Savage Winter

American Opera Projects and Pittsburgh Opera

Music by Douglas J. Cuomo
Directed by Jonathan Moore

DATES: NOV 7—10 at 7:30pm
LOCATION: BAM Fisher (Fishman Space)
RUN TIME: Approx 1hr 15mins no intermission

Season Sponsor:
Bloomberg Philanthropies
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Savage Winter

Written and Composed by
Douglas J. Cuomo

Text based on the poem *Winterreise* by
Wilhelm Müller

Directed by
Jonathan Moore

Performers
The Protagonist: Tony Boutté (tenor)
Guitar/Electronics: Douglas J. Cuomo
Conductor/Piano: Alan Johnson
Trumpet: Sir Frank London

Scenery and properties design
Brandon McNeel

Video design
Joseph Seamans

Lighting design
Cindy Limauro

Sound design
David Bullard

Music Director
Alan Johnson

Production Manager
Robert Signom III

Production Coordinator
Scott H. Schneider

Technical Director
Sean E. West

Stage Manager
Melissa Robilotta

Assistant Director
Liz Power

Assistant Stage Manager
Jessica L. Halem

Props Master/Wardrobe Assistant
Sophia Andreyev

Supertitles Operator
Ellen Máirín Johnston

Production Assistants
Alissa Jaquin, Joel Kalow, Cal Silberstein, Holly Wright

Production Photographer
Steven Pisano Photography

This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, and funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Significant project support was provided by the following: Ms. Michele Fabrizi, Dr. Freddie and Hilda Fu, The James E. and Sharon C. Rohr Foundation, Steve & Gail Mosites, David & Gabriela Porges, Fund for New and Innovative Programming and Productions, Dr. Lisa Cibik and Bernie Kobosky, Michele & Pat Atkins, James & Judith Matheny, Diana Reid & Marc Chazaud, Francois Bitz, Mr. & Mrs. John E. Traina, Mr. & Mrs. Demetrios Patrinos, Heinz Endowments, R.K. Mellon Foundation, Mr. & Mrs. William F. Benter, Amy & David Michaliszyn, The Estate of Jane E. Knox, Arthur Weldon, Joseph M. Newcomer, Ph.D.

Savage Winter is a co-production of American Opera Projects & Pittsburgh Opera

World premiere performance presented by Pittsburgh Opera, February 17, 2018

Some people choose to go on a silent retreat to embark on this interior journey to find this deep authenticity. Others are thrown kicking and screaming from the wreckage of their workaday lives into a degree of self-awareness.

Still others might ignore the call to grow and change altogether and spend the rest of their lives frozen into the rictus of a smile that might be, in fact, a silent scream.

It seems to me that both the Müller/Schubert original and this piece, inspired with loving awe by that original source material, are concerned with the deep existential questions. The timeless questions of the quest for authenticity and individuation, and of course the experience of the painful “pangs of despised love” as my countryman, Shakespeare, has it. Indeed, when the Fates and the Furies come crashing down on us, we might even join Hamlet in the primal question at the nub of it all: “To be or not to be.”

The room in which our protagonist finds himself is of course a recognizable, physical space. But it is also a metaphorical one. He is here on a journey of reflection, confronting his demons, his fears, his grief for his lost love, and feelings of pain and rejection. He feels primal, animal pain. He is like a wolf in a cave, licking his wounds. He needs to go alone on a journey into the winter of his soul and hopefully find a thawing, a discovery of the truth that will possibly set him free.

I was reflecting on ideas around the Desert Fathers and Mothers, prophets, poets, hermits, “the lunatic, the lover, and the poet,” sequestering themselves from the world for short or lifelong periods in order to journey to the center of their souls. And return to the world perhaps with insights gained from such an interior pilgrimage.

We are not sure at the end whether or not our protagonist finds what he is seeking. Or indeed what choice he will make. But choose he must.

You too are invited on this journey. And so it is in that spirit that I wish you, “Bien Camino...”

