


MANNERISM

Winking

Face: Eyebrow elevation
grimacing ^{CC, A.T} A.M

Head Tonic spasms S.S

Eye *  OG: forced conj
Adversive ties

Forced closure, blink, lid
ew

BMOP
sound

TOBIAS PICKER: AWAKENINGS

Hand

tawing, picking, pe
Fidget & scratch

TOBIAS PICKER b. 1954

AWAKENINGS

LIBRETTO BY ARYEH LEV STOLLMAN

JARRETT PORTER baritone

JOYCE EL-KHOURY soprano

ADRIENNE DANRICH mezzo-soprano

CÉSAR DELGADO tenor

ANDREW MORSTEIN tenor

KATHARINE GOELDNER mezzo-soprano

KEITH KLEIN bass

ERIN MERCERUIO NELSON soprano

VICTORIA DAVIS soprano

DAVID SMALL bass baritone

STEPHANIE KACOYANIS contralto

KRISTA RIVER soprano

STEVEN GOLDSTEIN tenor

MICHELLE TRAINOR mezzo-soprano

SEAN MALKUS tenor

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT | ODYSSEY OPERA

Gil Rose, conductor

DISC 1 (55:25)

ACT I

- [1] Scene 1: October 1966.
A hospital dayroom 8:24
- [2] Scene 2: Three years later, February 1969.
Hospital meeting room 4:55
- [3] Scene 3: March 1969 9:30
- [4] Scene 4: Morning, July 1969 8:02
- [5] Scene 5: Sultry evening. Early August 1969.
Sacks' dining room.
Patients' rooms 8:20
- [6] Scene 6: Early August 1969.
New York Botanical Garden 8:01
- [7] Scene 7: Later that afternoon.
Dayroom 8:12

DISC 2 (48:13)

ACT II

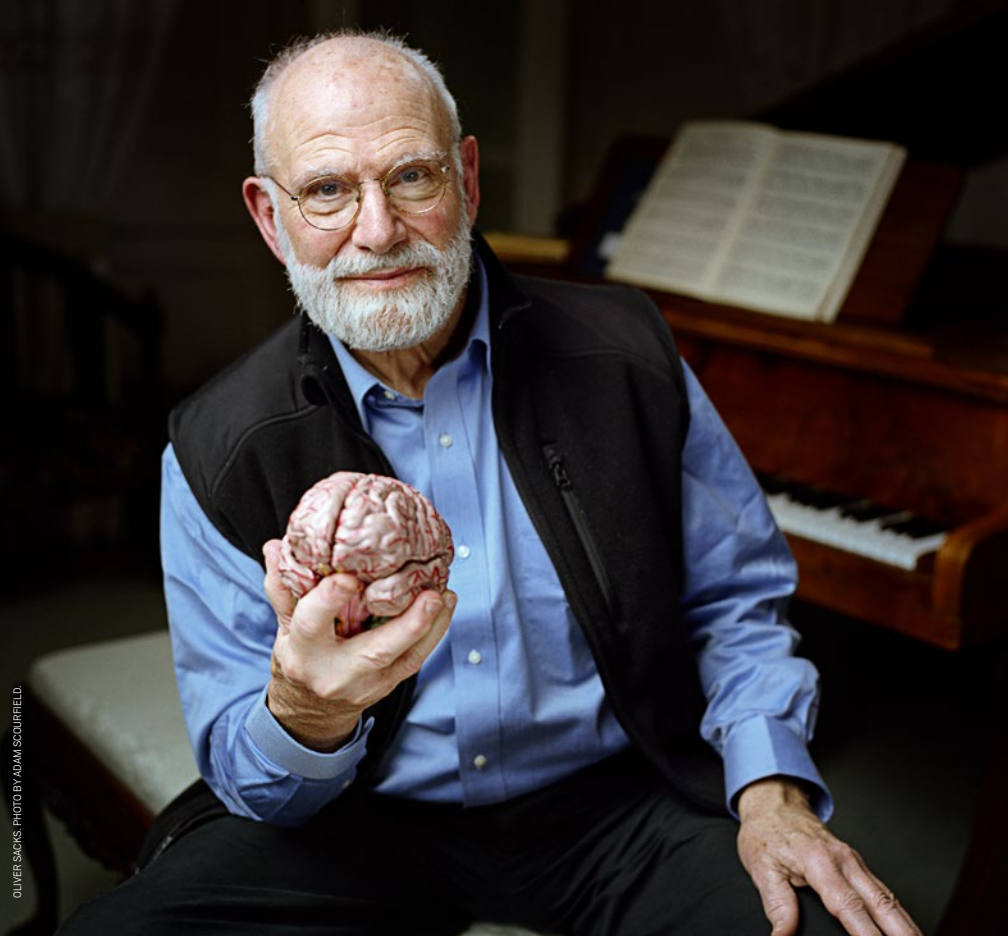
- [1] Scene 1: Evening August 26, 1969.
Dayroom 8:51
- [2] Scene 2: Leonard's room, a week later.
September 1969 6:32
- [3] Scene 3: October 1969. Dayroom afternoon.
Rose's room, evening 8:03
- [4] Scene 4: Administration meeting room.
Sacks' parents' living room 8:45
- [5] Scene 5: Morning, December 1969.
Dayroom 5:45
- [6] Scene 6: Twilight, December 1969.
Dayroom 10:14

Composer's Comment: Tobias Picker

Oliver Sacks and I met in 1992 through a mutual friend who believed Dr. Sacks could diagnose the mysterious and debilitating movement disorder that has plagued me since the age of five. Oliver told me that I had Tourette's Syndrome, and helped me learn how to acknowledge and understand a major part of myself that I couldn't before. As our friendship developed, I became enamored by the sheer beauty of his prose as he in turn began attending my concerts and opera premieres. When I expressed a desire to adapt one of his books into an opera, Oliver urged me to consider *Awakenings*. Both because of its proven dramatic appeal (the film version was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1991) and my own identification with the patients, some of whom suffered from exhausting major tics, I readily agreed.

The opera is framed by our retelling of the Brothers Grimm version of *Sleeping Beauty*, with Dr. Sacks himself cast as the prince. I employed letters of his name as a *cantus firmus* using the Renaissance technique of *soggetto cavato* — notes drawn from the vowels of key words — to further ground the music in mythology and allegory. For example, Sacks' character is represented by omnipresent, persistent, "frozen" octave A's — which simultaneously *always* signify his "frozen" patients — against which the melodies of the storytelling unfold.

In 1973 when he published *Awakenings* and even in 1990 when the film adaptation was released, Oliver Sacks was still closeted, only to come out to the world months before his death in 2015 at the age of eighty-two. Though he was open with me, it wasn't until the last year of his life that he came out to the world at large. We have incorporated struggles with sexual identity into the fabric of our story. With all five of my prior operas about heterosexuals, I felt a longing to write about gay characters — in this case bound together in a triangle of unrequited love. Leonard is unable to express or understand his feelings for



OLIVER SACKS. PHOTO BY ADAM SCOURFIELD.

Mr. Rodriguez because he has been locked in a frozen body for forty years; Mr. Rodriguez is consumed by his adoration of Dr. Sacks; Oliver finds himself locked in by outside social and familial forces.



PICKER AND SACKS, RHINEBECK, NY, MAY 23, 2015. PHOTO BY BILL HAYES.

Composing *Awakenings* was an act of love: love for my old friend Oliver, a man with an endless heart, who is central to the story; love for my husband and partner of 43 years, the splendid neuroradiologist/novelist/librettist Aryeh Lev Stollman; love for the brave survivors of the “Sleepy-Sickness” pandemic; and love for the power of music and words to bring to life a long-dormant story of sadness and hope. I hope this story will

resonate and provide some solace for today’s audiences who have recently endured a new pandemic — which has reminded us all of the fragility of life and the power of healing through medicine, music, words, and time.

* * *

Awakenings is dedicated to its director, my longtime friend and collaborator James Robinson. And this recording, with special thanks to Gil Rose, is dedicated to my beloved friend, Roma Broida Wittcoff.

Librettist’s Comments: Aryeh Lev Stollman

A NOTE ON ENCEPHALITIS LETHARGICA

During the years 1916–1927 the sleeping-sickness pandemic, encephalitis lethargica (also known as von Economo’s disease), swept across the globe. In 1917 Vienna, Constantin von Economo published some of the first case histories in the German language. As this was wartime, communication between different medical communities throughout the world was limited, but in the decades after the war thousands more case reports and articles were added to the medical literature as the disease appeared and grew on many continents.

One of the initial striking symptoms that gave rise to its name, was the extreme lethargy and sleepiness many victims suffered, along with abnormal eye movements. Unlike patients in coma, these people were often rousable and even aware of what was going on around them while they “slept.” During the course of the pandemic, a million or more died, but thousands lived on, many of them later developing symptoms — some of which were similar to Parkinson’s disease — leaving them immobile, like living statues. Large institutions were built throughout the world to house and care for the survivors. After nearly half a century, most of these had died as well, and those who had survived remained locked away in hospital wards, forgotten and “asleep,” including at Beth Abraham Hospital in the Bronx, where a brilliant young doctor, Oliver Sacks, came to work in 1966.

In 1967, Dr. George Cotzias published a landmark paper showing that large doses of L-DOPA — doses a thousand times more than previously given — could effectively treat Parkinson’s disease. Dr. Sacks began experimenting with the drug, noting the similarity of Parkinson’s patients with the post-encephalitic patients he discovered at Beth Abraham, often referring to them as “Sleeping Beauties.” By doing so, he awakened these forgotten men and women who had never stopped thinking or feeling, temporarily bringing them back to an active and engaged life as documented in his book *Awakenings*.

More than a century has passed since the first reported cases, and the cause of this disease remains one of history's medical mysteries. Some believe that encephalitis lethargica may have appeared several times in history and in different places, including hundreds of years before in England, Italy, and Germany.

In the last several years the world has experienced a startling new pandemic, whose long-term effects — physical and neurological — are still unknown. We are grateful to all the members of the medical and extended health care community who have dedicated themselves to the care of the victims of this pandemic, as Dr. Sacks lovingly did with his patients so many years ago.

AWAKENINGS is an opera in two acts with a libretto by Aryeh Lev Stollman based on Dr. Oliver Sacks' 1973 memoir of the same name. Scored for vocal soloists, chorus, and full orchestra, it was premiered by The Opera Theatre of St. Louis on June 5, 2022, at the Loretto-Hilton Center for the Performing Arts in Webster Groves, MO.

By James Robinson

Shortly after becoming artistic director at Opera Theatre of St. Louis in 2008, I set about to create a program called *New Works, Bold Voices*, an initiative that would not only focus on the creation of world premieres by a wide range of composers but also present "second looks" and revivals of recent operas. The success of *New Works, Bold Voices* was quite remarkable and audiences flocked to both the new and newer in equal measure. The only problem, of course, was that it was impossible to produce all the works by composers I had long admired. But one title I was determined to stage was Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*, an opera I had long admired and believed to be sadly neglected. As luck would have it, in 2011 Tobias asked if I might be interested in staging the world premiere of his stunning opera *Dolores Claiborne*, based on the novel by Stephen King with a libretto by J. D. McClatchy, for the San Francisco Opera.

A few years later, I was reading op-ed pieces in the *New York Times* written by Dr. Oliver Sacks who was chronicling his battle with terminal cancer. During a meeting to discuss potential subjects, Tobias casually mentioned his deep friendship with Dr. Sacks and how he had always longed to write an opera based on what is possibly Sack's most famous book,

Awakenings. It did not take long for me to realize this was our operatic “eureka moment,” so we commissioned Tobias and his husband, doctor, and novelist, Aryeh Lev Stollman, to create a new opera for St. Louis’ 2020 season on this rather unconventional subject.

