and here we are

independence eve

mercury falling

odes to earth and air

and here we are

a shadow puppetry opera

COMPOSER	Matthew Welch
LIBRETTO	Daniel Neer
ORIGINAL SOURCE MATERIAL	Memoirs of Edgar Kneedler, Ethel Kneedler and Donald Kneedler

And Here We Are is an opera based on the memoirs of composer Matthew Welch's great uncle Edgar Kneedler, an opera singer isolated by his move to Asia and subsequent internment (1942-45) in the Santo Tomas concentration camp in WWII Philippines. The impact of cultural collisions is stressed in this unique narrative which culls from many sources. As Welch described in an interview about the new opera:

from composer Matthew Welch:

"The librettist, Daniel Neer, made a decision to center the narrative around my great-uncle Edgar Kneedler. But, since Daniel did quite the amount of research into other people's anecdotes about the camp, he also included information from other internees' memoirs and they all remembered things in different sequences, or with different emphasis. In a number of these other published books, Edgar Kneedler pops up quite a bit. So what Daniel was able to do was consolidate all of these into one quasi-fictive voice. We were able to tell a number of people's stories through a single narrative."

PERFORMANCE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

May 6, 2018

WORLD PREMIERE

National Sawdust, Brooklyn NYC

Daniel Neer (baritone), Matthew Welch (conductor), Jeanette Oi-Suk Yew (design and direction)

Elyse Kakacek (soprano), Kate Maroney (mezzo-soprano), Joe Chappel (bass)

Ben Holmes (trumpet), Joe Bergen (Percussion), Chris Graham (Percussion), Mark Utley (Percussion), Emily Manzo (piano), Ian Riggs (bass guitar), Joe Tucker (drums)

December 15, 2016 Story Binge II

Selected Scenes, Work in Progress 1 Merkin Concert Hall at Kaufman Music Center, NYC Daniel Neer (baritone), Joe Chappel (bass-baritone), Matthew Welch (conductor) Ben Holmes,(trumpet), Joe Bergen (vibraphone), Emily Manzo (piano), Ian Riggs (bass guitar), Brian Chase (drums)

December 12, 2015 Experiments in Opera

Selected Scenes | In Residence at The Stone, NYC

Daniel Neer (baritone), Kate Maroney (mezzo-soprano), Matthew Welch (conductor) featuring Blarvuster with Mantra percussion: Ben Holmes,(trumpet), Joe Bergen (vibraphone), Al Cerulo & Jude Traxler (glockenspiel), Emily Manzo (piano), Ian Riggs (bass guitar), Brian Chase (drums)

April 1 & 2, 2015 <u>Story Binge</u>

Selected Scenes, Work in Progress | Roulette Intermedium, Brooklyn Daniel Neer (baritone), Matthew Welch (alto sax and conductor) featuring Blarvuster: Ben Holmes,(trumpet), Joe Bergen (vibraphone), Emily Manzo (piano), Ian Riggs (bass guitar), Mike Pride (drums)

LINKS: And Here We Are WORLD PREMIERE promotional

And Here We Are

music by Matthew Welch

direction by Jeanette Yew

libretto by Daniel Neer

based upon a true story by Edgar, Kneedler

featuring Blarvuster and Mantra Percussion

National Sawdust May 6, 2018



experiments in opera







independence eve

an american opera in three scenes

COMPOSER LIBRETTO	<u>Sidney Marquez Boquiren</u> Daniel Neer		
Independence Eve is a new one-act chamber opera by composer Sidney Marquez Boquiren and librettist Daniel Neer that explores the troubled journey of race relations in America. Comprised of three independent scenes, each taking place on July 3 of different decades in unspecified cities, Independence Eve focuses on the stories of three character pairings struggling with identity and acceptance amidst issues that span one hundred years of our American experience. Independence Eve is being developed through the guidance and mentorship of American Opera Projects.			
PERFORMANCE HISTORY A	ND DEVELOPMENT		
January 24 & 26, 2020 Opera Birmingham I Red Mountain Theatre Company I Birmingham, Alabama Brian Wallin (tenor), Jorell Williams (baritone), Dennis Whitehead Darling (stage director), Cris Frisco (music director)			
June 3-11, 2017 UrbanArias Signature Theat Brandon Snook (tenor), Jorell V	WORLD PREMIERE re I Washington, DC Williams (baritone), Shaun Patrick Tubbs (director), Robert Wood (music director)		
	Scene I: 'Stop and Frisk' oject Concert: Black Lives Matter I Roulette, Brooklyn, NYC n Norfleet (baritone), Marlon Daniel (music director)		
February 3-5, 2015 Harlem School of the Arts I N Brandon Snook (tenor), Jorell V	Workshop and Reading YC Williams (baritone), Mila Henry (music director), Daniel Neer (director)		
	Reading Arts Center I Garden City, NY buth Oxford Space I Brooklyn, NYC Williams (baritone), Mila Henry (musical director, Damian Norfleet (director)		
	Scene I: 'Stop and Frisk' ear America Singing I Bronx Collaborative High School Williams (baritone), Mila Henry (music director), Damian Norfleet (director)		
	Scene I: 'Stop and Frisk' yn BEAT Festival I The Unsung City I Brooklyn Historical Society, Brooklyn NY Williams (baritone), Mila Henry (musical director), Ted Gorodetzky (director)		
September 13, 2014Scene I: 'Stop and Frisk'Two Sides Sounding I Brooklyn BEAT Festival I East New York Farmers Market I Brooklyn, NYBrandon Snook (tenor), Jorell Williams (baritone), Mila Henry (musical director), Ted Gorodetzky (director)			
May 2, 2014	Scene I: 'Stop and Frisk'		

