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PRESENTS

THE MAN WHO MISTOOK HIS WIFE FOR A HAT

A chamber opera in one act by Michael Nyman

Libretto by Christopher Rawlence

Adapted from the case study of the same name by Dr. Oliver Sacks

Sung in English with projected English titles

November 10, 11, & 12, 2023

Noah Liff Opera Center Studio

Directed by John Hoomes

Conducted by Dean Williamson

Featuring the Nashville Opera Orchestra

CAST

Dr. S, the Neurologist.....TYLER NELSON

Dr. P, the Patient.....MATTHEW TREVIÑO

Mrs. P, the Wife.....CAROLINA WORRA

Tickets & Information

Contact Nashville Opera at 615.832.5242

or visit NashvilleOpera.org

The mysterious functioning of the mind can say a lot about the heart. Micheal Nyman's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* is adapted from Dr. Oliver Sacks' book of the same name. Based on one of Dr. Sacks' actual case studies, this chamber opera is a sometimes comedic, yet extremely poignant story of a man coping with personal adversity by using the power of music to organize and heal his shattered world.

SYNOPSIS

i. Prologue

The neurologist delivers an address concerning his approach to neurology and introduces the case of Doctor P.

ii. The First Examination

Doctor and Mrs. P arrive at the neurologist's clinic, having been referred by an ophthalmologist. A series of routine neurological tests are carried out, revealing little. As he prepares to depart, P makes several alarming mistakes, and the neurologist resolves to see him again.

iii. The House Call

Baffled by his first meeting with P, the neurologist determines to observe his patient in the environment of his own home.



MATTHEW TREVIÑO as DR. P



CAROLINE WORRA as MRS. P

The investigation continues as the neurologist engages P in a variety of visual exercises designed to reveal the nature of P's condition: geometric solids, cartoons, television, photographs, rose, glove, chess game.

iv. Testing Visual Memory

The neurologist asks P to describe, from one end to the other, the buildings and layout of a local street they both know well.

v. Paintings as Pathology? An Argument

The neurologist discovers that P is a talented amateur painter. Upon examining a portfolio of his paintings, he concludes that P's illness is reflected in these works, which have moved from representational figurative paintings to the purely abstract.

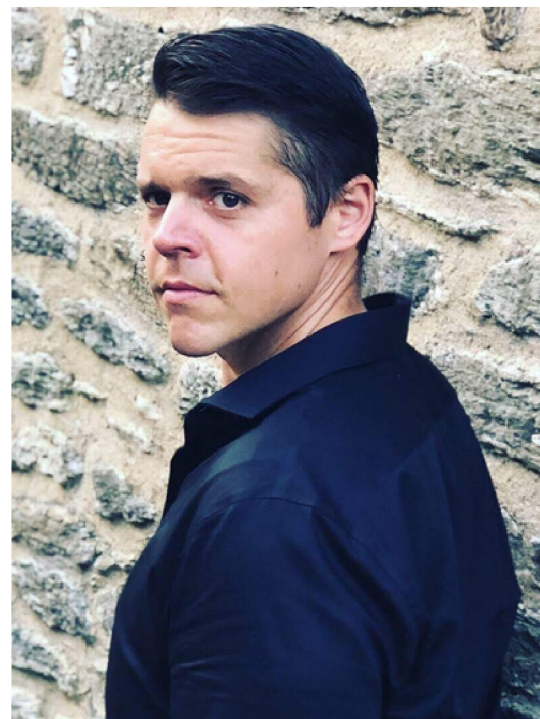
The conclusion angers Mrs. P, who insists that the change in her husband's painting style is an expression of his artistic development, not of his deepening illness.

vi. The Prescription

As P continues enjoying his tea, Mrs. P explains to the neurologist how her husband manages, through music, to cope with daily life despite his perceptual problems.

vii. Epilogue

The neurologist delivers his concluding remarks on the case.



TYLER NELSON as DR. S

MOMENTS TO LISTEN FOR:

i. Prologue

As neurologist Dr. S introduces the case of Dr. P, his study highlights the characteristics the patient lacks, rather than his profound abilities with music and arts.

iii. The House Call and "Ich Grolle Nicht"

Pulled from Schumann's "Dichterliebe," Dr. P sings this piece with the company of Dr. S, who begins to question how his patient can be exceptionally musically talented, yet so deficient in visual stimuli comprehension.

