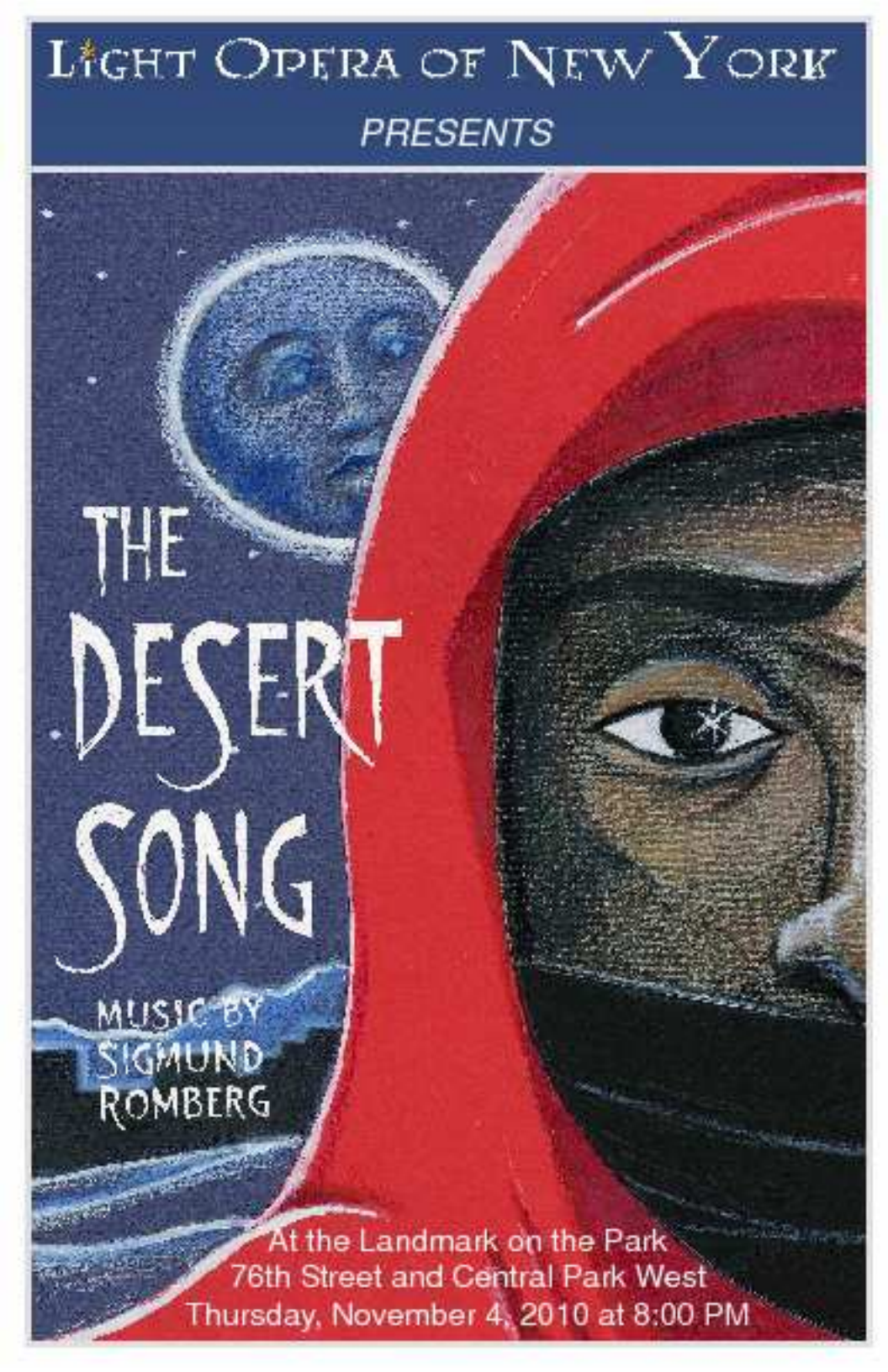


LIGHT OPERA OF NEW YORK
PRESENTS



THE
DESERT
SONG

MUSIC BY
SIGMUND
ROMBERG

At the Landmark on the Park
76th Street and Central Park West
Thursday, November 4, 2010 at 8:00 PM

Sigmund Romberg: The Man & His Music

This master of American operetta created **five** of the greatest hits of his era! With an initial run of 2,600 performances, the music of these shows is saturated with unforgettable waltzes, marches and gorgeous melodies including “Sweetheart, Sweetheart” (*Maytime*, 1917,); (*Blossom Time* with songs adapted from themes of Franz Schubert, 1921); “Serenade” (*The Student Prince*, 1924); “One Alone” (*The Desert Song*, 1926) and “Lover Come Back to Me” (*The New Moon*, 1928.)



