

# THE RAPE OF LUCRETIA

by Benjamin Britten  
libretto by Ronald Duncan

## CAST

(In order of appearance)

Male Chorus.....Scott Brunscheen  
Female Chorus.....Jenny Schuler  
Collatinus.....David Govertsen  
Junius.....Aaron Wardell  
Tarquinius.....Matthan Black  
Lucretia.....Robin Bradley  
Bianca.....Giovanna Jacques  
Lucia.....Elyse Kakacek

## PRODUCTION

Conductor .....Codrut Birsan  
Stage Director.....George Cederquist  
Vocal Coach and Pianist.....Alyssa Arrigo

## NOTE

There will be no intermission

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## CHICAGO FRINGE OPERA'S MISSION

Chicago Fringe Opera presents American and English vocal works and re-envisions the traditional concert-going experience through minimalist and modern performance concepts.

## UPCOMING SEASON INFORMATION

A Quiet Place by Leonard Bernstein | May 2015  
Turn of the Screw by Benjamin Britten | Fall 2015

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### Elyse Kakacek

Lucia  
Recently: Despina - Cosi fan tutte (Floating Opera Project), Alice - Alice in Wonderland (Chicago Opera Playhouse)

### Jenny Schuler

Female Chorus | CFO Design & Marketing Director  
Recently: Alice - Falstaff (/kor/ productions)

### Aaron Wardell

Junius  
Recently: Yamadori - Madama Butterfly (Castleton Music Festival), Marco - Gianni Schicchi (Teatro National de Sucre)

[ChicagoFringeOpera.com](http://ChicagoFringeOpera.com)  
for additional information

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## SPECIAL THANKS

## PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

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THE RAPE OF LUCRETIA  
by Benjamin Britten

November 17, 19 & 24 at 7:30pm, 2014

Studio Theatre at the Chopin Theatre  
1543 W Division St, Chicago, IL 60642



## SYNOPSIS

This production is set in the present; the following events unfold in an interrogation room on a military base. Before the opera's story begins, the military officer Tarquinius is taken into custody after being accused of raping fellow officer and wife of Collatinus, Lucretia.

What follows is an investigation into that accusation.

The Male and Female Choruses lead the investigation and record testimonies of several witnesses. Tarquinius and two generals, Collatinus and Junius, are first brought in to reenact the events of the night of the alleged rape. The men explain they were drinking and arguing about the infidelity of women, then are dismissed.

The Choruses usher in Lucretia and her close friends, Bianca and Lucia, and ask the three to reenact their actions of that same night, in which they were at home, waiting for Collatinus to return safely.

Following the two sets of testimonies, the Choruses bring Tarquinius and Lucretia together, hoping the tension between them to divulge further evidence relating to the rape. Tarquinius proceeds to torment Lucretia, reminding her of exactly what happened between them on the night in question. Tarquinius then leaves Lucretia, who falls asleep, exhausted.

The following morning, Bianca and Lucia enter to check on Lucretia. They discover that Tarquinius has abused her in the interrogation room. Collatinus and Junius return shortly after, knowing that Tarquinius has vanished and something is awry. Collatinus' arrival is too painful for Lucretia to bear; and she kills herself, leaving the investigators, the Male and Female Choruses, to come to terms with the events they have witnessed.

Read the full libretto:



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In an odd way, the act of rape perpetrated against Lucretia in this opera is not the story's central event. There is little suspense in whether or not a rape will occur, as the opera's title alone tells us what is going to happen. Indeed, in the libretto, the rape doesn't even take place onstage.

The main event of the opera comes before and after the rape: how events could lead to such a horrid act, how we try and make sense of such an act after the fact, and how we try (or don't try) to make sure it never happens again.

With this approach, coupled with the distinctly military setting (after all, Britten wrote the opera just three years after the end of the Second World War), I began my research by watching a harrowing documentary called *The Invisible War*. This film from 2012 investigates the prevalence of rape in the military: why so many rapes happen, why they go unreported, and why the higher-ups do nothing to stop them. In that context, I realized that there was nothing in the text which suggested that Lucretia -- married to a military officer -- couldn't in fact be one herself.

The Male and Female Choruses are perhaps the most problematic figures of Britten's opera, especially the way in which they remain outside the action as a conduit between the characters and the audience. One way to keep them outside of the action, but to have them retain a stake in what happens in the story, was to make them investigators: part military police, part documentarians.

Ultimately, the opera is not only an investigation to the events of the night in question, but also an investigation into how such events happen, how rapes continue to remain unreported, and what our role is as humans and citizens -- military or not -- to work against such crimes being committed in the future.

## ABOUT THE CAST

### **Alyssa Arrigo**

Pianist | CFO Répétiteur

Recently: Artist-in-Residence Collaborative Artist (Chicago College of Performing Arts), Young Artist (Chicago Opera Theater)

### **Matthan Black**

Tarquinius | CFO Administrative Secretary

Recently: Enrico - Lucia di Lammermoor (Main Street Opera), King Claudio (cvr) - Amleto (Opera South-west)

### **Codrut Birsan**

Conductor | CFO Artistic Director

### **Robin Bradley**

Lucretia | CFO Development

Recently: Carmen (cvr) - Carmen (Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre), Ottavia - L'incoronazione di Poppea (Manhattan Summer Voice Festival)

### **Scott Brunscheen**

Male Chorus | CFO Co-General Manager

Recently: Tonio (cvr) - La Fille du Regiment (Madison Opera), Spoletta - Tosca (Madison Opera)

### **George Cederquist**

Stage Director | CFO Head of Production

Recently: Paul's Case (Pittsburgh Opera), Dark Sisters (Pittsburgh Opera)

### **David Govertsen**

Collatinus | CFO Member

Recently: Majordomo - Capriccio (Lyric Opera), Raimondo - Lucia di Lammermoor (Main Street Opera)

### **Giovanna Jacques**

Bianca | CFO Development

Recently: Jade Boucher - Dead Man Walking (Victory Gardens), Founder of Caritas Ensemble