

OF
LETO

A STAGED CONCERT READING

+

A CREATIVE HONORS THESIS BY ALEXANDER TOM

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Prologue: Minnesota in the Summer

Forget the Past

No Ordinary Boy

House Blues

At Long Last

We Meet Benhamin Romjin

Minnesota in the Summer (Reprise I)

Robert Decides

Of Leto: the Braxton-Harper Affair

God Bless the Braxtons

How I Miss Our Afternoons

[there will be a 10-minute intermission]

ACT II

Entr'acte: a Wedding March

I Will Follow You

The Reading of the Drafts

For Our Flag and Our Country

Secrets in the Trenches

Lucky

There Are Better Ways

Maybe You'd Forgotten

The Reading of the Letters

There is Love

Finale: Minnesota in the Summer (Reprise II)

ACT I

For the Braxton family, every summer provides plenty of time to think about the future and reflect about the past. But for James Braxton, an idealistic teen who idles away his workdays lost in the reveries of youth, this is the summer he must reflect about the future. James, a constant laborer for the Braxton family, is invited to join his best friend, Tommy, at a community bonfire. The town's high schoolers are all planning on attending.

As he attempts to leave, Robert Braxton - father and stern patriarch of the Braxton farm - reminds him his day tomorrow begins at dawn. James leaves and in his absence Robert and Linda Braxton delve into the secret that built their family.

At the bonfire, life takes an unexpected turn when James meets a love that will haunt him for life. Her name is Sarah Harper, a well to do girl from the other side of town -- an unlikely friend for an orphaned farmer's son. Though they've attend school together for the past five years, there is an unorthodox connection they feel when - at long last - words are exchanged.

Together Sarah and James slowly lose their innocence and idealism as social duties and moral obligations temper their youthful optimism with each passing week. Robert learns about these meetings and decides that the family secret must be revealed. Once spoken, the Braxton family begins to crumble and the life that they wanted is tainted by the memories never made.

ACT II

Some years later, Sarah Harper marries a high school classmate, Benjamin Romijn. Their honeymoon has barely ended when Benjamin is drafted into a war that would come to shape a generation.

The Braxton family continues to fall apart and by the time it is James' turn to leave for the war, Linda must share another secret. The draft takes its toll on the town, and after no news for weeks from her husband, Sarah is forced to reflect on her life. Elizabeth, high school confidant, gives the truest picture of the story, and gives Sarah hope for the future.

OF LETO is based on a true story of love lost and found; a visceral and intimate exploration of the havoc wrought by impersonal social forces on the lives of individuals. It is a story of shared secrets, estranged siblings, forbidden romance, and love that transcends all obstacles. The question remains: is it better not knowing - choose duty or love?



CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor and Thesis Candidate - Alexander Tom
Libretto - Daniel Oberhaus
Orchestrator - Drew Nichols
Assistant Director and Media Director - Bethany Brown
Marketing and Business Director - Rachel Chada
Rehearsal Pianist - Jonathan Lang
Orchestra Director - Clarice Collins
Sound & Recording Engineers - Josh Hontz and Patrick Driscoll
Thesis Director - Dr. James DeMars
Second Reader - Dr. Deanna Swoboda
Third Reader - Professor Toby Yatso

Orchestra

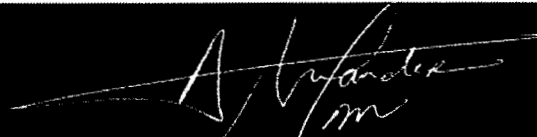
Violin - Clarice Collins
Viola - Daniel Lorenzo
Cello - Wei Guo
Double Bass - Ben Jones
Flute/ Piccolo - Rachel Minto
Clarinet/ Bass Clarinet - Brittany Johnson
Alto/ Tenor Saxophone - Jillian Kaplan
Trumpet - Robert Giambruno
French Horn - Parker Kauffman
Trombone - Ben Larson
Piano - Jonathan Lang
Percussion - Lisa Atkinson, Scott Correll

NOTES FROM THE COMPOSER

I have firmly believed that music, above all else, is to communicate. When I began this project, I wanted to create a piece that dealt with the ideas and situations in which one could relate. Those concepts became family, love, and duty. In my attempt to convey those ideas, I used the dramatic intentions of opera and the conventions of musical theatre. Still, I wanted to undo what many have aurally and visually scene as "typical" – to essentially deceive the ear and continually do so with several main themes.