Trained in both music and engineering, Romberg (1887 – 1951) arrived in New York from his native Hungary in 1909. He supported himself by playing piano (often

including his own compositions), in various local restaurants until the legendary Broadway impresario and producer J. J. Schubert included a Romberg piece in his 1914 review, *The Whirl of the World*. Few would have predicted the tremendous impact this composition would have on the American musical scene. For the next thirty-five years, Romberg was to compose more than sixty works for the stage containing a total of over eight hundred individual songs. His last major hit was *Up in Central Park* (1945) which ran for 504 performances.

His tremendous musical accomplishments were three-fold. First, the composition of the many classic and unforgettable songs as noted above; second and third, the establishment of not one but two distinct models for the many American operettas to follow – those with a waltz centered, bittersweet ending of works like *Blossom Time* or

The Student Prince to the duple-meter creations whose happy endings were laden with the sentiment and nostalgia seen in *The Desert Song* and *The New Moon*.

By all accounts, jovial and fun loving Romberg was the very essence of traditional Viennese *Gemütlichkeit*, treasuring good food, good wine, good friends and solid conversation.



He also loved deep-sea fishing and driving at very high speeds. He was almost as famous for his humorous malapropisms or “Rommyisms,” as his friends called them, as he was for his music. To Jerome Kern, wearing a yachting cap at Belmont Park, he remarked, “You look like a race trout.” When Irving Caesar rose to speak at a function, Romberg quipped, “One word from you and you’re out the window.”

The Desert Song was inspired by the 1925 uprising of the Riffs, a group of Moroccan fighters against French colonial rule, the stories of Lawrence of Arabia and Hollywood’s Valentino films.

With new stage productions and the ever increasing availability of CD and DVD recordings, his legacy is receiving a much-deserved renaissance and continues to shine on in the 21st Century - awaiting discovery by future generations of those who love the special magic of lyric theater.

by Jack Behonek

References:

William A. Everett, *Sigmund Romberg*, Yale Press 2007
Richard Traubner, *Operetta – A Theatrical History*, Rev. Ed. Routledge 2003 NY & London



The Desert Song

Book and Lyrics by

**Otto Harbach, Oscar Hammerstein, 2nd
and Frank Mandel**

Music by

Sigmund Romberg

**Presented by an arrangement with Tams-Witmark Music Library, Inc.,
550 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10022**

STAGE DIRECTOR:

Gary Slavin

MUSIC DIRECTOR:

**Stephen Francis
Vasta**

ASSISTANT TO THE

DIRECTORS: **Carol Davis**

ORCHESTRA MANAGER AND
CONCERT MASTER:

Shane Thor Galligan

STAGE MANAGER:

Laura Bultman

PRODUCER:

John Odell Behonek

STAGE DESIGNER:

David Jones

COSTUME DESIGNER:

Lydia Gladstone

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Ted Cubbin

PROPERTIES MASTER:

Jack Delbe

HOUSE MANAGER:

Phil Bowers

BOX OFFICE MANAGER:

Anthony Cockcroft

The Cast

Sid El Kar (Red Shadow's Lieutenant) . . **Kevin Ginter**
Benjamin Kidd (Former society
correspondent of the *Paris Herald*) . . **Nathan Brian**
Captain Paul Fontaine. **Daniel Greenwood**
Margot Bonvalet (General Birabeau's
house guest). **Lauren-Rose King**
General Birabeau (Governor of a
French Moroccan Province) **David Seatter**
Pierre Birabeau (His only son) **Erick Castille**
Susan (His ward). **Amy Maude Helfer**
Azuri (Ben Ali's favorite). **Iris Karlin**
Ali Ben Ali (Caid of a Riff tribe). **Matt Ellison**
Clementina (A Spanish "lady") **LaToya Lewis**
Mindar **Matthew Kreger**
Hassi **Michael McAvoy**
Sgt. La Vergne **Matthew Kreger**

