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**AMERICAN OPERA PROJECTS PRESENTS**  
**Semi-staged and Concert Readings of New Operas:**  
***THE SUMMER KING*,**  
**BASED ON THE LIFE OF LEGENDARY NEGRO LEAGUE**  
**SLUGGER JOSH GIBSON.**

**Excerpts from *THE SUMMER KING* and other operas  
produced for the first time in March 2007 showcases**

**Brooklyn, NY, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007— AMERICAN OPERA PROJECTS (AOP) and partners, THE MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC, OPERA INDEX present readings of new operas. “AOP is a living, breathing workshop that gives you the opportunity to follow a new work from gestation to completion”- *TIME OUT NY***

**March 18<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm *THE SUMMER KING* and *THE GOLDEN GATE* at The Manhattan School of Music. WQXR’s Midge Woolsey hosts. Post-performance discussion with the creators. Tickets cost \$20 at the door, \$15 in advance and \$10 for seniors and students. Reservations: **Opera Index** 212-721-9828**

**March 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:30pm *THE SUMMER KING* and *THE WALLED-UP WIFE* at South Oxford Space, AOP’s home base (138 South Oxford Place in Fort Greene, Brooklyn). Post-performance discussion with the creators. Tickets are \$15, \$12 for seniors and students. No advanced tickets are available. Reservations: **AOP** 718-398-4024 or email [MGray@operaprojects.org](mailto:MGray@operaprojects.org).**

***THE SUMMER KING*, music by Daniel Sonenberg, libretto by Daniel Nester & Daniel Sonenberg, is based on the life of Josh Gibson, the Negro Baseball Leagues player. Rumored to have hit the only fair ball out of “the house that Ruth built”, Gibson died tragically at the age of 35, in 1947, three months before Jackie Robinson broke through the color barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Using a contemporary musical language of jazzy melodies and jagged harmonies the opera portrays Gibson as a mythic character trapped by societal circumstances: a mega-athlete emotionally unable to weather the strong tides of change.**

**THE SUMMER KING features an African-American cast including Lori-Kaye Miller, Jason S. McKinney, Anthony Turner and Leon Browne. Music Direction is by Steven Osgood, AOP’s Artistic Director. American Opera Projects lead funders for this project include NYSCA, The New York State Music Fund, established by the NY State Attorney General at Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors, and NYC’s Department of Cultural Affairs.**

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Composer **Daniel Sonenberg** was awarded a residency in AOP's *Composers & the Voice* program in 2003. In 2004 **THE SUMMER KING**'s libretto was workshopped in NYCO's **VOX Festival** and AOP began to develop the opera in 2005. Besides his collaboration with AOP, Sonenberg writes for chamber and orchestral ensembles, and recently gained notice for art songs and theater compositions. His *Baseball Songs*, described as "touching" by Oestreich in *The New York Times*, won the Robert Starer prize of the City University of New York.

**THE GOLDEN GATE**, music by **Conrad Cummings**, text from the novel of the same name by **Vikram Seth** is set in San Francisco in the early 1980's and follows four twenty-somethings through a year of emotional discovery. Seth's source novel is composed entirely of rhyming tetrameter sonnets and was **inspired by Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin***. Composer Conrad uses Tchaikovsky's *Onegin* as a departure point for some of the musical thematic material.

**Conrad Cummings**, a member of AOP's 2005-06 *Composer's & the Voice*, has had his music performed at **Carnegie Hall**, Brooklyn Academy of Music (**BAM**), **Davies Symphony Hall** in San Francisco, and numerous clubs and alternative performance spaces. Groups performing his music include **Brooklyn Philharmonic**, **the San Francisco Opera Center**, **Brandywine Baroque**, **Avian Orchestra**, and the symphony orchestras of Louisville, New Jersey, and Indianapolis.

**THE WALLED-UP WIFE**, a one-act opera for three voices and chamber ensemble by **composer Gilda Lyons**, retells an ancient folktale of young brides buried alive into the foundations of royal construction projects to bring the site good luck. Tricked into the ritual, the opera's leading character, a doomed bride, sings a lullaby to her infant son before the final bricks bind her to her fate.

Composer/vocalist **Gilda Lyons** is the Artistic Director of **The Phoenix Concerts** series at St. Matthew & St. Timothy, NYC, and was a composer in American Opera Projects' 2005-06 *Composers & the Voice* series. Her recent work, *Bone Needles*, for voices and dancers (commissioned by Amy Pivar Dances), was premiered at **Dance New Amsterdam, NYC**, in April 2006. Lyons has been active on the new music scene since 1997, when she made her professional debut as composer and vocalist with the **American Symphony Chamber Orchestra** performing the world premiere of her orchestral song cycle *Feis*.

**THE SUMMER KING**, **THE WALLED UP WIFE**, and **THE GOLDEN GATE** were all developed through AOP's innovative annual residency program for composers: **COMPOSERS & THE VOICE**.

**For Press material** and to learn more about this program and all other AOP projects, please visit AOP's recently redesigned website at [www.operaprojects.org](http://www.operaprojects.org).

Founded in 1988, **American Opera Projects (AOP)** has gained international recognition as an arts organization devoted to creating, developing, and presenting new American opera and experimental music theatre. AOP is led by Charles Jarden, Executive Director, and Steven Osgood, Artistic Director.

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