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***“WHO WILL ACKNOWLEDGE THINGS OF DARKNESS AS THEIR OWN?”***

**AOP Stretches the Boundaries of Opera**  
**DARKLING**  
**Premieres on February 28, 2006**  
**at the East 13th Street Theatre**

**NEW YORK, NY Monday, January 16, 2006** -- American Opera Projects (AOP) explores the outer edges of the operatic form with the world premiere of **DARKLING**, an experimental opera-theatre work with original music composed by **Stefan Weisman** and **Lee Hoiby**, conceived and directed by **Michael Comlish**, and music direction by **J. David Jackson**. Instrumental accompaniment is by members of the **FLUX Quartet**.

**DARKLING** brings to the stage award-winning New York poet **Anna Rabinowitz**'s acclaimed book of the same name—a work that burrows through shards of history derived from old letters and unidentified photos the poet found in a shoebox neglected for decades on a closet shelf in her parents' home. **DARKLING** is a work that speaks for those who did not survive to tell their stories or write their memoirs.

**DARKLING** assembles narratives of the Holocaust not through the convention of narrative details but through the turbulence of multiple voices in the act of finding themselves. The production recasts opera in a contemporary form by overlaying poetry with live music, interweaving the drama with a landscape of projected films and images, collages of spoken text and pre-recorded soundscapes.

Performances of **DARKLING** will begin Sunday, February 26th at the East 13th Street Theatre, 136 East 13th Street (at 3rd Avenue) and run through Saturday, March 18th. Opening Night is Tuesday, February 28, 2006. Tickets can be purchased through Ticket Central, [www.TicketCentral.com](http://www.TicketCentral.com) and by phone 212-279- 4200, 12-8 PM, daily. Tickets are priced at \$45-\$30, and discounted for students and seniors with valid ID.

Michael Comlish, an AOP veteran since 1999, has led the development of **DARKLING** at AOP in workshops over the last 2 years. His work has been praised by the press as "high-style," "unorthodox," "wickedly uproarious," and "anti-Romantic," and was featured in the New Yorker's "Talk of the Town" for his casting of pundit Andrew Sullivan as Benedick in **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**. Comlish's directorial approach is in the vein of Richard Foreman, David Herskowitz (director of AOP's **TONE TEST**, '04), and Anne Bogart (whom he assistant directed for AOP's **MARINA**, '03). Within the bleak world of **DARKLING** Comlish continues to explore a style that has been called "absurd, surreal, yet playful shifts among levels of reality."

Adaptor-Director Michael Comlish and Charles Jarden (AOP Executive Director and Producer) have put together an exceptional creative team for **DARKLING**. Three composers contribute music: Stefan Weisman (American Composers Orchestra, Sequitur) has written for the voice and for the instrumental ensemble; Thomas Hamilton (long- time Robert Ashley collaborator) has created a pre- recorded soundscape; and song composer Lee Hoiby has contributed a new

commission, "The Darkling Thrush," based on the famous poem by Thomas Hardy. Music Director J. David Jackson (MET Opera, conductor of AOP's premiere of **MARINA** starring Lauren Flanigan), and Brian DeMaris (New York City and Ash Lawn Operas), who will conduct **DARKLING**, complete this outstanding group of artists.

Lead singers include tenor Jon Garrison (MET Opera, NY Philharmonic) and baritone Marcus DeLoach (NYC Opera, Central City Opera) and ensemble members Jody Sheinbaum, Hai-Ting Chinn and Mark Uhlemann. Featured actors include Sid Williams (Actor's Studio, "The Sopranos"), Polish film star Elzbieta Czyzewska, Hillary Spector, Carol Monda, Julie Lockhart and Perri Yaniv.

Production elements: Set Design by Glenn Reed; Lighting Design by Brian Scott; Hair and Costume Design by Anna Kiraly; Projection and Video Editing by Gregory King; Sound Design by Zachary Williamson; Production Management by Scott Schneider; Instrumental Ensemble contracted by FLUX Quartet's Tom Chiu.

**Darkling: A Poem** (Tupelo Press 2001) has been hailed as "a daring masterpiece," a work that makes "a unique contribution to Holocaust literature," and as one of the "ineradicable Twin Towers of Holocaust poetry in English." Sold out audiences reacted with similar praise when excerpts from AOP's theatrical adaptation of **DARKLING** were presented by The Guggenheim Museum as part of the Works & Process series on November 13 and 14, 2005.

With **DARKLING**, American Opera Projects continues its exploration and remembrance of the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust. AOP has returned to the subject frequently because, AOP Executive Director **Charles Jarden** states, "**the Holocaust remains a story that wants to be told**. Over the last several years we have received more submissions concerning this theme than in any other category. I think that world disasters, natural ones such Hurricane Katrina and the Tsunami, and especially man-made ones, like the war in Iraq and 9/11, resonate to such a degree with creative artists that they are led back to collective memories, like the Holocaust, and to lessons about humanity and compassion that we learned, or did not learn."

Founded in 1988, **American Opera Projects** has gained international recognition as an arts organization devoted to creating, developing, and presenting new American opera, opera projects and experimental music theatre. **Additional press material is available at:** [www.operaprojects.org/press](http://www.operaprojects.org/press).

**American Opera Projects' DARKLING runs February 26 through March 18, 2006 at the East 13th Street Theater, Tuesdays & Thursdays-Saturdays at 8 pm; Sunday Feb 26 at 3 PM, Monday Feb 27 at 8 PM with opening night at 8 PM on Tuesday, Feb 28th. The performance lasts approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes with no intermission. Panel discussions with the creators will follow performances on 26 Feb; 4, 7 & 14 March 2006.**

American Opera Projects: 138 S. Oxford Street, Brooklyn, New York 11217 Tel: (718) 398-4024/Fax: (718) 398-3489

**DARKLING: A POEM** by Anna Rabinowitz (© Tupelo Press, 2001). [www.tupelopress.org](http://www.tupelopress.org)