Ensemble: **Katherine Corle, Matt Ellison, Kevin Ginter, Anna Kirkland, Matthew Kreger, LaToya Lewis, Michael McAvoy, David Seatter, Angela Smith.**

Special Thanks

Phil Bowers (marketing); Nathan Hull (logo design); David Jones (show graphics); Kurt Keller (graphic production); Rick Stanley (graphics & website); Norm Keller (Guild, flyers, program & photos); Elynn Amron Austin, Ramona Flood, Patricia Millman, Miranda Knowles & Deborah Thomas Shull (ushers); Village Light Opera Group (costumes, props and rehearsal space). For Landmark on the Park: Darius Lang, Events Manager; Ken Galloway, Sexton.

Hoof Beats in the Sand

French General Birabeau has been sent to Morocco to root out and destroy the Riffs, a band of Arab rebels, who threaten the safety of the French outpost in the Moroccan desert. Their dashing, daredevil leader is the mysterious "Red Shadow," a Frenchman. Margot Bonvalet, a lovely, sassy French girl, is soon to be married at the fort to Birabeau's right-hand man, Captain Fontaine. Birabeau's son Pierre, in reality the Red Shadow, loves Margot but pretends to be a milksop to preserve his secret identity. Margot tells Pierre that she secretly yearns to be swept into the arms of some bold, dashing sheik, perhaps even the Red Shadow himself. Pierre, as the Red Shadow, kidnaps Margot and declares his love for her.

To her surprise, Margot's mysterious abductor treats her with every western consideration. When the Red Shadow comes face to face with General Birabeau, the old man challenges the rebel leader to a duel. Of course Pierre will not kill his own father, so he refuses to fight, losing the respect of the Riffs. Azuri, the sinuous and secretive native dancing girl, might answer some of these riddles if only she can be persuaded by Captain Fontaine. Meanwhile Benny, a reporter, and Susan provide comic relief. Eventually, the Red Shadow's identity is discovered, a deal is struck with the Riffs and Pierre and Margot live happily ever after.

Musical Numbers

Time: 1925

Locale: Northern Africa

Act I

Scene 1: Retreat of the Red Shadow
in the Riff Mountains. Evening.

High on a Hill is our Stronghold Riffs
The Riff Song Red Shadow, Sid & Men
Margot—O! Pretty Maid of France Paul

Scene 2: Garden of General Birabeau's Home.
That night.

Has Anybody Seen My Bennie? Susan

Scene 3: General Birabeau's Drawing Room.
A few minutes later.

Why Did We Marry Soldiers? Women
French Military Marching Song Margot & Women
Romance. Margot
Then You Will Know. Margot, Pierre & Chorus
I Want a Kiss. Margot, Paul, Pierre & Chorus
It. Susan & Bennie
The Desert Song Margot & Red Shadow
Finale—Act I The Company

Act II

Scene 1: Great Hall of Ali Ben Ali.
Afternoon of the following day.

My Little Castagnette Clementina & Women
Song of the Brass Key. Clementina & Women
One Good Boy Gone Wrong. Clementina & Bennie

Scene 2: A Corridor. A few minutes later.

Eastern & Western Love. . . . Red Shadow, Sid, Ali & Men
(Let Love Go, One Flower In Your Garden, One Alone)

Scene 3: The Room of the Silken Couch.

The Sabre Song. Margot & Red Shadow
You Love Me. Margot & Red Shadow

Scene 4: Courtyard of General Birabeau's home.
Two days later.

All Hail to the General . Birabeau, Paul, Margot & Women
It (Reprise) Susan, Bennie & Women
As We Are Drinking Men
Finale—Act II. The Company

Who's Who in *The Desert Song*

John Odell Behonek (*Producer*) is a founder and current treasurer of LOONY. A theatre professional from age eight, he managed to combine a love of performing arts with a 30-year career as a research biochemist and science educator. Past president of the Village Light Opera Group, the G&S Society of NY and the Theatre Association of NY State and is currently secretary to the NY G&S Players.