So what makes *Awakenings* an “unconventional” opera? Over the past several years, I have been involved in the development of many new and newer works based on all sorts of subjects. There are pieces that I would deem strongly dramatic without necessarily being theatrical, and there are those that are purely theatrical without being traditionally dramatic. I would put *Awakenings* into a somewhat unique category. While there is a strong storyline with character development, this is an opera that has a more meditative angle. It is less action-oriented than contemplative. There are no real villains (except time itself, perhaps) and our hero (Dr. Sacks) is, in spite of his efforts, a bit of a failure during this episode in his medical career. Our patients do “awaken” with the help of Dr. Sacks and L-DOPA, but only briefly. Almost from the start, we know that this experiment will most likely end unhappily (after all, the chorus, much like a Greek chorus) sings of the tale of *Sleeping Beauty*. The fascinating thing for us as an audience is to see what happens with Rose, Leonard, and Miriam, once L-DOPA is delivered to them. How do they handle this newfound awareness of life around them and the world that has forgotten them? And how do they handle the fact that they know their awakened state is only temporary as their conditions deteriorate?

From the standpoint of a stage director, the biggest obstacle was how to bring out strong characterizations from the singers without allowing them to fall into stereotypes of patients living in a mental hospital. Fortunately, Tobias and Aryeh created sensitive and revealing voices for our three main characters: Rose, Miriam, and Leonard. It required all of us to “stay in the moment” and not to project doom, to work moment to moment without belaboring a point, and it was necessary to maintain a kind of emotional distance from the situation, working in almost a clinical manner. Both words and music eschew self-pity and one never finds the character wallowing in maudlin behavior. If anything, they are hopeful and full of wonder, as well as terrified and heart-broken. Interestingly, the cast (both in St. Louis and

in Boston) immediately grasped the depth of the characters and I can honestly say I have rarely seen a group of singers so invested in bringing them to life.

Perhaps the most elusive but ultimately revealing character is Sacks himself. We see him as a brash and overly confident young doctor, challenging authority and wanting to “risk it all” in the name of science. Once given permission to proceed with administering L-DOPA to the first patient, he is cocky and optimistic. From the standpoint of a singer, he has a huge task: that of observer and listener. Sacks becomes quite close to his patients, and a type of family is created. While Rose, Miriam, and Leonard open up to him about their pasts, memories, and hopes, Sacks remains remote and very guarded. In one of the opera’s most beautiful scenes, the journey to the botanical gardens, Sacks speaks of himself less as a flower and more like a plant, specifically the cycad. It reveals a thoughtful but detached person, emotionally self-protected. In spite of the efforts of nurse Rodriguez who demonstrates his infatuation with Dr. Sacks, he remains closed and lonely. It isn’t until the patients exhibit ill-effects and deterioration from the L-DOPA experiment that we begin to understand Sacks’ depth of fear and despair. However, the opera doesn’t end in despair for Dr. Sacks. Rather, he uses the episode with the central patients and nurse Rodriguez to continue to hope and work.

While developing the physical production for *Awakenings*, I returned to my usual team of collaborators: Allen Moyer, sets; James Schuette, costumes; Chris Akerlind, lights; and Greg Emetaz, projections. Like most contemporary operas, this one has multiple scenes and several locations. And the scenes, fluid and cinematic, move quickly from one to the other. It was crucial that the environment evoke the hospital day room (our primary location) but it was important that it not be overly detailed or depressing. We came up with a plan that involved a large and rather clinical environment where our patients could gather together or exist privately. In order to move from one room to another we used several large rolling glass panels that functioned as separators but also as windows. This allowed the patients to be evaluated and watched (as they were all observed members of an experiment) and it

allowed the audience to understand the kind of colorless worldview they were experiencing. Video and projections are used judiciously to show the passing of the days and weeks, and to underscore memories and flashbacks. Overall, the choreography of the institutional glass panels along with the lighting and projections helped the audience on their own journey to appreciate the mundane and fantastical through the eyes of those at Beth Abraham.

Little did we know that *Awakenings*, an opera about patients who had fallen victim to a worldwide pandemic, would also be derailed by another pandemic. Finally, though, in 2022 we presented the world premiere of *Awakenings* in St. Louis, and I can honestly say that it was one of the most deeply moving experiences with which I have been involved on a new opera. In *Awakenings*, we experience the joys, frustrations, failures and failings of a brave individual who, against all conventional wisdom, embarked on a series of experiments to liberate a group of patients imprisoned in their own bodies. We see and hear how these “awakened” individuals come to terms with their newfound freedoms and passions as well as their long-forgotten fears. At the same time, Dr. Sacks struggles with his own personal demons, suppressing his own desires. Tobias’ music gives voice to the three patients — Rose, Leonard and Miriam — with intensely probing emotional writing and orchestration. Sacks, too, is musically and dramatically revealed in ways both overly confident and psychologically conflicted.

Ultimately, Sacks’ treatments, while not a cure, opened the door to new advances in medicine for a wide range of diseases. As they say, without failure there is no success. From my own standpoint, I view the creation of art — specifically opera — in much the same way. It requires great courage from creators and audiences alike to embrace experimentation and the unconventional. In that sense, I am delighted that the audiences for *Awakenings* have been so enthusiastic and allowed themselves to be awakened.

James Robinson has served as the Artistic Director of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis since 2008, and plays an instrumental role in curating artistic programming at OTSL, and is a resource for rising composers and librettists across the nation.

AWAKENINGS

Music by Tobias Picker

Libretto by Aryeh Lev Stollman

Dr. Oliver Sacks

Rose

Miriam H.

Mr. Rodriguez

Leonard Lev

Iris Lev

Dr. Podsnap

Ruth

Lily

Dr. Samuel Sacks

Dr. Muriel Elsie Landau

Miss Kohl

Frank

Lucy

Fiancé

Jarrett Porter baritone

Joyce El-Khoury soprano

Adrienne Danrich mezzo-soprano

César Delgado tenor

Andrew Morstein tenor

Katharine Goeldner mezzo-soprano

Keith Klein bass

Erin Merceruio Nelson soprano

Victoria Davis soprano

David Small bass baritone

Stephanie Kacoyanis contralto

Krista River soprano

Steven Goldstein tenor

Michelle Trainor mezzo-soprano

Sean Malkus tenor



ACT I ENSEMBLE PHOTO BY KATY WITTMAN/BALL SQUARE FILMS

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

October 1966: Morning dawns in a hospital in the Bronx. The room is full of patients who exist in-between sleep and consciousness. Dr. Oliver Sacks chats with the nurse, Mr. Rodriguez, about these patients, all of whom have been in the same state for as much as 40 years. Dr. Podsnap, the hospital's medical chief, remarks upon the similarities between this sleeping sickness (encephalitis lethargica) and Parkinson's but declares the cases hopeless. Dr. Sacks promises the patients that he won't abandon them.

February 1969: Three years later, the hospital's staff debates the benefits of new drugs. One of these drugs, L-DOPA, has shown early promise in fighting Parkinson's, so Dr. Sacks believes it may also help the patients suffering from sleeping sickness. Dr. Podsnap reluctantly agrees to let Sacks administer an experimental dose to one case. Sacks chooses a patient named Leonard. The effect is miraculous: Leonard begins speaking and walking.

July 1969: Sacks has successfully administered L-DOPA to several other patients. Some are still struggling to speak properly, while others are re-learning how to walk. Two female patients, Miriam and Rose, have shown extraordinary improvement under the new treatment.

August 1969: Sacks, Leonard, Rose, and Miriam reflect on the time they lost to encephalitis lethargica. Leonard's writing and tone become more agitated as he expresses his desire for Mr. Rodriguez. Dr. Sacks and his patients take a field trip to the Botanical Garden; all are delighted to be amid such beauty. Mr. Rodriguez is infatuated with Dr. Sacks, completely unaware of Leonard's gaze. As Dr. Sacks teaches his patients about some of the plants, Leonard and Rose begin to exhibit odd behavior. Back at the hospital, Miriam receives an unexpected visit: her daughter Lily and granddaughter Violet are there to see her. Rose hallucinates about her lost lover.

ACT II

August 26, 1969: A newspaper has published an article about the success of Dr. Sacks' treatment of encephalitis lethargica patients. The patients are thrilled by their newfound fame. The hospital holds a party in Sacks' honor. He, Rose, Mr. Rodriguez, Miriam and some of the other patients begin to dance together. Leonard tries unsuccessfully to dance with Mr. Rodriguez. Suddenly, when the musical rhythm changes, Rose begins to move in an odd, frantic way and Leonard starts to rant nonsensically. Dr. Podsnap orders the patients back to their rooms.

September 1969: Dr. Sacks visits Leonard, who is furiously typing with one finger. Leonard tells the doctor that he wants to rise from the Ashes of Defeat to the Glory of Greatness. Despite his ramblings, Leonard realizes that he is deteriorating and fears returning to a dark world of sleep. His thoughts are interrupted by a hallucination of Mr. Rodriguez.

October 1969: Dr. Sacks is adjusting Miriam's dose of L-DOPA, but she has lost interest in fixing her condition. Rose is also struggling to move now; she still has visions of her fiancé coming back to her. The hospital staff debates whether treatments should cease. Sacks hates the idea of giving up, despite the drastic side effects, and is deeply wounded when Dr. Podsnap declares his experiment an abomination.

December 1969: Dr. Podsnap questions whether he has done more harm than good in letting Sacks experiment upon their patients. Sacks is devastated that he has failed to keep his promise to his patients. Yet even as he chastises himself, the patients silently sing to Sacks, thanking him for their second chance at life. Mr. Rodriguez tries to comfort Sacks, but Sacks pulls away.... It is not yet time for his awakening. Slumber falls once again upon the hospital.

ACT I

[1|1] Scene 1: October 1966.
A hospital dayroom

ENSEMBLE

A slumber fell upon the kingdom.
 The princess fell upon her bed.
 The king and queen fell on their thrones.
 The court upon their chairs.
 A slumber fell upon the kingdom.
 The horses fell upon their straw.
 The doves all slept up on the eaves.
 The flies upon the wall.
 The fire in the kitchen froze.
 The wind and leaves went still.
 And all the castle slept.
 A hundred years the castle slept.
 Around it grew a hedge of thorns protecting
 Sleeping Beauty.

MISTER RODRIGUEZ

You see, they know you're here, Doctor Sacks.
 Here they are.
 They've been like this for ages.
 Twenty years. Thirty years. Forty years!
 Rose...Rose... they say she flew airplanes.
 Here are your patients.
 They're like statues.
 They don't look old and don't be fooled,

They are not asleep.
 They are thinking.
 There is Leonard.
 He reads!
 Leonard's mother comes as surely as the sunrise.
 She sits with him all day.
 She turns his pages.
 He reads. He reads. He reads!

(Enter Doctor Podsnap)

DOCTOR PODSNAP

Well, Doctor Sacks. You will get to know them soon enough.
 Nurse Rodriguez, there are five hundred patients to tend to.
 MISTER RODRIGUEZ *(to Sacks)*
 I'm sorry I must leave you.

(He exits)

DOCTOR PODSNAP

The frozen ones are just a few.
 They're like Parkinson's, only much worse.
 All hopeless, all hopeless.

ENSEMBLE

Then a brave prince crossed the hedge of thorns
 And kissed the princess,
 And everyone and everything
 Awakened, awakened, awakened, awakened.

MIRIAM

Doctor, Doctor!
Help me! Help me!
I'm going to die! I'm going to die!

DOCTOR SACKS (*reading*)

Miriam H. Born in nineteen hundred fourteen.
Sent here at eighteen.
I have only read about them.
How sleeping sickness caught them in its spell.
Encephalitis lethargica.
Millions died, but thousands lived to sleep.
Long ago, princes came to cross a hedge of thorns
Protecting Sleeping Beauty.
But all were caught in the thorns and killed.
A century went by.
A brave prince came who wished to see her.
He was not afraid!
The hedge of thorns with roses bloomed right before his eyes,
And then it opened a path for him.
So, he passed through and found the princess
And woke her with his kiss.
Would that I were not afraid.
I won't abandon you.

MIRIAM/LEONARD/ROSE

A slumber fell upon the kingdom.
Our days fade into weeks and years.
Your time is not like time to us.
We all cry unseen tears.
A slumber fell upon the kingdom.
We hear but cannot speak a word
To tell you what it is like for us
To see but not be seen.

