

FRESH SQUEEZED OPERA

ANNOUNCING ITS 2018/19 SEASON

WITH WORKS BY Miriam Gideon • Whitney E. George • Dorothy Hindman • Veronika Krausas
Robert McClure • Eric Moe • Spencer Snyder • Devony Smith • Kate Soper • Gabi Herbst
Gemma Peacocke • Huang Ruo • John Aylward

“Small but Ambitious” – *Feast of Music*

“The Fresh Squeezed Opera Company is to be commended...” – *The Huffington Post*

“It’s refreshing to find a concert dedicated to female opera composers.” – *OperaRox*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fresh Squeezed Opera, marking its sixth year of producing, commissioning, and performing new opera, offers a season of new and historic works that actively examine and celebrate explorations of identity, chance, collaboration, and cultural influences in the 21st century.

From the world premiere of *Fortunato*, by groundbreaking American 20th century composer Miriam Gideon (a 1958 work fully realized in 2018 by FSO company member Whitney E. George); to Huang Ruo’s *Bound*, examining the intense cultural pressures experienced by first- and second-generation immigrants; to John Aylward’s *The Switch*, a meditation on the fluidity of expression in relation to gender, sexuality, and fixation; to *The Female Gaze*, a collaborative, multi-media inquiry into the roles and crucial perspectives of women in the arts, created by composers Gemma Peacocke, Gabi Herbst, and Whitney George; to the annual Fresh Squeezed Showcase, featuring Veronika Krausas’s *Hopscotch Tarot*, and a new FSO commission, written in collaboration by FSO members Devony Smith and Spencer Snyder, among other works, Fresh Squeezed Opera’s 18/19 season engages, challenges, and celebrates the complexity of modern life and art.

FSO Executive Director, Jillian Flexner, explains, “*We are thrilled to be sharing this range of exciting and innovative work with our wonderful audience! It’s a privilege and joy to share these works that typify not just the best of contemporary opera, but demonstrate where the art form can take us.*”

Fresh Squeezed Opera, 18/19 Season
Presented in New York City

2018 FRESH SQUEEZED SHOWCASE, with works by Dorothy Hindman, Veronika Krausas, Robert McClure, Spencer Snyder and Devony Smith, November 30, 2018

FORTUNATA, by Miriam Gideon/Whitney George, January 2018

THE FEMALE GAZE, by Whitney George, Gabi Herbst, Gemma Peacocke, February 2018

HERE BE SIRENS, by Kate Soper, March 22, 23, 2019 (Smith College Residency)

BOUND, by Huang Ruo and Bao-Long Chu, April 13- 19, 2019

SWITCH, by John Aylward, June 2019

2018 SHOWCASE, November 30, 2018, The Cell Theatre

Works by Dorothy Hindman, Veronika Krausas, Robert McClure, Eric Moe, Spencer Snyder and Devony Smith

Cast includes Brittan Fowler, Cara Search, Michelle Siemens and Devony Smith
Tickets \$15 at the door

A handpicked selection of new and recent works, including *The Pillow Book* by Dorothy Hindman, *Now Our Grief Is Put Away* by Robert McClure, *Lavished Sunlight* by Eric Moe, *Hopscotch Tarot* by Veronika Krausas (NYC Premiere), and a world-premiere FSO commission, written collaboratively by FSO company members Devony Smith and Spencer Snyder as part of a new FSO initiative dedicated to supporting collaborative new works.

FORTUNATO, January 2019, The CUNY Grad Center

Music & book by Miriam Gideon (1958), realized by Whitney George (2018)
Co-Produced with the Curiosity Cabinet (a division of CUNY)
Music and Stage Direction, Whitney George
Cast to be announced
FREE tickets available at the door

Fresh Squeezed Opera is thrilled to present the world premiere production of American composer Miriam Gideon's only opera, *Fortunato*.

Although it has never been produced, and until now has existed as only a partially-legible piano/vocal score, the composer-conductor (and FSO company member) Whitney E. George has created a completed instrumental realization of the work, enabling 21st audiences to experience a fully-realized exploration of Gideon's compositional voice, showcasing Gideon's distinctive and influential artistry.

Based on a Spanish farce written by the Spanish playwrights Serafín and Joaquín Álvarez Quintero, *Fortunato* is set in early 20th century Madrid, and follows the journey of the desperately poor and down-on-his luck eponymous protagonist, Fortunato.

