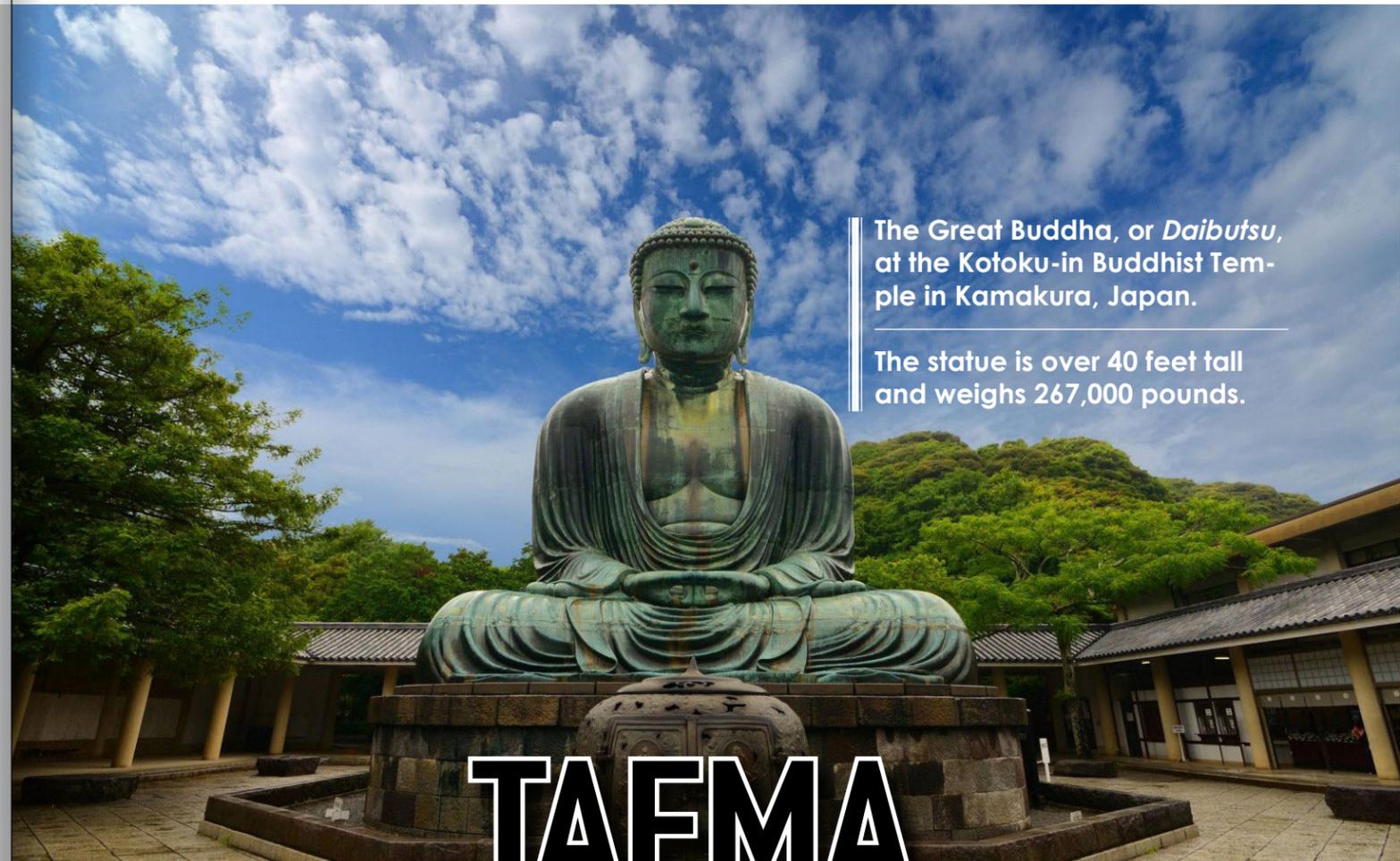


Katherine Zerull as Sitis and Chris Walljasper as Job



Flanking God are Messengers (from left) Megan Elliott, Linnell Ferguson, Sara Laufer and Kris Preston

[Click here to view videos from Hard to Believe!](#)



The Great Buddha, or *Daibutsu*, at the Kotoku-in Buddhist Temple in Kamakura, Japan.

