

Off-Brand
OPERA

PRESENTS A READING OF



PIETA

A NEW OPERA

MUSIC BY **JAKE LANDAU**

LIBRETTO BY **JAKE LANDAU & ANDREA DELGIUDICE**

DIRECTED BY **ANDREA DELGIUDICE**

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 AT 7PM

OPERA AMERICA • 330 7TH AVE, 7TH FLOOR

Off-Brand Opera

presents

a reading of

PIETÀ

Music by Jake Landau

Libretto by Jake Landau & Andrea DelGiudice

Directed by Andrea DelGiudice

Opera America

Mark Scorca Hall

Sunday, September 10 at 7pm

Cast:

Editta, a princess and a former singer of the PietàDevony Smith

Genovieffa Lyrica, a singer of the Pietà Claire Leyden

Fia, a ragamuffin, friend of Giorgio's Michelle Pauker

Odele Violista, a violist of the Pietà Alexia DelGiudice

La Direttrice, Headmistress of the Pietà Veronica Shea

Giorgio, grandson of Ugo and Editta Jordan Weatherston Pitts

Ugo, *il Padrone* of the Pietà, husband of Editta Jason Detwiler

Chorus of Figlie, “daughters” of the Pietà

including

Chiara Lyrica, a singer of the Pietà Erin Kennedy

Francesca Flautista, a flautist of the Pietà Nicole Goldstein

Dulce Arpista, a harpist of the Pietà Kayla Faccilongo

Rosanella Violinista, a violinist of the Pietà Christine Duncan

Piano Jake Landau

Cello Anthime Miller

About *Pietà*:

Against the dark, sinful city of 18th-century Venice, the *Ospedale della Pietà* (a real historical institution) glows with hope, humor, and music. The Pietà is an orphanage that takes girls off the street and trains them to sing and play instruments, forming one of Europe’s most elite orchestras of the day. Daughters of the Pietà (figlie) always perform from behind an impenetrable lattice, hidden from their audiences for propriety’s sake. Though they are cared for there, the figlie are kept under strict lock and key.

Outside the walls, the institution’s wealthy padroni (headmasters), Ugo and Editta, have raised teenage Giorgio as their adopted grandson. When Giorgio falls in love with a figlia named Genovieffa and takes her home to meet his grandparents, long-repressed family secrets rush to the surface. Editta, revealed to be a former figlia who will eventually become Suor Angelica’s La Zia Principessa, sees in Genovieffa a chance to fight her way out from years of shame over what she once did to her young niece Angelica—Giorgio’s mother. But will Editta be able to face down the truth of her trauma and have mercy on herself even as the past begins to repeat?

CONTENT NOTICE

Pietà discusses multiple instances of sexual assault, including one (in blackout) during the events of the opera.

1. Atone	Tutti
2. You Are All I See	Genovieffa, Giorgio
3. Pietà.....	Genovieffa, Editta, Giorgio, Ugo
4. You Must Have Mercy On Yourself	Genovieffa
5. For Shame	Editta
6. Under Some Other Sky	Fia, Odele
7. What Does A Mother Mean?.....	Giorgio
8. Stabat Mater	Tutti
9. Finale.....	Tutti

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QUOTES FROM DIRECTOR AND COMPOSER

“A hurt so small... will wear my life away” - MARION ANGUS

I was so deeply moved by the stories of the young women kept in the Tuam Home for Mothers and Babies, popularized recently by the book *My Name is Bridget*, by Alison O'Reilly. It took a researcher named Catherine Corliss, who remembered these women from her childhood in the 1950s, dedicating her *life* to discovering and exposing the truth about these “homes” to finally get that institution shut down. As a mother myself, I feel compelled to tell these women's stories in my evening-length concept for pairing *Pietà* and *Suor Angelica*. The two institutions where the operas take place (the *Ospedale della Pietà* and *Casa Santa Maria*, respectively) serve as metaphors for the larger systems external and internal imprisoning these women. This evening is about the inner lives of these young women and the meaning of motherhood, mercy and hope.

In partnership with composer and co-librettist Jake Landau, our story is told through the eyes of a young *Editta*, (La Zia Principessa in *Suor Angelica*), filling in her early life at the *Pietà* and the mysterious circumstances connecting her to Angelica's imprisonment at *Casa Santa Maria*. The relationship between these two women, and the circumstances that got them there, are at the heart of my work as a director.”