[1|2] Scene 2: Three years later, February 1969.
Hospital meeting room

(*Meeting room filled with doctors and administrators of
Beth Abraham.*)

ENSEMBLE

Modern medicines!
Dreadful treatments!
Side effects!
Complications!
Hyoscamine!
Stinking nightshade!
Anticholinergics!
Belladonna!
Apomorphine!
Amphetamines!
Antimuscarinics!
Trihexyphenidyl!
That's a mouthful!
Even worse, those surgeries!
Chemopallidectomies.
Pity the incurables!
Thalamotomies!
Poor Mrs. Rosenzweig!
They killed her this morning!

(*Doctor Sacks breaks into the meeting carrying a copy of
The New England Journal of Medicine.*)

DOCTOR SACKS

I have found the answer right here!
I've been waiting for this for three long years.
The patients have waited for decades.
L-DOPA! Large doses!
L-DOPA! Large doses!
Since it works on Parkinson's

Why not on encephalitis lethargica?
So much like Parkinson's.

DOCTOR PODSNAP
Encephalitis lethargica.

ENSEMBLE

Encephalitis lethargica.
Modern medicines!
Dreadful treatments!
Pity the incurables!
Complications!
Dreadful treatments!
Anticholinergics!
Belladonna!
Apomorphine!
Amphetamines!
Antimuscarinics!
Trihexyphenidyl!
Thalamotomies!
Chemopallidectomies!
Pity the incurables!

DOCTOR SACKS

Have you seen this, Doctor Podsnap?
Have you seen this *New England Journal of Medicine*?
Doctor Cotzias! Cotzias! Cotzias!
Cotzias figured it out!

DOCTOR PODSNAP (*aside to the others*)

Who does this Englishman think he is?
What is this Oxford boy doing here in the Bronx!
Where does he think he is practicing?
We're not Mass General!

DOCTOR SACKS

I believe we now have a treatment to try
That could bring the hopeless to life again.
Cotzias figured it out!

Large doses of L-DOPA
Brings new hope to those with Parkinson's.
We must try it!
We must try it on our encephalitis lethargica patients.

DOCTOR PODSNAP (*reading out loud from the Journal*)

"Modification of Parkinsonism
Chronic treatment with L-DOPA.
By George C. Cotzias."
But they are different, Doctor Sacks.
They don't have Parkinson's, Doctor Sacks.

DOCTOR SACKS

All their symptoms are similar, Parkinsonian.

DOCTOR PODSNAP

People, not guinea pigs, Doctor Sacks.

DOCTOR SACKS

Parkinsonian!

DOCTOR PODSNAP

We don't experiment here at Beth Abraham.
Another fancy paper.
It will be disproven before you know it.
Like belladonna!

DOCTOR SACKS

No, it's not like belladonna.

DOCTOR PODSNAP

Like hyoscamine.

DOCTOR SACKS

No, not like hyoscamine.

DOCTOR PODSNAP

Like amantadine.

DOCTOR SACKS

No! No! No! No! No! No!
Not like those other drugs.

This is real science!
Real science!
Please listen!
What have you to offer them?
You must listen to me!

DOCTOR PODSNAP
I must listen to you?
Young man! Watch yourself!
Watch what you say!

ENSEMBLE
Watch yourself!
Watch what you say!

DOCTOR PODSNAP
We don't experiment here at Beth Abraham.
We are entrusted with their care.

ENSEMBLE
We don't experiment here at Beth Abraham.
We are entrusted with their care.

DOCTOR SACKS
Please just read more and consider.

DOCTOR PODSNAP (*reading further from the article*)
"Slowly increasing doses of L-3-4-
dihydroxyphenylalanine,
L-DOPA, induced at least partial improvement
in a series of twenty-six patients with Parkinsonism.
Improvement of performance was graded as
Modest in four,
Marked in eight..."

DOCTOR SACKS
Marked in eight!

DOCTOR PODSNAP
And dramatic in ten.

DOCTOR SACKS
Dramatic in ten!
DOCTOR PODSNAP
One patient. One patient.
Choose one.
I hope for your sake you are right.

DOCTOR SACKS
Thank you, Doctor Podsnap.

ENSEMBLE
Modern medicines!
Dreadful treatments!
Side effects!
Complications!
Hyoscamine!
Stinking nightshade!
Anticholinergics!
Belladonna!

Apomorphine!
Amphetamines!
Antimuscarinics!
Trihexyphenidyl!
That's a mouthful!
Chemopallidectomies.
Pity the incurables!
Thalamotomies!
Modern medicines!
Dreadful treatments!
Side effects!
Complications!
Hyoscamine!
Stinking nightshade!
Anticholinergics!
Belladonna!
Apomorphine!

Amphetamines!
Antimuscarinics!
Trihexyphenidyl!
That's a mouthful!
Even worse those surgeries
Chemopallidectomies.
Pity the incurables!
Thalamotomies!
Poor Mrs. Rosenzweig!
They killed her this morning.

[1|3] Scene 3: March 1969

(In the dayroom, Sacks is standing over Leonard, giving Leonard his L-DOPA in a cup.)

DOCTOR SACKS
Yes, that's it. Slowly, Leonard.
That's it, Leonard. Every drop.
Good. Good to the last drop. Yes!

IRIS
Doctor Sacks! Doctor, this isn't helping.
It's been two weeks.
Two full weeks.
He's the same. Exactly the same.
Won't it hurt him?
So much medicine to take.
He never complains to me.
Maybe best to let him be.

DOCTOR SACKS
Let's give him a chance.

(A 10-year old Leonard appears. Iris turns to him.)

IRIS
Leonard Lev. You're not yet a man.

You're still just a boy of ten.
My boy. My child. My son.
You were always nice-minded and gentle.
Your father died when you were only three.
Now you tell me, "I will take care of you, Mama.
All I want is to live with you and read my books."

IRIS and DOCTOR SACKS
But that was before you/he took ill.

IRIS
Before...My boy. My child. My son.
I bet he's read more books than you, Doctor Sacks.
I'm frightened.
Maybe best to let him be.

DOCTOR SACKS
Let's give him a chance.
Little by little.
Today we're at five grams.
Five grams, Missus Lev.
Yesterday we tried four and a half.
Let's see what five grams can do.
Leonard, your mother is right.
Five grams is a lot to drink.
Are you feeling well?

(Leonard suddenly raises his head.)

LEONARD LEV
Yes, yes, Doctor Sacks. I'm feeling well.
Five grams, Doctor.
Not four and a half.
Five grams. That's my dose!
Five grams. That's my dose.

IRIS
My God! My son!

DOCTOR SACKS
He's speaking!

LEONARD LEV
Please help me out of this damn chair!
Please help me up!

DOCTOR SACKS
Mr. Rodriguez.

LEONARD LEV
I can do it! Watch me do it!

IRIS
My son is talking!
My son is standing!

LEONARD LEV
Doctor Sacks, I am glad you chose me to receive your
magic potion.

IRIS
My son is talking!
My son is standing!
After all these years!
Miraculous! I hope it's not too much for him.

LEONARD LEV
I'm glad you chose me.
I did not want to disappoint.

DOCTOR SACKS
You did not disappoint!
Oh, Leonard! No, Leonard! Oh!
Leonard! Leonard! Leonard!
Just tell me please.
What is it like just now?
What do you feel just now in this miraculous moment!

(Leonard takes a few steps with Sacks and Rodriguez.)

LEONARD LEV
It's a lovely feeling!
A lovely feeling.
To walk. To talk.
Of course, you do it every day.
And Rodriguez does it too.
I have watched you every night and every day for years.
How many years have I been imprisoned in that chair?
I could only live in books,
And live through other people's lives.
It's a lovely feeling.
A lovely feeling!
I am reborn.

DOCTOR SACKS and MISTER RODRIGUEZ
It's a lovely feeling to watch you walk and talk.

DOCTOR SACKS *(to himself)*
Now they must let me help the others.

(Leonard gestures to iris to give him a cigarette. She takes one from her purse and lights it for him. He takes a long drag and smiles)

[1|4] Scene 4: Morning, July 1969

MISS KOHL *(working with a patient, Frank)*
Again, again. Now, watch how my lips move.
Take your time, Frank.
"The summer is here, and the weather is lovely."

FRANK
"The summer..."

MISS KOHL
"is here..."

FRANK
"is here, and..."

MISS KOHL
That's good!

FRANK
"and the weather is lovely."

MISS KOHL
You are doing so well, Frank.
The vowels are the hardest.
Now together!

MISS KOHL and FRANK
"The summer is here, and the weather is lovely."

MISS KOHL
Wonderful!

MISTER RODRIGUEZ *(Rodriguez is helping Lucy walk.)*
Soon you'll be running around, Lucy,
Just like Rose and Miriam.

LUCY
Then we can all play Tag!
And I will win!
Won't they all be jealous?

MISTER RODRIGUEZ
I think they will!

LUCY
Ha ha. Ha ha.

MIRIAM *(triumphantly throwing down a card)*
Ha! Ha! I won! Again!

ROSE
Miriam, really! You were cheating!

MIRIAM
No, I wasn't.

ROSE
Really! Yes, you were! I'm no fool!

MIRIAM
Was not!

ROSE
Yes, you were! I'm not blind.

MIRIAM
Was not! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!
I'm entitled to cheat.
I have been cheated of so much time.
I am entitled.

ROSE
Then so am I!

MIRIAM
Yes, you are!

ROSE
Well, I was cheating too.

MIRIAM
Rose, you're so bad at it!

MIRIAM and ROSE
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

ROSE
We were cheating.

MIRIAM
We were cheating.

MIRIAM and ROSE
We are entitled!
We've been cheated for decades!

DOCTOR SACKS *(coming over to their table)*
Good morning, Miriam. Good morning, Rose.

MIRIAM and ROSE
Good morning, Doctor Sacks.



ADRIENNE DARRICHAS MIRIAM, VOICE EL KHOUENAS ROSE. PHOTO BY KATHY WITTENBERG BALL SQUARE FILMS.

DOCTOR SACKS

May I have a word with you, Rose?

MIRIAM

I guess I'll play some solitaire.

(Sacks and Rose walk together.)

DOCTOR SACKS

You are doing wonderfully, Rose.
Remarkable! Three grams! Remarkable!
How are you feeling now?
The nurses said you haven't slept again
It's been two nights.

ROSE

I do not want to sleep.
I have slept for forty years.
I feel like I could fly again!
I love you, Doctor Sacks.
Did you know?
Once I flew above the clouds.

(Rose holds her arms out wide as if she were aloft, and now appears in a garden – it is 1926, the “before time”. Her fiancé is there, and she sings to him.)

In the garden out here,
So many colors.
My mother keeps this garden
Which through the years
I'll keep inside me.
You are my man now,

ROSE and FIANCÉ

And I love you.
Do you want to marry me?

ROSE

I never want to sleep.
There's so much for us to do!
Let's never go to sleep, O my love!
Let's go dancing every night.
Let's just go!
I am so in love with you!

(She points out the window to the sky. Her fiancé fades away. Back into the present.)

DOCTOR SACKS

But that was before.

ROSE

That was before.
Then I fell ill and dreamed I was imprisoned in a castle,
And the castle was me.
It had the shape and form of me.
I dreamed I was bewitched and turned into a statue
And I knew there was a border I could no longer pass.
There was my before.
And there was my after.
I know it will be even better.

PATIENTS

When I fell ill, I fell asleep,
But still could hear my parents.
I could not speak or even stare,
But I heard them say,
“What shall we do? What choice is there?
How can we care for her at home?”
When I fell ill my limbs began to shake.
I could not stop them.
But then they turned to staffs that would not bend.
First just one and soon the others.

**[15] Sultry evening. Early August 1969.
Sacks' dining room. Patients' rooms**

(Doctor Sacks is in his study, intently writing in his journal. Rose, Miriam, Leonard in their respective rooms working on their own journals, which Sacks has encouraged.)

DOCTOR SACKS

Glorious but foreboding, these tropical summer days.
What complexities and confusion have the first
awakenings brought.

Days filled with joy, but this world is not the world they
left behind

When their long sleep began.

LEONARD LEV

Since my long sleep began.

I have never felt such vigor.

I have never known desire.

Now I've risen from my life of disease.

MIRIAM

Doctor Sacks says we should write every day

To know ourselves better.

To know what we're feeling.

And perhaps to let the world know us one day.

Why should we be so forgotten?