Two Sides Sounding | AOP25: Living Composers, Living New York | The Actors Fund Arts Center | Brooklyn, NYC Brandon Snook (tenor), Jorell Williams (baritone), Mila Henry (musical director), Ted Gorodetzky (director)

November 6, 2013Libretto ReadingAmerican Opera ProjectsI First Chance Reading SeriesMichael Criscuolo and Damian Norfleet (actors), Lemuel Wade (director)

September 13 - 22, 2012Scene I: 'Stop and FriskAmerican Opera Projects I Brooklyn BEAT Festival I OPERAtion Brooklyn IThe Irondale Center, Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, Flatbush Reformed Church I Brooklyn, NYCBrandon Snook (tenor), Jorell Williams (baritone), Mila Henry (musical director), Noah Himmelstein (director)

September 7 & 9, 2012Scene I: 'Stop and Frisk'American Opera Projets I Composer & The Voice: Six Scenes I South Oxford Space I Brooklyn, NYCBrandon Snook (tenor), Jorell Williams (baritone), Mila Henry (piano), Noah Himmelstein (director)

PRESS:

June 5, 2017 – <u>The Washington Post: Tackling race in opera — at center stage</u> "There's a lot packed into this small, punchy piece... Opera doesn't need to be obviously relevant to be important. But when one does take on a particularly topical subject, it's nice to see it doing it justice."

June 8, 2017 – <u>DC Theatre Scene: New chamber opera Independence Eve from UrbanArias</u> "It's magical... the piece is thoughtful, tender and infinitely musical. Daniel Neer, the librettist, concentrates on the relationships, not the politics..."

June 4, 2017 – <u>DC Metro Theatre Arts: Review: 'Independence Eve' at UrbanArias</u> "This is compact opera that lays social concerns at your feet."

September 15, 2014 – <u>The New Yorker: "Stop, Frisk, Sing"</u> July 17, 2014 – <u>Crain's New York Business: "Stop-and-frisk, the musical"</u>

LINKS / INFO:

Independence Eve's development at American Opera Projects

Segment of 'Stop and Frisk' aria from The Actors Fund Arts Center, Brooklyn

Opera Birmingham performance: <u>Scene 1</u> <u>Scene 2</u> <u>Scene 3</u>

'Talk Of The Town' Feature in THE NEW YORKER













Boquiren and Neer's **INDEPENDENCE** An American Opera in Three Scenes





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mercury falling

monodrama for tenor, solo dancer and chamber ensemble

COMPOSER	Chandler Carter
LIBRETTO	Daniel Neer

Mercury Falling is a fanciful interpretation of the last night in the life of Parisian sculptor Jean-Louis Brian (1805-1864). In the winter of early 1864, Brian attempted to protect his clay statue of Mercury in Repose from the bitter cold by covering it with his only blankets – and subsequently froze to death beside it. Mercury Falling depicts Brian's feverish attempts to finish his sculpture for the impending Salon exhibition. As the temperature drops and he succumbs to hypothermic hallucinations, he is lured into a fantasy world in which the god Mercury comes to life.

Incorporating themes of the artist's struggle for meaning, recognition and even survival,Mercury Falling is a monologue that shifts between reality and an allegorical fantasy world. The vocalist portrays the artist through vignettes of music and text (both sung and spoken) in free-association. Accompanying him on stage is a dancer/model portraying the life-sized Mercury. The chamber ensemble alternately evokes the freezing, desperate climate of the artist's studio and his increasingly grandiose expectations for his work of art.