Nathan Brian (*Benjamin Kidd*) Originally from Minnesota, Nathan is excited to be performing *Desert Song* for the second time and with LOONY for the third time. Nathan has performed with The Minnesota Opera, Ohio Light Opera, Sarasota Opera, Johannesburg Symphony, and the Pine Mountain Music Festival. He has a performance degrees from The University of Michigan and the University of Utah. Nathan will be performing in *United Parcels* on Theater Row this Winter and in the premiere of *Zip Goes a Million* in Los Angeles in the spring.

Laura Bultman (*Stage Manager*) is glad to join LOONY for this year's wonderful season. She has been a children's librarian, a dance company manager, and, for the past four years, the resident stage manager at the Village Light Opera Group. Thanks to Jack for calling, to Gary and Steve for all the laughter, and to Mike who loves her despite the chaos of a life in theater.

Erick Castille (*Pierre Birabeau*) originally from Sherman, Texas is a recent graduate of Oklahoma City University and a new resident of NYC-- and he couldn't be more thrilled to be a part of this production. Favorite past roles include Grosvenor in *Patience*, Bill Calhoun in *Kiss Me*, *Kate* and Tony Esposito in *The Most Happy Fella*. Erick would like to thank his family and dear friends for their constant love and support.

Katherine Corle (*Ensemble*): Credits: Suor Angelica, Trinity Opera, NY; Contessa - *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Mimi (cover) - *La Bohème*, Burgas, Bulgaria; Frasquita and Micaëla (cover) – *Carmen*, Hradec Králové, Czech Republic. Scenes: Cio-Cio-San (*Madama Butterfly*), Suzel (*L'amico Fritz*), and Desdemona (*Otello*). Katherine received a BFA w/ honors from NYU - Tisch and studies with Dorothy Stone.

Ted Cubbin (*Lighting Designer*): This is Ted's first production with LOONY. Ted is regularly involved with the Blue Hill Troupe and the Amateur Comedy Club (producing, stage management, technical design, lighting). Recent shows include *Into the Woods*, *Brigadoon*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* and *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*.

Carol Davis (*Assistant to the Directors*): LOONY founder, past president, Blue Hill Troupe, NYGASP; current president, G&S Society of N Y. Carol has produced and/or staged all of the LOONY performances to date.

Matt Ellison (*Ali Ben Ali & Ensemble*) recently received his Bachelor's of Music in Musical Theater from Oklahoma City University where he studied under Dr. William Nield Christensen. Favorite roles include the Postman in Hoiby's *The Scarf* and the title role in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Love to the cast, crew, Kings, and the Girls.

Kevin Ginter (*Sid El Kar & Ensemble*) graduated from the Conservatory of music at Brooklyn College, while studying with Richard Barrett, and singing many leading roles. Mr Ginter has spent the past two summers doing the IVAL young artist programs. This year Mr. Ginter is doing many

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www.thestringcollectivenyc.com.

Violin I: Shane Thor Galligan, *Violin II*: Kristin Nikaj Sawyer, *Viola*: Trevor Wadleigh, *Cello*: Jilliane Russo, *Bass*: Joe Higgins, *Piano & Conductor*: Stephen Francis Vasta

Who's Who in *The Desert Song*

auditions, competitions, and performances with Light Opera of New York, Hartford Opera Theater, and The Conservatory of music at Brooklyn College.

Lydia Gladstone (*Costume Designer*): Performances include major roles in regional and stock companies throughout the Northeast and NYC. Her costumes have been seen in theatre companies and schools in NYC (off and off-off Broadway) and on Long Island. She is thrilled to be doing what she loves with the encouragement and support of her family and friends. Thank you for supporting live theatre.

Daniel Greenwood (*Capt. Paul Fontaine*): LOONY debut! With NYGASP: *Ruddigore*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *HMS Pinafore*. Off-Broadway: *The Cure* (NYMF). Regional: *My Fair Lady*, *Dirty Blonde*, *Wizard of Oz*, *Ragtime*, *A Year With Frog And Toad*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Carmen*, *Man of La Mancha*. AMDG.