DOCTOR SACKS

They should not be so forgotten.

ROSE

It's forty years since I held a pen.

I was afraid I'd forgotten how to write.

Whoever reads this, please

Forgive my mistakes.

I'm sixty-four, but feel I'm still twenty-one.

I know it's nineteen sixty-nine.

But for me it's nineteen twenty-six.

ROSE and DOCTOR SACKS

The time that passed was not "time" for me/them.

LEONARD LEV

L-DOPA is a blessed drug.

It has given back my life.

It has opened me out!

I was shut tight before.

MIRIAM

I used to be so pretty!

No one believes it now.

And I had a daughter,

Taken from me when I fell ill

And they put me here.

She was just a baby.

But no one asked me.

No one asked me.

No one came to see me.

Lily. Lily. Lily.

She used to be so pretty, too.

ROSE and DOCTOR SACKS

Just today he/I asked me/Rose,

"Do you really believe you are twenty-one?"

ROSE

And I said, "I cannot even imagine being any older.

For forty years I have never stopped being twenty-one.

DOCTOR SACKS

Glorious but foreboding these tropical summer days.

Why am I filled with foreboding?

The Botanical Garden will reassure me

And perhaps enchant them.

Everything in bloom!

Nature renewed despite its antiquity.

MISTER RODRIGUEZ (*entering Leonard's room*)

How are you this evening, Leonard?

LEONARD LEV

I am fine, Mister Rodriguez. Very fine.

And you're looking very fine tonight, Mister Rodriguez.

I see this handsome man with new eyes and a racing
heart.

I have never felt desire.

I am now a man in love.

MIRIAM, ROSE, and LEONARD LEV

Our world awakened!

After such long sleep.

A world so filled with joy.

MISTER RODRIGUEZ and DOCTOR SACKS

Glorious but foreboding, these tropical summer days.

What complexities and confusion have the first
awakenings brought!

Days filled with joy, but this world is not the world they
left behind

When the long sleep closed in on them. That world is
gone.

The world is new and confusing now.

At times I see you/myself in them.

A part of life held back.

**[16] Scene 6: Early August 1969.
New York Botanical Garden**

ROSE

Look at all the columbine!

MIRIAM

Rose, those are honeysuckle.

ROSE

They smell so sweet!

MIRIAM

You forgot your flowers!

ROSE

It's been forty years!

There are things I have to learn again.

MIRIAM

Careful, there's a bee near your nose!

ROSE

Oh, he's just a gentle bumblebee.

He won't sting me.

LEONARD LEV

Have you been here before, Mister Rodriguez?

This seems a perfect place.

Everything in bloom!

DOCTOR SACKS

This perfect place!

The world as it should be!

A world in harmony.

Every plant in summer bloom to greet you all,

Their fellow blossoming flowers.

LEONARD LEV

If I'm a flower, Doctor Sacks,

What kind of flower am I?

DOCTOR SACKS

You're like this red anthurium.

Anthurium scherzerianum.

Brilliant and resilient,

It purifies the air around itself.

LEONARD LEV
And what kind of flower are you?

DOCTOR SACKS
Me? I am rather like a plant than a flower.
Perhaps a cycad.

An ancient survivor of the plant kingdom,
Older than the dinosaurs with whom they once lived.
I know a specimen here.
I'm simply in love with them!
Simply in love!

MISTER RODRIGUEZ
I have never heard him speak of love before.

LEONARD LEV
Mister Rodriguez, please walk closer to me.
Please hold my arm, I feel unsteady.

MISTER RODRIGUEZ
But your arms are swinging very fast!
Let me get hold of one.

(Rodriguez gets ahold of Leonard's right arm, his left arm continues to swing quickly.)

DOCTOR SACKS
The cycad!
Encephalartos longifolius!
Look at its fronds, arranged in rosettes.
The sturdy trunk.

LEONARD LEV
It looks like a stunted palm tree.

DOCTOR SACKS
They look like palms, but are much older.
In Jurassic times they grew one hundred feet!
They have no flowers, only cones filled with colorful seeds.

LEONARD LEV
But what is special about the cycads?

DOCTOR SACKS
Tragic and heroic are the cycads,
Emissaries from deepest time.
A time we cannot imagine.
Tragic and heroic are the cycads.
Tragic.

The world that bore them is lost.
Its inhabitants have vanished.
Heroic, too, surviving extinction
To live and grow in our time.

MIRIAM
Then we're like cycads too,
Once tragic, but joyous now.

DOCTOR SACKS
Yes.

LEONARD LEV
Doctor Sacks was telling us what kind of flowers we are.
I am an anthurium.
It has a big stamen like a penis.

MIRIAM
Leonard!

LEONARD LEV
Huge!

ROSE
If you wanna touch me
Do it right or I shan't let you again!
If you put your hand beneath my skirt...

MISTER RODRIGUEZ *(interrupting to distract Rose and calm the others)*
I am a quiet flower that no one ever heard of,

That keeps its mysteries to itself.
When I was a boy in Ponce,
I was startled by a river flower.
It was phosphorescent in the twilight,
Like the deep blue night sky.
I did not know its name
But now I know it must have been
La Flor de Amor. The Flower of Love.
For many years I looked for it again.
But never found it.
Until now, until now, standing here by me.

DOCTOR SACKS *(oblivious)*
This perfect place.
The world as it should be!
A world in harmony.

MISTER RODRIGUEZ
But he does not see me.

DOCTOR SACKS
Every plant in summer bloom as they greet you all,
Their fellow blossoming flowers.

LEONARD LEV *(to Rodriguez)*
I have found it too
As I stand here next to you.

ROSE
Doctor Sacks, what kind of flower am I?

DOCTOR SACKS
A wild fragrant rose!

ROSE
And what kind of flower is Miriam?

MIRIAM
I am like this orchid that blooms so rarely.

ROSE
Oh, my God, Miriam!
You are not supposed to pick the flowers here!
Especially an orchid.

MIRIAM
I only picked one.
No one saw me.
I won't let it die!
I won't let it die!
I will put it in water.
I'm entitled!

MIRIAM and ROSE
We're entitled to this perfect day!
To this perfect day!

MIRIAM, ROSE, and LEONARD LEV
It's a joy to be alive on a day like this!
On such a summer afternoon!

DOCTOR SACKS
You're entitled!
You're entitled to this perfect day.

MIRIAM, ROSE, LEONARD LEV, MISTER RODRIGUEZ, and
DOCTOR SACKS
Ah! Every summer afternoon should be like this!

[17] Scene 7: Later that afternoon. Dayroom

(Sacks, Rose, Miriam, Leonard and Rodriguez are excitedly entering the dayroom after their return from the botanical garden. On the side is a social worker talking to a young woman, about thirty, with a girl about ten years old.)

IRIS
You're back. Are you alright, Leonard?
Was it too much walking?
Are you alright?

LEONARD LEV
Yes, Mother. Of course.
I had a wonderful time.
I'm independent now.
Why don't you take off for a week?
Go to Florida, maybe...
You could do with a rest.

IRIS
What would I do there?
I wish you'd have let me come with you.

RUTH
Miriam, Miriam, you have visitors.
Marvelous visitors!

MIRIAM
Visitors?
No one has visited me for thirty years.
Thirty years! No one.

LILY
My name is Lily.
I am your daughter.
Mother I never knew, forgive me, Mother.
They told me you had died.

MIRIAM
Lily. Lily.

LILY
And this is your granddaughter, Violet.

MIRIAM
Lily! Lily! Look at you! Look at you!
Look at you so pretty.
Just like I first saw you.
I tried to tell them.
I tried to tell them.
"Don't take my child away!

Don't take her from me!
Just let me hold her!"
But I could not speak.
I could not move or even smile.
It was like a nightmare.
It WAS a nightmare.
I saw them sadly shake their heads. I tried to tell them,
"Don't take my child away.
I am her mother! I am her mother!"
Forgive me, Lily. Forgive me, Lily!
I have dreamed of you every night for thirty years.
Where in heaven or on earth are those thirty years?
If only God could give them back to me.

MIRIAM and ROSE
The time that passed was not "time" for us.

MIRIAM
And Violet, you're so pretty too.
Pretty Violet!
Who told you I was dead?

LILY
My father said you had died when I was born,
But I always kept your picture by my bed.

MIRIAM
And how...how is your father who kept you from me for
thirty years?

LILY
My father died last year.

MIRIAM
Ha! Ha! Ha!
I guess he got himself and me mixed up.
Ruth! Thank you for finding my daughter, Lily
And bringing her to me.
Thank you.

(To Sacks and the others)
Come meet my family.

MISTER RODRIGUEZ and DOCTOR SACKS
...a family...a family.

MIRIAM
I have a daughter.
I have a granddaughter.
I have a family.
I have a family.

ACT II

[2]1 Scene 1: Evening, August 26, 1969. Dayroom

(Impromptu party celebrating Sacks for the newspaper coverage of his success in treating encephalitis lethargica patients)

STAFF
You are all famous!

PATIENTS
We are all famous!

LUCY
I am famous!

FRANK
I am more famous!

PATIENTS
We're in the newspaper!
Now that we're talking!
Now that we're walking!

ROSE
A family...
I loved a man once.
Where did he go?
Where is he now?
I wanted to marry him.
(Hallucinating while gazing at the window.)
There you are.
You've come back for me.

We are famous!

LUCY
Look! Look! I am the most famous!

FRANK
No, you're not.

LUCY
"Lucy H. has even started taking voice lessons."

FRANK
That's my picture in the paper!
It is as big as Doctor Sacks'.
And Lucy doesn't even have a picture.
I'm more famous than Lucy!

LUCY
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! But I got more words.

PATIENTS
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!
We never thought we would get better.

We thought we were forgotten.
But Doctor Sacks has reminded them we are here.
"Thanks to the miracle-working Doctor Sacks."

MISS KOHL
And you are all his miracles.

PATIENTS and STAFF
We are all famous!
We are all miracles!

DOCTOR PODSNAP
This fluff in the newspaper,
How unseemly!
"The miracle-working Doctor Sacks."
How did he get them to say that?
"Before my patients lived at the extremes of human
experience."

What rubbish!
Who talks like that?
He must be queer!
Look at that one.
Talking to himself.
Look at them!
What a woeful menagerie!

RUTH
They seem so happy today, Doctor Podsnap.
Moving about and talking and laughing.
Enjoying themselves.

LILY
Mother's so happy!
What's wrong with a little party?

DOCTOR PODSNAP
Nothing, I suppose.
Where is our miracle worker?
Look at them.
They are still sick.

MISS KOHL (*she puts on a record*)
How about a waltz?

LUCY
Oh, yes! A waltz!

MIRIAM
How wonderful.
We haven't had a party since Christmas.
And that was such a sad and motionless affair.
Where is Doctor Sacks?
I think he's embarrassed by all the fuss.
Mister Rodriguez, may I have this waltz?

MISTER RODRIGUEZ
Of course! It would be my pleasure, Miriam.

MIRIAM (*They waltz.*)
I haven't danced in thirty years.

LEONARD LEV
Will you dance with me?

(*Miriam thinks Leonard is asking her and shakes her head no.*)

Will you dance with me?
Will you dance with me, Mister Rodriguez?

MISTER RODRIGUEZ
But...but I am dancing with Miriam now.
Can't you see, Leonard?

MIRIAM
He's dancing with me, Leonard.
Go dance with Rose.

MISTER RODRIGUEZ
Leonard, Leonard, now please go.

ROSE
Doctor Sacks, here you are, finally.
Will you dance with me?

DOCTOR SACKS
But of course!
I know you were a great dancer.

ROSE
I was. I was.
I went dancing every night.
Everyone wanted to dance with me.

DOCTOR SACKS
I am not so good at it, but I will try.

ROSE
You are very good at it, Doctor Sacks.
You're a prince, Doctor Sacks. You're a prince.

FRANK
Holey moley!
Can we have something a little livelier?
This is a party, not a funeral.

(*Someone else changes the record to something more
staccato/percussive, which has an unexpected effect
on Rose.*)

ROSE
Oh! Oh! Oh, Doctor Sacks.
This music is all wrong.
I cannot dance to this.
This rhythm, this timing is wrong.
It's making me a marionette! A marionette!
I cannot control myself.
This timing is wrong for me.
And I've lost so much time.
I shall never get it back.