v. Painting as Pathology? An Argument

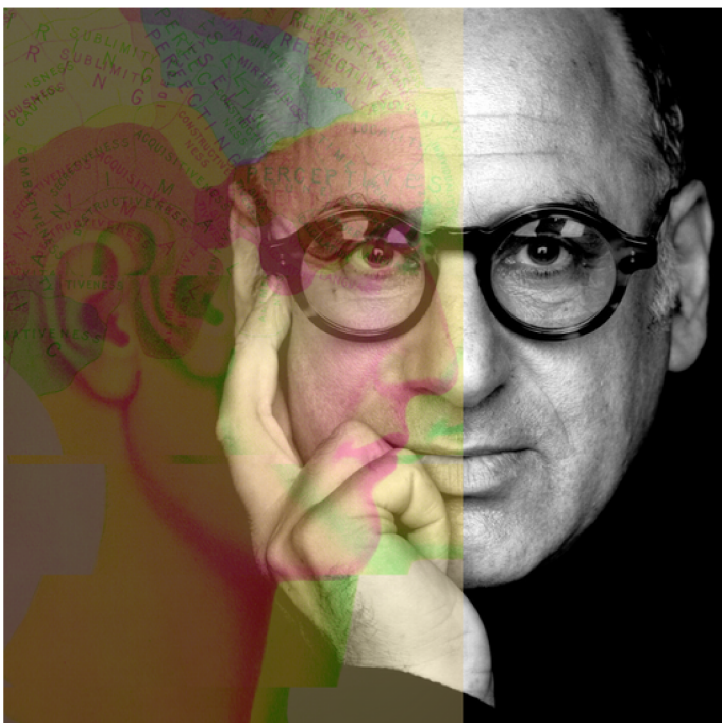
Creating art in his free time, Dr. P's painting style seems to have shifted over time from realism to the more abstract, leaving concerns from Dr. S.

FUN FACTS:

Composer Michael Nyman was the first to apply the term "minimalism" to music!

This opera was first performed in 1986 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London!

Nyman was a member of the self-described World's Worst Orchestra, the Portsmouth Sinfonia!



MICHAEL NYMAN Born 1944

Michael Nyman is a British composer of minimalist music, pianist, librettist, and musicologist known for the many film scores he wrote during his lengthy collaboration with the filmmaker Peter Greenaway. His operas include "Letters, Riddles and Writs;" "Noises, Sounds & Sweet Airs;" "Facing Goya;" "Man and Boy: Dada;" "Love Counts;" and "Sparkie: Cage and Beyond." He has also written several concerti, string quartets, and many other chamber works for his Michael Nyman Band, with or without whom he tours as a performing pianist. He has said he prefers writing opera over other sorts of music.

Nyman was born in Stratford, London. He studied at King's College and was accepted at the Royal Academy of Music in September 1961, focusing on piano and seventeenth-century baroque music. After school he settled into music criticism, where he is generally acknowledged to have been the first to apply the term "minimalism" to music in a 1968 article in The Spectator magazine.

Michael Nyman's popularity greatly increased after he wrote the score to Jane Champion's award-winning 1993 film "The Piano." The album became a classical music best-seller, and he was nominated for both a British Academy Award and a Golden Globe.

Additionally, Nyman was the featured pianist on the Portsmouth Sinfonia's recording of Bridge Over Troubled Water on the Martin Lewis-produced 20 Classic Rock Classics album on which the Portsmouth Sinfonia gave their unique interpretations of the pop and rock repertoire of the 1950's-1970s.

He composed "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat" in 1986.



Ryan MacPherson as Dr. S
and Matthew Treviño as Dr. P
in the 2013 Nashville Opera
Production of THE MAN
WHO MISTOOK HIS
WIFE FOR A HAT.

ALL-ACCESS INCLUSION NETWORK (AAIN)

Nashville Opera is a proud member of the All-Access Inclusion Network (AAIN). The AAIN is led by Vanderbilt Kennedy Center's Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders (TRIAD) and is a collaborative effort to create opportunities to increase access and inclusion of neurodivergent individuals across the lifespan.



Nashville's Opera's All-Access Opera strives to make opera inclusive for all with evidence-based supports provided for all Mainstage Shows and Education Programming. All-Access Opera bolsters accessibility for attendees with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other disabilities and creates exciting new learning opportunities and audience experiences for our patrons. The purpose of our supports is to: build excitement, promote understanding, clarify expectations, establish predictability, and decrease anxiety.

For more information about the All-Access Inclusion Network, please visit <https://vkc.vumc.org/vkc/triad/cei-AAIN/>, or visit the table in the lobby at the show.



ON OPERATIC VOICES:

Every voice is unique, and no singer gets to choose the category in which they sing but must work with the vocal attributes with which they were born. Composers usually assign a voice type to a character based on his/her personality or age. Read these descriptions for examples.

SOPRANO

This is the highest female voice and has a range similar to a violin. In opera, the soprano most often plays the young girl or the heroine (sometimes called the prima donna), since a high bright voice traditionally suggests femininity, virtue, and innocence. The normal range of a soprano is from middle C through two octaves above middle C, sometimes with extra top notes. Most women are sopranos. In *THE MAN WHO MISTOOK HIS WIFE FOR A HAT*, Mrs. P is played by a soprano.

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Also called a mezzo, this is the middle female voice with a range similar to an oboe. A mezzo's sound is often darker and warmer than a soprano's. In opera, composers generally use a mezzo to portray older women, villainesses, seductive heroines, and sometimes even young boys. Mezzo-sopranos also often serve as the friend or sidekick to the soprano. The mezzo-soprano's normal range is from the A below middle C to the A two octaves above it.

