



THREE WAY

world premiere



NASHVILLE
OPERA



present

THREE WAY

A Trio of One-Act Operas

Music by Robert Paterson

Libretto by David Cote

ANN AND FRANK BUMSTEAD, WORLD PREMIERE SPONSORS

World Premiere, January 27, 2017 • James K. Polk Theater, TPAC

Production Conceived and Directed by John Hoomes
for Nashville Opera and American Opera Projects

Conducted by Dean Williamson • Featuring the Nashville Opera Orchestra

CAST

THE COMPANION

Maya, <i>a single woman</i>	Danielle Pastin
Joe, <i>her android companion</i>	Samuel Levine*
Dax, <i>the tech-support guy</i>	Wes Mason

SAFE WORD

The Domme, <i>Mistress Salome, a dominatrix</i>	Eliza Bonet*
The Client, <i>a businessman</i>	Matthew Treviño

MASQUERADE

Jillian DeBridge } <i>hosts of the masquerade</i>	Eliza Bonet*
Bruce DeBridge }	Matthew Treviño
Jessie } <i>a thirtyish couple seeking spice</i>	Courtney Ruckman*†
Marcus }	Samuel Levine*
Connie } <i>secret swinglife veterans</i>	Danielle Pastin
Larry }	Wes Mason
Tyler } <i>an androgynous postgender couple</i>	Melisa Bonetti*†
Kyle }	Jordan Rutter*

* Nashville Opera Debut

TICKETS & INFORMATION

Contact Nashville Opera at 615.832.5242 or visit nashvilleopera.org.

Study Guide Contributors
Anna Young, Education Director
Cara Schneider, Creative Director

NASHVILLE OPERA WELCOMES YOU TO THREE WAY.

This production is intended for mature audiences and contains adult language and situations.

Three Way, a tantalizingly tongue-and-cheek title for three operatic vignettes, includes *The Companion*, *Safe Word*, and *Masquerade*. These comic operas take a closer look into relationships, desire, and human nature. Each piece cleverly unravels with exciting twists and turns, ensuring an evening of intrigue set to a smart, sometimes jazzy, often beautiful score. John Hoomes, Artistic Director and CEO of Nashville Opera, lovingly describes the piece as *Sex and the City* meets *The Twilight Zone*.

A WORLD PREMIERE

Nashville Opera is proud to produce the world premiere of *Three Way* in partnership with American Opera Projects. Nashville opera enthusiasts get the first chance to see this evocative piece. Encore performances later occur in New York at the Brooklyn Academy of Music beginning June 15, 2017.

THE STORY (STORIES!)

THE COMPANION

The evening opens with *The Companion* and we are introduced to Maya and Joe. Maya is a career woman who has it all—including the perfect man. He cooks, cleans, compliments and is always waiting to rub her feet after a long day. He fulfills her every need (wink!) with no complaint or opinion of his own. One may ponder how this could be possible until we realize Joe is an android; a synthetic man! Maya purchased a basic model “companion” and is very happy with him until he begins to show glitches and is in need of repair. Dax, a handsome technician, is called to run an update on Joe’s software. He asks Maya why she chooses to emotionally invest in something that isn’t alive when she could find real love with another per-

son. She answers by explaining Joe is the perfect man—or is he? This clever opening drama explores the definition of a perfect mate and the essential elements of a relationship. Should potential disappointment with something real mean more than emotional stability and perfect expectations with something synthetic?

SAFE WORD

Safe Word unfolds in a posh apartment where we meet “Mistress Salomé,” a highly paid dominatrix. (One could say this opera features a strong female lead!) The story takes a closer look at boundaries and power with a series of unexpected events ultimately leaving the audience guessing as to who is really in control.

MASQUERADE

Finally, we find ourselves at a mysterious party filled with colorful characters in *Masquerade*. The audience gets a sneak peek into many different kinds of relationships. Initially, a seemingly racy situation explores loneliness and the need for human connection.

This witty production of *Three Way* shares much in common with all great opera plots—relationships, love, loneliness, and desire.



THREE WAY cast members Matt Treviño, Sam Levine, Eliza Bonet, Wes Mason, and Danielle Pastin get playful in a photoshoot.

LISTEN FOR THIS!

All three operas are written for classically trained voices and chamber orchestra. A chamber orchestra refers to a smaller group of instruments and is often intended for an intimate venue or chamber. Our orchestra contains the following: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French horn, percussion, piano (doubling synthesizer), 2 violins, viola, cello, bass, and one conductor. Approximately 12 players round out the ensemble.

The style of writing has a spiced-up Broadway feel in which large, dramatic moments are supported with tuneful melodies. The listener will enjoy this smart, rhythmic score, often incorporating the usage of text painting. Text painting refers to musical gestures that telegraph the text and support the action of a scene. Much of the plot unfolds in the style of recitative or sung music in which the clear declamation of text is paramount and often accompanied by simplistic chord progressions.