DOCTOR SACKS
Rose, be calm.

(*To Rodriguez*)
Take off that record!

ROSE
Oh my God! This rhythm, this timing is wrong for me.
I've lost so much time.
I shall never get it back.
I cannot control myself.
Worse than before! Worse than before!

DOCTOR SACKS
That music is over now.

(*Rose stiffens, her neck extends backwards, her eyes roll into
her head, an oculo-lyric crisis.*)

Rose, Rose, I am holding you.
Rose, Rose...
Mister Rodriguez, sodium amytal!

MIRIAM
Is she dying? Is she dying? Is she dying?

LILY
No, Mother. She'll be all right.

LEONARD LEV
This world is filled with devils.
A world polluted.
But I am still rising from the Ashes of Defeat
To the Glory of Greatness!

IRIS
Leonard, Leonard, what's the matter?
Calm down, please. Calm down, please.
Doctor Sacks, please help me.
Please help him.
I knew this would turn out bad.

LEONARD LEV
This world is filled with devils.
A world polluted.
But I am still rising from the Ashes of Defeat
To the Glory of Greatness.

MIRIAM
Is she dying? Is she dying?
This rhythm is all wrong for her.
Is she dying?

DOCTOR SACKS
Rose!

IRIS
Leonard, Leonard, Leonard, Leonard.
Calm down. Calm down.
Leonard, calm down.

LEONARD LEV
She is dying! She is dying!
From the Ashes of Defeat,
I am rising, still rising,
To the Glory of Greatness.

DOCTOR SACKS
Rose! Rose! Rose!

MIRIAM
Is she dying? Is she dying?
ENSEMBLE WOMEN/LUCY
Is she dying? Is she dying?
Is she? Is she?
Is she dying?
We might die too!

ENSEMBLE MEN/FRANK
We might. We might.
We might die too!
We might die soon.

DOCTOR PODSNAP
What a woeful menagerie!
Your medical miracles!
Look what you've done to them?

This excitement is too much for them.
They need to quiet down.
Take them all to their rooms.
Nurses! Orderlies! Anyone! Anyone!

**[2|2] Scene 2: Leonard's room, a week later.
September 1969**

(Leonard has been banished to his room because of his aggressive behavior. He is furiously typing with one finger on a typewriter. On one wall is projected a small painting of a western scene with cowboys riding their horses. During the scene, as he talks with Sacks, the painting gradually becomes larger and larger until it is life size when Sacks exits the room. Sacks enters the room holding his chart.)

ENSEMBLE
The world is filled with devils!
A world polluted!
But he has risen!
He is still rising from the Ashes of Defeat
To the Glory of Greatness.

DOCTOR SACKS
Good morning, Leonard.
Good morning, Mrs. Lev.

(Not looking at Sacks, Iris silently storms out.)

What's going on, Leonard?

LEONARD LEV
Let's not talk about it.
I have sent her out for air.

DOCTOR SACKS
I'm happy to see you working on your journal.
Hopefully they will let you rejoin the others soon.

(From time to time Leonard glances at the growing picture, which Sacks does not see.)

LEONARD LEV
I don't care to rejoin the others, Doctor Sacks.
They've sent me to my room just like a child!
It's not my journal I am writing, Doctor Sacks.
It is my autobiography.
It's time I told my story.

This polluted world must know me
So, I can save it.
I have risen from the Ashes of Defeat
To the Glory of Greatness.
There is a too muchness lately,
Trying to pull me apart.
But I shall pull myself back together.
A new hell has fallen upon me.
But I will not go back to my past.
I will not go back to that darkness.

DOCTOR SACKS
We will do our best and not let you go back there.

LEONARD LEV
"We will do our best! We will do our best?"

DOCTOR SACKS
For now, writing your autobiography may help you stop
hallucinating.

LEONARD LEV
I don't hallucinate!
I see what others can't.
I will see you later, Doctor Sacks.

(Sacks exits. Leonard looks at the picture, which is now life size.)

What is this I see?
Those handsome lovers there?
Who are they?
I know!

(He rises from his seat and walks perfectly normally over to the picture. An imaginary Rodriguez emerges from the picture.)

Mister Rodriguez. Finally.

MISTER RODRIGUEZ
When I was a boy in Ponce,
I was startled by a river flower.
It was phosphorescent in the twilight,
Like the deep blue night sky.
I did not know its name...

LEONARD LEV and MISTER RODRIGUEZ
But now I know it must have been la Flor de Amor
The Flower of Love.
For many years I looked for it again
But never found it.
Until now! Until now.
Standing here beside me.
Kiss me!

(Leonard and Rodriguez kiss. Leonard is seated, having never left his chair, staring straight ahead.)

PATIENTS
We're entitled to this perfect day!
To this perfect day!
It's a joy to be alive on a day like this.
On such a summer afternoon!
Oh! Every summer afternoon should be like this.



**[2|3] Scene 3: October 1969. Dayroom Afternoon,
Rose's Room Evening**

(Sacks and Miriam at a desk at the side of the dayroom)

DOCTOR SACKS

Let's try a slightly higher dose of L-DOPA.
A higher dose.

MIRIAM

I don't want a higher dose.
I don't want any dose.

DOCTOR SACKS

Then let's divide your dose in four instead of two.
Maybe that will help your walking.
Maybe it will stop that tic.

MIRIAM

I don't know.

DOCTOR SACKS

Let's try it for a few days.

MIRIAM

Alright. If you say so.
But just a few days.

DOCTOR SACKS

Just a few days.

(That evening, Rose is in her wheelchair, struggling to comb her hair. Miriam walks in with great difficulty, holding two canes.)

MIRIAM

These goddamn...these goddamn feet!

ROSE

What's wrong with you?

MIRIAM

Today was very difficult.
Doctor Sacks chopped up my dose,
But it did not help.
Made things worse.
You see, I can barely walk.

LUCY *(suddenly shouts)*

That L-DOPA, it's Hell-DOPA!

MIRIAM

You said it, Lucy! Hell-DOPA!

(To Rose)

My feet are sticking to the ground
Like a fly to flypaper.
Ha! Looks like things are difficult for you, too.

ROSE

I'm quite fine, Miriam.
I'm managing.

MIRIAM

Admit it, Rose.
You need help.
Should I help you comb your hair?

ROSE

I don't think you can help me, Miriam.
This is not so difficult for me.
I'll get it done.
It's almost eight.
My handsome visitor is coming soon.

MIRIAM

Your husband?

ROSE

Yes! They won't allow him to sleep over. Prudes!
A curse to live in an institution.

They try to grind you down.
Worse than living with your parents.
But he still comes here every single night!
I must get ready.

MIRIAM

But Rose...

ROSE

Now, Miriam. I know what you're thinking.
Don't be jealous.
You should find someone too.
A daughter is a wonderful thing,
But a lover!
There is quite a difference.

MIRIAM

Yes, I'm sure it makes a difference.
But, Rose, so much time has passed.
What's the point of dreaming?
Dreams are not real.

ROSE

Not real?
This waking world is only part real.
My dreams are more real to me
Than this body that became a stranger to me.
Why does everyone say,
Rose, so much time has passed.
Time to move on.
Such silliness.
What of it?
What of time?
I prefer to dream.
We've been awakened, but not completely.
My dreams are more real to me
Than whatever happened to me.
Something awful may be coming for me.

But right now, let me be.
Don't you see?
I'm happy!

MIRIAM

Then I am happy for you.
I am happy for you, Rose.
I admit it. I admit it.
I dream too.

MIRIAM and ROSE

If time stood still for us, what of it?
What is time to us now?
Let us be. We are happy now,
Despite this fearsome life bestowed upon us.
We've been awakened, but not completely.
What else can we do?
And if we choose to live inside our dreams,
When our bodies seem apart from us, what of it?
Let us be.

MIRIAM

I must go now.
I will let you be.

(Miriam begins to clumsily walk out of the room. Rose drops her brush and Miriam, startled, turns around. She loses her balance and falls.)

ROSE

Help! Somebody help!

(Rose tries to get up to help Miriam, but is unable to do so. Miriam wants to shout for help, but only a faint voice comes out.)

Help! Somebody help!

**[2|4] Scene 4: Administration meeting room.
Sacks' parents' living room**

STAFF

Broken bones!
Broken spirits!
Broken Promises!
Poor Miriam broke her pelvis in two places!
So much pain!
And such a little fall!
And Leonard is hallucinating.
His mind is broken.
Modern medicines. Modern medicines.
Was it worth it?
Was it? Was it?
Is it worth it?

DOCTOR PODSNAP

Doctor Sacks, what have you done?
What have you done?
We don't experiment at Beth Abraham!
This cannot continue.
These treatments must be stopped.

DOCTOR SACKS

We cannot stop now.
That would make them worse!
Not all are doing badly.
Rose is happy.

DOCTOR PODSNAP

She too is hallucinating.

DOCTOR SACKS

Rose is walking. Rose is talking.
Rose is happy.
We must not stop now.

DOCTOR PODSNAP

These treatments must be stopped.

DOCTOR SACKS

Do you want to put them back to sleep?

DOCTOR PODSNAP

How much worse would that be?
I wish I had not let you start this experiment.
They are not guinea pigs.
This is not medicine.
This is an abomination.
A complete abomination!

STAFF

This is an abomination!
An abomination!
An abomination!

DOCTOR PODSNAP and STAFF

These treatments must be stopped.

(A living room scene in Sacks' parents' home in London, 1951.)

SAMUEL SACKS

A telegram for you, Oliver.
Please open it.

DOCTOR SACKS *(opens the telegram)*

Oxford! A scholarship!

SAMUEL SACKS

What a happy day!
We are very proud, Oliver.
Mother, can you believe it? Oxford!

MURIEL ELSIE LANDAU *(knitting)*

We are very proud, Oliver,
But now you will be leaving home.
We cannot help but worry.

We cannot help but wonder,
What will become of you?

DOCTOR SACKS

Mother, please don't worry.
I will not be very far away.
I will be home often.

ENSEMBLE

We cannot help it. We are your parents.

SAMUEL SACKS

We are your parents.
We cannot help it
Now that you are leaving home,
We...your mother and I...
We were wondering, what might your future bring.
There are so many important things in life.
What will become of you?

DOCTOR SACKS

Why are you so worried?
I just got a scholarship to Oxford.

SAMUEL SACKS

You don't seem to have any girlfriends.
Don't you like girls?

MURIEL ELSIE LANDAU

Perhaps he prefers boys?

DOCTOR SACKS

Yes, but I haven't...I haven't...
I've done nothing.

MURIEL ELSIE LANDAU

You are an abomination!
I wish you had never been born.

SAMUEL SACKS
Elsie!

(Present-day. Sacks is now alone.)

DOCTOR SACKS

Such a thing.
To be wished unborn.
How could there be limits to a mother's love?
Or to a doctor's love and caring?
I was foolish,
When called a prince, I believed I was a prince.
But I am not and never will be.
When I see my name in the papers
I am drunk on ink.
But I am drowning in it.
I am ruined.
Such a thing.
To be wished unborn.
How could there be limits to a mother's love?
Love?
Or to a doctor's love and caring?
I was bewitched.
Locked in myself.
Turned into a statue.
I could not change things then
But when I came to this forlorn place,
I thought, here are things I can change!
But they can't be changed by me.
Not with medicine or love.
There is a border I can never cross.

[2|5] Scene 5: Morning, December 1969. Dayroom

(Frank is sitting with Miss Kohl. Rose, Miriam and Ruth are seated at the table as in the original card-playing scene. Leonard is seated alone at a different table. Lucy is with Rodriguez.)

MISS KOHL

Frank, let's try a few words.
(spoken) My name is Frank.

FRANK

My...name... *(Frank cannot say another word.)*

MISS KOHL

I'm sorry, Frank.
I know that it is hard now that they've stopped that medicine.

RUTH

Rose, Miriam, shall we try to play a game?
Something simple? Go Fish?

MIRIAM

Fish...

ROSE

Old...Maid...

RUTH

I think Old Maid is easier.

STAFF

Soon you'll be running around.