Amy Maude Heifer (*Susan*) is thrilled to make her LOONY debut as the loony Susan! Upcoming: Pitti-Sing (*Mikado*) & Princess Kalyba (*Utopia, Limited*) with NYGASP. Recently: Kate (*Pirates of Penzance*) with Boheme Opera-NJ & NYGASP, Hansel (*Hansel and Gretel*) at Boston Lyric Opera, Stéphan (*Roméo et Juliette*), Cherubino (*Marriage of Figaro*), Zita & La Ciesca (*Gianni Schicchi*), Kathy (*Company*), Tiger Lily (*Peter Pan*). Artist-in-Residence at Dayton Opera, Spring 2011. Proud member AEA. www.amyhelfer.com

David T. Jones (*Stage Designer*): teaches theatre history and scenic design/decoration at York College, CUNY. He is Resident Scenic Designer for the Village Light Opera Group and Northern Highlands HS in Allendale, NJ. He also provides the promotional art for his friends at LOONY.

Iris Karlin (*Azuri*) is a native Israeli, internationally acclaimed soprano, musician and actress, who is also an IDF officer in reserve. Her personal charm & sensational voice made her one of the leading singers in Israel. Pursuing her career, Iris moved to the States where she performs with several opera companies & orchestras.

Lauren-Rose King (*Margo Bonvalet*) has been praised for being "delicious to both hear and watch; with a lovely, clear voice." (Berkshire Fine Arts). Recent roles include Fire (*L'enfant et les sortilèges*), Yum-Yum (*The Mikado*), Johanna (*Sweeney Todd*) and Josephine (*H.M.S. Pinafore*). King is a recent graduate of New England Conservatory. In January she sings the role of Soeur Contance in Poulenc's *Les Dialogues des Carmélites* with One World Symphony. (www.lauren-roseking.com)

Anna Kirkland (*Ensemble*): received her BFA from NYU-Tisch and studies with Dorothy Stone. Credits include *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Marcellina, cover Contessa) and *Aida* (Sacerdotessa) with Burgas Opera, Bulgaria; *Carmen* (Mercedes) with Hradec Kralove Summer Opera Festival, CZ; and Mary Flynn in *Merrily We Roll Along* (NYC).

Matthew Kreger (*Mindar, Sgt. LaVerne & Ensemble*): is excited to be a part of this wonderful production. From a recent New York Times review: "Matthew Kreger gave a winning performance as John Styx", in *Orpheus in the Underworld*. He has performed on stage with James Earl Jones, Robert Goulet, and Paul McCartney. He has sung at venues including Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and The Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. He created the role of Hosie Roach in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree*, at Houston Grand Opera, released on Albany Records.



The Seven Pillars of Wisdom 1926
autobiography by T. E. Lawrence

Who's Who in *The Desert Song*

LaToya Lewis (*Clementina & Ensemble*): a Brooklyn native, favorite roles include: Fiordiligi (*Così fan Tutte*) & Micaela (*Carmen*). Ms. Lewis covered Clara from *Porgy and Bess* with Utah Festival Opera and has also covered Miriam from Lee Hoiby's *The Scarf* with Chelsea Opera. Received MM from Binghamton University & BM from Purchase College.

Michael McAvoy (*Hassi & Ensemble*) graduated from UConn with a bachelor degree in vocal performance, and continues to study voice with Dr. Constance Rock. He has performed with various companies in Connecticut and Naples, Florida, but most recently, he participated in the Franco American Vocal Academie and sang as part of the Opera Naples YAP.

David Seatter (*General Birabeau*): is Artistic Director of www.shawproject.org The Shaw Project. He has performed over 150 roles with such companies as Opera Northeast, Jacksonville Lyric Opera, Opera Delaware, Augusta Opera and CAMI Tours. Among his favorite roles are Ko-Ko (*Mikado*) Capt. Andy (*Showboat*), The Viceroy (*La Perichole*) and Hucklebee (*The Fantastics*).

Gary Slavin (*Stage Director*) would rather be directing and choreographing than doing anything else. He has staged pieces for the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival in the UK, the Blue Hill Troupe, the NY International Fringe Festival, Off Broadway and theatres throughout the US and Europe. Every stage is a sandbox, a place to play, and the sandbox is his favorite place. LOONY has a great sandbox! Dear Audience: YOU are the theatre - thank you.

Angela Smith (*Ensemble*) has performed in many of LOONY's concerts, and with the New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players (NYGASP). She performs regularly with the NYGASP Wand'ring Minstrels and the NYGASP Cabaret "I've Got a Little Twist." Other credits include The Vocal Arts Symposium in Colorado Springs, Lake George Opera, St. Bonaventure Quick Center for the Arts, Pine Mountain Music Festival, South Carolina Opera, Delaware Opera, Caramoor

Opera, New York Vocal Artists, and Liederkranz Opera. Her favorite opera roles include Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust* and Micaëla in *Carmen*.

