



THE DALLAS OPERA
MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL:
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THE DALLAS OPERA
IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE
THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON
IN THE WINSPEAR OPERA HOUSE
“High Notes & High Seas!”
Opening Night: Friday, October 23, 2009

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**Season Includes a Dallas Opera World Premiere!**

DALLAS, JANUARY 15, 2008 — **The Dallas Opera** is thrilled to announce our glittering **2009-2010 Inaugural Season** in the **Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House** at the **Dallas Center for the Performing Arts**.

The **53<sup>rd</sup> International Season, “High Notes and High Seas!”** will commence on the evening of **Friday, October 23, 2009**, when the City of Dallas will become home to the world’s largest contiguous Arts District.

The Dallas Opera’s first season in the Winspear Opera House will consist of five outstanding productions, including a **Dallas Opera world premiere of a new opera, *Moby-Dick*, by an internationally renowned artistic team: composer Jake Heggie, librettist Gene Scheer, and Patrick Summers, who will conduct.**

*Moby-Dick* will star the acclaimed tenor, **Ben Heppner**, in the pivotal role of “Captain Ahab.”

The inaugural season includes Giuseppe Verdi's *Otello*, the work which will open the new opera house in October of 2009, conducted by **Dallas Opera Music Director Graeme Jenkins**, followed by W.A. Mozart's *Così fan tutte* in February of 2010; Gaetano Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* in February/March; **Jake Heggie's Moby-Dick** opening in late April of 2010 and Giacomo Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* to close the 2009-2010 Season in May.

Mr. Heggie, best known for his masterpiece, *Dead Man Walking* (2000, with Terrence McNally), one of the most frequently performed contemporary operas in the world, will create a brand-new work based on a landmark of 19<sup>th</sup> century American fiction: **Herman Melville's Moby-Dick** (1851).

Jake Heggie also composed *The End of the Affair* (libretto by Heather McDonald, Leonard Foglia and Mr. Heggie), the lyric drama *To Hell and Back* (libretto by Gene Scheer), and the musical scene *At the Statue of Venus* (libretto by Terrence McNally). The recipient of a 2005/06 Guggenheim Fellowship, Mr. Heggie has composed more than 200 songs, in addition to concerti, orchestral works and chamber music.

The librettist, Gene Scheer, collaborated with composer Tobias Picker on The Dallas Opera's 2001 world premiere production of *Thérèse Raquin* (available on Chandos and cited by *Opera News* as one of the ten best classical recordings of 2002) and, again, in 2005 on *An American Tragedy* for the Metropolitan Opera.

Most recently, his "**American Anthem**," sung by Norah Jones, was prominently featured in the **Ken Burns PBS documentary "The War"** after being first performed by mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves before President and Mrs. Clinton at the Smithsonian Institute.

"Among the most rewarding experiences of my professional life," says composer **Jake Heggie**, "have been my collaborations with the enormously gifted Gene Scheer.

"He has a passion for the stage and especially for opera that includes a broad vision of character, plot and action."

Mr. Heggie notes: "He's also an incredibly gifted composer and lyricist, with a love for singers that is equal to my own. We are a perfect match and I'm overjoyed that we'll tackle this enormous and exciting project together. We are already way ahead of the game with Ben Heppner as Ahab, Patrick Summers conducting, and the support of this impressive consortium, led by Dallas Opera.

"It's a great honor, and, a dream come true."

Mr. Heggie and Mr. Scheer recently collaborated on a poignant yet powerful song cycle with actors entitled “For a Look or a Touch,” a work based on the diary of a 19-year-old victim of the Holocaust. The result was immediately acclaimed “a masterpiece” (*The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, May 2007).

The pair have also worked on two other song cycles: “Statuesque” for mezzo and mixed chamber ensemble and “Rise and Fall,” a work for soprano and piano, as well as the lyric opera *To Hell and Back* and the opera *Three Decembers (Last Acts)*, a new chamber work based on a play by Terrence McNally scheduled to premiere on February 29, 2008 at Houston Grand Opera.

“Working with Jake Heggie has been a profound thrill for me,” says librettist **Gene Scheer**. “He is a brilliant composer who is deeply gifted at writing for the theater.