RUTH

Focus on the cards like Doctor Sacks says.
Your eyes will guide your hands.
Don't give up.

ROSE

I can't.

MIRIAM

She can't.

(Iris enters the room and sits with Leonard.)

RUTH

We'll try again tomorrow.

ROSE

Too much...

IRIS

I brought something for you to read.
The Aeneid.

You've always loved that.

Don't you want to read yourself?

Then I'll read to you.

"I sing of arms and the man,
He who, exiled by fate,
First came from the coast of Troy to Italy,
Hurled about endlessly by land and sea."
Well, we won't read now.

We'll just sit quietly
And watch the afternoon sunshine through the windows
together.

MISTER RODRIGUEZ *(trying to help Lucy stand)*

Good. Slowly.

(Lucy begins falling back in her chair.)

Okay, sit down now.

LUCY

My arms, my arms. Please move my arms.
Oh, no. I'm not myself, not myself.
Can't sing, can't run, can't even stand.
No more please.

[2|6] Scene 6: Twilight, December 1969. Dayroom

DOCTOR PODSNAP

Have I truly broken my oath?

First do no harm.

Why did I listen?

We don't experiment here at Beth Abraham.

I was entrusted with their care.

Have I done harm?

I was doubtful, yet I relented.

Why?

I let them have a chance.

I watched without illusions and with a practiced eye.

At least they had some happy moments.

But at what cost.

Can it be wrong to have tried?

I don't know.

Though in the end I did not protect them.

I did not....

(Doctor Podsnap exits. Doctor Sacks enters.)

DOCTOR SACKS

Is this their final haven
After such fearsome journeys?
How do they endure?

This time for them has been the longest day.

A long night of illness.

A pure morning of awakening.

A high noon of trouble.

Might they find inside themselves an evening of repose?

LEONARD LEV *(From his immobile state that Sacks does not hear.)*

I am a living candle.

Consumed that you may learn.

PATIENTS

A slumber fell upon the kingdom.
The princess fell upon her bed.

LEONARD LEV

New things will be seen in the light of my suffering.

IRIS and LEONARD LEV

Best to have let things be.

IRIS

My son, my son, my son though a man,
Is still just a boy to me.
Once again, he is calm and gentle.
And in each day and hour
Our heart and minds join together in quiet company.
A consolation for my care-worn life,
Now that they have let us be.

DOCTOR SACKS

What remains for them?

Or for me?

Of all we hoped for?

I do not know.

All I know is this work of healing,
Of rendering whole
Is first and last the promise of love.

ROSE

Doctor Sacks, I still love to fly.
And when I close my eyes I do.

And if I must go back in time,

I have no regrets,

Nor should you.

You gave us love

And made of us your family.

Youth has never left me.

The man I love has come back to me.

He loves me still.
He's always beside me.
Time did not pass for us.

ENSEMBLE
The wind and leaves went still.
And all the castle slept.

MIRIAM
Who knows if the world out there will ever truly know us?
Who in the world could ever truly know us?
At least in this place I am no longer forgotten.
Next to me is such love.

ENSEMBLE
You see, they know you're here, Doctor Sacks.

DOCTOR SACKS
Forever banished from the world through no wish or fault
of their own.

MISTER RODRIGUEZ
Doctor Sacks, I'm sorry for all that's happened.
You tried. You tried. You tried.
You did all that could be done.
And not in vain.
There were happy moments.

DOCTOR SACKS
Sorry for what?
I failed, Mister Rodriguez.
I failed.
It was not enough.

MISTER RODRIGUEZ
Such happy moments.
Such moments do not truly leave us.

When they first awoke,
Something changed in you.
You awakened, too.
Though your heart remains so hidden from me.

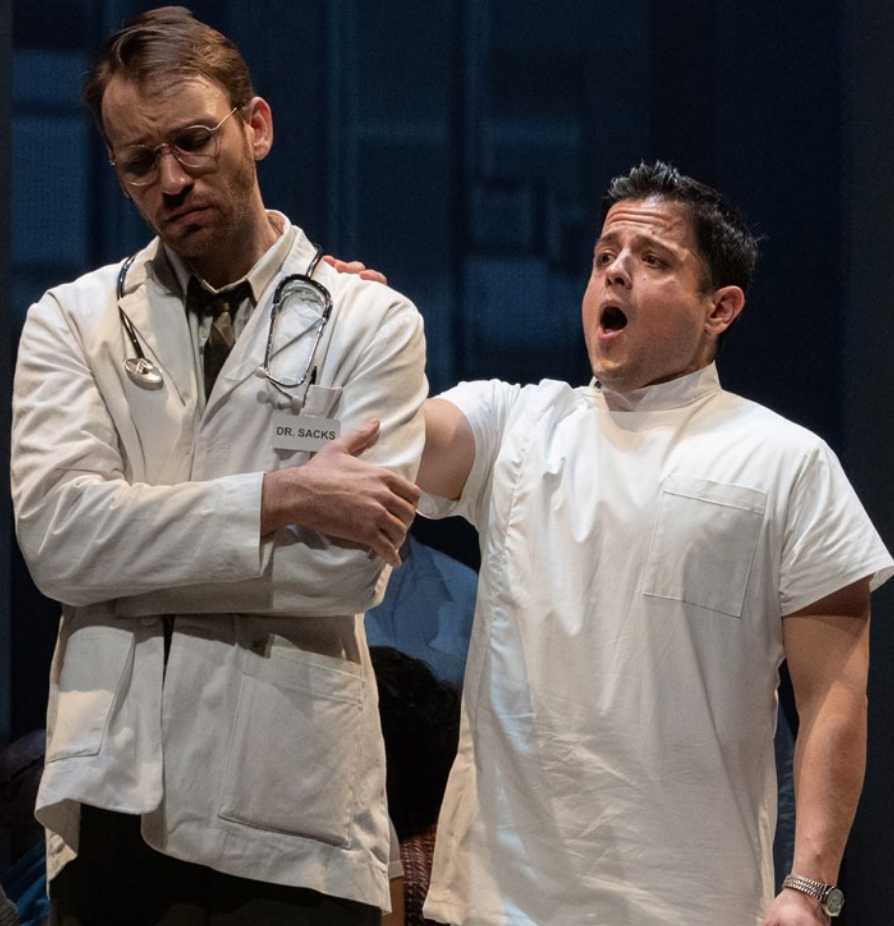
ENSEMBLE
They're like statues.
They don't look old and don't be fooled.
They are not asleep.

*(Rodriguez gently touches Sacks' shoulder, takes his hand
and tries to kiss him. Sacks, startled, turns and looks at him.
He kisses Rodriguez on the forehead, then withdraws his hand
from Rodriguez.)*

ENSEMBLE
The wind and leaves went still.
A hundred years they slept.

DOCTOR SACKS
I am sorry, Mister Rodriguez.
You are beautiful and good.
I am no longer the man I was,
But I have not truly awakened yet.
This time is not the time for me.
Perhaps one day when I've lived long enough,
Love will happen.
Not with medicine, but with a simple kiss.

TUTTI
And so, we reach the end of our tale,
When slumber fell once more upon the kingdom.
All who were awake now sleep forever.
No prince, no love, nor God Himself,
Did change what Fate ordained.





TOBIAS PICKER AND GIL ROSE, 2023.



GREG BOLLINGER

Tobias Picker has drawn commissions from and performances by the world's leading musicians, orchestras, and opera houses. *The New Yorker* wrote of him as "a genuine creator with a fertile, unforced vein of invention"; *The Wall Street Journal*, "our finest composer for the lyric stage"; and *BBC Music Magazine*, "displaying a distinctively soulful style that is one of the glories of the current musical scene."

His operas have been commissioned by the Santa Fe Opera (*Emmeline*, 1996), LA Opera (*Fantastic Mr. Fox*, 1998), Dallas Opera (*Thérèse Raquin*, 2001), Metropolitan Opera (*An American Tragedy*, 2001), San Francisco Opera (*Dolores Claiborne*, 2013), Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (*Awakenings*, 2022) and Switzerland's Theater St. Gallen (*Lili Elbe*, 2023). His operas have also been produced by the New York City Opera, San Diego Opera, Opéra de Montréal, Chicago Opera Theater, Covent Garden, Opera Holland Park, English Touring Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, and many other companies. In 2015, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis mounted a major new production of his *Emmeline* that won universal acclaim as "a work of gripping emotional intensity and extraordinary musical expressivity" (the *Dallas Morning News*), "one of the best operas written in the past twenty-five years" (*The Wall Street Journal*), and "the greatest American opera of the 20th century" (the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*). The world premiere recording of *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, his family opera, was released by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project and Odyssey Opera in Spring 2019 on the BMOP label, which won the 2020 Grammy award for best opera recording. In 2022, Picker's opera *Awakenings*, based on Oliver Sacks' 1973 book chronicling his efforts to help the victims of the encephalitis lethargica epidemic, premiered at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

His extensive discography also includes albums devoted entirely to his works on Nonesuch, Sony Classics, Virgin Classics, Angel, Chandos, Ondine, Albany Records, Wergo, and Tzadik.

Individual works have appeared on Sony Classics, Angel, and Ondine albums. Tobias Picker has had symphonic works commissioned and performed by the BBC Proms, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Opéra de Montréal, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Vienna Radio Symphony, and Zurich Tonhalle, among many others. In addition to three symphonies, he has composed concertos for violin, viola, cello, and oboe, as well as four piano concertos and a ballet, *Awakenings*, also based on the book by Oliver Sacks, commissioned by the London-based Rambert Dance Company.

An accomplished pianist, he has performed as soloist in performances of his piano concertos and chamber works with major orchestras and chamber ensembles around the world. He has received prestigious awards throughout his career and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has served as composer-in-residence for the Houston Symphony, from 1985 to 1990, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and the Pacific Music Festival. In 2010 he founded Opera San Antonio and served as its artistic director until 2015. Picker then was appointed artistic director of Tulsa Opera from 2016 to 2022: his tenure in Tulsa would see the selection of Lucia Lucas as the first transgender opera singer to have a leading role on the American stage (for which Picker is also featured in James Kicklighter's documentary film, *The Sound of Identity*), a baseball-themed production of *Rigoletto* adapted for an open-air baseball stadium to accommodate the gathering restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, *Greenwood Overcomes*, a concert with new works by African-American composers to honor the memory of the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, as well as a Thaddeus Strassberger-directed, immersive production of *Salome*.

He is married to Aryeh Lev Stollman, the award winning novelist, neuroradiologist, and librettist for both *Awakenings* and *Lili Elbe*, an opera based on the life of the Transgender painter, Lili Elbe to be premiered later this year. His music is published exclusively by Schott.

ANNA MALEK



Aryeh Lev Stollman is the author of the critically acclaimed novel *The Far Euphrates*, originally published by Riverhead, winner of a Lambda Literary Award, an American Library Association Notable Book, a *Los Angeles Times Book Review* Recommended Book of the Year, a National Book Critics Circle Notable Book, and translated into five languages. *The New York Times Book Review* called *The Far Euphrates*, "Radiant ... remarkable both for Stollman's eloquently understated prose and the ease with which he constructs his artful plot." *The Boston Globe* called his second novel, *The Illuminated Soul*, "An admirable novel of ideas ... profound." His third novel, *Queen of Jerusalem*, was published by Aryeh Nir/Modan in Hebrew translation under the title *Divrei y'mei Naamah*.

Stollman's short fiction has appeared in *Story*, *American Short Fiction*, *The Yale Review*, *The Southwest Review* and *LitMag*, with many of these stories appearing in his collection *The Dialogues of Time and Entropy*. His story "Lotte Returns!" was commissioned and broadcast by National Public Radio.

Stollman wrote the libretto for *Awakenings*, an opera composed by Tobias Picker, based on the book by Oliver Sacks, and commissioned by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and the libretto for Tobias Picker's new opera, *Lili Elbe*, based on the life of the Transgender painter, Lili Elbe, commissioned by Theater St. Gallen, Switzerland to premiere October 2023.

He is married to the composer Tobias Picker and is a neuroradiologist at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City.