– Andrea DelGiudice, Director; Co-Librettist

“A large part of Andrea DelGiudice's thesis as a director is to devictimize old portrayals of female characters in opera and present them as fully rounded people. As a composer, it's my honor to write music that allows these characters to express the full complexity of their humanity, integrating contemporary musical theater techniques (such as belting) into traditional operatic singing. The rise of agency for female characters correlates with the gradual lowering of their average voice types over time, for the chest voice allows their words to be heard and, therefore, significant. This is why the soprano is standard in opera and where in more contemporary musical theater, it's the belter. But in general for me, it's all about using people to the full extent of their extraordinary talents, rather than requesting anyone change what they are so skilled at, and embracing the power of innovatively diverse performance practices.”

– Jake Landau, Composer; Co-Librettist

ABOUT OUR ARTISTS



Jake Landau (*Composer & Co-Librettist*), b. 1995, is a composer and librettist based in New York City. His music has been performed by the New York Philharmonic, Houston Grand Opera, and headlining Broadway stars in venues as diverse as Carnegie Hall, the Royal Palace of Amsterdam, and Birdland Jazz Club. Jake is a Clarendon Scholar of Oxford University and an Extension-Division faculty member at The Juilliard School, having graduated from both institutions. His musical *Psyche* had its first 29-hour Equity reading in November '22, following the premiere of his opera *Aeterna* in Italy that summer. Jake is represented by UIA Talent. www.JakeLandau.com



Andrea DelGiudice (*Director & Co-Librettist*)'s credits include an international career in Europe and the United States as a leading soprano and a female centered, conceptual stage director. She has performed at such prestigious venues as the Scottish National Opera, Munich State Opera, Liege Opera, Opera Bonn, Edmonton Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, and Arizona Opera alongside renowned artists such as Placido Domingo, Johan Botha, and Sherill Milnes. She made her directing debut with her edgy, female-driven conceptual productions of Verdi's *La Traviata* followed by Bizet's *Carmen* at the Axelrod Performing Arts Center as well as Italy's Narnia Festival, followed by a newly imagined double bill of Puccini's *Suor Angelica* with the workshop of *Pietà*. Recent projects include *La Bohème* (Light Opera of New Jersey), *Don Giovanni* (Seton Hall), *Dido and Aeneas*, & *Aeterna*, (another Landau/DelGiudice collaboration), and *Hansel and Gretel* (Narnia Festival). Ms. DelGiudice is one of the most sought-after voice teachers and vocal consultants in New York City with students currently engaged nationally and internationally. She is excited to direct the American Premiere of our double bill, *Pietà* and *Suor Angelica* at Oklahoma City University in November of this year. Andrea is represented by Randsman Artists Management. www.andreadelgiudice.com

ABOUT OUR ARTISTS (CONT.)



Alexia DelGiudice (*Odele Violista*) Violist Alexia DelGiudice (she/her) received her master's degree from Northwestern University, studying under the tutelage of renowned violist Helen Callus. She received her Bachelor of Music from the Juilliard School as a student of Misha Amory and Heidi Castleman. In February of 2017, Alexia debuted as viola soloist performing the Hoffmeister Viola Concerto with the Northwestern University Baroque Orchestra. In 2018 and 2019, Alexia performed with New York City Opera Orchestra in their productions of Donizetti and Rameau's *Pigmalione*, and their 2019 world premiere production of *Stonewall*. She currently plays with dell'Arte Opera Ensemble, MidAtlantic Orchestra, and New Amsterdam Opera. In 2019, Alexia performed the Elgar Cello Concerto with the Narnia Festival Orchestra in Amelia, Italy. In 2020, Alexia was featured as a soloist in the award winning NYC film premiere of *Pietà*, and in 2021 performed in the European premiere of *Pietà* in Narni, Italy.



