

PRESS RELEASE

Announcing the premiere of a new opera **THE SCARECROW** with music by Joseph Turrin and libretto by Bernard Stambler - commissioned by a consortium of twelve universities. The University of Texas at Austin and the Sara & Ernest Butler Opera Center will premiere the opera on February 24, 26, March 3, and 5, 2006. Directed by Robert DeSimone, Scenic Design by Christopher McCollum, and conducted by Joseph Turrin.

Other performances within the next three years by the consortium include: Eastman School of Music, Hartt School of Music, Yale University, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, University of North Texas, Baylor University, University of Oklahoma, Arizona State, University of New Mexico and Michigan State.

The work is based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's last short story "Feathertop" About a New England witch who brings a scarecrow to life, and after admiring her splendid work, decides to send it into town, conjuring up mischief and mayhem. What she didn't count on, was the absolute power of love, and a true heart. Bernard Stambler's wonderfully rich and poetic libretto is a monument to this truly American tale. Stambler is most widely known for his opera "The Crucible" with composer Robert Ward.

Turrin and Stambler collaborated on this opera in 1976 as tribute to the American Bicentennial. The work was never orchestrated and remained on the shelf for many years. In 2004 Turrin decided to revise and orchestrate the work. Knowing the difficulty of having new American operas produced, finding interested opera companies, and the frustration and expense of sending out scores and recordings. He decided to put together a consortium of universities and colleges. This seemed the perfect venue for new material - good performance facilities, a training ground for American singers and musicians, a dedicated faculty of professionals, and an eagerness to explore and experience new works.

THE SCARECROW is in two acts, with a cast of ten characters, and scored for 2 flutes (piccolo double), oboe, 2 clarinets (bass clarinet double), 2 bassoons (contra bassoon double), 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, harp, piano (harpsichord & celesta double), 4 cello, bass, and 2 percussion.

For more information please contact:

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