THE FEMALE GAZE, February 1, 2019, Roulette

Collaborative works by Whitney George, Gabi Herbst, Gemma Peacocke

Cast Includes Jane Hoffman, other cast TBD

Tickets \$18 at the door

The Female Gaze will consist of two parts. Part 1 will be the commissioning and development and presentation of new works by Whitney George, Gemma Peacocke, and Gabi Herbst for female voice, ensemble, and electronics. George's piece, "Rumors" will be a continuous, surrealist, non-linear narrative from the perspective of women on social media. Peacocke's piece examines overlooked moments between women in everyday life, in the absence of men, and specifically speaks to

differences in openness and communication. Herbst's piece will focus on intertwining organic female vocals with live-processed electronics.

Part 2 will be an on-going social media campaign that highlights women working in the field of opera—telling their stories, raising awareness, and bringing a diversity of professions, races, religions, sexualities, and nationalities to the narrative. Working with Opera 360 – an opera centric social media handle – FSO will be able to engage with, interview, and showcase many amazing women in the field of opera.

HERE BE SIRENS, March 22, 23, 2019, Smith College

Music and Book by Kate Soper, with additional texts by Plato, Theobaldus of Cambridge, Homer, Erasmus, Raimbaud de Vacquiras, Tibullus, Edna St. Vincent-Millay, Thomas Campion, Michael Drayton, Iamblicus, Dante, John Milton, and Sappho (trans. Anne Carson)

Stage Direction, Amber Treadway, Projection Design, Matthew Wasser

Cast: Victoria Benson (Polyxo), Claire Myers McCormick (Peitho), Devony Smith (Phaino)

As part of its Smith College 18/19 residency, Fresh Squeezed Opera returns to its highly acclaimed production (January 2018 at National Sawdust) of Kate Soper's extraordinary *Here Be Sirens*. Described by the New Yorker as "erudite, hilarious, furiously inventive," *Here Be Sirens* presents the daily life of three sirens, who kill time on their island as they await an endless procession of doomed sailors. As the opera goes on, the sirens re-enact the abduction of Persephone, encounter (and battle) their favored sisters the Muses, and leave no rock unturned to plumb the depths of their own origins in this work of "audacious, genre-bending music theatre" (*Wall Street Journal*).

This production happens as part of a residency by Fresh Squeezed Opera at Smith College, alma mater of FSO founders Jillian Flexner and Maggie Rascoe, as well as composer Kate Soper.

BOUND, April 13- 19, 2019, Baruch Performing Arts Center

In partnership with the Baruch Performing Arts Center

Music by Huang Ruo. Libretto by Bao-Long Chu

Stage Direction, Ashley Tata and Music Direction, Huang Ruo.

Cast Includes Fang Tao (Diane Tran), Guang Yang (Khan), other cast TBA

Tickets \$35 general/\$15 students

A one-act chamber opera inspired by the real-life headline; "Diane Tran, Honor Student at Texas High School, Jailed for Missing School," *Bound* explores the complex dynamics and conflicting forces at play in a Vietnamese-American family.

Librettist, Bao-Long Chu, says about the work: "To me, a Vietnamese refugee living in America, the notion of being bound to one's culture (and the struggles therein) is not just an idea, but my life writ large."

The story of Diane Tran and her struggle of being torn into different directions - between Eastern and Western ideologies – is both specific and incredibly resonant, when when the very concept of immigration is being challenged at the highest levels of our government.

SWITCH, June 2019, Bank Street Theater

Music by John Aylward (Libretto assembled by Aylward)

Music Director, Jean-Philippe Wurtz, Stage Director, Laine Rettmer, Cast TBA

John Aylward's *The Switch* is a philosophical and psychological analysis of the fluidity in the creative process – particularly when one lacks inspiration. Described as “an amalgam of almost every possible aspect of the theater, subtly transforming speaking into singing, instrumentalists into actors, ideas into dialogue... In the end, it becomes all Aylward: a tour-de-force presentation with genuine integrity and lots of comedy as well,” by Keith Powers of WBUR.

From Aylward: “In *The Switch*, I try to take the absolute extremes of vocal expression and embed them in a kind of traditional storytelling technique, in the service of a concatenation of texts written by authors I admire: DH Lawrence, Italo Calvino, Carl Jung, and Shakespeare. This same fluidity of expression is embodied in the fluidity of sexuality, gender and fixation embodied in the characters.”

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Building on its history of presenting works that explore modern life and the human condition with humor, joy, seriousness, sadness, and a sense of verve (highlights including Kate Soper's brilliantly received *Here be Sirens*, Jillian Flexner's *La Zombiata*, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, *a e i*, *Scopes*, and many more), Fresh Squeezed Opera continues to develop as a “small but ambitious” engine of innovation in 21<sup>st</sup> Century opera.

For more information, visit:  
[www.freshsqueezedopera.com](http://www.freshsqueezedopera.com)

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