

LATITUDE 65

INSIDE: OPERA FAIRBANKS; THEATER REVIEWS; MUSEUM'S LAMPREY EXHIBIT



Eduard Zilberkant directs the Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra and Fairbanks Symphony Chorus during a rehearsal at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Davis Concert Hall on Tuesday. ERIN CORNELIUSSEN/NEWS-MINER

COMING TO UAF, PUCCINI'S 'Turandot'

By Gary Black
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A collaborative effort between musician, singer and stage is in the works at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, bringing the famed work "Turandot" to life at Davis Concert Hall.

The production is a joint effort between the Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra, Fairbanks Symphony Chorus

and the Northland Youth Choir, in collaboration with UAF Department of Theatre and Film, to stage the famous Puccini opera. It is two performances only, April 29 and May 1 at the university.

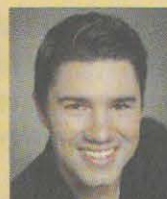
The production itself is huge. It's one of Puccini's most noted works, and in grand operatic tradition, requires the right talent, staging and artistry to pull it off. Eduard Zilberkant knows he's got

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SOLOISTS



Blalock



Bunsold



Celaire



Elckel



Fourie



Graham



Morrow



Owens



Perez

COURTESY FAIRBANKS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

TURANDOT

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that all under control.

"It's pretty huge. It's one of the biggest operas there is out there, and I've always wanted to do it because it requires such a large orchestra, and we have that here," Zilberkant, the director of the Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra, said.

The performances features the orchestra on stage at Davis Concert Hall rather than performing in the pit, and musicians will share the stage with nine soloists, many of whom are guest performers traveling to Fairbanks next week to bring the classic to life. In addition to the symphony and soloists, the Fairbanks Symphony Chorus and Northland Youth Choir will join in the performance as well.

"Turandot" tells the story of a Chinese princess of the same name whose suitors must answer three riddles before she will consider marrying her admirer. If you fail to answer her riddles correctly, you die. In the public square, a young prince becomes enamored

with Turandot and sets out to win her love while staying alive and proving he is worthy of her affections. The performance includes English supertitles.

It was Puccini's last work he composed, and the final act was completed after his death in 1924. It made its stage debut in Milan in 1926.

"It's one of the most popular operas done on any stage," Zilberkant said. "I've wanted to do this in Fairbanks because something of this scale hasn't been done. To do a show like this is any conductor's dream. It's so big in every way."

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Puccini's "Turandot," with the Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra, Fairbanks Symphony Chorus and the Northland Youth Choir, in collaboration with UAF Department of Theatre and Film

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. April 29 with a pre-concert lecture at 6:30 p.m. and 4 p.m. May 1 with a pre-concert lecture at 3 p.m.

WHERE: Davis Concert Hall, University of Alaska Fairbanks

TICKETS: Available online at www.fairbankssymphony.org or at the box office before showtime

To help bring the massive performance to life, UAF theater professor Carrie Baker came on board to help stage direct. She's attended several symphony rehearsals to take in the music and has the staging and blocking set for when guest soloists arrive next week. That's when she'll blend the acting portions of "Turandot" with Zilberkant and crew's musical expertise in just a few days before the performance opens on April 29.

"It's a different kind of energy," Baker said of staging an operatic production compared to

a play. "I've gotten to the point in the past couple of weeks where I've moved from stress to excitement. It's a huge symphonic performance and the choir is big, and you can feel it in your body. That's when I got super excited."

Both Baker and Zilberkant gave accolades to costumer Theresa Reed and lighting director Adam Gillette, both of whom are noted in the Fairbanks theater world for their respective roles in creating live art. Reed's costumes are authentic replicas of the "Turandot" era, and Gillette's lighting is used to set the mood on stage and enhance the storytelling.

"The level of playing and the artistic vision is incredible, plus we have this great Davis Concert Hall," Zilberkant said. "All of this makes for a spectacular show. It should not be missed by the Fairbanks community."

Contact Features Editor Gary Black at 459-7504 or on Twitter: @FDNMfeatures.

NOTABLES

Carrie Baker, stage director


Eduard Zilberkant, music director and conductor

Lorna Eder, Fairbanks Symphony Chorus director

Melissa Downes, Northland Youth Choir director

Adam Gillette, lighting designer

Theresa Reed, costume designer

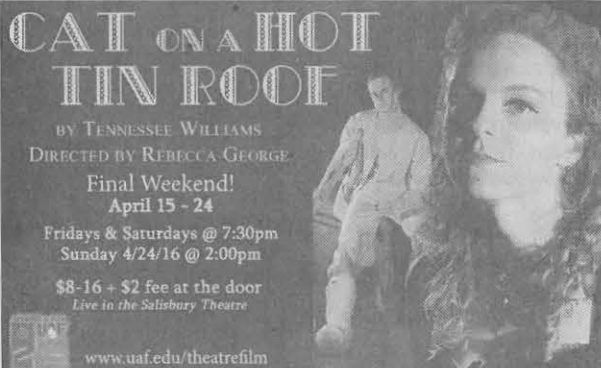



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