The statue is over 40 feet tall and weighs 267,000 pounds.

TAEMA

A Buddhist Opera by Richard St. Clair

Background: The Composer's Inspiration

Richard St. Clair has spent years researching the tradition of Noh theatre, the classical theatre of Japan. He has studied literally dozens of Noh libretti in English translation and has viewed Noh performances in original Japanese on YouTube. Noh plays are usually quite short, though the declamation of text is

very slow and chant-like. Thus a short two-act Noh play can take an hour to perform.

The Noh play tradition in Japan has the following characteristics: one singer declaims at a time, and there are usually two principal actors with two or three subordinate characters and a small

chorus of six or so. It is accompanied by a single flute and a couple of drum players making the presentation both visually and aurally very lean and sparse. The musical style of Noh is quite different from anything in the West.

Though Richard's music is broadly influenced by the

Taema/St. Clair

Noh tradition, there is no attempt to imitate it. The music and drama are entirely in a Western style. While Richard's setting of the *Taema* Noh play is on the lean side by Western standards, by Japanese standards it is rich and sumptuous. For example, Richard would like the SATB chorus part in his opera to be performed by a chamber chorus with at least 4 singers on a part. The chorus' vital role is evident in the interplay between chorus and soloist that occurs particularly in the second act.

Richard has set the entire libretto of the Noh play. To help promote audience understanding, he recommends that handouts with the libretto be made available to the listeners. Though the Noh has a uniquely specific manner of acting with very subtle stage moves making significant statements, it is the composer's wish that the dramatic elements of the opera not imitate the stylized Japanese acting style. Rather, he wants a Western style of acting, while maintaining the fluidity of movement that is reflected in the Noh gesture. Imaginative choreography is essential.

The set could be similar to a Noh set – that is, with three pine trees. He suggests that an image of the *Taema*

Mandala (below) be projected onto a screen at a particularly dramatic moment as indicated in the libretto. Additionally, imaginative scenery would be welcomed by the composer.

St. Clair recommends foregoing contemporary costuming in favor of Japanese kimonos. The use of traditional Noh costumes could be investigated as a possibility, though proprietary issues in

Japan might not allow it. Noh masks would have to be dispensed with, as they would interfere with the soloists' singing.

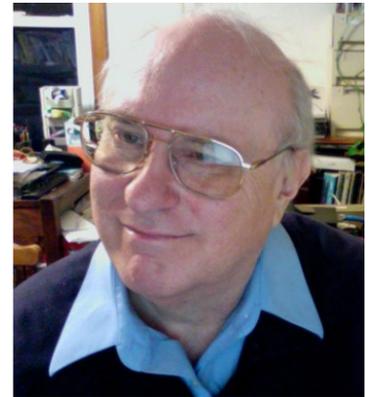
Richard describes the music as quite tonal, though modern in character. He believes it to be very accessible to modern listeners. To further enhance a production, Dr. St. Clair would make himself available to talk with the cast and/or audience.



Taema/St. Clair

Q & A

SIO Editor John Pfautz and composer Richard St. Clair discuss *Taema* and the historical origins of the libretto.