THE COMPANION includes three singers (soprano, tenor, baritone)

“The Perfect Man,” sung by the soprano character Maya, contains a funny text set to a lyrical melody with simple accom-

paniment making certain the words are easily understood. The text, “What I want is a man. Not just any man: the perfect man,” bookends the aria. The final note is sung with a tender pianissimo (or soft dynamic) in the high register of the soprano voice.

The accompaniment for “Broken Machines,” makes use of a flowing pattern that propels the piece forward as a kind of work-song for the character Dax (baritone) as he tends to Joe. Dax ironically repeats the phrase, “People are broken machines,” referring to his clients and comparing them to the androids he repairs.

Joe’s tenor aria, “You Were My First Love,” has a tenderly crafted melody with a lovely theme. It is an expertly written piece with a free flowing, gentle accompaniment. This aria provides one of the most genuine moments of *The Companion* and is ironically delivered by the only non-human character in the opera! Truth sometimes reveals itself in the most unlikely places. In contrast, the opera closes with a repetitive, almost mechanical duet between Dax and Maya, eluding to a blossoming love between the two.

SAFE WORD includes two singers (mezzo, bass-baritone)

The Client’s aria, “A Man Needs,” is a highly tuneful and rhythmic piece. Its jazzy style may remind one of a sultry cabaret piece. The client explains his desires and reason for his session.

“Pain and Release,” sung by the *Domme*, presents a moody and theatrically charged text giving insight into our mezzo-soprano’s character. The overall feel of the piece ebbs and flows as the title of the aria would suggest. The final chord is quite dissonant and clashes with an unsettled feeling suggesting there is more to the story.

MASQUERADE includes eight singers (2 sopranos, 2 mezzo-sopranos, counter-tenor, tenor, baritone, bass-baritone)

This opera incorporates a countertenor as part of an androgynous couple at the party. The other member of the pair is a mezzo-soprano. The selection of these two voices is perfect due to the similar quality and range they share. It is fascinating to hear them intertwine; the similar vocal colors blend beautifully. Often, composers use either a countertenor or a mezzo-soprano and a selection with both is sure to be an exciting rarity!

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Robert Paterson

A “modern day master” and often the “highlight of the program” (*The New York Times*), Robert Paterson’s music is loved for its elegance, wit, structural integrity, and a wonderful sense of color. Paterson was awarded Composer of the Year from the Classical Recording Foundation at Carnegie’s Weill Hall in 2011. His music has been on the Grammy® ballot yearly, and his music was named Best of 2012 on National Public Radio. Season highlights include Nashville Opera’s world premiere of *THREE WAY* which will be remounted with co-producer American Opera Projects at BAM in Brooklyn, June 15–18, 2017. Other premieres include his opera with Mark Campbell, *The Whole Truth, Shine* for the American Brass Quintet, *Moon Music* for the Claremont Trio, and *Graffiti Canons* for the Volti choir of San Francisco. His works have been performed by the Louisville Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Austin Symphony, Vermont Symphony, among others. Paterson’s choral album was released with Musica Sacra and maestro Kent Tritle, with a world premiere of *Lux Aeterna* at the Cathedral of St. John



the Divine. Paterson gives master classes at universities, including the Curtis Institute of Music, Aspen Music Festival, New York University, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Paterson is the artistic director of the American Modern Ensemble and resides in NYC with his wife Victoria, and their son Dylan. For more information, visit robertpaterson.com.



David Cote is a playwright, librettist and journalist based in New York City. Aside from collaborating with Robert Paterson, Cote’s opera with composer Stefan Weisman, *The Scarlet Ibis*, premiered to critical and audience acclaim in New York’s Prototype Festival in 2015. *The New York Times* called *The Scarlet Ibis* “an outstanding new chamber opera...a moving, intense and dignified creation.” His song cycle with Paterson, *In Real Life*, just had its world premiere in Texas with the Austin Chamber Ensemble. Two choral works with Paterson, *Did You Hear?* and *Snow Day*, were sung by Musica Sacra and conducted by Kent Tritle on Eternal Reflections (American Modern Recordings). Plays include *Otherland* (Eugene O’Neil National Playwrights Conference finalist), *Rude News*, *Porlock*, and *Aristotle’s Comedies*. David is theater editor and chief

THE LIBRETTIST

David Cote

drama critic of *Time Out New York* and a contributing critic on NYU’s On Stage. His reporting and criticism have appeared in *American Theatre*, *Opera News*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times* and elsewhere. He has taught seminars in arts criticism at Brooklyn College and wrote popular companion books to the hit Broadway musicals *Wicked*, *Jersey Boys* and *Spring Awakening*. In the 1990’s, David was an actor and director, working with avant-garde icon Richard Foreman, Iranian exile auteur Assurbanipal Babilla, and writer-director Richard Maxwell. He directed the world premiere of Babilla’s acclaimed monologue, *Something Something Über Alles (Das Jackpot)*, as well as the 2013 revival starring Robert Honeywell of Brooklyn’s Brick Theater. David lives in Manhattan with his wife, audiobook narrator Katherine Kellgren. His work has been developed and presented by Nashville Opera, Opera America, Gingold Theatrical Group, HERE, Beth Morrison Projects, American Opera Projects, and Fort Worth Opera.

