

Detroit Opera to conclude 2023–24 season with Janáček’s comedy *The Cunning Little Vixen*; Yuval Sharon’s production features projections that transform singers into forest creatures

Cast to include Mané Galoyan in the title role,
with Samantha Hankey, Michael Sumuel, David Cangelosi,
Alex Rosen, Andrew Potter, Victoria Lawal and Rehanna Thelwell,
conducted by Roberto Kalb, May 11, 17, and 19, 2024



Yuval Sharon’s production of Leoš Janáček’s *The Cunning Little Vixen*, performed by the Cleveland Orchestra in 2014 and 2017, comes to Detroit Opera in May. Photo by Roger Mastroianni

DETROIT, April 11, 2024—Human and animal worlds collide when Detroit Opera presents Leoš Janáček’s 1924 comedy *The Cunning Little Vixen*, an enchanting modern fable about a clever fox who tries to outwit her captors. Music Director **Roberto Kalb** conducts, and Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director **Yuval Sharon** directs his production that was first performed by the Cleveland Orchestra. The cinematic production features playful projections that transform singers into forest creatures, with hand-crafted animations that evoke the fable’s comic-strip origins. Singers’ heads pop out of cutouts in the sets. “We are inviting the audience into a deeper reflection of how we interact

with nature, think about nature, these forces—animals, trees, the seasons, our relation to the ever-shifting natural world,” says Sharon. *The Cunning Little Vixen* will feature animation creation by **Walter Robot Studios** (Bill Barminsky & Christopher Louie), projection and lighting design by **Jason H. Thompson**, costume design by **Ann Closs-Farley**, and mask design by **Cristina Waltz**.

These will be the first Detroit Opera performances of one of Leoš Janáček’s great works; the score features some of the most beautiful music ever written. The music incorporates Romantic and Impressionist influences and folksongs the composer heard in his native Moravia in the Czech Republic. “This is incredibly family-friendly, and so fun and mesmerizing,” says Music Director Roberto Kalb. “And the cast is spectacular—I truly think that no theater in the world can boast a better cast than Detroit Opera.” Fast-rising soprano **Mané Galoyan**, singing the title role of the Vixen (Sly Little Fox), last appeared at the Detroit Opera House in *Arias and Overtures* in October, transfixing the audience and showcasing her astonishing vocal breadth, from operatic favorites to Spanish zarzuelas. Also returning to the Detroit Opera stage will be bass-baritone **Michael Sumuel** in the key role of the Forester; in Detroit Opera’s *Xerxes* in 2023, Sumuel “served up Mozart-level energy as Elviro, as vocally playful as he was adept at applying his abundant, round hug of a tone to Handel’s demanding passagework” (*Opera News*). Mezzo-soprano **Samantha Hankey**, making her Detroit Opera debut as Fox Golden-Strip (Lisak), has been praised for her “elegance and youthful tone” (*Financial Times*) and powerful stage presence, paired with a voice admired for its “dusky focus and hypnotic allure” (*The Times*). Several young artists from the **Detroit Opera Youth Chorus** will sing small roles in the opera.

The Cunning Little Vixen

May 12, 17, & 19, 2024

Detroit Opera House

Running time: 90 minutes, no intermission

Music by Leoš Janáček

Libretto by Janáček, based on a story by Rudolf Těsnohlídek

Sung in Czech with English supertitles

Conductor: Roberto Kalb

A Cleveland Orchestra production

Director: Yuval Sharon

Animation creation: Walter Robot Studios (Bill Barminsky & Christopher Louie)

Projection and lighting design: Jason H. Thompson

Costume design: Ann Closs-Farley

Mask design: Cristina Waltz

Fox Golden-Strip (Lisak): Samantha Hankey (mezzo-soprano)

The Vixen (Sly Little Fox): Mané Galoyan (soprano)

The Forester: Michael Sumuel (bass-baritone)

Schoolmaster/Mosquito: David Cangelosi (tenor)
The Parson/The Badger: Alex Rosen (bass)
Harašta: Andrew Potter (bass)
The Rooster: Victoria Lawal (soprano)
Forester's Wife/The Owl: Rehanna Thelwell (mezzo-soprano)

Performance dates:

Saturday, May 11, 2024, 7:30pm

Friday, May 17, 2024, 7:30pm

Sunday, May 19, 2024, 2:30pm

About Detroit Opera

Detroit Opera (formerly Michigan Opera Theatre), one of the nation's most vibrant nonprofit arts organizations, aspires to influence the future of opera and dance with a goal of invigorating audiences through new and re-imagined productions, relevant to current times. It is creating an ambitious standard for American opera and dance that emphasizes community, accessibility, artistic risk-taking, and collaboration. Founded in 1971 by the late Dr. David DiChiera, Detroit Opera is led by President and CEO Patty Isacson Sabee; Yuval Sharon, Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director; Associate Artistic Director Christine Goerke; Music Director Roberto Kalb; Artistic Advisor for Dance Jon Teeuwissen; and Board Chairman Ethan Davidson. For more information, visit www.detroitopera.org. Follow the company on Facebook and Instagram (@DetroitOpera), LinkedIn (Detroit Opera), as well as Twitter (@DetOperaHouse).

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