“I have come away from each of our projects with a great sense of satisfaction and gratitude, and I am very excited to collaborate with Jake to bring Melville’s masterpiece, *Moby-Dick*, to the operatic stage.”

This collaboration will mark the fourth time that Maestro Patrick Summers, who also serves as Music Director of Houston Grand Opera, has conducted Jake Heggie world premieres. Previously, he wielded the baton for *Dead Man Walking* and *The End of the Affair*. He is also scheduled to lead the world premiere of *Three Decembers (Last Acts)* come February.

*Moby-Dick* is a co-commission and co-production with **San Francisco Opera**, **San Diego Opera** and **Calgary Opera**. The eagerly anticipated new work will have its world premiere in Dallas in April/May of 2010 with subsequent performances by our co-producing companies (dates to be announced).

“Melville’s masterpiece is a microcosm of the world in which we live,” explains **Director of Artistic Administration Jonathan Pell**. “On our ever-shrinking globe, the tensions and concerns raised by the clash of cultures and the devastating results of blind obsession – as demonstrated in the classic novel – seem especially timely.

“This new opera will address important issues while keeping us on the edge of our seats with what promises to be a thrilling new theatrical work!”

*Moby-Dick* will mark the first collaboration between composer Jake Heggie and The Dallas Opera.

“Jake and I have known each other for several years and have discussed the possibility of a commission for much of that time,” says Mr. Pell. “The opening season of the new Winspear Opera House just seemed to be the perfect opportunity.”

**Ian D. Campbell, General Director and Artistic Director of San Diego Opera** noted “San Diego Opera has a strong record of staging contemporary works and was a proud collaborator with The Dallas Opera on the creation of Tobias Picker’s *Thérèse Raquin* in 2001 (featuring the work of librettist Gene Scheer).

“It is, therefore, a delight to join once more with Gene, The Dallas Opera, San Francisco Opera and Calgary Opera in the creation of Jake Heggie’s *Moby-Dick*. I want to thank and congratulate The Dallas Opera for being the lead partner in this venture.

“Jake is a brilliant composer at the forefront of opera today,” Mr. Campbell added. “We have been trying to fit a Jake Heggie composition into the San Diego Opera Schedule for a few years, and *Moby-Dick* is the perfect work.

“Whale watching is a popular pastime on the waters off San Diego. I have no doubt that the Heggie/Scheer *Moby-Dick* will give landlubbers just as much excitement.”

**David Gockley, General Director of San Francisco Opera** expressed his enthusiasm for the project, as well: “I am thrilled that San Francisco Opera can be a part of Jake’s new opera. The work Jake and I have done together has been some of the most meaningful of my professional life – his ability to write for the human voice is exemplary and his music has an infectious lyricism with huge international appeal.

“This will be a major new work by a major American talent, and we are proud to be working with Dallas on this commission.”

“Calgary Opera is thrilled to be participating in this co-commission and co-production with The Dallas Opera, San Diego Opera and San Francisco Opera,” says **W.R. (Bob) McPhee, General Director and CEO of Calgary Opera**. “We have become known as a leader in the development of new works in Canada, having commissioned five new operas, and we look forward to our first collaboration with US partners.

“Calgary audiences responded with great appreciation and enthusiasm when we presented the Canadian premiere of *Dead Man Walking* in 2006 and we know our

community will be excited about Jake Heggie's *Moby-Dick*. We look forward to introducing Calgary and Canada to this operatic version of a great classic as told through Heggie's music and the words of the accomplished librettist Gene Scheer.

"The other wonderful happenstance in this collaboration is that *Moby-Dick* will be part of the opening season at the new Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House in Dallas, as I was a central player in the building of the Francis Winspear Centre for Music in Edmonton, which opened in 1997. I have a great deal of affection and respect for the Winspear family for their most generous support of the arts."

The Dallas Opera has presented five American premieres, as well as two world premiere works, and continues to create fresh, new productions of established masterpieces of the genre.

Building on the excitement of the company's inaugural season in the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House and the opening of the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts, The Dallas Opera decided to launch this new commission, based on Herman Melville's classic tale of one man's obsessive search for revenge.

Given the creative team, we anticipate a work of great musical and emotional complexity.

