

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE

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MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE PRESENTS COMPANY PREMIERE OF *The Passenger*

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MOT Collaborates with more than 60 Community Partners

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Nov. 14 -22 at the Detroit Opera House

DETROIT (October 23, 2015) - Michigan Opera Theatre's 45th fall opera season continues with the company premiere of Polish-Jewish composer Mieczysław Weinberg's *The Passenger*, for **four performances from Nov. 14-22**.

Weinberg originally composed *The Passenger* in 1968, but the work was suppressed by the Soviet government for more than 40 years. The opera is based upon Zofia Posmysz's novel of the same name. The production will be sung in seven languages - Russian, German, Polish, French, Yiddish, Czech, and English - with English supertitles projected above the stage.

In Weinberg's opera, a West German diplomat, Walter, and his wife, Liese, are ocean-bound for a new posting in Brazil. Unbeknownst to her husband, Liese once served as an SS officer in Auschwitz. There's another woman on the same cruise ship, a passenger who resembles Marta, a young woman who was interned at Auschwitz. Her presence haunts Liese. As the opera unfolds, the audience travels into Liese's memory, descending from the elegant ocean liner to the dark world of the camp, its barbed wire and barracks and train-tracks. There, the cruelty of the overseer is matched by the strength and goodness of the prisoners. Guilt and denial, lies and truth, fear and courage, and unbreakable love, are the anchors of this artistic and emotional experience.

Michigan Opera Theatre has invited participation from community groups throughout metro Detroit to engage in an educational discourse about the importance of remembering genocide and addressing it in our own times. For a full list of community events related to *The Passenger*, please visit: <http://www.michiganopera.org/opera/community-partner-events-the-passenger/>

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“The combined power of all of these people is extraordinary. Art can unite. Music can make a difference; Opera can serve as a catalyst for productive dialogue. We honor our community partners who are joining us on this journey with *The Passenger*,” said **Wayne S. Brown**, President and CEO of Michigan Opera Theatre.

The cast includes **Daveda Karanas** (Liese), **Adrienn Miksch** (Marta), **David Danholt** (Walter), **Anna Gorbachyova** (Katya), **Liubov Sokolova** (Bronka), **Marian Pop** (Tadeusz), **Angela Theis** (Yvette), **Ashley Maria Bahri Kashat** (Krystyna), **Kristin Eder** (Vlasta), **Courtney Miller** (Hannah), **Jeff Byrnes** (1st SS Officer), **Lauren Skuce** (Old Woman/Alta), **Brent Michael Smith** (2nd SS Officer), **Joseph Michael Brent** (3rd SS Officer), **Stephen Lusmann** (Older passenger, steward and commandant), and **Geraldine Dulex** (Capo/Overseer). For complete casting information, please visit michiganopera.org.

The opera is directed by revival director **Rob Kearley**, who worked closely with **David Poutney**, the opera’s original director. MOT favorite **Steven Mercurio**, who most recently conducted MOT’s *Faust* last spring 2015, conducts.

The Passenger is a coproduction of Bregenzer Festspiele, Austria, Teatr Wielki Opera Narodowa Warszawa, and English National Opera ENO. Original designers include, set designer **Johan Engels**, costume designer **Marie-Jeanne Lecca**, and lighting designer **Fabrice Kebour**.

MOT’s production is sponsored by **Ford Motor Company**, **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**, **Friends of Polish Art**, and **The Polish Consulate of Chicago**, with additional support for a panel discussion from **The Mandell and Madeleine Berman Foundation**.

The opening night performance, **Nov. 14**, will be broadcast live on **WRCJ 90.9 FM**, with commentary beginning at 7 p.m. with host Dave Wagner.

Access tickets for students and young professionals, ages 18-40, are available for the performance on **Wednesday, Nov. 18**, at a reduced price, with a special reception following the performance.

A **free opera talk** begins one hour prior to each performance.

Ticket prices range from \$29 to \$149. Tickets may be purchased online at www.MichiganOpera.org by calling (313) 237-7464, or in person at the Detroit Opera House (1526 Broadway, Detroit). Tickets may also be purchased at Ticketmaster.com, at any Ticketmaster outlet, or by calling (800) 745-3000.

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The Passenger

Music by Mieczysław Weinberg

Saturday, Nov. 14	7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Nov. 18	7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 21	7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 22	2:30 p.m.

At the Detroit Opera House

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About Michigan Opera Theatre

Michigan Opera Theatre (Wayne S. Brown, President and CEO; Dr. David DiChiera, Founder and Artistic Director), one of the nation's most vibrant nonprofit arts organizations, is committed to presenting opera and dance of the highest artistic caliber. Founded in 1971, the company's mission is to serve as a major cultural resource to the state of Michigan and the city of Detroit. Visit the website at www.michiganopera.org.