Jason Detwiler (*Ugo*) With over sixty roles to his credit, Detwiler has become well-known for his magnetic and energizing stage performances. Last season saw him perform Counts Almaviva and di Luna, Germont, Scarpia, Lescaut, Peter, and the world premiere of Aeneas (Jake Landau's & *Aeterna*) in Idaho, New York, New Jersey, and Italy, as well as numerous role/company debuts as Edgar (*Tell Tale Heart*) with Opera Modesto, Opera Mississippi's Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), at Carnegie Hall in Vivaldi's *Magnificat*, and with New York City Opera in an abridged *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* (Papa) in Florence, Italy. The baritone was a 2023 Idaho Commission on the Arts recipient. (student of Andrea DelGiudice)



Christine Duncan (*Rosanella Violinista*) Mezzo-soprano Christine Duncan has always been fascinated by the voice and all the different ways it can sound, convey emotion, and tell a story. Trained simultaneously in classical, world folk and musical theater, she has developed a passion for a diversity of vocal styles and projects that cross genre boundaries. Her pursuit of vocal performance has led Christine to work with companies such as Grammy-winning Odyssey Opera/Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Beth Morrison/White Snake Projects, New Amsterdam Opera, The Center for Contemporary Opera, Fresh Squeezed Opera, Astoria Music Festival and the Narnia Festival. Favorite recent roles include Maurya in *Riders To The Sea: The Musical*, The Witch in *Ino The Woods* (Off-Brand Opera), La Principessa in *Suor Angelica* (Narnia Festival) and Nemine in *Captain* (Susanna Payne-Passmore/University of Oregon). Christine is an original cast member of *Pietà* and is thrilled to reprise her role as Rosanella Violinista. Christine is also a founding member and Artistic Director of Off-Brand Opera. (student of Andrea DelGiudice)

ABOUT OUR ARTISTS (CONT.)



Kayla Faccilongo (*Dulce Arpista*) is a Bronx native vocalist of Puerto Rican descent. Kayla recently made her Carnegie Hall debut singing with New York City Opera for the American premiere of *Vessels of Light* by Lera Auerbach. She also made her Lincoln Center debut last year as a featured soloist with the New York Philharmonic under the direction of Grammy winning Latin Jazz pianist and composer, Arturo O’Farrill. Other notable appearances include *The Mikado* with Bronx Opera, the original film premiere of *Pietà* in 2020, as well as the world premiere of *Gracvus* at Stamford Center of the Arts this summer. She holds her Bachelor of Music from the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College & Master of Arts from the Royal Academy of Music. (student of Andrea DelGiudice)



Nicole Goldstein (*Francesca Flautista*) is an NYC-based crossover artist with an affinity for both Opera and Musical Theatre. Recent credits include: *Dogfight* (Rose) and *The Light in the Piazza* (Clara cover) at Red River Lyric Opera, *On The Right Track* at AMT Theatre (The Woman u/s), *Iolanthe* (Celia), *A Concert for Sugihara* (Chorus) and *Anyone Can Whistle* (High Soprano Soloist) at Carnegie Hall, and *& Aeterna* (Aeterna) premiere at The Narnia Festival (Italy). Nicole received her BM in vocal performance from Oberlin Conservatory, as well as a graduate certificate from the Professional Conservatory of Musical Theatre at NYFA. (student of Andrea DelGiudice)



Erin Kennedy (*Chiara Lyrica*) is an original cast member of *Pietà* thrilled to perform it live in NYC for the first time! Recent roles include: Theater for the New City’s *A Stitch in Time* (First Lady), Ridgewood Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company’s *The Pirates of Penzance* (Mabel), Off-Brand Opera’s *Carousel* (Carrie) and *Into the Woods* (Baker’s Wife), Eccentric Theatre Company’s *Die Fledermaus* (Ida), Light Opera of New Jersey’s *La Bohème* (Musetta cover/ Angel); Fort Salem Theater’s *Nietzsche! A New Musical* (Lou Salomé). Erin also works as a pianist and music director (York Theatre, Ridgewood Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company, Off-Brand Opera). erinkatkenedy.com (student of Andrea DelGiudice)



Claire Leyden (*Genovieffa Lyrica*) NATIONAL TOUR: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Mrs. Bucket); New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players: *The Pirates of Penzance* (Mabel). NEW YORK: Heartbeat Opera: *The Extinctionist*, *Der Freischütz*; Victor Herbert Renaissance Project Live: *Madeleine* (Madeleine). REGIONAL: Riverside Center for the Performing Arts: *The Pirates of Penzance* (Mabel); Bristol Valley Theater: *It’s A Small World (or, The Robot Play)* (World Premiere), *Sherlock: Holmes and the Case of the Jersey Lily*; College Light Opera Company: *Brigadoon* (Jean), *A Little Night Music* (Mrs. Segstrom), *The Sorcerer* (Aline). TV: “Gossip Girl.” AWARDS: Lotte Lenya Competition Songbook Prize and Emerging Talent Award. EDUCATION: Williams College, BA. www.ClaireLeyden.com @claireley (student of Andrea DelGiudice)

ABOUT OUR ARTISTS (CONT.)