***Moby-Dick* will be performed beginning April 30, 2010.**

**Single tickets for the world premiere of *Moby-Dick* will go on sale in 2009.**

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The inaugural production in the Winspear Opera House, Giuseppe Verdi's 1887 masterpiece, *Otello* stars tenor **Clifton Forbis**, Georgian baritone **Lado Ataneli** and, in her American debut, acclaimed German soprano **Annette Dasch**, in a new production directed by **Tim Albery**. *Otello* will be conducted by **Dallas Opera Music Director Graeme Jenkins** with chorus preparation by **Chorus Master Alexander Rom**.

***Otello* will open October 23, 2009 in the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House at the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts. Additional dates will be announced in January of 2009.**

The second production of the 2009-2010 Season is a brilliant comedy of the sexes, *Così fan tutte* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Conducted by Dallas Opera Music Director Graeme Jenkins, the opera will star **Sir Thomas Allen** as "Don Alfonso," **Nuccia Focile** as "Despina" and a quartet of exciting Mozartians as the young lovers.

***Così fan tutte* is scheduled for performances in 2010 in the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House at the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts. Dates will be announced in January of 2009.**

Our third production, Gaetano Donizetti's sly and sophisticated *Don Pasquale*. This 1843 masterpiece boasts the American debut of Slovakian soprano **Adriana Kucerova** as "Norina," Dallas favorites **Donato DiStefano** as "Don Pasquale" and **Nathan Gunn** as "Dr. Malatesta."

***Don Pasquale* opens in 2010 in the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House at the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts. Additional performance dates will be announced in January of 2009.**

In the wake of the world premiere production of *Moby-Dick*, The Dallas Opera will present a four-hanky season finale: Giacomo Puccini's 1901 tale of devotion and betrayal and one of the most popular operas in the repertoire: *Madame Butterfly*.

Romanian soprano **Adina Nitescu** will return as Puccini's fragile Geisha and dashing American tenor **Brandon Jovanovich**, who recently moved Dallas audiences to tears as "Macduff" in Verdi's *Macbeth*, returns as the caddish Lieutenant Pinkerton.

***Madame Butterfly* will be performed in the Spring of 2010 in the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House at the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts. Performance dates will be announced in January of 2009.**

For tickets and information, call The Dallas Opera Ticket Services Office at 214-443-1000 or visit us online at www.dallasopera.org.

Easy-to-read English translations are projected above the stage during every Dallas Opera performance and special headsets are available for the hearing impaired.

TICKET INFORMATION FOR THE 2008-2009 SEASON:

Season subscribers may renew their seats today and a limited number of new subscriber seats are being offered to the general public. A subscription seat for all five productions ranges **from \$75 to \$1,020**. The first 500 subscribers for each performance also receive a free purple parking pass.

Single tickets go on sale in September, **priced from \$15 to \$199, if purchased in advance.** Contact Dallas Opera Ticket Services at **214-443-1000** or visit us online at www.dallasopera.org.

THE DALLAS OPERA 2008-2009 SEASON INFORMATION

The Dallas Opera celebrates its Fifty-Second International Season with 20 performances of five productions in the Music Hall at Fair Park. Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m. and matinees begin at 2 p.m.

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO by W.A. Mozart

November 14, 16(m), 19 & 22, 2008

Production from New York City Opera

An opera in four acts first performed at Vienna's Berg-theater, May 1, 1786.

Text by Lorenzo Da Ponte after the stage play by Pierre-Augustin Beaumarchais.

Time: A single day

Place: The estate of Count Almaviva

Conductor: Graeme Jenkins

Stage Director: John Copley

Production Design: Carl Toms*

Lighting Design: Jeff Harris

Chorus Master: Alexander Rom

Starring: Daniel Okulitch (*Figaro*), Lyubov Petrova (*Susanna*), Michael Todd Simpson (*Count Almaviva*), Susanna Phillips* (*Countess Almaviva*), Jennifer Holloway* (*Cherubino*), Stephen Morscheck (*Doctor Bartolo*), , Suzanna Guzman (*Marcellina*)

DIE FLEDERMAUS by Johann Strauss II

December 5, 7(m), 10 & 13, 2008

Production from Seattle Opera

Comic opera in three acts first performed at Vienna's Theater an der Wein, April 5, 1874.

