

## ContempOpera/Cleveland launches Incubator Series June 9

by Mike Telin



With a mission to “give a voice to the composers of our time,” the latest addition to Northeast Ohio’s opera scene, [ContempOpera/Cleveland](#), will bring that goal to life on Friday, June 9 at 7:30 pm at Cleveland Public Theatre with the first installment of the company’s Incubator Series. The performance will feature music by Cleveland composers Dawn Lenore Sonntag, Steven Mark Kohn, and Lorenzo Salvagni, as well as New York City-based Darryl Curry and Argentine Saúl Cosentino. The concert is part of CPT’s Free Beer Friday.

“I’m very excited about this concert,” company founder Andrea Anelli said during a telephone interview. The idea for the Incubator Series came to Anelli one year ago. “I was in New York and met with [composer, playwright, and musical director Darryl Curry](#),” she said. “I loved everything he had to say about the reasons he does what he does.”

Anelli, who in June of 2016 left Cleveland Opera Theater, the company she founded in 2006 as Opera Per Tutti, said that while “grand opera” is being served well in the area, there is a need for an organization dedicated to presenting new operatic and vocal works. The evening’s works will be performed by sopranos Anelli and Rebecca Freshwater, tenors Benjamin Bunsold and Timothy Culver, baritone Brian Keith Johnson, and pianist Lorenzo Salvagni.

Anelli, an admitted Puccini addict, said that it has been fun to get to know, and work with composers who live in the area. “We’re presenting selections from Kohn’s *Mary Chestnut*, about a woman who lived during the Civil War and kept a diary. It’s one person’s voice during a horrific time, but it’s very compelling because it brings up a lot of provocative questions about perspectives on war.” Two of Kohn’s settings of folksongs will also be included.

Anelli said that “Lucia’s aria,” from Salvagni’s opera in progress, *Pied I Grotta*, is about a women in distress. “It’s unlike anything else that is included on the program.” Rounding out works by Cleveland composers will be selections from Sonntag’s opera *Verlorene Heimat*, which takes place in Nazi-occupied East Prussia.

Cosentino’s dramatic *Dolor* is based on a poem of the same name by [Alfonsina Storni](#). “It’s about the character’s desire to feel the perennial oblivion of the sea,” Anelli noted. “It is tragic, but the way Saúl has set it makes it a lovely piece.” Salvagni will also perform Cosentino’s delightful *Tangomania* for solo piano.

Anelli said she’s pleased to bring Darryl Curry’s music to Cleveland. “The work is based on Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* — it’s quite wonderful.”

Tickets are \$20 for adults, or \$17 for students and seniors and can be purchased at [cptonline.org](http://cptonline.org) or by phone at 216-631-2727, Ext. 501.

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