Michelle Pauker (*Fia*) is thrilled to be returning Off-Brand Opera! She was most recently seen as Nora in OBO's *Riders To The Sea*, adapted by Jake Landau & Phoebe Corde and directed by George Abud. Past credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Idaho Shakespeare Festival), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Great Lakes Theatre Co.), *Into The Woods* (Forestburgh Playhouse). Michelle is grateful to the team at Off-Brand Opera for creating a space where artists can embrace their curiosity, explore, collaborate, and push boundaries! www.MichellePauker.com



Jordan Pitts (*Giorgio*) Tenor Jordan Weatherston Pitts has been recognized for his “heroic”, “passionate” and “bewitching” performances both on the operatic stage and in concert. He has been seen in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Classical Review*, *The Financial Times*, *Opera News*, *OperaWire*, *The Boston Globe*, *Early Music America Magazine*, and *The New York Times*. Jordan has performed with New York City Opera, Opera Saratoga's Young Artist Program, as an Orvis Studio Artist with Hawaii Opera Theater, as well as in concert with Hartford Symphony Orchestra, The New York Opera Collaborative, The Garden State Opera, The Boston Camerata, Heartbeat Opera, The Newburyport Choral Society, and the Western New York Chamber Orchestra. Mr. Pitts holds a Master of Music from Boston University and a Bachelor of Music Performance from SUNY Fredonia.



Veronica Shea (*La Direttrice*) is a singer, actor, producer and digital marketer passionate about storytelling and sharing authentic onstage connection with audiences. She is excited to return to the role of La Direttrice in *Pietà* after performing in its Italian premiere at the Narnia International Vocal Arts Festival in 2021. Other recent roles include Musetta in Light Opera of New Jersey's production of *La Bohème*, Juno in *& Aeterna* at the Narnia International Vocal Arts Festival, Rosalinda in Eccentric Theater Company's *Die Fledermaus*, Mabel in both Ridgewood Gilbert & Sullivan's and Summit Chorale's *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Julie Jordan in Off-Brand Opera's *Carousel*. She is a Founder of Eccentric Theater Company and Off-Brand Opera, and the Director of Marketing at The York Theatre Company. veronicashea.com (student of Andrea DelGiudice)



Devony Smith (*Edita*), mezzo soprano, hails from Watsonville, California and is currently based in NYC. She will debut this season with Opera Modesto & Boheme Jersey Opera, and has appeared with the Brooklyn Art Song Society, Colburn Symphony Orchestra, New Orchestra of Washington, Midatlantic Opera Company, & Utopia Opera. She made her Lincoln Center solo recital debut as the Grand Prize Winner of the MIMF Art Song Competition; she participated in the prestigious Song Continues workshop at Carnegie Hall. Devony is a voice teacher at The Neighborhood Playhouse School. (student of Andrea DelGiudice)



ABOUT OFF-BRAND OPERA

In a world where brand definition rules, three singers found themselves longing for a space to play around with something different—something off-brand. Tradition told them that's not *how it's done*. But what if it could be?

Off-Brand Opera strives to push and blur the boundaries of genre and performance practice, bringing musical communities together in the service of telling a story. We encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration in order to foster fresh, relatable, and relevant interpretations of beloved works.

Off-Brand Opera is committed to:

- Creating a safe space for artists to take risks when it comes to performance practice and genre.
- Performing in intimate, non-traditional venues to foster audience connection, communication, and immersion.
- Hiring musicians from a diverse set of musical backgrounds, including opera, musical theater, jazz, folk, hip-hop/R&B, and pop/rock.
- Welcoming project ideas from audience members, friends, and donors.

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