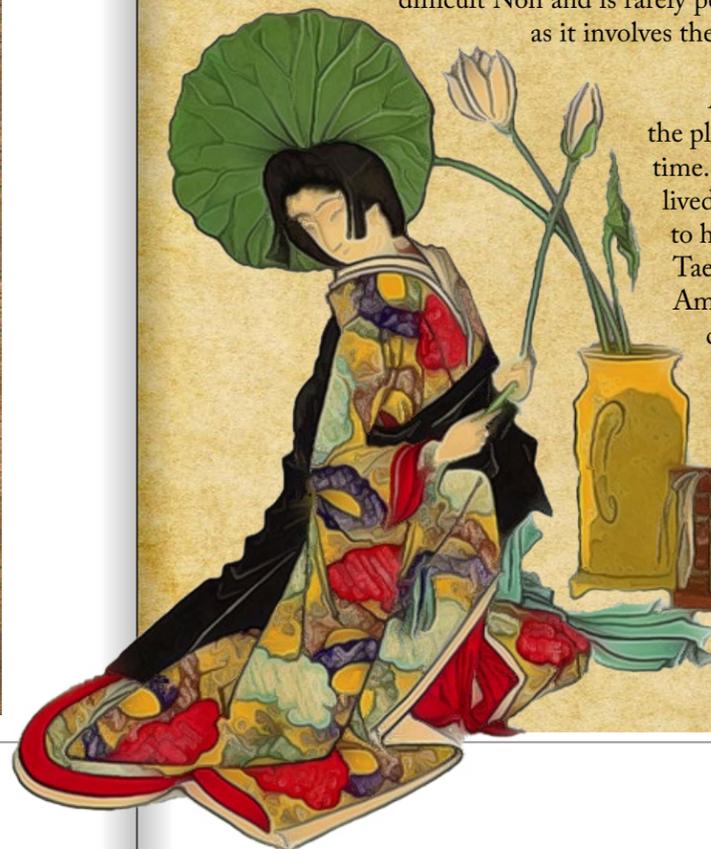


JP: What draws you to write an opera with a Buddhist subject? (I guess that's a bit awkward, but I think we need to establish the virtue and uniqueness of this project.)

RSC: This opera brings together my life as a Pure Land Buddhist, my lifelong dedication as a composer to vocal and choral music, and my deep interest in Japanese literature such as haiku, tanka, and in particular the theatrical genre, Noh. Noh developed over hundreds of years and reached its zenith in the 15th and 16th centuries in Japan. Perhaps the most well-known actor and playwright of that period is Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443), the author of the play which I selected as the libretto for my opera, *Taema*.

Here is the legendary background of the Noh play taken from an online web page, and how it was adapted to the theater by Zeami:

In spite of being a beautiful Noh that endured through the ages ever since Zeami's time, *Taema* is considered a difficult Noh and is rarely performed. It belongs to the fifth category of Noh plays, the so called *kiri-noh*, as it involves the miraculous apparition of otherworldly beings.



As most of the Noh plays created in the early Muromachi age (1336-1573), the plot of *Taema* originates in a legend that was well known to the audience of that time. In this case, it is the story of Chūjō-hime, a young lady who is said to have lived during the late Nara period (8th c.) and who later became a saintly figure due to her deep devotion to Amida Buddha. After taking Buddhist vows and entering *Taema* temple, she swore not to leave the temple until she sees the incarnation of Amida Buddha. One day an old nun came to her and said that her wish would come true if she gathers a large quantity of lotus stalk. After seven days the old nun appeared again and miraculously dyed all the thread made from lotus stalk gathered by Chūjō-hime in five colors. A young woman descended from the sky and wove the lotus threads in a beautiful mandala during only one night. After the weaver returned to the celestial world, the old nun explained the meaning of the mandala to Chūjō-hime: it represented the Pure Land, inhabited by celestial beings and by the souls rescued by Amida. In the end she revealed that she herself was the incarnation of Amida Buddha and had come in human form in response to Chūjō hime's sincere faith. After the apparition left, Chūjō-hime kept longing to be reunited with Amida and soon her soul would be welcomed in paradise by the bodhisattvas.

During Zeami's time, the legend of Chūjō-hime was extremely popular, with people from all provinces coming in pilgrimage to Taema temple, where they could pray at the miraculously woven mandala. The Buddhist thought of previous ages (Heian and early Kamakura) had taught that women could not hope to be reborn in the Pure Land unless they are first reborn as men. However, the legend of Chūjō-hime affirmed that women were also able to gain access to Amida's paradise and the Taema mandala was a tangible proof of Amida's vow that no one who believes in him shall be left behind. This accounts for the great popularity of the legend and of the mandala itself.