Stephen Francis Vasta (*Music Director*) a veteran conductor, vocal coach, and keyboardist, was music director for LOONY's Victor Herbert season last year. His conducting credits include *Die Fledermaus*, *The Merry Widow*, and *The Mikado* for Opera Northeast; *Orpheus in the Underworld* as Assistant Professor of Theatre at Ball State University (IN); Handel's *Rinaldo* at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; *Cimarosa's Il matrimonio segreto* at Berkshire Opera; and *Trial by Jury* and *H.M.S. Pinafore* for Opera Naples (FL) Opera. On the concert platform, he has guest conducted the Filharmonie Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic. Mr. Vasta's extensive musical theatre credits include *Damn Yankees* with Jamie Farr at the Cape Playhouse (MA); *Godspell* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival; *Camelot* at Alabama Shakespeare Festival; *The Best Little Wh***house in Texas* at Ball State University; *Oh! Coward* off-Broadway in New York; and the 1992-3 international tour of *Peter Pan* which played throughout the U.S., Canada, and East Asia. He has been on the faculty of the American Musical and Dramatic Academy (AMDA) since 1993. Mr. Vasta has been reviewing professionally since 1993, as a Contributing Editor at both "Stereophile" and "Listener" magazines. Currently he is a regular contributor to "Opera News" as well as to several websites.

Rudolph Valentino in the 1926 silent film *The Son of the Sheik*



“Sand Kissing a Moonlit Sky”

The Desert Song was born to succeed! Not only were Near Eastern stories already familiar to audiences of earlier operettas like Sullivan’s *The Rose of Persia* (1899), Herbert’s *The Rose of Algeria* (1909) and Fall’s *The Rose of Stamboul* (1916) but the newspapers were filled with the exploits of Lawrence of Arabia, as well as accounts of Riff uprisings against the French rule of Morocco.

The Desert Song on Stage

Originally titled *Lady Fair* during successful out-of-town tryouts in Wilmington, Delaware, and Boston, Massachusetts, the original Broadway production opened as *The Desert Song* at the Casino Theater on November 30, 1926, and ran for a very successful 465 performances. It was directed by Arthur Hurlley and choreographed by Bobby Connolly and starred Robert Halliday and Vivienne Segal.



1926: *The Desert Song* on Broadway

The Desert Song was revived on Broadway in 1946 and 1973. It enjoyed a renaissance in the 1980s when it was performed regularly by the Light Opera of Manhattan.

To celebrate the centennial of Romberg’s birth in 1987, the New York City Opera staged a lavish production with Richard White and Linda Michele. Although a bit old-fashioned by present standards and somewhat improbable in its storyline, *The Desert Song* continues to be loved and performed.

The Desert Song on Film

Made into a motion picture four times by Warner Brothers, a lavish production was filmed in 1929 with Technicolor sequences, starring Myrna Loy as Azuri



1929 Movie: John Boles and Carlotta King

with John Boles and Carlotta King. At the beginning of the sound era, this version captured the spirit of the original Broadway production and became a huge hit. To capitalize on the success of the original picture, Warner Bros. released a two-reel adaptation of the film in 1932 entitled *The Red Shadow*. By the 1940’s, the original 1929 film had become illegal to view or exhibit in the United States due to its pre-code content of sexual innuendo, lewd suggestive humor and open discussion of themes such as homosexuality. The Technicolor sequences have survived only in black-and-white.

A second feature version was made in 1943, which was topically altered to have the hero fighting the Nazis. Filmed entirely in Technicolor, it starred Dennis Morgan and Irene Manning.



1943 Movie: Italian billboard features Azuri



1953: Kathryn Grayson and Gordon MacRae



The Desert Song on Recordings

No original Broadway cast recording was made, but the 1927 London cast did preserve eight selections for EMI. These 78-rpm records have been transferred to CD on the Pearl label.

Decca made an album in 1944 with Kitty Carlisle, Felix Knight, and Wilbur Evans covering 10 selections from the score. This has been released on CD, paired with *The New Moon*.

