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Chelsea Opera presents

The NY Premiere of

The Parting by Tom Cipullo

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK, February 28th, 2022 – Currently in its 18th Season, **Chelsea Opera** is proud to present a limited, two performance engagement of *The Parting*, an exciting contemporary work for voice and chamber ensemble. This chamber opera concerns personal encounters with the evils of the Holocaust and attests to the life-affirming value of poetry and historic reflection. There will be two performances, on **Saturday, May 21, 2022 at 8:00pm** and **Sunday, May 22, 2022 at 2:00pm** at **CNY Jazz Central** (441 East Washington Street, Syracuse, NY 13202). Music direction is by **Benjamin Grow** and stage direction is by **Garrett A. Heater**. Tickets: **General Admission: \$35**. Visit chelseaopera.org/season.html for more information.

The Parting, an opera with music by **Tom Cipullo** (*Glory Denied*) and libretto by **David Mason**, is presented by Chelsea Opera in its New York premiere. The story is told using the lyrical words of Hungarian-Jewish poet Miklós Radnóti's experiences, discovered after his murder at the hands of the Nazis in WWII. Entwined in Radnóti's story is that of his wife, Fanni Gyarmati, and the specter of death that haunts the couple on their last night together in 1944 before he leaves for a labor camp for the third time. Baritone **Peter Kendall Clark** (who played the lead role in Chelsea Opera's 2015 revival of Cipullo's *Glory Denied*) performs the role of Radnóti, with soprano **Laura Dixon Stickling** as Fanni, and mezzo-soprano **Sarah Heltzel** as Death. This marks the fourth collaboration between Cipullo and Chelsea Opera, a creative partnership that began with the 2010 production of the composer's highly acclaimed opera *Glory Denied*. Chelsea Opera's premiere production garnered rave reviews from *The New York Times* and paved the way for *Glory Denied* to become one of the most produced contemporary operas in the country. *The Parting* was commissioned by Music of Remembrance and premiered in Seattle, WA in 2019.

Making a triumphant return to the conductor's podium, both performances are conducted by Chelsea Opera's music director and principal conductor **Benjamin Grow**. Chelsea Opera's producing artistic director **Garrett A. Heater** will stage direct the production. This premiere also occasions a return to **CNY Jazz Central** (441 East Washington Street, Syracuse, NY 13202) where the company presented Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Medium* in 2022.

This remarkable work brings the voices of the Holocaust back to us almost 77 years after the end of WWII. The poetry, music, and spiritual resilience continue to illuminate our shared humanity in the face of unspeakable evil. Chelsea Opera remains steadfastly committed to the visions of artists and composers' pursuits and bringing audiences a fresh musical voice with this new and original piece.

Praise for **Tom Cipullo**:

"Mr. Cipullo's vocal writing is fresh and natural, and he amplifies it with thoughtful, sometimes picturesque commentary in the piano line." – Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*

". . . a shrewd dramaturge as well as a compelling composer." – Joshua Rosenblum, *Opera News*

Tom Cipullo's work has been hailed by the American Academy of Art & Letters for music that displays "inexhaustible imagination, wit, expressive range and originality." His works are performed regularly throughout the United States and with increasing frequency internationally. The winner of a 2012 Guggenheim Fellowship, the 2013 Sylvia Goldstein Award from Copland House, and the 2013 Arts & Letters Award from the American Academy, Mr. Cipullo has received commissions from Music of Remembrance, SongFest, Joy in Singing, the Cecilia Chorus, the New York Festival of Song, the Mirror Visions Ensemble, Sequitur, and Cantori New York, multiple fellowships from Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and awards from the Liguria Study Center (Bogliasco, Italy), the Fundacion Valparaiso (Spain), the Oberpfaelzer Kuenstlerhaus (Bavaria), and ASCAP. Cipullo's operas *Josephine* (2016) and *After Life* (which was also commissioned by Music of Remembrance in 2014) were produced by Chelsea Opera in 2018.

Chelsea Opera (co-founded by Leonarda Priore and Lynne Hayden-Findlay) is a professional company presenting fully staged operas with chamber orchestra. The company provides for professional singers to advance their careers while making opera affordable and accessible to a broad spectrum of the community. The fine acoustics of the venue provide an intimacy and proximity allowing the audience to feel involved and a part of the opera's story. Of Chelsea Opera's sustainability, Anthony Tommasini of *The New York Times* noted: "With American opera companies

large and small struggling financially and a few going under, [Chelsea Opera is] a patch of encouraging news...” Following its production of Aaron Copland’s *The Tender Land*, writer Jon Sobel declared: Chelsea Opera “certainly ranks as one of the country’s preeminent ‘small’ opera companies.”

Formed in 2004 by singers, Leonarda Priore and Lynne Hayden-Findlay, Chelsea Opera was launched with an all-volunteer production of *Suor Angelica*. Initially, Ms. Priore and Ms. Hayden-Findlay intended to produce only this one opera. However, artist and audience response was so compelling they agreed to incorporate and obtained their IRS non-profit designation in a record eight days. They have produced extensive standard and contemporary operas, garnering critical acclaim at each outing. Despite its size, Chelsea Opera is the recipient of two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts – ArtWorks program, most recently for its production of Tom Cipullo’s *Glory Denied*.

Chelsea Opera has received funding from The Baruch Foundation, The Good News Foundation, The Music Performance Trust Fund, The Alice M. Ditson, The The Amphion Foundation, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and sponsorship support from JetBlue Airways and Community Bank, N.A.

For further information, visit chelseaopera.org or write to: kenos@chelseaopera.org

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