Zeami's Noh adapts the contents of the legend for the stage. An itinerant monk reaches Taema temple and meets an old nun accompanied by a young woman. They show him around the temple: the famous lake, where the lotus stalk threads have been dyed in five colors, the cherry tree on whose branches the threads had been left to dry. Enchanted by the scenery spreading before his eyes, the monk asks them who they are. After revealing that they are the old nun and the weaver from the legend about Chūjō-hime, the two disappear enshrouded in a purple cloud. In response to the monk's prayer to see more of the revelation, the spirit of Chūjō-hime appears in second part of the play. She is now an inhabitant of Amida's Pure Land, enjoying the heavenly music and dances of the bodhisattvas. After reminding the monk about Amida's sacred vow to rescue all beings, she expresses her joy in a celestial dance and eventually disappears. This is when the monk wakes up from his dream.

There are several fascinating points about this Noh, whose creation is attributed to Zeami himself. With its original story being a famous legend, known beforehand by anyone, the author intently omitted some episodes, in order to concentrate on others and to even rearrange the contents to fit his auctorial purpose. The highlight of the play consists in the way the mandala is woven into the text, in a manner so subtle that it often remains unnoticed, both by audiences and by readers. In the scene where the old nun shows the monk around Taema temple, the place appears to be identical to the image of Amida's Pure Land such as it is depicted in the famous mandala. The colors of the landscape are the five colors that the lotus threads had been dyed in and even the pond and the cherry tree remind one of the sacred realm in heaven.

With the underlying theme of *Taema* being the rebirth of women in the Pure Land, it is all the more significant that the main role was played by a female Noh actor. Uzawa Hisa and her daughter Uzawa Hikaru belong to the very few women Noh actors active at the moment. A member of the Tessenkai group for Noh studies and involved also in projects related to contemporary theatre, Uzawa Hisa's activity spans over the borders between performing arts.

Taema/St. Clair

Q & A
Continued

[St. Clair's's comments resume]

In its Japanese form, Noh is performed by just a few players, a handful of actors, a small chorus, and a single flute and a couple of drums. The music is very severe and minimalistic even by recent western standards. The declamation of the lyrics in the Japanese form of Noh performance is very slow and chant-like. Even for Japanese who follow along with a libretto booklet it is hard to follow.

As a composer of western music for over a half century, I am steeped in the musical traditions of my own culture, hence I chose a western style to go with the English translation of Zeami's play. In my opera, I have created a completely accessible music with flowing melodies, rich harmonies, and a lot of movement and dramatic variety to appeal to most music lovers. The libretto suggested to me a rich and sumptuous musical setting. The stylistic language of my opera could thus be characterized as post-romantic tonality with a modern "accent".

JP: I noticed that you created the opera with limited forces and resources. As a college



A typical stage set-up for a Noh drama.

opera director, I thank you for your wisdom in those choices. The smaller size of the orchestra and cast, and the 60 minutes length make performance more plausible for those of us working in academia. Is that why you chose smaller forces, or are there other reasons?

RSC: The play I chose as my libretto is only in two relatively short acts, hence it seemed most appropriate to write for limited forces as a chamber opera. Since there is a flute in traditional Noh theater, I expanded the wind timbre to a full ensemble of flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon.

However, I also wanted a rich accompaniment, so I added a full complement of strings, a harp, timpani, and chimes. Though it is conceived as a chamber opera, it could occupy the first segment of a grand opera program of shorter operas, with a full string section.

JP: What is it about this text that calls to you?

RSC: The text deals with miraculous events not usually associated with Buddhism. I am a Pure Land Buddhist (the actual term is Jodo Shinshu Buddhism or simply Shin Buddhism) and the libretto has a Pure Land Buddhist theme, the miraculous origin of a gigantic mandala or woven painting depicting the Western Pure Land of the Amida Buddha, the savior-Buddha revered widely among East Asian Buddhists from Vietnam to China to Korea to Japan. This is the form of Buddhism that I believe in and follow.

Most people think of Buddhism as sitting cross-legged on the floor for hours on end, doing abstruse purification rituals, or studying mysterious word puzzles called koans. Pure Land Buddhism is about joyful faith and devotional reverence, not rigorous practice most people associate with Zen or other forms of meditative Buddhism.

As the libretto unfolds, the singers explain the faith aspect of Pure Land Buddhism as it

reveals the miraculous event for which the play is named.