—Jonathan Moore, Director
DAVID BULLARD
Sound design

David Bullard’s design credits include War of the Worlds by Annie Gosfield and Yuval Sharon premiere with LA Philharmonic; The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Cleveland Playhouse); The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (St. Louis Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse); Ainadamar (Frost School of Music); The Secret Garden (Cincinnati Playhouse, Baltimore Center Stage); Three Tales (LA Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall); NETworks presents: Anything Goes (National Tour); Men’s Lives (Bay Street Theatre); Ninth and Joanie (LABYnth Theatre); Amadeus (Old Globe Theatre— Critics Circle Nomination); One Night Only: A Night with Al Pacino (International Tour); On Golden Pond (National Tour); and The Unexpected Man (NY and LA—Drama Desk and Lortel nominations) He has also done live and studio work for the Metropolitan Opera, New York Philharmonic, Steve Reich, and Meredith Monk, as well as museum installations for the Smithsonian Institution and the National Track & Field Hall of Fame with EAR Studio.

DOUGLAS J. CUOMO
Composer/Guitar/Electronics

Douglas J. Cuomo has composed for the concert, operatic, and theatrical stages as well as television and film. His work includes Doubt, premiered by Minnesota Opera; The Fate of His Ashes: A Requiem for Victims of Power, premiered by Seraphic Fire; Black Diamond Express Train to Hell, premiered by the American Composers Orchestra (Carnegie Hall); Arjuna’s Dilemma, 2008 BAM Next Wave, (and in 2016 becoming the first opera ever performed in Nepal); Only Breath, commissioned by Maya Beiser (International Festival of Arts and Ideas); and Kyrie, premiered by Chanticleer (Metropolitan Museum of Art). His work has been performed by artists including Denyce Graves, Christine Brewer, Taka Kigawa, Ashley Bathgate, Young People’s Chorus of New York, and Chris Botti. Work for television and film includes themes for HBO’s Sex and the City, NOW with Bill Moyers, Wide Angle, and music for Homicide: Life On The Street and over 30 film scores. He has lectured extensively across the US on music, collaboration, and creativity. Cuomo co-leads the band Turquoise Lake with Afghan singer Humayun Khan.

ALAN JOHNSON
Music director/Piano

As music director, conductor, pianist, and vocal coach, Alan Johnson has prepared, performed, and premiered works in opera, theater, and dance since 1986. Among his many awards are an Obie for sustained excellence in music direction and a Joseph Jefferson Award for outstanding music direction (The Sound of a Voice and Hotel of Dreams, composed by Philip Glass). His previous BAM appearances include Hydrogen Jukebox (Glass, Winter/Spring 1991) and Arjuna’s Dilemma (Cuomo, Next Wave 2008). His long association with Philip Glass has included music direction for premieres in opera (In the Penal Colony, The Sound of a Voice); dance/theater (Provenance Unknown, The Mysteries and What’s So Funny, Henry IV Parts I and II, Cymbeline, and In the Summer House); and music preparation for premieres of Book of Longing, The Making of the Representative for Planet B, Hydrogen Jukebox, Orphée, and La Belle et La Bête. Johnson is music director at John Duffy Institute for New Opera at the Virginia Arts Festival and received a 2016 Rockefeller residency in Bellagio, Italy. He is currently on a recital tour of opera excerpts by Anthony Davis.

CINDY LIMAUCO
Lighting design

Cindy Limauro designs for opera, theater, dance, and architecture. She is a design partner in C&C Lighting, a member of United Scenic Artists and IALD. Recent productions with Pittsburgh Opera include the world premiere of Ashes & Snow, Marriage of Figaro, Rake’s Progress, and Aida. Other credits include Mister Roberts starring Martin Sheen for Burt Reynolds’ Jupiter Theater and the world premieres of The Three Sisters for Opera Columbus and Dracula, The Musical and Nonsense in Rome. Other design collaborations include Pittsburgh Ballet, Baltimore Opera, Cincinnati Ballet, Quantum Theater, Maryland Ballet, City Theater, and Pittsburgh Public Theater. Her work has appeared in two international exhibits, the 2007 Prague Quadrennial and the 2005 World Stage Design in Toronto. C&C Lighting projects include Gulf Tower Weather Beacon, and other award-winning projects including Hunt Library, Pausch Memorial Bridge, Carnegie Museum of Natural History Hall of Dinosaurs, and Carnegie Museum of Art Chariot of Aurora.