Text by Carl Haffner and Richard Genée after the play by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy.

Time: Late 19th Century

Place: A spa town near Vienna

Conductor: Graeme Jenkins

Producer: Chris Alexander

Stage Director: Tomar Zvulun*

Production Design: Zack Brown*

Lighting Design: Marie Barrett

Chorus Master: Alexander Rom

Starring: Wolfgang Holzmaier (*Gabriel von Eisenstein*), Ana Maria Martinez (*Rosalinda*), , Bruce Ford (*Alfred*), Christopher Feigum (*Dr. Falke*), Marianna Kulikova (*Prince Orlofsky*), Ava Pine (*Adele*).

ROBERTO DEVEREUX by Gaetano Donizetti

January 23, 25(m), 28 & 31, 2009

A new Dallas Opera production by the team that brought you MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS!

An opera in three acts first performed at Teatro San Carlo in Naples, October 28, 1837.

Text by Salvatore Cammarano after François Ancelot's tragedy, *Elisabeth d'Angleterre*.

Time: the Elizabethan Age

Place: London

Conductor: Graeme Jenkins

Stage Director: Stephen Lawless

Scenic Design: Benoit Dugardyn

Costume Design: Ingeborg Bernerth

Lighting Design: Mark McCullough

Chorus Master: Alexander Rom

Starring: Stephen Costello (*Roberto Devereux*), Hasmik Papian* (*Elizabeth the Queen*), David Kempster (*Duke of Nottingham*), Elizabeth Batton (*Sara, Duchess of Nottingham*)

LA BOHÈME by Giacomo Puccini

February 13, 15(m), 18 & 21, 2009

Our most popular opera in one of our most popular productions!

An opera in four acts first performed in Turin's Teatro Regio, February 1, 1896.

Time: 1830s

Place: Paris, France

Conductor: Pietro Rizzo**

Stage Director: Mark Streshinsky

Scenic Design: Jean Pierre Ponnelle

Costume Design: Peter J. Hall

Lighting Designer: Marie Barrett

Chorus Master: Alexander Rom

Starring: James Valenti* (*Rodolfo*), Maria Kanyova (*Mimi*), Dwayne Croft (*Marcello*), Valentina Farcas* (*Musetta*), Robert Gleadow* (*Colline*), Weston Hurt* (*Schaunard*)

THE ITALIAN GIRL IN ALGIERS by Gioachino Rossini

March 6, 8(m), 11 & 14, 2009

The Grand Finale! A production from Santa Fe Opera!

A comic opera in two acts first performed in Venice's Teatro San Benedetto, May 22, 1813.

Text substantially derived from Angelo Anelli's libretto for Luigi Mosca's 1808 *L'italiana in Algeri*.

Time: the time of fantasy

Place: Algeria

Conductor: Graeme Jenkins

Stage Director: Chris Alexander

Scenic Design: Robert Innes Hopkins*

Costume Design: David C. Woolard*

Lighting Design: Duane Schuler

Chorus Master: Alexander Rom

Starring: Manuela Custer* (*Isabella*), William Burden* (*Lindoro*), Paolo Pecchioli* (*Mustafa*), Patrick Carfizzi* (*Taddeo*).

* Dallas Opera Debut

** American Opera Debut

Ticket Information for the 2007-2008 Dallas Opera Season

Presented by the Elsa von Seggern Foundation

Special Gratitude extended to Margot Winspear and the late Bill Winspear

The Dallas Opera is supported, in part, by funds from: **City of Dallas, Office of Cultural Affairs; TACA;** and the **Texas Commission on the Arts** and **American Express**. The Dallas Opera would like to thank its 2007-2008 production underwriters, including: **Kimberly-Clark, Nokia** and **Margot and Bill Winspear**. **American Airlines** is the official airline of The Dallas Opera. Advertising support from *The Dallas Morning News*.

