



PO BOX 277 ~ OLD CHELSEA STATION  
NEW YORK NY 10113-0277



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
CONTACT: KLAY-JAMES ENOS  
917-797-3152  
kenos@chelseaopera.com  
www.chelseaopera.org

**Chelsea Opera presents... *Bon Appétit***  
**by Lee Hoiby with libretto by Mark Shulgasser**

Utica, NY – Join Chelsea Opera as they bring their 17<sup>th</sup> season to a sensational close with their first full production since the lifting of COVID restrictions in New York State, with *Bon Appétit* by Lee Hoiby (libretto by Mark Shulgasser), a delectable short opera about “The French Chef,” Julia Child that is sure to lift audiences' spirits. There will be two performances: on Friday, June 18 and Saturday, June 19, 2021, both at 7:30 PM at The Salerno Room in the Scalabrini Center of Mt. Carmel/Blessed Sacrament Church (649 Jay Street, Utica, NY 13501). The production is produced by Leonarda Priore/Chelsea Opera. Stage direction is by Peter Elacqua and music direction is by John Krause. Tickets: General Admission: \$35 adv/\$45 door, Seniors: \$25 adv/\$35 door. This production will comply with current New York safety guidelines. Wine, hors d’oeuvres, and sweets will be served.

Visit <http://www.chelseaopera.org/season.html> for more information, online ticketing, and mail-in ticket forms.

*Bon Appétit* is an uproarious operatic tribute to the legendary chef and television personality Julia Child. The stage is transformed into the setting for a taping of Child's television cooking show, “The French Chef.” The audience is transported to the studio, where Child gives instruction on how to bake a French chocolate cake—but with an operatic twist. Mezzo-soprano Ann McMahon Quintero stars as Julia Child in a solo performance. This is an unmissable chance to see this stellar New York City singer/actress perform in Utica, NY, accompanied by musical talent both local and NYC-based. Performed alongside the staged performance will be a sampling of French musical numbers to get the audience into a Gallic spirit, with complimentary wine and hors d'oeuvres served before the show. But the cake-making musical performance would not be complete without a special surprise dessert at the end! *Bon Appétit* premiered off-Broadway in 1985 with Jean Stapleton (*All in the Family*) in the Child role.

**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 an opportunity for professional singers to advance their careers while making opera affordable and accessible to a broad spectrum of the community. 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."

Originally based in New York City, Chelsea Opera is currently expanding its productions to include Utica/Oneida County and Syracuse/Onondaga County, with regular productions planned for the area into the future. The company began bringing its annual holiday show, *Bending Towards the Light ... A Jazz Nativity* by Anne Phillips, to Utica, NY in 2017, with performances dedicated to the memory of co-founder Leonarda Priore's brother Nicholas S. Priore. Later, performances were also expanded to Syracuse, NY. Chelsea Opera went on to annually perform the *Jazz Nativity* and further produced other concerts in the Utica/Syracuse area. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, Chelsea Opera was forced to cease its planned productions for New York City out of safety concerns. Oneida and Onondaga County served as a fitting second home for the company. Chelsea Opera added additional programming in the area as soon as it was safe to do so. Chelsea Opera President Leonarda Priore was raised in the area, and has maintained a strong feeling of belonging to the community. Several members of Chelsea Opera's board also share a connection to Oneida County, from former Rome, NY resident Larry Beers to once Utica-local Gerald Potter. A new addition to Chelsea Opera's creative team, Producing Artistic director Garrett A. Heater, is from Syracuse and is a former Artistic Director for Syracuse Opera.

Formed in New York City in 2004 by singers, Leonarda Priore and Lynne Hayden-Findlay, Chelsea Opera was launched with an all-volunteer production of *Suor Angelica*. Initially, Priore and 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 Alice M. Ditson, The Barbara Bell Cumming Foundation, The Tow Foundation, The Amphion Foundation, the H.O. Peet Foundation, the NYU Community Fund, 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).

**For further information, visit [www.chelseaopera.org](http://www.chelseaopera.org) or write to: [kenos@chelseaopera.org](mailto:kenos@chelseaopera.org)**

###