

Opera Staff

Staff Accompanist	Bobbie Carlson
Reserve Accompanists	Jeremiah Padillah, Abigail Wiegand
Assistant to the Director and Movement Coach	Nora Winsler
Chorus Master	Jeffrey Hunt
Guest Acting Coach	Ben Lambert
Video Production Coordinator	Nora Winsler
Cinematographer	Quinton Carr-Goodwin
The Girl	Adara Hotaling
The Boy	Hunter Clarke
Anthony De Rocher	Matt Merline
Joseph De Rocher	Rob Condas

Production Staff

Lighting Designer	R. Lee Kennedy
Stage Manager	J.J. Jones
Audio Design	Tom Carr
Wardrobe Crew	Rachel Herrick
Technical Crew	Ashton Allin, Cassidy Anderson, Cody Bowald, Sydney Bronaugh, Ben Cinaed, Julius Davis, Megan George, Jesse Herson, Soolim Jeong, Brian Kinzie, Leo Kline, Oliver Kriska
Forbes Center Technical and Operations Coordinator	Bradley Monahan

Special Thanks

Cat's Cradle; Dan Harrison; JMU School of Theatre and Dance;
Jan Sievers Mahon, Director of the Arboretum; Nielsen Construction;
Cooper Shaw, Basketball Specialist

Opera Orchestra

Flute

1. Lydia Carroll
2. Davina Miaw

Oboe

1. Laura Ruple
- 2/EH. Anthony Fortuna

Clarinet

1. Kaci Seager
- 2/BC. Alison O' Bryan

Bassoon

1. Josh Ballinger
- 2/Contra. Summer Davis

Horn

1. Josh Almond
2. Kaitlyn Brown

Trumpet

1. John Nye
2. Allie Woodbury

Trombones

1. Nathan Michaels
2. Isaiah Core

Percussion

1. Caleb Pickering - Principal
2. Josh Cummings
3. KaiPo Lan

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

School of Music
presents

Dead Man Walking

By Jake Heggie

Based on the book by Sister Helen Prejean, C.S.J.

featuring the JMU Opera Theater

Don Rierson, Director

Jeremy Thompson, Conductor

Cynthia Wohlschlager, Associate Music Director

Friday-Sunday,
November 9-11
Mainstage Theatre



There will be a 10-minute intermission.

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is sponsored by Kathy Moran Wealth Group.

Director's Note

One of the joys of working on this production was that Jake Heggie and Sister Helen Prejean are very much alive and were enthusiastic about speaking to the JMU Opera Theater about their work. Heggie told me that when Terrance McNally suggested *Dead Man Walking (DMW)* as the subject for a commission for San Francisco Opera, he immediately heard metal gates crashing and loud prison language. Since the commission was for a New Year's opening, everyone assumed that the subject matter would be light and frivolous, but McNally would have none of that. He believed that in contemporary times, the subject needed to be more serious and reflect the meanness and raw passion associated with prison life. Lotfi Mansouri, general director of San Francisco Opera, contacted Sister Helen Prejean, who had served as spiritual advisor to several inmates on death row, and after a year of preparation, the opera slowly took shape.

Heggie stated very clearly that the opera is not about a rape and murder; it is about how Sister Helen guides Joseph De Rocher on his journey to redemption. The episodes in the opera depict how the lives of the characters associated with the execution are damaged by the harsh realities of institutionalized murder: the impact on the felon's and victims' families, the impact on the prison staff and other inmates, and finally, the abject horror experienced by the convict himself during the death ritual.

When asked about his process, Heggie stated that he thought that his strength as a composer lay in his ability to create "the world of the piece" through its music—in this case, the hymn tune, blues and popular themes, the steely percussion of prison life, the lamentation of the victims' families, all painted together with a brilliant post-modern sound palate.

After working with the score for four months, it was clear to me why Heggie has been called "the Verdi of the 21st century." He has done what lyric theatre creators have done since the Greeks: expressed the highs and lows of the emotional typography of his era—lyric and mean, religious and profane, intensely personal and frigidly mechanical. As Heggie and Sister Helen stated, *DMW* not only expresses the process of redemption for Joseph De Rocher, but also for us as we experience it as an audience. In doing this so masterfully, *DMW* will surely redeem opera for us as a viable art form in the 21st century.

- Don Rierson

Patrons are reminded to turn off all pagers, cell phones, personal computers, and any other electronic devices.

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Setting

Hope House, New Orleans; later, Angola State Penitentiary - Angola, Louisiana
Summer, 1985

The Cast

Sister Helen Prejean	Susan Gouthro (11/9 and 11/11); Darby Clinard (11/10)
Joseph De Rocher	Erik Grendahl (11/9 and 11/11); Joel Clemens (11/10)
Ms. Patrick De Rocher	Cynthia Wohlschlager (11/9 and 11/11); Cecelia McKinley (11/10)
Sister Rose	Nicole Jenkins (11/9 and 11/11); Hayley Zavada (11/10)
George Benton (Warden)	Michael Richardson
Father Grenville	Aiden Everett
Kitty Hart	Ji Hee Kim (11/9 and 11/11); Mary Galvin (11/10)
Owen Hart	Howard Kim (11/9 and 11/11); Ricky Goodwyn (11/10)
Jade Boucher	Leah Shewmaker (11/9 and 11/11); Leah Finn (11/10)
Howard Boucher	Leif Jomuad (11/9 and 11/11); Ammad Akbari (11/10)
Motorcyle Cop, Older Brother	Brayden Paitsel
Younger brother	Daniel Bunting
Sister Catherine	Monica Slater (11/9 and 11/11); Brenna McFarland (11/10)
Sister Lillian	Megan O'Brian (11/9 and 11/11); Camila Maric (11/10)
Guard 1	Kirk Fenerty
Guard 2	Benjamin Gofton
First Mother	Anastasia Ross
Ms. Charlton	Natalie Harris
Solo Inmates	Ammad Akbari, Daniel Bunting, Marjin De Waal, Ricky Goodwyn, Leif Jomuad, Howard Kim, John Lopez-Najarro, Brayden Paitsel, Raiquan Thomas
A Paralegel	Lauryn Boyle
Sisters and Mothers	Catie Brooks, Camryn Finn, Maggie Hallauer, Lindsay Marcus, Catie Moore, Aya Nassif, Sarah Petko, Lizzy Thomas
Children	Aidan Cahill, Colin Cahill, Holly Ramia, Emily Rosenberger, Nora Winsler, Shiva Zarean
Basketball Players	Benjamin Gofton, Ty Greenough, John Messimer, Raiquan Thomas