Earl Wrightson starred in Al Goodman's recording for RCA Victor. This one has not been released on CD. The last issue was in 1958, on the budget label Camden.

A more complete recording starring Nelson Eddy was made by Columbia Records in 1953. Long the preferred recording of this score, it is not yet available on CD. Gordon MacRae recorded a 10-inch LP for Capitol, later repackaged with Kern's *Roberta* on a 12" LP, which is out of print. MacRae's costar in the 1953 film version, Kathryn Grayson, recorded selections with Tony Martin on a 10-inch record for RCA Victor, which is long out of print.

Victor also recorded Mario Lanza in highlights from the score. Released shortly after the singer's death, it became one of his best-selling LP's and is now available on CD, paired with *The Student Prince*.

Reader's Digest include a selection in their album *A Treasury of Great Operettas*, first offered for sale in 1963. now available on CD. Also in 1963 Capitol had MacRae and Dorothy Kirsten record a full album of the score. Most of it can be heard on the EMI CD *Music of Sigmund Romberg*, along with selections from *The Student Prince* and *The New Moon*.

by Norman Keller

A third color feature version was made in 1953, with most of the adult themes and humor removed or sanitized. This version altered the plot, making General Birabeau the father of Margot, rather than the father of the Red Shadow, as in the play. It starred Kathryn Grayson and Gordon MacRae. Both the 1943 and the 1953 films changed the hero's name from the Red Shadow to El Khobar. In the 1953 version, El Khobar's disguise was that of a mild-mannered Latin teacher who tutored Margot and had to fend off her amorous advances (which were fairly discreet by modern standards).

The Desert Song on Television

Another clean version was adapted for live TV in 1955 (with Gale Sherwood and Nelson Eddy), and Salvatore Baccaloni imported from the Metropolitan Opera to play Ali Ben Ali. One of the writers brought in to modernize some dated dialogue was a young Neil Simon.



1955 Telecast: Foreground: Otto Kruger, Earl William, Nelson Eddy. Background: Gale Sherwood.

References: Wikipedia, and Richard Traubner OPERETTA – A Theatrical History Rev. Ed. Routledge 2003 NY & London

LOONY From the Very Beginning

It happened in February, 2006, at a typical après-show gathering at the University Club, Jack Behonek, Carol Davis, Nathan Hull, Norm Keller, and Rich Miller spontaneously agreed to serve as volunteer directors in a new, professional, not-for-profit light opera company. They named it Light Opera of New York, which they affectionately nick-named LOONY, its acronym, and elected Carol as president. By fall of 2006, the company had registered as a tax-exempt corporation. From this beginning, the founders established a high-arc trajectory which has now brought the company to the brink of becoming a cultural force in New York City.

For starters, LOONY enthusiastically welcomed an invitation from the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival in Buxton, England, to present three classic **one-act operettas** at the huge 13th annual summer conclave in August. To raise money for the trip, the group successfully previewed its offering, *A Sullivan Triple Bill*, at the New York State Genealogical Society in July. At Buxton, where the producers provided a full orchestra, sets and a real theater, success was, again, the venture's keynote.

LOONY went "general public" in the U.S. in November 2006, presenting *Operetta Favorites*, a black tie affair at Manhattan's Symphony Space. Thirteen polished professional singers plus piano delivered 19 selected melodies by Friml, Herbert, Kalman, Lehar, Offenbach, Romberg, Strauss, etc.

In mid-spring 2007 the company presented a ten-song, black-tie concert, *The Golden Age of Operetta*, followed by another of its characteristic leaps of faith - a one-act Jacques Offenbach operetta, *M. Choufleuri Regrets*. . . From here to the end of the 2008-09 season, the company established a pattern - collages of songs from the operetta canon plus an occasional one-act staged reading, lightly costumed and accompanied by piano. Audiences heard two LOONY collections of



Concert at the Liederkrantz Club 2008

operetta gems, *A Life of Love* and *Love in 2/2 Time*. The latter presented a clever baton-passing, round-robin series of impassioned operetta duets sung by nine two-timing lovers! Light opera devotees also feasted on two one-act musicals, Gilbert and Pascal's, *Eyes and No Eyes* and Victor Herbert's *The Magic Knight*. LOONY had grown from infancy to fledgling.