Jarrett Porter, praised by *Opera News* for his “imposing baritone” and “supple vibrant baritone that he deploys with unaffected lyricism and manifest honesty”, is quickly garnering a reputation as a fearless talent and commanding intellect.

In the 2022–2023 season, Porter joins the Internationale Opernstudio at Oper Frankfurt, where he will make his debut as Hausofmeister in Brigitte Fassbaender’s production of Strauss’s *Capriccio* under the baton of Sebastien Weigle. Throughout the season with the company, he will sing Leone in R.B. Schlather’s critically acclaimed *Tamerlano*, create the role of Edgar in Vito Zuraj’s World Premiere *Blühen*, sing the

Elder Son and The Herold in Britten’s *The Prodigal Son / The Burning Fiery Furnace*, and sing Herzog Hoël in a rare staging of Frank Martin’s *Le Vin Herbé*. Porter returns to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis to create the role of Oliver Sacks in the World Premiere of Tobias Picker’s *Awakenings*, and will join the roster of Artists in Residence of Marlboro Music, collaborating with Mitsuko Uchida, Jonathan Biss, and Lydia Brown.

In the 2021–2022 season Jarrett Porter played Nick Shadow in Louisa Muller’s staging of *The Rake’s Progress* at The Juilliard School. On the recital stage, he joined pianist Taylor Hutchinson at Truman University for a program of Vaughan Williams’s *The House of Life* and Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*, and worked with composer Amelia Brey to premiere her new songs *Inadequate Night* at Juilliard. In April of 2022, Porter made his professional debut at Arizona Opera as Guglielmo in *Così fan Tutte*.

As a sought-after recitalist and collaborator, Jarrett Porter has recently been heard at Reitstadl (Neumarkt in der Oberpfalz) with French pianist Juliette Journaux, broadcast by Bavarian Radio. Porter has held fellowships at the Ravinia Steans Music Institute at The Ravinia Festival, and at SongFest at the Hidden Valley Music Festival under the mentorship of Sir Thomas Allen and Graham Johnson. Porter’s song performances have often centered

on Schubert, including a lieder performance on National Public Radio with pianist Taylor Hutchinson and *Winterreise*, also with Hutchinson, at Arizona State University.

The 2020–2021 season brought his company debut at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as Neil Armstrong in the World Premiere of Steve Mackey’s *Moon Tea*, and as the Adjudicator in the World Premiere of Damien Sneed’s *The Tongue and the Lash*. He can be seen in the June 2020 issue of *Opera News*, where he was the magazine’s *Soundbite*. A student of Darrell Babidge, Jarrett splits his time between Frankfurt and New York.



Joyce El-Khoury was born in Lebanon and raised in Canada. She has an acclaimed reputation for bringing newly discovered and rarely performed works to life, most recently with the world premieres of Donizetti’s *L’Ange de Nisida* at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden and Franz Liszt’s *Sardanapalo* with the Weimar Staatskapelle, both recorded and released internationally.

Ms. El-Khoury’s discography also includes two other rare Donizetti operas on the Opera Rara label (*Les Martyrs* and *Belisario*) conducted by Sir Mark Elder – all to critical acclaim. Her first solo disc, *Écho*, recorded with The Hallé and conducted by Carlo Rizzi was nominated for a Juno Award

from the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences in recognition of outstanding achievements in the music industry.

The recipient of the 2022 Maria Callas Debut Artist of the Year from the Dallas Opera, Ms. El-Khoury’s has performed over 30 leading roles in major opera houses around the world in an expansive repertoire including *Norma*, *Carmen*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Violetta (La traviata)*, *Amelia (Un ballo in maschera)*, *Elisabetta (Don Carlo)*, *Maria/Amelia (Simon Boccanegra)*, *Anna Bolena*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Elisabetta (Roberto Devereux)*, *Imogene (Il Pirata)*, *Liù (Turandot)*, *Anna (Le Villi)*, *Tatyana (Eugene Onegin)*, *Leïla (Les pêcheurs de perles)*, *Salome (Hérodiade)*, *Tatyana Bakst (Great Scott)*, among others.

Ms. El-Khoury has collaborated with some of the opera world's most prolific conductors. She joined maestro Riccardo Muti in her debut as Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra & with the Tokyo Spring Festival as well as the Verdi *Requiem* at the Teatro Massimo Palermo in Italy. She frequently worked with the late Lorin Maazel at the beginning of her professional career in leading roles such as Desdemona (*Otello*), Mimí (*La bohème*), *Suor Angelica* and Loretta (*Gianni Schicchi*) at the Castleton Festival as well as Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) at the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing and in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Munich Philharmonic. She has also enjoyed a close relationship with composer Tobias Picker, first performing the title role of *Emmeline* at Opera Theatre of St. Louis to critical acclaim and then reuniting with him for his opera *Awakenings* in the role of Rose for the opera's east coast premiere in collaboration with Odyssey Opera & Boston Modern Opera Project.

On the concert stage Ms. El-Khoury has joined many of the leading orchestras around the world including the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, the Prague Philharmonic under the direction of Emmanuel Villaume for Beethoven's *9th Symphony*, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestre de Paris for Rossini's *Stabat Mater* as well as opening the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra's season in a gala concert performance. She has given recitals around the world including the Amici Chamber Ensemble in Toronto and at the Al Bustan Festival in her home country of Lebanon, highlighting repertoire of the Lebanese culture.

Ms. El-Khoury continues to be a cultural advocate for Lebanon, with many recent masterclasses at the Al Bustan Festival as well as mentoring young Lebanese singers through her teaching initiative Lessons for Lebanon.

Adrienne Danrich's voice has been described as "fresh liquid-silver" and "meltingly tender in its high, floating vulnerability" by *Opera News*. *La Cronaca del Wanderer* describes her as "...soprano lirico spinto autentico", "an authentic lyric spinto soprano." Ms. Danrich made her San Francisco Opera stage debut as Micaela in Bizet's *Carmen*. Ms. Danrich made her professional debut as Pamina in Mozart's *Die Zaubeflöte* with Kentucky Opera while still a part of the Artist Diploma program at University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She made debuts with Sarasota Opera, Opera Pacific, and Dayton Opera as the Countess in *Le*



Nozze di Figaro and her Lyric Opera of San Antonio debut as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*.

Ms. Danrich returned to the Dayton Opera stage as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*. Ms. Danrich sang the role of Serena in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* with Dayton Opera, Sister Rose in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* with Fort Worth Opera, Rosalinda in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* with Lyric Opera of San Antonio, and Azelia in Still's *Troubled Island* for the William Grant Still Festival. With Cincinnati Opera, she performed the High Priestess in Verdi's *Aida*, and Cilla in excerpts from Richard Danielpour's *Margaret Garner*. Ms. Danrich also performed with Kenya Opera in various venues throughout

Africa in Nairobi and Mombasa. On the concert stage, Ms. Danrich has performed selections from *Porgy and Bess* with Sir Willard White and San Francisco Symphony, the *Porgy and Bess* Suite with Philadelphia Orchestra, the Brahms *Requiem* with Cape Cod Symphony, *The Ordering of Moses* and selections from *Die Fledermaus* with Dayton Philharmonic, *Bachianas Brasilieras* with Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Dido in *Dido and Aeneas* with Orchestra of St. Luke's Outreach, John Carter's *Spiritual Cantata* with Louisville Orchestra, and "Home for the Holidays" with Cincinnati Symphony. Ms. Danrich made her soloist debut at Carnegie Hall with New England Symphonic Ensemble in Beethoven's Mass in C and Mozart's Mass in G. She made her Alice Tully Hall debut with The Little Orchestra of New York performing arias and duets by Vivaldi. Ms. Danrich is a native of St. Louis, MO and is an alumna of Eastman School of Music and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Ms. Danrich has recorded *Only Heaven* by Ricky Ian Gordon with PS Classics, *Age to Age* with OCP Publications, *Original Songs of Sacred Slumber and Solitude* with Soli Deo Gloria Productions and *A Tribute to William Warfield* with the Eastman School of Music.



César Delgado, Mexican-born tenor, has been praised for his “generous, lustrous tenor” and “committed, energetic acting” by *Opera News*. Mr. Delgado has been steadily building an active career that finds him regularly on the stages of US, German, and Mexican opera houses. This season 2022/2023 he’s been scheduled to create the title role in the World Premiere of *ZORRO* with Fort Worth Opera and Opera Southwest (both house debuts). He will appear as Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* in his house debut at Gulfshore Opera, as Narraboth in *Salome* in his house debut with Tulsa Opera, as Nemorino in *L’elisir d’amore* with Monterrey Opera in Mexico, and as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* with

Santander Theater in Mexico. He will sing Mahler’s *Das lied von der Erde* in a return with the Ontario Philharmonic Orchestra in Canada. He will return to sing Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with Mazatlan Opera in Mexico.

Operatic highlights from previous seasons include performances at Regensburg Theater in Germany as Edgardo di Ravenswood in the new production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* directed by the legendary Brigitte Fassbaender; as Duca di Mantova in *Rigoletto* with the New Orleans Opera; as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at The Charleston Opera; as Arcadio in the fully-staged Latin America premiere of *Florenca en el Amazonas* in Mexico City; the title role in the NYC premiere of Catán’s *Il Postino*; his house debut in New York City Opera’s production of *La Fanciulla del West*; and as Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* with Mazatlan Opera in Mexico conducted by Enrique Patron de Rueda. International honors and top awards include: Opera PALCCO (Mexico) 2020, the Gerda Lissner Foundation (NYC) 2018 & 2016, the Giulio Gari Foundation (NYC) 2018, Sinaloa International Singing Competition (Mexico) 2017, the “Murray Rosenthal” Major Award at the Opera Index International Competition (NYC) 2016, and Opera San Miguel (Mexico) 2015. In 2015, he was chosen to participate in Plácido Domingo’s 2015 New York Master Class, sponsored jointly by *Opera News* and the Metropolitan Opera Guild. He was also invited to participate in the first International

Residency of the Ryan Opera Center by Chicago Lyric Opera. A Mannes President Full Scholarship recipient, Mr. Delgado graduated with a Professional Artist Studies diploma from Mannes College for Music (2015).



Andrew Morstein, American tenor, praised for his “vocal virtuosity” (*Olyrix*), is a former member of the Junges Ensemble Theater (JET) at Vienna’s prestigious Theater an der Wien, appearances there included Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Spoletta in *Tosca* (new production), Camille in Tobias Picker’s *Thérèse Raquin*, Officer 1 / Sandy in *The Lighthouse*, Georg in the 175th anniversary of the original performance of *Der Waffenschmied*, and finally as Klas/Windmüller in *Enoch Arden*.

In a truncated 2020–21 season, Andrew Morstein performed Andronico in *Bajazet* (Vivaldi), an evening of Russian song

at the Wiener Kammeroper, and the Amalekite in *Saul* (Händel) in a much-celebrated production by Claus Guth, which was filmed for Austrian public television and transmitted by ORF Austria. Other professional highlights include Telemachus/City Man in Patrick Morganelli’s *Hercules vs. Vampires* with Nashville Opera, and as Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* with Opera NEO.

While a graduate student at Northwestern University, Mr. Morstein performed Peter Quint in Britten’s *The Turn of the Screw*, Tom Rakewell in Stravinsky’s *The Rake’s Progress*, Bénédict in Berlioz’s *Béatrice et Bénédict*, and Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*. In concert, he performed Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 and the tenor solos in Janaček’s *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*.

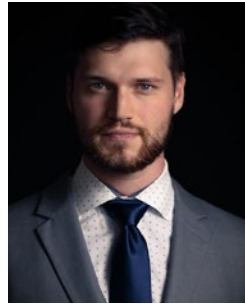
Mr. Morstein is a Metropolitan Opera National Council Encouragement Award winner, finalist in the NYIOP/Premiere Opera Vocal Competition, Camille Coloratura Competition (audience

choice prize), and a winner in the Edward M. Murray Competition of voice, as well as a winner in the Kyrenia Vocal Competition.