OF LETO is a project that I cannot stylistically codify in "opera" or "musical theatre." At times, and as you may have heard in the pre-concert video, I think of this collaborative project as a "musical drama." As I composed this work, I wanted to an identity away from the text: that the music be independent enough that a musical number could be used away from the context of the story. I believe that many of the musical numbers do exist in such a way that they support the story and the characters but also could support themselves. As a whole, I worked to ensure continuity and that the story was not marred by music nor the music boxed-in by the text.

As my final creative capstone for the School of Music and my honors undergraduate thesis for Barrett, the Honors College, I collaborated across the greater ASU campus to achieve a one-of-a-kind project. This cross-discipline collaboration includes four ASU colleges (BHC, WPC, CLAS, and Herberger at large) along with a range of majors from performance to marketing to English. The importance of projects like OF LETO is that there is a solid effort and foundation for students to be continually supported in their endeavors to develop, create, and produce. In my time here at SOM, I have been blessed to have worked and studied with an amazing array of collaborative faculty, and I hope this premiere justifies such time.



CAST BIOGRAPHIES

MIKELLE ATKINSON (Ensemble) is ecstatic to be graduating from ASU this Fall semester with her Bachelor's Degree in Music Therapy! She will begin an internship at Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City, Utah in January of the New Year. Mikelle got her start at ASU as a classical and collaborative pianist. She has had the privilege of studying closely with members of the piano, voice, and music therapy faculty, and is honored to be a part of this production. Performing in "Of Leto" is a very unique and memorable experience and she would like to thank everyone involved for all their hard work and dedication. She would also like to thank her friends who have made her experience at ASU so unforgettable. Congratulations Alex on completing your Thesis! Toi Toi everyone!

NICOLE BLUMENSTEIN (Ensemble) is delighted to have had the opportunity to be part of such a fun production! She is a third year undergraduate working on her B. Mus in Vocal Performance. Nicole can be seen performing in various ASU choir ensembles as well as in the community as a cantorial soloist. In her spare time, Nicole enjoys working with other students in the club, Jury's Out: Music Students for the Community to put on community performances for senior citizens. Nicole would like to thank her voice teacher, Professor Carole FitzPatrick for all her guidance and support.

CHARLOTTE BROOKS (Narrator) Charlotte Brooks is a graduate of Duquesne University, is a published writer, composer and lyricist and has worked in music and theater for more years than she can remember. Charlotte has designed and taught music related courses for Peoria Unified School District and Xavier College Prep. She has worked in community and professional theater as musical director, and also teaches piano and coaches vocal auditions. Ms. Brooks has written and produced dozens of musicals, and performs in musical theater and cabarets. In 2009 she launched 16 Bars to produce and perform cabarets and musical productions, and is a founding member of Theatre Artists Studio. Charlotte is presently writing and performing with 16 Bars. Thanks to Alex for allowing me to participate in this amazing project!

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

SARAH BRUTON (Bethany, Ensemble) is a DMA Voice Performance candidate. She graduated with her Master in Music Voice Performance Pedagogy from ASU spring of 2015 and earned her Bachelor of Music from Cal State Fullerton in 2008. She is excited to be participating in this project and thankful to be working with such wonderfully talented peers. Favorite roles include "Sarah" and choreographer for Guys and Dolls, "Gertrude" in Seussical, "Floretta" in Into the Woods, and more recently Gino in LOT's production of A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine and Sally in Reefer Madness. She has enjoyed performing in background choirs for Andrea Bocelli, Juanes, John Williams, and Eric Whitacre at venues like the Honda Center, the Hollywood Bowl, and the 2013 TED Conference. She would like to thank her family and friends for always being supportive!