CONTRALTO

This is the lowest female voice and has a voice similar in range to a clarinet. Contraltos usually sing the roles of older females or special character parts such as witches and old gypsies. The range is two octaves from F below middle C to the top line of the treble clef. A true contralto is very rare - some believe they don't exist at all!

COUNTERTENOR

This is the highest male voice, which was mainly used in very early opera and oratorio. The voice of a countertenor sounds very much like a mezzo-soprano's voice, and they often sing the same repertoire. Like the contralto, true countertenors are very rare.

TENOR

This is usually the highest male voice in an opera. It is similar to a trumpet in range, tone, color, and acoustical ring. The tenor typically plays the hero or the love interest. His voice ranges from the C below middle C to the above. In *THE MAN WHO MISTOOK HIS WIFE FOR A HAT*, Dr. S is played by a tenor.

BARITONE

This is the middle male voice and is close to a French horn in range and tone color. The baritone usually plays villainous roles or father-figures. The range is from the G an octave and a half below middle C to the G above.



Matthew Treviño as Dr. P, Ryan MacPherson as Dr. S, and Rebecca Sjöwall as Mrs. P, 2013

BASS-BARITONE/BASS

This is the lowest male voice and is similar to a trombone or bassoon in range and color. Low voices usually suggest age and wisdom in serious opera. The range spans from roughly the F above middle C to the F an octave and a fifth below. In *THE MAN WHO MISTOOK HIS WIFE FOR A HAT*, Dr. P is played by a bass.

THE 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.



Rebecca Sjöwall as Mrs. P and Matthew Treviño
as Dr. P, 2013

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, houselights 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.

ARIA

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.

RECITATIVE

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”)

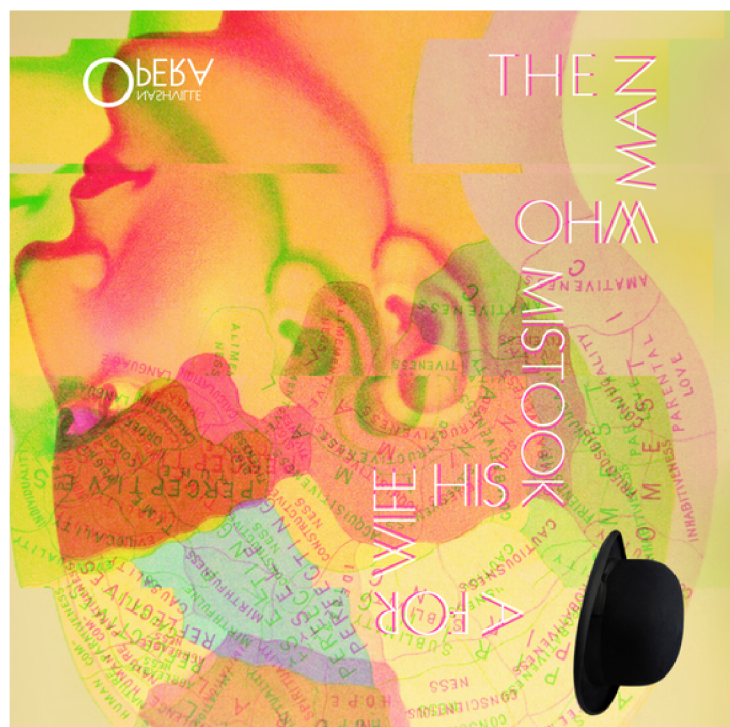
Ensemble singing deals with two or more voices of different ranges performing together. These include duets, trios, quartets, quintets, and sometimes sextets. The composer blends the voices depending on the dramatic requirements of the plot. For instance, a love duet may begin with each performer singing different music at different times, then gradually unifying into harmony. Conversely, the music of a duet may depict conflict. In this opera, there is no ensemble.

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. In this opera, there is no chorus.

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.



OPERA ETIQUETTE

ALWAYS BE EARLY!

Please arrive early to ensure you can 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. 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...

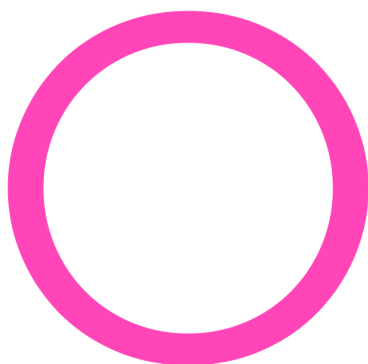
to everyone in the audience and on stage. Opera is a live performance, so any talking, cell-phone use (including texting) or other noise/light disruption takes away from everyone's experience at the opera. Wait until intermission to talk to your neighbor or use electronic devices that may distract others.

APPLAUSE WELCOME!

There are several opportunities for applause during a performance. Applause should take place when the conductor takes the podium at the very beginning of the performance and following intermission. It is also acceptable to applaud after an overture or aria during the performance. 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, the singers will take their "curtain call." It is appropriate to continue applauding until all singers have stepped forward to accept their applause.

NO PHOTOS OR RECORDINGS PERMITTED

For the safety of the actors, no still photography or video recording are permitted during the performance.



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