

*House of*



L E G  
E N D  
A R Y



# HOUSE OF LEGENDARY

IT'S LOVE OR DRAG, BABY



## CREATIVE TEAM

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COMPOSER  
**JOSEPH RUBINSTEIN**

LIBRETTIST  
**JASON KIM**

DIRECTOR  
**DAVID MENDIZÁBAL**

CHOREOGRAPHER / MOVEMENT CONSULTANT  
**KEMAR JEWEL**

## DEVELOPMENT ARTISTS

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CONDUCTOR  
**JORGE PARODI**

DEE LEGENDARY  
**AARON CASEY**  
TENOR

JOHN  
**TREVOR MARTIN**  
BARITONE

LOLA  
**JORDAN RUTTER**  
COUNTERTENOR

MARTINA  
**MICHAEL KUHN**  
TENOR

SOFIA  
**CAROLINE WORRA**  
SOPRANO

EMCEE  
**KEMAR JEWEL**

INSTRUMENTALISTS  
**BOB HALEK**  
**MILA HENRY**  
**LANA NORRIS**  
**MATTHEW STEPHENS**  
**CHARITY WICKS**

## SYNOPSIS

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*House of Legendary* is a story about double lives and destructive desires set in the glory days of New York City's underground drag culture. Drag performer Dee Legendary's passionate love affair with Officer John takes an unexpected and dangerous turn, yielding a stylish, intimate and daring lyrical chamber opera influenced by 1980s dance music, jazz and pop.

## SCORE & PRODUCTION INFO

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### DURATION

100'

### ROLES

5 singers

(1 soprano, 1 countertenor, 2 tenors, 1 baritone);

1 ballroom emcee (spoken role);  
optional dancers / performers

### INSTRUMENTATION

flute (alto flute), 2 clarinets (bass clarinet),

piano, 2 percussion, 2 violins,  
viola, cello, string bass

### COMMISSION & DEVELOPMENT

*House of Legendary* is currently in development with The American Opera Project, in association with Seagle Festival.

It has received development workshops and support from AOP's Composers & the Voice program, Fort Worth Opera's Frontiers Showcase, Amanda + James, Manhattan School of Music/Opera Index, and The Hermitage Artist Retreat. AOP is currently seeking co-commissioners and producers for the World Premiere.

### INFORMATION & MEDIA SAMPLES

For more information, visit [www.aopopera.org/legendary](http://www.aopopera.org/legendary).

or

contact Mila Henry, AOP Artistic Director; [mhenry@aopopera.org](mailto:mhenry@aopopera.org)

### FUNDING

The development of *House of Legendary* is supported in part by a Repertoire Development Grant from OPERA America's Opera Fund.

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## THE CREATORS



### JOSEPH N. RUBINSTEIN, COMPOSER

Joseph N. Rubinstein was born in Cleveland, OH, and spent his childhood there and in Newport News, VA. He currently lives in New York City. With an emphasis on emotional directness and vivid storytelling, Joseph's melodically driven and dramatic work is often inspired by American history, explorations of identity, and the natural world. His style is particularly informed by the folk-influenced concert music of the United States, United Kingdom, and Russia, and by minimalism, the sacred choral music tradition, electronica, and musical theater. His music has been presented by organizations and individuals including the Seagle Music Festival, Forth Worth Opera, The Manhattan School of Music Opera Theater, Triad: The Boston Choral Collective, American Opera Projects, The Holy Cross Chamber Singers, The Secret Opera, bass-baritone Matthew Burns at the Spoleto Festival USA, C4, and the Young New Yorker's Chorus. He has collaborated on new theatrical works and songs with librettists and writers including Mark Campbell, Jason Kim, and Melisa Tien. Joseph and Jason Kim are the recipients of a 2017 Opera Genesis Grant from American Opera Projects and The Hermitage Artist Colony for developmental work on their opera "House of Legendary", as well as a 2020 Repertoire Development Grant from Opera America for the same project. Select vocal works by Joseph are published by See-A-Dot and North Star Music, and are recorded on 4Tay Records and Crossover Music. He is an alumnus of the Pacific Chorale's Choral Sketches program, New Dramatists' Composer-Librettist Studio, and American Opera Projects' Composers & the Voice program. He studied music at Columbia University (BA) and The Juilliard School (MM).

<https://josephnrubinstein.com/>



### JASON KIM, LIBRETTIST

Jason Kim is a Korean-born dramatist. His television writing includes BARRY (HBO), GIRLS (HBO), LOVE (Netflix), GRACEPOINT (Fox), and DIVORCE (HBO). His feature work includes an adaptation of the upcoming true crime book THE FLAWLESS for Fox Searchlight Pictures. His play THE MODEL AMERICAN opened the Williamstown Theatre Festival in 2017 on the Nikos Stage. His musical KPOP premiered in 2018 at Ars Nova Theater in New York and won the Richard Rogers Award, the Off-Broadway Alliance Award, and Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Musical. KPOP: The Musical is slated to open on Broadway in 2022. He is the recipient of a Writers Guild Award and has been nominated for an Emmy Award, PGA Award, and the NAACP Image Award.



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## MEDIA SAMPLER

### THE MAKING OF HOUSE OF LEGENDARY

A revealing look at the creation of the opera-in-development *House of Legendary*, an opera infused with 1980s dance music, jazz and pop influences, about double lives and destructive desires set in the glory days of New York City's underground drag culture.

Includes musical samples, interviews with the creators, and details behind the historical importance and inspiration of *House of Legendary*.



### "DEE LEGENDARY, THAT'S ME"

In association with Seagle Festival's American Center for New Works Development, AOP presents Scenes from *House of Legendary: A work-in-progress event*. Live and Livestreamed from the Oscar Seagle Memorial Theater, the event included excerpts from the opera, conversations with the creators, and an audience Q&A.



### "DEE LEGENDARY AND OFFICER JOHN"

In association with Seagle Festival's American Center for New Works Development, AOP presents Scenes from *House of Legendary: A work-in-progress event*. Live and Livestreamed from the Oscar Seagle Memorial Theater, the event included excerpts from the opera, conversations with the creators, and an audience Q&A.



WATCH ADDITIONAL SAMPLES [HERE](#).

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## BACKGROUND RESOURCES

### THE STORY THAT INSPIRED THE OPERA

In 1993, in the Harlem apartment of Dorian Corey, a drag performer and dressmaker who'd died of AIDS, detectives make a gruesome discovery.

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)



### "PARIS IS BURNING"

Jennie Livingston's 1991 documentary focuses on drag queens living in New York City and their "house" culture, which provides a sense of community and support for the flamboyant and often socially shunned performers. Groups from each house compete in elaborate balls that take cues from the world of fashion. Also touching on issues of racism and poverty, the film features interviews with a number of renowned drag queens, including Willi Ninja, Pepper LaBeija and Dorian Corey.

[WHERE TO WATCH](#)



### RESEARCH IMAGES

A gallery of photos used in the research of *House of Legendary*:

[VIEW GALLERY](#)

### BALL CULTURE INFORMATION

Learn more about the Ball Culture that is the setting of *House of Legendary*.

[READ WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE](#)