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BIOGRAPHIES ATTACHED
PHOTOS AVAILABLE FOR MEDIA USE UPON REQUEST
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Key Biographies:

Jake Heggie, Composer and Pianist

Jake Heggie is the composer of the acclaimed operas *Dead Man Walking* (libretto by Terrence McNally), *The End of the Affair* (libretto by Heather McDonald, Leonard Foglia and Jake Heggie), the lyric drama *To Hell and Back* (libretto by Gene Scheer), and the musical scene *At the Statue of Venus* (libretto by Terrence McNally). The recipient of a 2005/06 Guggenheim Fellowship, he has also composed more than 200 songs, as well as concerti, orchestral works and chamber music. His songs, song cycles and operas are championed internationally by singers including Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham, Audra McDonald, Patti LuPone, Isabel Bayrakdarian, Kristin Clayton, Kristine Jepson, Joyce DiDonato, Joyce Castle, Zheng Cao, and Bryn Terfel. He has collaborated extensively with conductors Patrick Summers, Nicholas McGegan, John DeMain, Michael Morgan, and director Leonard Foglia.

Upcoming commissions include a music theater work for the Metropolitan Opera in association with Lincoln Center Theater; a three-person music theater work featuring Frederica von Stade for Houston Grand Opera and San Francisco Opera (libretto by Gene Scheer); a major new opera for The Dallas Opera, San Francisco Opera, San Diego Opera and Calgary Opera; a new song for mezzo Joyce DiDonato to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Merola Opera Program; duets for women for the Steans Institute at the Ravinia Festival; and *For a Look or a Touch*, a song cycle for baritone, narrator and chamber ensemble about the persecution of homosexuals during the holocaust, commissioned by Seattle's Music of Remembrance (texts by Gene Scheer, based on interviews in the documentary film *Paragraph 175*).

In 2007, *Dead Man Walking* is scheduled to receive more than 50 performances. Heggie's operas have been performed at the San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, State Opera of South Australia, Cincinnati Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, Opera Pacific, Calgary Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Madison Opera, Baltimore Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre. *Dead Man Walking* recently received its European Premiere in Dresden at the SemperOper in a new production by Nikolaus Lehnhoff. Future productions of the operas are scheduled for Malmö Opera (Scandinavian Premiere), Vienna's Klangbogen Festival, Sydney, and Kansas City Lyric Opera. An award-winning PBS documentary titled *And Then One Night: The Making of Dead Man Walking*, has been telecast internationally, and both operas have received live broadcasts on National Public Radio.

He has been resident composer for the San Francisco Opera, EOS Orchestra, Vail Valley Music Festival, and the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival, and has given lectures and master classes for singers and composers at universities and conservatories that include the Cincinnati Conservatory, NYU, Bucknell University, DePauw University, and UCLA, to name a few. He has also been a guest artist at SongFest in Malibu, the Steans Institute at the Ravinia Festival, and the Grandin Festival in Cincinnati.

As a pianist, Heggie has often accompanied Frederica von Stade in recital, and has also performed with sopranos Anna Netrebko, Dawn Upshaw, Kristin Clayton, Nicolle Foland, and Leah Partridge; mezzos Susan Graham, Joyce DiDonato, Lorraine Hunt-Lieberson, Jennifer Larmore, Margaret Lattimore, Mary Phillips and Zheng Cao; tenor Paul Groves; countertenor Brian Asawa; and baritones Thomas Hampson

and Bo Skovhus. Recordings of his work include *The Deepest Desire* (Eloquentia), *Dead Man Walking* (Erato), *The Faces of Love* (RCA), *My Native Land* (Teldec), and *Holy the Firm: Essay for Cello and Orchestra* (Oakland East Bay Symphony with cellist Emil Miland). Heggie also contributed a song to the musical *Songs From and Unmade Bed*, lyrics by Mark Campbell (Ghostlight).

Among the composer's numerous commissions are works for the San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera (co-commissioned by Madison Opera and Opera Pacific), Metropolitan Opera with Lincoln Center Theater, Opera Colorado, Ravinia Festival, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Oakland East Bay Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Louisville Orchestra, New Century Chamber Orchestra, Chanticleer, Harmida Trio, Camerata Pacifica, San Francisco Girls Chorus, Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia, University of Kansas at Lawrence, University of Connecticut at Storrs, Music of Remembrance, Pacifica Chorale, Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival, Music Accord and individual commissions from singers Frederica von Stade, Jennifer Larmore, Brian Asawa, Bryn Terfel and Robert Orth.

