CAST
(In order of vocal appearance)
1st Trio Member................................................Jenny Schuler
2nd Trio Member.............................................Jonathan Zeng
3rd Trio Member...............................................Tobias Wright
Sam, a business man.......................................Aaron Wardell
Dinah, his wife.............................................Julia Elise Hardin

PRODUCTION
Conductor ...........................................................Codrut Birsan
Stage Director...............................................George Cederquist
Lighting Designer.........................................Claire Sangster
Choreographer..............................................Natalja Aicardi
Drums..............................................................Sean Kimzey
Bass...............................................................Scott Bakshis

NOTE
There will be a 30 minute jazz set prior to the opera and a 15 minute jazz set following the performance.

SPECIAL THANKS
The Chopin Theater
Edgebrook Lutheran Church
Olympic Carpet

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS
Codrut Birsan, Matthan Black, Robin Bradley,
Kevin Byrne, Katy Compton, Katy Coy, Benjamin
De Los Monteros, Carley DeFranco, Robert Delonis,
Bernadette DiCarlo, Bernadette DiCarlo, Patricia
Dickerson, Victoria Dietrich, Peter Elliott, Marc
Embree, James Floyd, Candace Forest, Robert
Glassman, Robert Glassman, Stacy Hancock, Walter
Hansen, Amy Hardin, Richard and Virginia Hardin,
Mark Hendren, Trina Kakacek, Ms. Linda Karn,
Linda Karn, Heather Keith, Kathryn Knauer, Marc
Lapinski, Claudiu Laurentiu, Collette and Alan
Leonhardt, Paul Lim, Melanie Lunardi, Cristian
Luput, Maricca Lutz, Joanna Maday, Kathy Manilla,
Stephanie Manilla, Morgan McCarthy, Kaileen
Miller, Daniel Dudici Mirela Galatanu, Susan Nelson,
Frank Perabo, Nicholas Photinos, Noah Pligge, Nik
Pugmire, Christopher Remmel, Allison Shapp, Glenn
B. Smith, Daniel Smith, Arthur S. Pietz, Jerry Tietz,
Nathan Troup, Antoine Van Den Bogert, Vlad Vitoc,
Lauren Washington, Ryan Wells, Karen Willoughby,
April Winney

OUR MISSION
Chicago Fringe Opera presents English-language
vocal works in contemporary settings to re-imagine
the traditional concert-going experience.

UPCOMING
The Turn of the Screw by Benjamin Britten
Fall 2015

CHICAGOFRINGEOPERA.COM

March 13-14 and 19-21 at 7:30 pm, 2015
Studio Theatre at the Chopin Theatre
1543 W Division St, Chicago, IL 60642
Director's Note

When Leonard Bernstein wrote Trouble in Tahiti in 1951, his theme – that life in suburbia is not necessarily as perfect as it seems – was an original and surprising idea, perhaps even a shocking one.

My, how America has changed in the last sixty years.

As portrayed in the art of today, there is nothing really shocking about the tension between the surface dream and the hidden nightmare of suburban life. Every medium has had its take on the topic, from Ben Folds to Arcade Fire, from Desperate Housewives to Weeds, and in many other songs, TV shows and films in between.

Why, then, does Trouble in Tahiti still affect us so deeply? The score hasn’t changed since its original composition, apart from the opera being subsumed by a larger, separate Bernstein work from the 1980s called A Quiet Place. The opera’s music is as striking as ever, featuring chromaticism and syncopated rhythms that only Bernstein could have composed. It combines legit operatic motives (sung by Sam and Dinah, a married couple in crisis) with the swing and jive of a hip jazz trio who drive the narrative forward and comment on the story.

But beyond the score, it’s the slowly souring relationship between Sam and Dinah that moves us as much now as then. We may no longer be shocked by the idea of the suburbs hiding dark secrets, but we will always be taken aback when we hear the news that a couple we know and love has begun to drift apart.

Sam and Dinah are not bad people. They have their proclivities, like all of us, but they do want their ten-year-old marriage to succeed. No, they are not the problem: their surroundings are. The quest for a perfect suburban life has led them not to a quiet place (a phrase Dinah uses in describing a dream she had), but to an empty place. In possessing more than they could possibly ever need – a goal which suburban society has told them is right and good – Sam and Dinah fail to realize that they’ve been sold a false bill of goods. Two cars, good schools, a big backyard, and plentiful malls are no substitute for contentment or for deep, personal connection. They work hard for the dream, and get it, but at the expense of their marriage.

That conflict is what lies in the hearts of Sam and Dinah, in the heart of this opera, and in the hearts of many of us today.

About the Creative Team

Natalja Aicardi
Choreographer
Recently: Theatre Building Chicago, Caffeine Theatre, Stockyard theatre Project, Chicago Opera Vanguard

Codrut Birsan
Conductor | CFO Artistic Director
Recently: Rape of Lucretia (Chicago Fringe Opera), Magic Flute (Chicago Summer Opera)

George Cederquist
Stage Director | CFO Head of Production
Recently: Paul’s Case (Pittsburgh Opera), Dark Sisters (Pittsburgh Opera)

Claire Sangster
Lighting Designer
Recently: The Killing of Michael X (Jackalope Theater), The Fly Honey Show V (The Inconvenience)

About the Cast

Julia Elise Hardin
Dinah, Sam’s wife | CFO Co-General Manager
Recently: Rosina (The Barber of Seville - Lyric Opera of Chicago Opera in the Neighborhoods), 2nd Lady (The Magic Flute - Chicago Opera Theater)

Jenny Schuler
1st Trio Member | CFO Design & Marketing
Recently: Female Chorus (The Rape of Lucretia - Chicago Fringe Opera), Alice (Falstaff - /kor/ Productions)

Aaron Wardell
Sam, a businessman
Recently: Junius (The Rape of Lucretia - Chicago Fringe Opera), Yamadori (Madame Butterfly - Castleton Festival)

Tobias Wright
3rd Trio Member
Recently: Raoul de St. Brioche (The Merry Widow - Light Opera Works), Don Ottavio (Don Giovanni - Lawrence Opera Theatre)

Jonathan Zeng
2nd Trio Member
Recently: Frederic (Pirates of Penzance - Cincinnati Opera Outbound), Mr. Vogel (The Impresario - Midwest Opera Works)

Read more about our cast and creative team: ChicagoFringeOpera.com/voices-program/