SIR FRANK LONDON
Trumpet

Sir Frank London is a Grammy-award winning trumpeter and composer. A member of the Klezmatics, he has played trumpet with Lester Bowie, David Byrne, Pink Floyd, They Might Be Giants, LL Cool J, Hector Lavoe, Itzhak Perlman, Jane Siberry, Mel Tormé, LaMonte Young, and John Zorn and is featured on over 500 CDs. His compositions include the Yiddish-Cuban opera Hatuey Memory of Fire (with Elise Thorton); Salomé: Woman of Valor (with Adeena Karasick); the folk-opera A Night in the Old Marketplace (with Alex Aron and Glen Berger); 1001 Voices: Symphony for a New America (with Judith Sloan & Warren Lehrer); and Tony Kushner’s A Dybbuk. In 2019 he will premiere Ghetto Songs at Hamburg’s Elbphilharmonie; From Shetet to Stage at Carnegie Hall, and Kurt Weill in New York. London was knighted by Hungary for his work advancing Jewish and multicultural Hungarian music and culture.
BRANDON MCNEEL
Set design

Brandon McNeil’s many opera credits include Il Matrimonio Segreto, Pittsburgh Opera; La Rondine, Manon, Gianni Schicchi, and La Scala di Setta, Curtis Opera; and La Bohème, Opera Columbus. Theater credits include Fall, Huntington Theatre Company; Under the Skin and Ruined, Everyman Theatre; The Miracle Worker, national tour, Montana Repertory Theatre; Sawbones and The Diamond Eater, HERE; Tartuffe, The New School; Sweeney Todd, Carnegie Mellon; Blind Angels, Theatre for the New City; and The Head Hunter, Producers Club. As an associate designer, McNeil has worked with colleagues Derek McLane, David Gropman, Paul Tate DePoo, Narelle Sissors, David Korins, Lee Savage, Dane Laffrey, among others—with productions at many distinguished regional theaters, major opera companies, and Broadway. Brandon McNeil is a Brooklyn-based designer, originally from Powell, WY. He holds a BFA from the University of Montana in the wonderful city of Missoula, and his MFA degree from the Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama.

JONATHAN MOORE
Director

Jonathan Moore is a London-based award-winning British/Irish actor, published playwright, librettist, and director who has worked in Britain and internationally (Royal Shakespeare Company, English National Opera, National Theatre, West End, Shakespeare’s Globe at the invitation of Mark Rylance, Royal Opera House, Scottish Opera, Opera North, BBC TV and Radio, Almeida, Donmar, Arcola, The Gate, La Fenice Venice, Chicago Opera Theater, Long Beach Opera, Savannah Festival, Munich Biennale, and many more.) He directed (and co-adapted the libretto for) the world premiere opera Greek by Mark Anthony Turnage which received an Olivier Award nomination (Munich Biennale, ENO, and at BAM Next Wave 2018) and co-directed the BBC Film version (Royal Philharmonic Society Award and a Midem Award at Cannes). This past summer he directed his own new revival of the work in a 30th anniversary production for the Arcola Grimeborn Festival in London, which received universal acclaim.

He co-starred in his own play Treatment for the BBC TV film version opposite Gabriel Byrne. His play Inigo, about Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuits, has been published in English and Spanish and performed globally. Last year he co-wrote/directed Invention of Morel (music, Stewart Copeland), at Chicago Opera Theater and recently revived this year at Long Beach Opera. He directed the world premiere of Savage Winter at Pittsburgh Opera earlier this year. He has directed premieres of operas by Henze, Schnittke, Turnage, Muller-Wieland, MacMillan, Nyman, and Berkeley, among many others. He has worked with artists as diverse as Ludovico Einaudi, Joe Strummer of The Clash, punk band Killing Joke, classical violinist Daniel Hope, jazz artist Uri Caine, bassist Jah Wobble, reggae star Eddie Grant, and industrial band Test Dept.