During this period, the company instituted a series of initiatives required to bring itself from fledgling into early adulthood. In addition to reconstituting and expanding itself, the board added an advisory board of experts and aficionados, established a supporting guild and created a five-year planning cycle under the leadership of newly elected board president, Norm Keller. Furthermore, it became clear that the time to take another leap of faith had arrived... produce a **complete, multiple-act operetta**.

Thus arrived the 2009-10 season's birth -- a tribute to Victor Herbert celebrating his 150th birthday. It comprised four events: one last black tie collage (Herbert favorites) hosted by cabaret headliner and legend K.T. Sullivan (right) plus three complete musicals, *Naughty Marietta*, *Mlle. Modiste* and *The Red Mill*.



Eyes & No Eyes 2008



Live For Today Concert 2009





Naughty Marietta 2010

Production values rose substantially as a piano/string orchestra accompanied the fully costumed per-



Mlle. Modiste 2010

formers. Along the way, and just for summer fun, LOONY bracketed the season with two light-hearted Gilbert & Sullivan send-ups which Carol Davis conceived, wrote and produced, a gender-reversed *Mis(s) Trial by Jury* and a multi-culturally generated *Iolanthe, or Peer Pressure*.

Most important, to it's health, LOONY's loyal, enthusiastic and steadily growing audience provided the sustenance and encouragement which propelled the company to take this season's leap of faith -- a more than doubling of its venue's seating capacity. The company is at a crucial point. Is its growth momentum strong enough to push it past the critical mass required to give multiple performances of each work?

If so, and if LOONY is able to "provide a permanent home for European and American operetta in New York City," tonight's operetta buffs will have earned the rights to brag that they were there when LOONY was getting its wings. *by Phil Bowers*



The Red Mill 2010

The 2011 LOONY Guild

We are grateful for the generosity of the following contributors who have already donated toward our new season. Their donations help us offset our costs, keep our prices affordable, and provide access for audiences that cannot afford even our low prices. Guild members receive advanced notification of all productions and events plus extra benefits. Please consider joining. LOONY is a 501(c)(3) organization, so contributions are fully tax-deductible. Go to our website at:

www.LightOperaOfNewYork.org for a list of last season's Guild members, as well as a description of this season's benefits.

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LOONY is grateful for corporate matching gifts from ExxonMobil and IBM

Our productions have been made possible, in part, by a generous gift from the Victor Herbert Foundation, Inc. in recognition of our very successful Victor Herbert season.

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LIGHT OPERA OF NEW YORK

Embrace Classic American Operetta

Now that you have seen *The Desert Song*, won't you join us for the rest of our American Operetta Season? If you haven't already done so, you can order tickets online or by phone (see information below).



The Vagabond King

“— And to hell with Burgundy!”

Thursday, February 17, 2011—8:00 PM

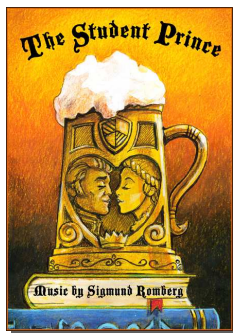
Parisian vagabonds rise up to rescue the city for King Louis XI, marching to the tune of Rudolf Friml's celebrated "Song of the Vagabonds." More favorites include "Only a Rose," "Love For Sale," "Some Day," "Tomorrow," "Nocturne" and "Love Me Tonight."

The Student Prince

"Golden Days"

Thursday, May, 19, 2011—8:00 PM

An unforgettable story about unrequited love, featuring Sigmund Romberg's famous "Drinking Song," plus "Deep in My Heart," "Just We Two," "To the Inn We're Marching" and "Serenade." Nostalgia doesn't get any better than this.



Ticket Ordering Information

Telephone: with a credit card, call 866 811-4111

Online: with a credit card, go to www.LightOperaOfNewYork.org

Ticket Prices: Reserved Section—\$50 per show (plus a small service charge)

General Admission—\$40 per show (plus a small service charge)

Questions: 212 249-9470 or www.LightOperaOfNewYork.org

While you are ordering tickets online or by phone, won't you please consider supporting us by joining our Guild and making a tax-deductible contribution to LOONY? There is never a service charge for making a donation. Or you can send a check to Light Opera Of New York, c/o Anthony Cockcroft, 222 East 71st St. Apt. 2B, New York, NY. See our website for benefits of membership.

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