

OperaOggiNY
Thomas Lawrence Toscano - Artistic Director
William R. Lewis - Music Director

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For Immediate Release:
OperaOggiNY to re-open McCaddin Memorial Hall Theater

They say that miracles only happen in the movies, or at least in other places, but, a true cultural miracle has happened in the swiftly changing neighborhood of Williamsburg. A 600 seat, "theater" complete with 50 foot proscenium arch raked stage and a balcony, plenty of fly space with classic brick and wood and plaster construction has been found and is about to be opened to the public by a collaboration between OperaOggiNY and the St. Peter and Paul parish.

With feverish construction having implanted itself in the Williamsburg North/South neighborhood, and a clear lack of performance spaces of this nature within this area, this theater could have a very serious impact upon musicians, singers, actors, other performing artists and their audiences from both sides of the East River.

OperaOggiNY's artistic director Thomas Lawrence Toscano said it best: "I just couldn't believe it. A 600 seat theater, intact? Yes, it certainly needs work, but, given our simple and direct approach to opera, we can give some fabulously intense performances here."

The why of all of this all happened very innocently. During the summer, Mr. Toscano was looking for some rehearsal and possible performance space in local churches. A connection with community board member Esteban Duran, put him in touch with Fr. Rick Buehler (Pastor of St. Peter and Paul's), who decided to give it a try, and the rest is happening at this very moment.

Rehearsals, started this week, are already bringing serious opera back to the theater. With Music Director, Bill Lewis, (coach to none other than the Met's Marcello Giordani and accompanist to all of Ronan Tynan's appearances) as part of the mix, these two very serious performers are preparing L'Oracolo, by Leone. Although presented within the last 2 years in a concert version in Manhattan, this is the first time that the work has been staged in an extremely long time. This one act verismo opera, composed by Leoni, who was a student with Puccini and part of Ponchielli's studio, will not disappoint. Set in San Francisco's China Town, circa 1900, it was all the rage at the Met while Antonio Scotti was a star.

The building may be overlooked but, it has an illustrious history, all but, forgotten. New York's Mayor McClellan, to name but one, made important, timely political speeches to their constituents (before radio and certainly television) in this space. According to 1971 New York Times article Henry Miller, (the infamous writer) went to school in this building. It was built in 1897 and dedicated in 1898. When opened it boasted a free library as well as this unique performance space. Later it was turned into a school and remained so until a few years ago.

Performances Nov. 6, 7, 8. McCaddin Memorial 288 Berry Street.

Hours 8pm.

Admission: \$20 dollars.

Williamsburg Brooklyn

Subway access: L train or J,M,Z trains.

For more information call: please contact Will Carter @ 718-312-8064

or write press@operaogginy.com

Other relevant links
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Artistic Director; Thomas Lawrence Toscano

(conductor/composer, a history of performances in Sicily, South America, US, founded various orchestras and the Vizzini Music Festival, conducted and co-produced the first Philip Glass opera in South America "The Fall of the House of Usher"; student of Bernstein, Giulini, Mueller)

Musical Director: William Lewis

Consummate opera coach and accompanist, constantly works with, Marcello Giordani, Ronan Tynan, Maureen O'Flynn, Lauren Flannigan, J.Patrick Rafferty, Spiro Malas, Cythia Haymann, to name a few.

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