REVIEWS

FROM THE WORKSHOPS OF THREE WAY

“Composer Robert Paterson and librettist David Cote have created an effortlessly funny, clever and deeply resonant opera, in which the music and the story fuel one another to create an entertaining and meaningful theatrical experience.”

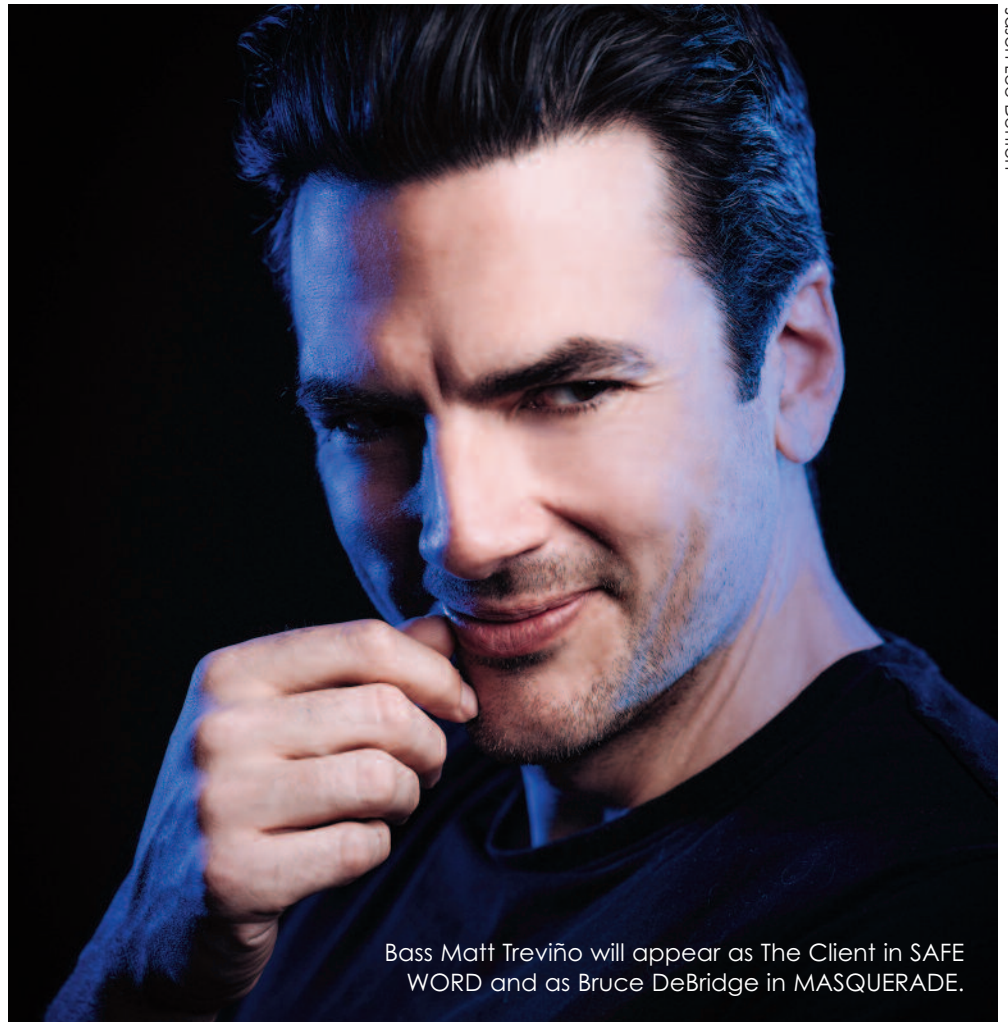
— *Opera News*

“...an innovative—and, yes, occasionally explosive—cocktail of opera buffa, sex comedy, science fiction, psychological study and social commentaries, all supported by an appropriately gritty score... wildly, yet smartly, entertaining.”

— *Classical Music Rocks.net*

“Robert Paterson’s brilliant score provided a magical counterpoint... a highly enjoyable comic opera. to the humorous contretemps by revealing the emotional truth of what was really happening instead of being whimsical or humorous... the elements came together in a fun way that made *The Companion* a highly enjoyable comic opera.”