PERFORMANCE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

June 19, 2009

Long Leaf Opera Festival I Stewart Theater I North Carolina State University Daniel Neer (tenor), Jake Szczypek (dancer), Viktor Valkov (piano), Benjamin Smith (piano), Jody Oberfelder (choreographer), Chandler Carter (music director), Ted Gorodetzky (director)

PRESS:

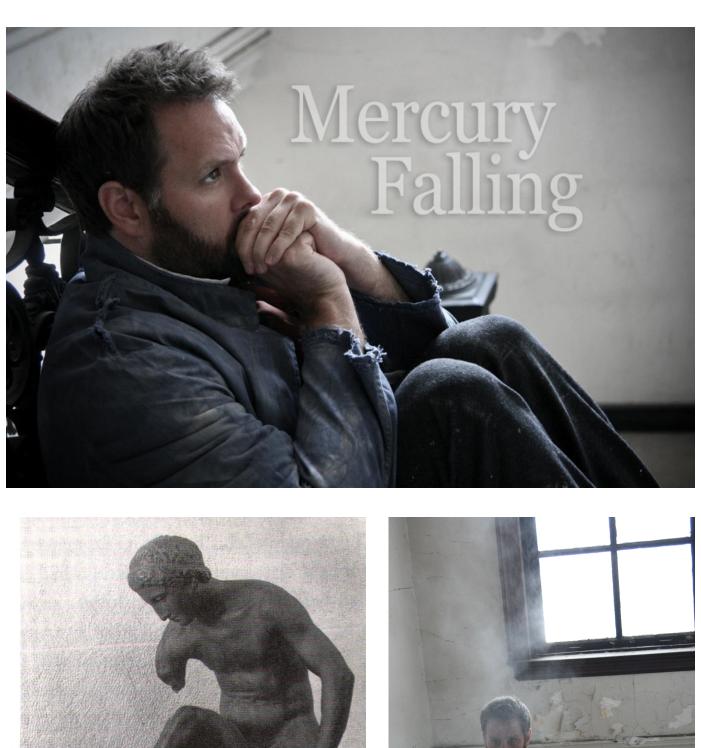
"...the music was in turns mystical, affectionate, conflicted, triumphant, and much more....the athletic dancing and singing took us through emotional paroxysms of immense proportions...a strangely and powerful moving drama. It brought to mind those same issues that Thomas Mann (and Benjamin Britten) delved into in *Death in Venice*. What is it about beauty that so disarms us? What is it about great art that is often both deeply unsettling and uniquely satisfying?" - Classical Voice of North Carolina

"Librettist Daniel Neer fancifully envisions what is going through Brian's head that night, as the sculptor readies himself for a comeback after an early splash of fame. As the cold sets in, Brian begins to hallucinate, imagining that the statue is alive, telling it all his hopes for a success at an upcoming exhibition. Carter's score...beautifully conjures icy coldness with tinkling short phrases and fevered delirium with dissonant, skittering chords. The music constantly changes to fit Brian's mood swings. These are superbly realized by Neer as performer, his voice coloring all Brian's fears and yearnings while expressing his derangement with haunting physicality. The physical interaction of sculptor and statue is viscerally staged, adding nuanced dimensions to the concept, sensitivity shaped by director Ted Gorodetzky...a confident, intriguing work." - Raleigh News and Observer

LINKS:

Mercury Falling Promotional VIDEO

MUSICAL EXCERPT FROM MERCURY FALLING

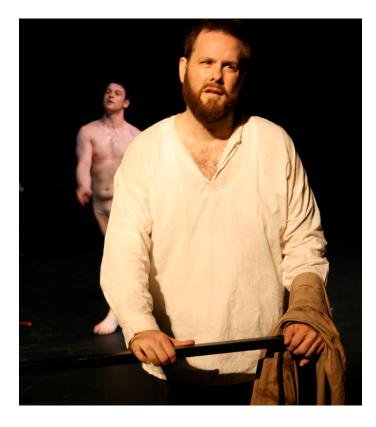


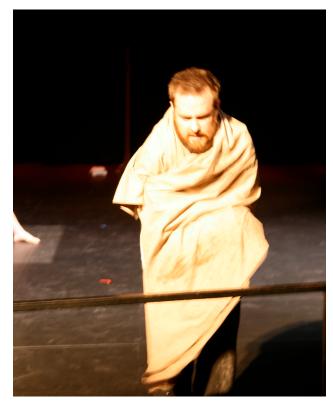












odes to earth and air

chamber opera for mezzo-soprano, baritone, piano, and mixed media

COMPOSER	Sidney Marquez Boquiren
LIBRETTO	Daniel Neer

Odes to Earth and Air is a multi-media chamber opera focusing on the tumultuous relationship of 19th century sculptor Camille Claudel and her brother, the author and diplomat Paul Claudel. Combining chamber opera (mezzo soprano and tenor) with film media, it presents an imagined dialogue between the iconic Claudel siblings, whose soulful and reflective diatribe on their lives are skillfully reflected in an accompanying narrative of film images. *Odes to Earth and Air* attempts to deconstruct the driving motivation of two powerful cultural and intellectual giants who helped catapult the Symbolist movement of art and literature in early 20th century Paris, and explores the factors of gender, religion, politics and family relations in their artistic endeavors and quest for personal fulfillment.

PERFORMANCE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

October 16, 2010

WORLD PREMIERE

Adelphi University Performing Arts Center

Abigail Fischer (mezzo-soprano), Daniel Neer (baritone), Adam Nielsen (piano), Ted Gorodetzky (director and visual media artist)