Moore’s other awards include two Edinburgh Festival Fringe First Awards; best director, best libretto awards (Munich Biennale); runner up for the Verity Bargate Award; and a nomination for an Olivier Award. He has been a guest speaker on the arts at Oxford University, London School of Economics, and as a panelist at Opera America in New York. He was featured on the cover of Time Out and has had an entry in Who’s Who since 2007. Future projects include text and direction of a world premiere opera by Michael Nyman, a new music theater piece by Ludovico Einaudi, a feature film script commission, and developing a new musical. jonathanmooreuk.com

MELISSA ROBILOTTA
Stage manager

Melissa Robilotta’s work in opera includes productions of Porgy and Bess, The Cunning Little Vixen, The Barber of Seville, and Stomping Grounds at the Glimmerglass Festival; The Passenger at Florida Grand Opera; María de Buenos Aires at Fort Worth Opera; Pagliacci and Gianni Schicchi at Utah Opera; and Anna Christie at Encompass New Opera Theatre. Her work off-Broadway includes Plenty and Barbecue at The Public Theater; Skeleton Crew at Atlantic Theater Company; and A Day by the Sea at Mint Theater Company. Regionally, her work includes the Williamstown Theatre Festival and the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. She holds a BA from Christopher Newport University in Newport News, VA, and an MFA from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

JOSEPH SEAMANS
Video design

Joseph Seams began designing projections in 2012 after a 40-year career making PBS documentaries and independent films including projects for NOVA, Frontline, National Geographic, and Mister Rogers Neighborhood. For Pittsburgh's Quantum Theatre he has created projections for Maria de Buenos Aires, Ainadamar, Mnemonic, All the Names, The Winter’s Tale, Clara, Red Hills, and Chatterton. He also designed projections for Pittsburgh's Microscopic Opera's production of Thérèse Raquin, Night of the Living Dead, and Frida. This is Seams’ first production with American Opera Projects.

ROBERT SIGNOM III
Production manager

Robert Signom III has been working in production for over 15 years. As production manager, he has worked for Tri-Cities Opera, Opera Saragato, Signature Theatre, Gotham Chamber Opera, Aspen Opera Theatre Center, Ensemble Studio Theatre, HERE Arts Center, NJPAC, and many others. As stage manager, he has called over 50 productions in New York, and more regionally. He is an Eagle Scout and a graduate of New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts.

SCOTT H. SCHNEIDER
Production coordinator

Scott H. Schneider has been the production manager for the Bronx Opera Company for 11 seasons. Other credits include The Preacher and The Shrink and An Error of the Moon (The Beckett Theatre); The Magile of Iitzik Manger and Culturefest NYC (National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene); She Loves Me (Caramoor); Marie Galante (Opera Francais de New York); Darkling (American Opera Projects); and Joy (The Actors’ Playhouse). He has worked as stage manager for opera and theater productions off-Broadway, regionally, and on tour. His design credits include lighting for Centenary Stage Company, dell’Arte Opera Ensemble, and Club Med International. Schneider is the former treasurer of Stage Managers’ Association, a graduate of Wesleyan University, and artistic director of Bad Dog Productions.

INTUITIVE PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT
Production manager

Intuitive Production Management is a New York-based theatrical production firm specializing in opera, off-Broadway, dance, and live events. Founded by Robert Signom III and Scott H. Schneider, their mission is to bring superior production values and personalized support to each performance. intuтивеprodmgmt.com
Currently celebrating its 30th anniversary, Brooklyn’s American Opera Projects (AOP) is at the forefront of the contemporary opera movement through its commissioning, developing, and producing of opera and music theater projects, training programs for student and emerging composers and librettists, and community engagement. Savage Winter is AOP’s third co-production with Pittsburgh Opera, where the opera had its world premiere in February, and the fourth AOP production to appear at BAM following Hagoromo starring Wendy Whelan (Next Wave 2015) and As One (part of the Professional Development Program, 2014), which has since become the most produced American opera written in the 21st-century with over 25 new productions since its premiere.

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 80th season in 2018—19. Established by five intrepid women in 1939, Pittsburgh Opera is viewed as one of the most vibrant opera organizations in the US, with a rich artistic tradition, outstanding educational programs, an acclaimed resident artist training program, and a progressive outlook toward the future. Its green initiative culminated in LEED® Silver certification for its Strip District headquarters, and its capacity as a true community partner has increased significantly under general director Christopher Hahn’s leadership.