Katharine Goeldner has been described by *Opera News* as “a natural actress...[a] powerhouse mezzo with thrilling, laser-like focus” and “luminous tone.” *Opera* magazine has praised her voice as “stunningly rich.” Katharine Goeldner’s unique gifts have taken her to stages and concert platforms throughout the U.S. and Europe in an astonishing range of repertory. Katharine’s performances in recent seasons include Fricka in *Das Rheingold* at Minnesota Opera; Fricka in *Die Walküre* with the Augsburg Staatstheater; a “deliciously slippery” (New York Classical Review) Annina in *Der Rosenkavalier* at The Metropolitan Opera; Herodias in *Salome* with the Minnesota Orchestra, Virginia Opera, Tulsa Opera,

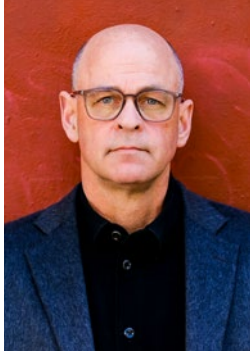
and at the Fisher Center at Bard College; Berio’s *Folk Songs* with the Mozarteum Orchestra of Salzburg; Verdi’s *Requiem* with the Jacksonville Symphony; Madam Larina in *Eugene Onegin* at the Santa Fe Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Michigan Opera Theatre; Brigitta in *Die tote Stadt* in Toulouse and with RTÉ Dublin; and Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Dutch National Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago. She created the roles of Jackie Onassis in David T. Little and Royce Vavrek’s *JFK* at Fort Worth Opera and later at Opéra de Montreal; Peggy Ophuls in Jack Perla and Rajiv Joseph’s opera *Shalimar the Clown*, based on the Salman Rushdie novel; and Ma Joad in Ricky Ian Gordon and Michael Korie’s *The Grapes of Wrath* at Opera Theatre of St. Louis: a production that moved to Michigan, where she won the Wilde Award for Best Performance in an Opera. Katharine returned to Opera Theatre of St. Louis in their 2022 season, as Iris Lev in the world premiere of Tobias Picker’s opera *Awakenings*. An Iowa native, Katharine studied at the University of Iowa and at Salzburg’s Mozarteum. She is a permanent resident of Salzburg, Austria.



Keith Klein is a bass-baritone native to Kansas City, Missouri. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music (2018) and Florida State University (2020), Keith has a wide musical background and a rich, powerful voice. His singing career began with winning the 2014 KC Superstar competition and appearing on Season 10 of *America’s Got Talent*. Since then, he has been honing his craft in classical technique and singing for America’s most celebrated institutions such as the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Opera Colorado, Florida Grand Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and Odyssey Opera. His accolades include performing as a Fleming Artist for the Aspen Music Festival and School and being awarded an

Encouragement Award at the Metropolitan Opera’s Laffont Competition and The Barbara and Stanley Richman Memorial Award. Keith also originated the role of Dr. Samuel Sacks in Opera Theatre of St. Louis’ world premiere production of *Awakenings* by Tobias Picker and returns to the opera in this recording as Dr. Podsnap.

Keith’s voice has been hailed as a “true bass...stood out, even in its very brief moment in the sun” (Susan Elliot, *Musical America*) and a “pleasing bass baritone...spews out a potent and rangy denunciation that shows a voice of considerable size” (James Sohre, *Opera Today*). Keith made his Boston debut with Odyssey Opera as a part of this production.



Gil Rose is one of today's most trailblazing conductors, praised as "amazingly versatile" (*The Boston Globe*) with "a sense of style and sophistication" (*Opera News*). Equally at home performing core repertoire, new music, and lesser-known historic symphonic and operatic works, "Gil Rose is not just a fine conductor, but a peerless curator, sniffing out—and commissioning—off-trend, unheralded, and otherwise underplayed repertoire that nevertheless holds to unfailingly high standards of quality. In doing so, he's built an indefinable, but unmistakable, personal aesthetic" (WXQR).

A global leader in American contemporary music, Rose is the founder of the performing and recording ensemble the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), who "bring an endlessly curious and almost archaeological mind to programming... with each concert, each recording, an essential step in a better direction" (*The New York Times*), as well as the founder of Odyssey Opera, praised by *The New York Times* as "bold and intriguing" and "one of the East Coast's most interesting opera companies." Since its founding in 1996, the "unique and invaluable" (*The New York Times*) BMOP has grown to become the premier orchestra in the world for commissioning, recording, and performing music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under Rose's leadership, BMOP has won seventeen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, been selected as *Musical America's* Ensemble of the Year in 2016, and in 2021 was awarded a *Gramophone* Magazine Special Achievement Award in recognition of its extraordinary service to American music of the modern era. Under Rose's baton, BMOP has been featured at numerous festivals including the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), and the MATA Festival in New York. In 2013, Gil Rose expanded his musical vision with the founding of Odyssey Opera, a company dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire from all eras. Working with an international roster of singers and directors, Odyssey has presented more than 35 operas in Boston, with innovative, thematically linked seasons. The company has also established itself as a leader of modern opera in the United States, having given three world premieres and numerous U.S. premieres. In addition to his role as

conductor, Rose is leading the charge for the preservation and advancement of underperformed works through recordings. BMOP/sound, the independent record label Rose founded in 2008, has released over 86 recordings of contemporary music by today's most innovative composers, including world premieres by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Chen Yi, Anthony Davis, Lisa Bielawa, Steven Mackey, Eric Nathan, and many others. With Rose as executive producer, the label has secured five GRAMMY® nominations and a win in 2020 for Tobias Picker's opera *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. Odyssey Opera's in-house label has released five CDs, most recently a complete version of Camille Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII*. Beyond Boston, Gil Rose enjoys a busy schedule as a guest conductor and educator. Equally at home on the podium in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, Rose has led performances by the Tanglewood Opera Orchestra, the Netherlands Radio Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the National Symphony of Ukraine, the Matsumoto Festival of Japan, the New York City Opera, and the Juilliard Symphony among others. In addition to being former faculty at Tufts University and Northeastern University, Rose has worked with students across the U.S. at institutions such as Carnegie Mellon University, MIT, New England Conservatory, and the University of California at San Diego. He is a visionary curator of music, inaugurating the Ditson Festival of Music at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art and programming three seasons for the Fromm Concerts at Harvard series. In the upcoming season, Gil Rose leads Odyssey Opera in a concert performance of three one-act operas by Rachmaninoff and brings John Corigliano and Mark Adamo's new opera *The Lord of Cries* to Boston audiences. In addition, he and BMOP will travel to Carnegie Hall for the orchestra's debut performance and culmination of their 25th season, and BMOP and Odyssey will co-produce *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed That Line to Freedom*, the second opera in AS TOLD BY: History, Race, and Justice on the Opera Stage, a five-year initiative highlighting Black composers and vital figures of Black liberation and thought.



The **Boston Modern Orchestra Project** is the premier orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Described by *The New York Times* as “one of the most artistically valuable” orchestras in the country, BMOP is a unique institution in today’s musical world, disseminating exceptional orchestral music “new or so woefully neglected that it might as well be” via performances and recordings of the highest caliber.

Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span over a century. Each season, Rose brings BMOP’s award-winning orchestra, renowned soloists, and influential composers to the stage of New England Conservatory’s historic Jordan Hall, with programming that is “a safe haven for, and champion of, virtually every *ism*, and every genre- and era-mixing hybrid that composers’ imaginations have wrought” (*Wall Street Journal*). The musicians of BMOP are consistently lauded for the energy, imagination, and passion with which they infuse the music of the present era.

BMOP’s distinguished and adventurous track record includes premieres and recordings of monumental and provocative new works such as John Harbison’s ballet *Ulysses*, Charles Wuorinen’s *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, and Lei Liang’s *A Thousand Mountains, A Million*

Streams. The composers performed and commissioned by BMOP contain Pulitzer and Rome Prize winners, Grawemeyer Award recipients, and MacArthur grant fellows.

From 1997 to 2013 the orchestra won thirteen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming. BMOP has been featured at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. During its 20th anniversary season, BMOP was named Musical America’s 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra in the organization’s history to receive this distinction.

BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge’s Club Oberon and Boston’s Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2004 to 2012.

BMOP/sound, BMOP’s independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP’s extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today’s most innovative composers. BMOP/sound has released over 90 CDs on the label, bringing BMOP’s discography to over 100 titles. BMOP/sound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of a 2020 GRAMMY® Award for *Tobias Picker: Fantastic Mr. Fox*, eight GRAMMY® Award nominations, and its releases have appeared on the year-end “Best of” lists of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, National Public Radio, *Time Out New York*, *American Record Guide*, *Downbeat Magazine*, WBUR, NewMusicBox, and others.

BMOP expands the horizon of a typical “night at the symphony.” Admired, praised, and sought after by artists, presenters, critics, and audiophiles, BMOP and BMOP/sound are uniquely positioned to redefine the new music concert and recording experience.

FLUTE

Ashley Addington
Sarah Brady*

OBOE

Laura Pardee Schaefer
Jennifer Slowik*

CLARINET

Gary Gorczyca
Jan Halloran*

BASSON

Gregory Newton*
Susie Telsey

HORN

Nick Auer
Alyssa Daly
Neil Godwin
Whitacre Hill*

TRUMPET

Chris Belluscio
Michael Dobrinski*

TROMBONE

Hans Bohn*
Alexei Doohovsky

TUBA

Ken Amis

TIMPANI

Craig McNutt

HARP

Ina Zdorovetchi

PIANO

Yoko Hagino

VIOLIN I

Heidi Braun-Hill*
Ben Carson
Tudor Dornescu
Susan Jensen
Aleksandra Labinska
Nicole Parks

VIOLIN II

Colleen Brannen*
Paola Caballero
Annegret Klaua
Sean Larkin
Kay Rooney
Edward Wu

VIOLA

Peter Sulski*
Dimitar Petkov
Emily Rideout
Alexander Vavilov

CELLO

Nicole Cariglia
Nicholas Johnson
David Russell*

DOUBLE BASS

Kate Foss*
Randall Zigler

*Principals

Tobias Picker

Awakenings

Producer: Tobias Picker and Gil Rose

Recording and postproduction engineer: Antonio Oliart

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Awakenings was recorded on February 26 and 27, 2023 at Fraser Performance Studio at the WGBH Studios, Boston, Massachusetts.

This recording was made possible by the generosity of Roma Broida Wittcoff.

ODYSSEY OPERA Holly Druckman, Chorus Master; Laura McHugh, Chorus Manager

SOPRANO

Alecia Batson
Ashley Victoria Jones
Cynthia Lopez Perez
Aurora Martin
Laura McHugh

COUNTERTENOR & MEZZO-SOPRANO

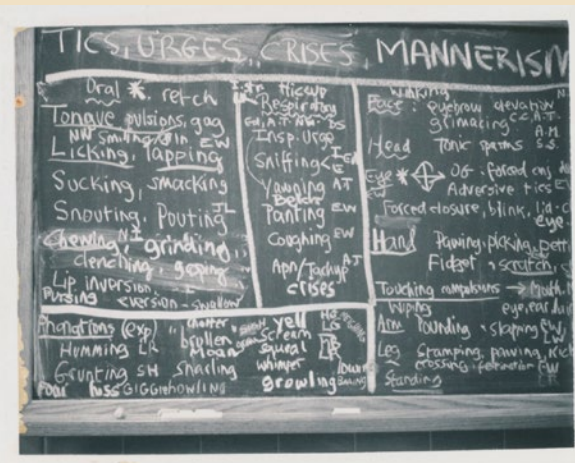
Darby Clinard
Lucas Ludwig Coura
Jade Espina
Madison Smith
Mauri Tetreault

TENOR

Colin Campbell
Daon Drisdorn
Joel Edwards
Eiji Miura
Srinivasan Raghuraman

BARITONE & BASS

Joshua Dixon Belt
Keith Eric Brinkley
Jacob Cooper
Thomas Valle Hoag
Ron Williams



Cover art photo: Dr. Oliver Sacks' chalkboard notes. Courtesy of the Oliver Sacks Foundation

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Design: John Kramer
Editor: Dianne Spoto

TICS, URGES, CR

Oral * retch

Tongue pulsions, gag

NW smiling/grin EW

Licking, tapping

Sucking, smacking

Snoutting, Pouting^{JL}

Chewing, grinding

I. str. Hi
Resp

Ed, A.T.

INSP

Sniff

Yawn

BE
Pan

Cov

Apr