JP: What is it that you hope the listener gains from this experience?

RSC: First and foremost, I want the listener to engage with my music and the story of the play. Nothing would make me happier than if people simply liked my music, as I wrote the music to be enjoyed as music and as drama. If there is a further interest in Buddhism that results from this experience I would be delighted, but I am not attempting to proselytize or convert, for I respect others' spiritual paths in life as their inner leading.

JP: Thank you, Richard St. Clair, for sharing your opera with us. A composer bares his/her soul in a composition such as this, and we appreciate your willingness to be vulnerable and truthful. I wish you many performances of your creative output. On behalf of the National Opera Association's Sacred in Opera Project, I thank you sincerely.

当麻

TAEMA

A BUDDHIST OPERA IN TWO ACTS

By Richard St. Clair
On a 15th Century Japanese Noh play by Zeami Motokiyo
English Translation by Thomas Rimer

INSTRUMENTATION:

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in B-flat
Bassoon
Chimes
Timpani
Harp
SATB Chorus with SATBB soloists
Strings

DURATION:
About One Hour

PLOT SUMMARY:

Find the complete summary of the storyline by clicking [here](#).

NOTE BY THE COMPOSER:

This opera may also be presented in concert format as an oratorio. If presented in opera format, there is a dance interlude near the end of Act Two, which should be choreographed. If presented in oratorio format, the dance interlude in Act Two should be played as written but not choreographed.

-Richard St. Clair-

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

Waki: A priest of the Jodo (Pure Land) Sect – BASS

Wakitsure: Two attendant priests – BARITONE and TENOR

Tsure: A girl, the manifestation of the Goddess of Mercy (KWANNON) – SOPRANO

Shite: Part I: a nun, the manifestation of Amida – ALTO

Part II: the Princess Chuio (same singer) – ALTO

Kyogen: A person from the vicinity – TENOR

Taema/St.Clair

Biography

RICHARD ST. CLAIR is a Harvard educated composer living in Boston. The play Richard chose for his libretto was written in the first part of the 15th century. His complete biography and extensive list of composed works can be found [here](#).



Dr. St. Clair has been composing music for over 50 years. And, he has a predilection for vocal music. Prior to his conversion to Buddhism, he composed for the church. This music can be found [here](#). Christian influence was important in his life, being brought up in the church. He found the church to be a refuge during troubling times. But later in life after a profound personal tragedy he found Buddhism to better address his life issues in a more complete and satisfying way. While searching JSTOR, Richard found a translation of Noh plays by J. Thomas Rimer (Professor Emeritus from the University of Pittsburgh.) This particular play spoke to Richard, as he found it to be suited to both his spirituality and his aesthetics. He was soon convinced that he had found the perfect libretto.

Richard has composed in a wide variety of styles that early on revealed an influence by the avant-garde. He soon broke away from that mold and pursued a more neoclassical/neoromantic vein of composition. But, he has never pinned himself down to any one style. He can write in twelve-tone technique for one composition and then write a completely tonal work right afterwards. He revels in the stylistic freedom that modern musical life has made for the composer.

Richard was a guest at the Marlboro Academy of Music in 1967, where Rudolf Serkin encouraged him to pursue a career as a composer. Richard earned a Ph.D. in Music Composition from Harvard University in 1978, though ultimately he found the academic realm to be constraining. One of his classmates at Harvard was John Adams, another composer who found academia to be stifling to the composer's creative spirit.

Noh drama has a long tradition in Japanese theater, evolving over a period of centuries.

THE SACRED IN OPERA

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Co-Editors

John Pfautz
Kurt-Alexander Zeller

Layout Editor

Daniel Hammond

Committee Members

John Pfautz, Co-Chair
Kurt-Alexander Zeller, Co-Chair
Ruth Dobson
Karen Esquivel
Susan McBerry
Bill Bugg

The co-editors are interested in highlighting productions of sacred music drama presented by NOA members.

Contact us at johnpfautz@augustana.edu

NOA Convention 2015
January 8 - 11 in Greensboro, NC
Click Here to Register Now!