

## Ohio Light Opera to open its 37th season on June 13

by Daniel Hathaway



Ohio Light Opera will produce 58 performances of 8 shows this summer in Freedlander Theatre at the College of Wooster, kicking off its season with Lerner & Loewe's *Brigadoon* on Saturday, June 13 at 7:30 pm.

Founder James Stuart originally had a summer Gilbert & Sullivan festival in mind in 1979, but since

its inaugural season in Wooster, OLO has evolved to embrace a wider range of light opera, including European operetta and American musical theater. OLO is now under the leadership of artistic director Steven A. Daigle and general director Julie Wright Costa.

The mix of operettas and Broadway shows to be performed in 2015 by the 40 members of the vocal ensemble includes Cole Porter & Abe Burrows' *Can-Can*, Ogden Nash & Kurt Weill's *One Touch of Venus*, George & Ira Gershwin's *Oh, Kay!*, Gilbert & Sullivan's *Ruddigore* and *Yeoman of the Guard*, and Franz Lehár's *Friederike*.

OLO will roll out new productions about once a week until late July, when all the shows will be rotating in repertoire, giving the company the opportunity to hold a four-day symposium titled "Taking Light Opera Seriously" from July 28-31.

Live performances during the symposium will include an original modern musical drama honoring Mary Ellis, a major operetta star in early 1900s. The program will be written and arranged by Steven Daigle and presented by Julie Wright Costa, who will bring the world of Mary Ellis to life through songs, stories, and reflections.

Another live performance will focus on “songs from the cutting-room floor,” featuring company members performing songs that were discarded from the final versions of shows. A third performance will showcase songs from outside the traditional sphere of operetta, including works from Spain, Russia, Italy, and Greece. In addition to the performances, a panel of operetta experts will talk about the history of the genre.

Patrons will have their choice between afternoon and evening performances from June 18 through August 8. For those who would like to make an overnight or weekend out of their trip to Wooster (it’s a one-hour drive down I-71 from downtown Cleveland), OLO has dinner and lodging packages to suggest. Details and tickets [here](#).

*Published on ClevelandClassical.com June 8, 2015.*

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