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*A in Memoriam

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Savage Winter
Libretto

Composer: Douglas J. Cuomo, with text based on Wilhelm Müller’s Winterreise poetry cycle, adapted by the composer.

1. GOOD NIGHT
I arrived a stranger a stranger I depart.
In May wildflowers bloomed and I was blessed.
We spoke of love even marriage.
Now the world is so desolate.
The path concealed beneath the snow.
I must go now in this ink black night, alone.
The sound of the dogs and the tracks of deer
by the moon.
I must go now in this ink black night, alone.

2. THE WEATHERVANE
I hear the wind whistling outside my lover’s house.
My lover’s house, my lover’s house.
Did I mention?
That’s my lover’s house.
That is my lover’s house.
Am I deluded?
It could be.
But I think the wind is mocking me.
I may be deluded, maybe I’m deluded.
Could it be mocking me? The wind.
Well look at that weather vane,
Aha, look at that weather vane.
Aha, how did I miss it?
I should have seen it,
The sign fixed on the house.

3. FROZEN TEARS
Frozen drops fall from my cheeks.
Have I then not noticed
I have been weeping?
Ah tears, my tears,
Are you so cold that you turn to ice?
Like the cold morning dew?
And yet you well up so scaldingly hot
From your source within my frigid heart,
As if you would melt all the ice of winter.

4. NUMBNESS
In vain I seek his footprints in the snow,
Where we walked hand in hand through green meadow.
I will kiss the dirt
And use my burning tears
To pierce ice and snow
Until I see the earth below.
Where shall I find a flower?
Where shall I find green grass?
The flowers are dead the grass is so pale.
Oh shall I take no memory from here?
And when my sorrow dies
Who will speak to me of him?
My heart is dead
His image cold and rigid locked within it.
I can’t warm my heart,
For if it melts again his image too will float away.

5. THE LINDEN TREE
By the gate behind the well stands a linden tree
Sitting in its shade I had many a sweet dream.
In its bark I’ve carved many a word of love,

6. THE DELUGE
[Instrumental]

7. A SHARP STONE
I carve with a sharp stone
The name of my beloved
On this icy crust.
My heart sees itself there.

8. RETROSPECT
The soles of my feet are burning
Though I walk on ice and snow.
I do not want to breathe again
‘Til the town is out of sight.
I stumbled on every stone
In my haste to leave that town.
The crows throw ice upon my head
Down from the roof of every house.
Oh town, I remember how you received me.
The thrush sat with the nightingale outside your window,
Each trying to sing the most beautiful song.
Trees blossom clear water flows from the fountain.
And when I first saw his eyes my fate was sealed.
When I think of that day now,
I wish I could look back once more
And stumble my way back to town
To stand again before his door.

9. SPARK
I see a light.
Half blind I follow it,
Into the rocks I descend.
How shall I find, find a way out of here?
That does not trouble my mind.
I often stray from the path
But what does it matter
since every path leads to one goal?
All of our joys,
All of our sorrows
Are nothing but sparks in the night.
A fracture in this earth pulls me in.
Calmly I wend my way down.
Every river will reach the sea.
Every sorrow will reach its grave.
When I am done I will be free.
When all is dark I will be free.
In the abyss I will be free.
Under the earth I will be free.
All of my grief will reach its grave.

10. REST
As I lie down to rest
I see how tired I am.
But to move is to forget.
It was too cold to rest.
The wind was harsh but blew me on.
When at last I found shelter
My limbs could not find rest,
So hot their wounds did burn.
You too my heart,
So wild in storm and fight.
Now in this calm you feel the serpent’s bite.

11. DREAM OF SPRING
I had a dream last night.
I saw flowers clear as day, bright flowers.
Also meadows,
Green meadows, shining green in the warm sun.
And bird calls, happy bird calls.
But then the cock crowed and my eyes awoke.
It was cold.
Dark.
I heard ravens on the rooftop.
And look,
on the window pane, who painted these leaves?
Are you laughing at the dreamer who saw flowers in the winter?
I dreamed of love.
Oh joy and rapture!
I dreamed of love and rapture, But then the cock crowed and my eyes awoke.
Now I sit here alone and reflect upon my dream.
I close my eyes once more.
My heart still beats so warmly.
I dreamed of love and rapture.
Oh joy and rapture!
I dreamed of love.