Jake Heggie was born in West Palm Beach, FL, in 1961. From the age of two he was raised in Ohio and California. His first composition teacher was the late Ernst Bacon, with whom he studied in Orinda, CA from 1977 to 1979. After two years of study in Paris, he went to UCLA where he studied piano with the late Johana Harris and composition with Roger Bourland, Paul DesMarais and the late David Raksin. He has made his home in San Francisco since 1993.

Gene Scheer, Librettist/Songwriter/Lyricist

The work of Gene Scheer is noted for its scope and versatility. His music and lyrics have gained enthusiastic admirers among a broad audience. In 2005 Mr. Scheer worked as librettist with Tobias Picker on "An American Tragedy" which was premiered at the Metropolitan Opera. This opera was Mr. Scheer's second collaboration with Mr. Picker. Their first opera "Therese Raquin", premiered at the Dallas Opera in November 2001. "Therese Raquin" was subsequently performed in Montreal (in a French translation) and in 2003 in San Diego. The recording, available on Chandos, was cited by Opera News as one of the ten best recordings of 2002. In March 2006 a new production of "Therese Raquin" opened at Covent Garden in the Linbury Theater.

Since introducing his compositions just a few years ago, Mr. Scheer's songs have been performed by artists including Renée Fleming (with Christoph Eschenbach), Denyce Graves, Sylvia McNair, Stephanie Blythe, Jennifer Larmore and Nathan Gunn. The distinguished documentary film maker, Ken Burns, chose to feature Norah Jones singing Mr. Scheer's song "American Anthem" in his recent World War II documentary entitled "The War," which aired on PBS. "American Anthem", first performed by Ms. Graves for President and Mrs. Clinton at the Smithsonian Institute, has been recorded both by Denyce Graves (on RCA) and by Nathan Gunn (on EMI.)

Ms. Graves included Scheer's "Christmas Once More" on her nationally televised PBS Christmas Special and has performed a number of songs by Mr. Scheer with orchestras including the National Symphony in

Washington DC (with Leonard Slatkin) and the National Arts Symphony of Canada. In 2003, Mr. Scheer was commissioned to write a choral version of his song "Christmas Once More" which was performed in Orchestra Hall with the Chicago Symphony and Chicago Symphony Chorus. This work was later performed by the Colorado Symphony with the Colorado Symphony Chorus. Duain Wolfe conducted.

Renée Fleming performed works by Mr. Scheer on her most recent concert tour-- including a performance at Carnegie Hall. She opened her "Live from Lincoln Center" program with the Orpheus chamber orchestra with a new version of Mr. Scheer's song "Another New Voice Teacher" written by Mr. Scheer and Andrew Thomas especially for the event. In 2004, Ms. Fleming, who was asked to give the commencement speech at Julliard, commissioned a song from Mr. Scheer with which she concluded her remarks to the graduating class.

Nathan Gunn recently performed Mr. Scheer's song cycle "Voices from World War II" with the Isis Chamber orchestra. Mr. Gunn debuted the work (piano accompaniment) at London's Wigmore Hall. He has subsequently performed the work in New York, Berkeley California, Washington DC and most recently at the Monnaie in Brussels.

In 2006, Mr. Scheer collaborated with Wynton Marsalis on a new piece entitled "It never goes away" which was featured in Mr. Marsalis' work entitled. "Congo Square." This new work was premiered in New Orleans in April 2006 and then after a tour through the United States was performed at Lincoln Center on May 6, 2006. In November 2006 the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra with Nic McGegan conducting performed the premiere of a new Lyric Drama by Jake Heggie and Mr. Scheer entitled *To Hell and Back*. This new piece featured Patti LuPone and Isabelle Bayrakdarian.

Most recently Mr. Scheer has been working on a number of new commissions. He wrote the libretto for a children's opera based on an original story entitled "The Star Gatherer" with composer Stephen Paulus. This piece was premiered in Minnesota in late Oct 2006. With Jake Heggie, Mr. Scheer has written two song cycles, "Statuesque" and "Rise and Fall." Currently they are working on a new piece for Frederica Von Stade and a song cycle based on the experiences chronicled in the film "Paragraph 175."