Nina Cole Garguilo (Sarah Harper) is currently pursuing a Doctoral degree in Vocal Performance at Arizona State University. Nina loves helping students of all ages and abilities, and aims to instill confidence in her students, whether they be learning new techniques or preparing for stage performance. She has performed roles including Laetitia (Gianni Schicchi), Bellomy (The Fantasticks), and Maria in scenes from West Side Story. In addition to opera and musical theatre performances, she has been a featured soloist in many choral works. While obtaining her Bachelor's degree at the University of Mississippi, Nina was a soloist for Ola Gjeilo's "Tundra", and his premieres of "Liberation of Ellisbell" and "New York I & II". In 2012, she started her professional choir career with the Grammy Award winning Phoenix Chorale. In the summer of 2013, Nina sang the title role in the opera, Das Tagebuch der Anna Frank at the Mittelsächsisches Theater in Freiberg, Germany. Her most recent stage performance was in Mozart's "Cosi fan tutte" as Despina.

MICHAEL DEVERY (Robert Braxton) is a first year Master's student at ASU, where he is studying Musical Theatre Performance. He graduated with a BM in Music Education with a Dual Concentration in Vocal and Instrumental Education from the University of South Alabama in Mobile, Alabama. Michael is an avid performer, having performed in productions of Gianni Schicchi, Madama Butterfly, La fanciulla del West, Candide, Sweeney Todd, and Les Misérables. He was most recently a featured soloist in ASU Chamber Singers performance of Mozart's Requiem. He is currently studying with Gordon Hawkins.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

PHILIP GODFREY (Ronnie, the Postal Boy, Ensemble, Quartet Member) is a sophomore currently studying Vocal Performance under David Britton. As a recitalist, he has performed with the Chandler Symphonic Chamber Group and ProMusica AZ, and has been a soloist for Camelback Bible Church and Victory Lutheran Church. Philip has participated in the ensemble of major works including: Messiah, Fauré's Requiem, Rutter's Gloria, and The Creation by Haydn. He has performed Horton in Seussical the Musical and Prince Charming in Cinderella, as well as playing the role of Friedrich in the Sound of Music. He will be in ASU Lyric Opera's production of Guadalupe this semester.

ADRIENNE GOGLIA (Linda Braxton) was born and raised in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. She has been singing for over 25 years, and has performed in a variety of musical genres. Adrienne studied Music Theater Performance at Arizona State University, graduating with a Bachelor of Music in 2005, and continued her studies in the graduate program at ASU, being awarded a Master of Music in Music Theater/Opera Performance in 2007. In addition to a number of theater credits, Adrienne was most recently seen as Mrs. Julian in ASU Lyric Opera Theatre's production of Benjamin Britten's Owen Wingrave. Adrienne currently works as the Human Resources and Business Services Coordinator Senior at the ASU School of Music, serves as soprano soloist for Pinnacle Presbyterian Church, and is pursuing a DMA in Vocal Performance.

MICHAEL FRONGILLO (Benjamin Romijn) currently serves as choir director at Apollo High School in Glendale, having recently graduated with a BM in Music Education from the University of Arizona, where he was an enthusiastic member of the music community as a featured soloist and member of Symphonic Choir, the music director for CatCall, UA's all-male a cappella group, and performing in works such as "Die Zauberflöte" and "A Little Night Music". Michael is an active and enthusiastic member in the Phoenix choral and voice community, teaching private voice and singing in Orpheus Male Chorus among other pursuits.

TITUS KAUTZ (Ensemble, Quartet Member, "the voice of" Mr. Harper) is a second-year Master of Music candidate in Musical Theater Performance at Arizona State University. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Nebraska Wesleyan University and an Associate of Arts degree from Western Nebraska Community College. Favorite past roles include "Father" in Children of Eden, "Jesus" in Reefer Madness, "Moonface Martin" in Anything Goes, "Marius" in Les Misérables, "Cat in the Hat" in Seussical, "Abraham" in Altar Boyz, and "Bruschino" in Il Signor Bruschino. In addition to performing, Titus has played piano for a number of productions including: Lucky Stiff, Spamalot, 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, Cabaret, and Legally Blonde. Titus would like to thank his family for their ongoing love and support!