12. LONELINESS
Like a dark cloud drifts through clear skies.
When a faint breeze blows in the fir tops.
Thus I go with weary steps through bright joyful life, alone.
Alone, greeted by no one.
Alas that the air is so calm.
Alas that the world is so bright.
When storms were raging I was not wretched.

13. THE SENTINEL
Ah my heart, my marrow!
Though I am done, you my heart still wait. Keeping vigil, bearing only silence.
Though I am done, you are my marrow, A sentinel unmoved by facts, moved only by fate.
This movement is a murmur, Then a single beat, then another then another. Then a trickle then a stream, a surge, a torrent,
An eruption that spills over with hope. Hoping to hear something, anything, anything.
Though I am done, you my heart continue to wait. Keeping vigil, hearing only silence.
So long with no word, With nothing, silence, nothing.
Though I move forward

With strength and without suffering, You my heart are a sentinel who hopes to be invaded,
looking back full of suffering and without strength.
You wait for even just a visit in a dream. “Please visit in a dream,” you say “Please visit in a dream.”
Though I am done, my heart is my marrow, A sentinel unmoved by facts, moved only by fate.
It waits for you and says “please, please, please, please”.

14. THE GREY HEAD
The frost has sprinkled a white sheen upon my head.
I thought, “already I’m an old man” and I rejoiced!
But soon it melted away.
Now I shudder at my youth.
How far it is until the grave.
Between sunset and the light of morning
Many a head has turned grey.
But who will believe it?
Mines has not done so throughout this whole journey.

15. THE CROW
[Instrumental]

16. LAST HOPE
A leaf.
My leaf, my hope.
It trembles.
I tremble, it falls.
I sink to my knees,
Weeping on the grave of my hope.

17. IN THE VILLAGE
Dogs bark! Chains rattle!
People sleep in their beds,
Dreaming of things they do not possess!
By tomorrow morning all will have vanished.
Let your dogs bark and drive me away,
Allow me no rest.
I am finished with all dreams.
Why should I linger among slumberers?

18. STORMY MORNING
The storm has ripped the sky.
Tattered clouds fly about,
Red flames between them.
My heart sees itself painted in the sky.
It is nothing but winter cold and savage.

19. DELUSION
Ah delusion.
Delusion is a godsend.

20. SIGNPOST
But then why do I avoid the roads the other travelers take
And furtively seek hidden paths?
I have done no wrong that I should shun mankind.
What foolish yearning drives me into the wilderness?
Signposts stand on the road pointing to the town,
And I wander on restlessly,
But seeking rest.
I see my own signpost,
Immovable before my eyes.
I must travel a road from which no one has ever returned.

21. THE INN
There, beyond the village stands a hurdy-gurdy player. With fingers numb he plays as best he can. Barefoot on the ice, He totters to and fro.
No one looks at him, No one wants to listen,
And his little plate remains forever empty.
He lets everything go on as it will.
And dogs growl around the old man.
No one looks at him, And dogs growl around the old man.

22. COURAGE
When the snow flies in my face I shake it off,
When my heart speaks in my breast I don’t listen.
I sing loudly and merrily.
I sing to drown it out.
I do not hear what it tells me, I have no ears.

23. THREE SUNS
I saw three suns.
I looked ‘till my eyes hurt.
Long and hard
To be sure.
But there they stayed.
I prayed they would never leave me, But now I know.
These suns were not meant for me. These are not my suns.
Look on other people’s faces. Not long ago, like them I had three suns.
Now the two best have set, If only the third one would follow.
I would feel better in the dark.

24. THE HURDY-GURDY PLAYER
There, beyond the village stands a hurdy-gurdy player. With fingers numb he plays as best he can. Barefoot on the ice, He totters to and fro. And his little plate remains forever empty. No one wants to listen, No one looks at him, And dogs growl around the old man. He lets everything go on as it will. He plays and his hurdy-gurdy never stops. Strange old man, shall I go with you? Will you turn your hurdy-gurdy to my songs?
“...a razor-sharp new production... it has lost none of its scabrous power.”

—THE TIMES (UK)

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