— *StageBuddy.com*



Jason Lee Denton

Bass Matt Treviño will appear as The Client in SAFE WORD and as Bruce DeBridge in MASQUERADE.

OPERA ETIQUETTE

ALWAYS BE EARLY!

Please arrive early to ensure you are able to find your seat before the performance begins and before the orchestra tunes. If you are late, you may miss the overture or even the first act!

OPERA IS FOR ALL AGES TO ENJOY!

Opera is full of emotion, passion, human conflict, and discovery. Nashville Opera usually presents operas in their original language and projects supertitles above the stage so the audience can understand every word.

WHAT TO WEAR

Many people think of a night at the opera as a glamorous event and an excuse to bring out the fancy attire. But, it is also acceptable to dress comfortably. For dress rehearsals, the casual attire that students wear to school is perfectly acceptable. A light sweater, jacket, or wrap is suggested because the theater is air-conditioned.

USE THE RESTROOM

Once in the theater it is courteous to remain seated and involved in the production until intermission. Please do not leave the theater unless there is an emergency.

PLEASE BE COURTEOUS...

to everyone in the audience and on stage. Opera is a live performance, so any talking, cell-phone use (including texting) or other noise/light disruption takes away from everyone's experience at the opera. Remember that unlike many staged performances, opera singers do not use microphones. This makes it essential to wait until intermission to unwrap gum/candy, talk to your neighbor or use electronic devices that may distract others. Be sure to turn off cell phone and pagers.

APPLAUSE WELCOME!

There are several times during a performance when it is appropriate to applaud the performers. The first opportunity to applaud takes place when the conductor takes the podium at the very beginning of the performance and when he/she returns to the podium following intermission(s). It is also acceptable to applaud after an overture or aria in the middle of a performance. Applaud when the performance moves you. You may show your appreciation to the performers by shouting "Bravo!" for a male performer, "Brava!" for a female performer, or "Bravi!" for an ensemble. At the conclusion of the performance, singers who performed principal roles in the opera will take their "curtain call." It is appropriate to continue applauding until all singers have stepped forward to accept their applause. Sometimes, audience members are so impressed with the overall performance of the opera, they will stand and applaud the entire ensemble. This is called a "standing ovation."

NO PHOTOS OR RECORDINGS PERMITTED



A SOUND ANATOMY OF OPERA

There are many different kinds of songs in opera. Performers may sing alone, in couples (duets), trios, or larger groups, and there are also moments when no one sings at all—and each composer develops his or her own preferred combinations of these options.

THE OVERTURE

An opera usually begins with an orchestral piece of music called the overture, which functions as an introduction to the opera. Lasting anywhere from five to twenty-five minutes, these opera overtures usually contain important themes from the rest of the production. Before 1800, house lights were not dimmed while the overture played, and audience members continued to talk, drink, and even play cards! This ceased in the 1900's as the overture became a more integral part of an operatic performance. At the end of the overture, the curtain rises and the story of the opera unfolds through a series of scenes. These scenes are organized into acts.

ARIAS

An aria is a solo moment for an opera singer and is usually accompanied by the orchestra. Italian for “air” or song, an aria stops the plot momentarily, giving each character the opportunity to express their innermost thoughts and feelings. These pieces also provide an opportunity for the singer to demonstrate their vocal and artistic skill. Mozart, Verdi and Puccini were able to achieve a remarkable balance between memorable melodies that perfectly suit the human voice while still reflecting the drama of the text.

RECITATIVES

Recitatives, a type of singing unique to opera, help propel the action forward. They can be accompanied either by a full orchestra, or, as is often the case with opera written before 1800, by harpsichord or keyboard instrument. Often introducing an aria, the text is delivered quickly and encompasses a very limited melodic range. It has no recognizable melody and the rhythms follow those of the spoken word.

ENSEMBLE (“TOGETHER”)

Ensemble singing deals with two or more voices of different range performing together. These include duets, trios, quartets, quintets, and sometimes sextets. The composer blends the voices depending on the dramatic requirements of the plot. For instance, a love duet may begin with each performer singing different music at different times, then gradually unifying into harmony. Conversely, the music of a duet may depict conflict. Georges Bizet used this technique in *Carmen*: if you listen to the duets sung by Carmen and Don José, you might notice that their musical lines are never completely blended, and this foreshadows their tragic ends.

CHORUS

Most operas include music sung by a large group of singers (sometimes more than 40) called a chorus. The chorus often appears in a crowd scene and can provide a stunning contrast to solo or ensemble singing. In one opera by Benjamin Britten, the chorus is played by a single male and a single female, as in the tradition of ancient Greek theatre.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

The orchestra accompanies the singing and introduces the opera with the overture. Musical and emotional themes often appear in orchestral introductions and conclusions to arias, recitatives, and choruses. In many cases, the orchestra plays such an important role, the gravity of its existence is that of a leading character.