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Alex Kunz (James Braxton) is honored and touched to be part of the amazing team creating Of Leto! Alex holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Merchandising from South Dakota State University and is a second-year Masters of Music candidate in Musical Theatre Performance under the studio of Dr. Carole Fitzpatrick. Favorite credits include Company (Robert), A Year With Frog and Toad (Man Bird/Snail), Children of Eden (Adam/Noah), and the Wizard of Oz (Scarecrow). Many thanks to the creative mind of Alex Tom for "pushing my lot" by providing the most challenging score I've ever tackled and to everyone involved for making a premiere feel so seamless!

DRAKE SHERMAN (Ensemble, Quartet Member) is currently a sophomore at Arizona State University studying vocal performance. He first started his musical journey in freshman year of high school, and has since performed Billy (Anything Goes), Robert Martin (Drowsy Chaperone), Josh (Big, the Musical), and most recently Paul (Company) at ASU. Though his credits tell a different story, his main love is opera and hopes to pursue that after his college career.

SAM STEFANSKI (Tommy, Ensemble, Quartet Member) is in his senior year at the ASU School of Music pursuing his Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance. Sam has competed and won several state and regional National Association of Teachers of Singing competitions. Currently, Sam is the choir director for his church as well as his private music program, MELOS Music.

LINDSAY STILLWELL (Elizabeth) is a second year Master of Music candidate in Musical Theatre Performance and a student of Anne Elgar-Kopita. Lindsay holds a Bachelor of Music degree from University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. She was last seen with LOT in the chorus of Dido and Aeneas and Reefer Madness. Favorite roles include "Susanna" in The Marriage of Figaro, "Kit Kat Girl" in Cabaret and "Lucy" in You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown.

SEDONA URIAS-RAMONETT (Lily, Ensemble) is excited to be a part of such a unique, student run production! She had been previously seen at Lyric Opera Theatre in the ensemble of "Children of Eden". Favorite roles include Maria in "West Side Story" at Valley Youth Theatre and Baroness Elsa Schrader in "The Sound of Music" at Xavier College Preparatory. She would like to thank her amazing parents and family for their endless support and her friends for believing in her.

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PETER & SHARA-DAWN CHAMBERS
KENLEY CONRAD
TODD CORBEIL
PETER COSTA
MATTHEW CRAIG
JOSEPH CURTIS
ALEXANDER DUKE
MARK FEAREY
ERICA FLORES
BRIAN FONG
JOHN FONG
KAREN FONG
SUE FONG
RANDY & AMY FONG
BERNICE FONG
YURI FONG
ANNE FREDRICKSON
MARGIE GIN
MICHELLE GO
KATHERINE HERRING
ERIC HESSEL
PENELOPE HOM
MADDIE HOUTS
GLENN & JANE LEE
ERRORL LEE

JANA MARTON
RITA MCGLYNN
SEPTEMBER MITCHELL
TOSIN MOROHUNFOLA
LAUREN NEMECK
TENLEY OBERHAUS
SUSAN PANSING
MARY ROBINSON
BRIAN ROOD
DEVON ROOD
JUDY ROOD
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MCKENZIE STEUBER
SAM SULTAN
JONATHAN TANG
MONICA TANG
OWEN TANG
SHARON TANG
STEVEN TANG
PAMELA TOM
VICTORIA TOM
JESSICA TOM
ELLIOT TRAVIS
WALTER & SHIRLEY WONG
JUNE YOON

In loving memory and dedication to
Henry Wayne Tom and Christopher Fong Tom.

How I Miss Our Afternoons

I want to express my immeasurable gratitude towards my thesis committee and those who have been working on this project since 2013. Additionally, it should be said that the ASU School of Music Faculty have been a great influence on my musical and academic career for the past four years. The wonderful foundation of the music composition program is that it asks (and allows) us to network within our college. Essentially removing the introversion and creating niche extroversion that garners both a great array of musicians as colleagues and peers but also friends. Dr. Rockmaker once told me in my first lesson that I have to listen to everything – new music, old music, sometimes viola music, but also the silence. It is something I continually think about when writing and communicating. Thank you!

Alexander Tom

