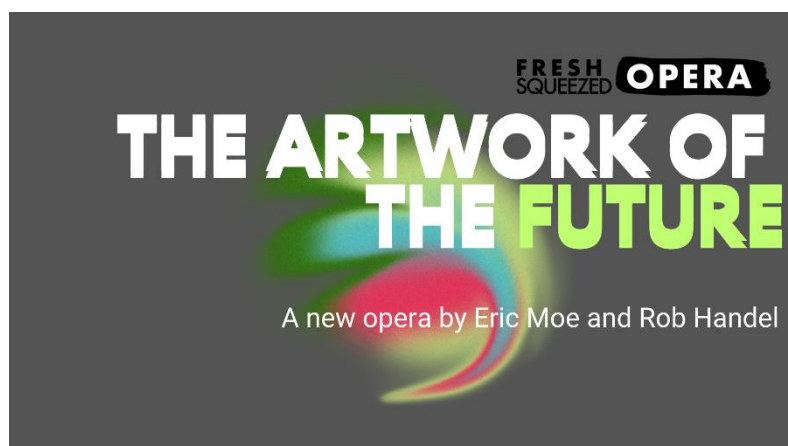


***The Artwork of the Future*, a New Opera with Music by Eric Moe and Libretto by Rob Handel – World Premiere Production by Fresh Squeezed Opera, May 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 2023, at HERE Performing Arts Center**

The lighthearted science-fiction opera about robot-loving artists and art-loving robots features four singers and instrumental septet



Omar Najmi, Emily Solo, Brittany Fowler, Daniel Klein

A new opera by composer Eric Moe and librettist Rob Handel, *The Artwork of the Future*, will have its world premiere in a production by Fresh Squeezed Opera in five performances at HERE Performing Arts Center in SoHo on May 13, 14, 16, 18, and 19, 2023. The 70-minute work, scored for four singers and

instrumental septet, is a lighthearted science-fiction opera that looks at the purpose of art in challenging times through the lens of comedy.

The plot follows artists Spearmint Lodge and Najeen Teflo as they try to secure an artistic legacy. Inspired by a TED Talk about immortal artists such as Bach and Van Gogh, whose efforts have remained part of the human experience long after their deaths, they decide that they need to know whether their future-leaning music and “spectator-triggered musical robot installations” will indeed endure. With the help of scientist Amalia Habitué, they travel 300 years into the future and arrive at the Guggenheim Museum, which proves to be full of their work, honoring them as prophetic artists. A robot docent explains that humans have died out, barely noticing this while preoccupied with their phones. Returning to the present, the artists find themselves fiercely divided about what to do. She wants to abandon their dreams of immortality and devote their energies to saving humankind. He doesn't see a problem with a future populated by robots, so long as the art survives. Will humankind be saved? How about their relationship? Answers in May.

The production is directed by Dara Malina, and Alex Wen is the music director. The cast features tenor Omar Najmi (Spearmint Lodge), soprano Emily Solo (Najeen), baritone Daniel Klein (TED Talker, Dewey the robot docent), and mezzo-soprano Brittany Fowler (Amalia). The instrumental ensemble features clarinet/bass clarinet, keyboard synthesizer, piano, string trio (violin, viola, cello), and sampled sound.

Fresh Squeezed Opera is a small, ensemble-based opera company whose mission is to present genre-pushing new works of the highest caliber that explore the depths of operatic music. *The Artwork of the Future* was selected from an open call from the company that yielded over 200 submissions of new works. Producer Jillian Flexner says: “This opera stood out to us for its refreshing neo-classical style married with electronics and an incredibly insightful comedy that will actually make you laugh.” The company's current season features works that highlight the importance of humor and fun.

Premiere of Eric Moe's *Where Do You See Yourself in 5 Years?* by Collage New Music

Eric Moe's latest chamber work, *Where Do You See Yourself in 5 Years?* for a septet of flutes, clarinets, cello, piano, and percussion, is a commission from the ensemble Collage New Music for its 50th anniversary. It will have its world premiere performance on [April 16, 2023](#), at Killian Hall at MIT.

Later this year, *A Forest Unfolding*, a collaborative artwork conceived by novelist Richard Powers, with composers Melinda Wagner, Stephen Jaffe, David K. Garner, and Eric Moe for soprano, baritone, and instrumental sextet, will be performed at the Aspen Music Festival by the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Tim Weiss, conductor, and Renée Fleming, narrator, on [July 22, 2023](#).

Eric Moe's music has been variously described as “maximal minimalism,” “Rachmaninoff in hell,” and “music of winning exuberance.” Although the surfaces and genres are varied, his works share a concern for rhythmic propulsion and a disregard for stylistic orthodoxies. Sometimes tonal, sometimes not, harmony (generally crunchy) and melody (often angular) play privileged roles in his work.

Eric has received numerous grants and awards for his work, including the Lakond Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a Guggenheim Fellowship; commissions from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Fromm Foundation, and the Koussevitzky Foundation. *Tri-Stan*, his sit-trag/one-woman opera on a text by David Foster Wallace, premiered by Sequitur in 2005, was hailed by the New York Times as “a blockbuster” and “a tour de force,” a work of “inspired weight” that “subversively inscribe[s] classical music into pop culture.” In its review of the piece, the Pittsburgh Post-

Gazette concluded, “it is one of those rare works that transcends the cultural divide while still being rooted in both sides.” Active as a pianist and keyboard player, Moe writes music he enjoys playing, and otherwise plays music he wishes he’d written. www.ericmoe.net

Rob Handel is a librettist and playwright. *Looking at You*, a surveillance capitalism opera with music by Kamala Sankaram, was produced at HERE after development by The Civilians R&D Group, BRIC, and Opera America. The original cast recording, on the Bright Shiny Things label, reached the top ten on the Billboard traditional classical chart and was included in Opera News’s five best new works of 2021. Further works by Sankaram & Handel include *The Infinite Energy of Ada Lovelace* (a scientific romance), *All Decisions Will Be Made By Consensus* (the first live Zoom opera), *Only You Will Recognize the Signal* (a space opera serial), and *Bombay Rickey Meets the Psychology of Desire* (a cabaret). Productions include the Prototype festival at HERE, Tête à Tête in London, Opera Ithaca, New Camerata Opera, Opera Theater of Yale College, Boston University, and 3rd Eye in Chicago.

Handel’s plays have been produced and developed by New York Stage and Film, Long Wharf, Target Margin, Rorschach Theatre, Just Theater/Shotgun Players, Curious Theatre, the Royal Court, Donmar Warehouse, National Playwrights Conference, Soho Rep, Portland Center Stage, and Theater am Käfigturm in Bern, Switzerland.

Fresh Squeezed Opera is a small ensemble-based opera company focused on presenting only new music with intimate and impactful productions. Eric Simpson of New York Classical Review states, “New York is rich in tiny upstart companies working to find ways to make opera engaging for new audiences. Fresh-Squeezed Opera stands out among these for its impressive commitment to championing new works.” Its mission is to present genre-pushing new works of the highest caliber that explore the depths of operatic music.

FSO focuses on producing works that not only are new, but resonate with contemporary audiences. As a result, it has consistently sold-out houses to audiences (average age of 30) consisting largely of first-time opera goers. In its eight-season history, the company has presented over 50 composers’ works through its various programs, including an annual Showcase of Vocal Chamber Music, Main Stage Summer Operas, and commissioning series. www.freshsqueezedopera.com

Fresh Squeezed Opera presents
***THE ARTWORK OF THE FUTURE* – World Premiere**
Music by Eric Moe
Libretto by Rob Handel

Cast:

Omar Najmi (Spearmint Lodge)
Emily Solo (Najeen Teflo)
Daniel Klein (Ted / Dewey)
Brittany Fowler (Amalia Habitué / Shirl)

Dara Malina, Stage Director
Alex Wen, Music Director

May 13, 16, 18, and 19, 2023, at 8:30 pm
May 14, 2023, at 4:00 pm
HERE Performing Arts Center, Mainstage Theater
145 Sixth Avenue, New York, NY

Tickets: \$30

Ticket link: <https://ci.ovationtix.com/219/production/1153133>

www.freshsqueezedopera.com
www.artworkofthefuture.com

Updated April 13, 2023