ISU Opera Studio presents

Speed Dating Tonight!

Music and Words by Michael Ching
Based on a concept by Dean Anthony
Originally produced and directed by Dean Anthony at Janiec Opera Company 2013

Stage Director: Chad Sonka
Music Director: Jodi Goble

November 3 & 4, 2022
Martha-Ellen Tye Recital Hall
7:30 p.m.
Program

Opening Scene ........................................................................................................... TUTTI
Coordinator’s Welcome .............................................................................................. Kaylee
Pat The Bassoonist ..................................................................................................... Pat
Origamist ...................................................................................................................... Carey
Existential Skier .......................................................................................................... Sheryl
Panic Attack/Leaving ................................................................................................... Mia/Kaylee
If Not Now, When? .................................................................................................... Mia/TUTTI
Fragile Heart/Waiting Too Long ................................................................................ Aaron/Billie
I Want To Be Beautiful To You .................................................................................. Cassie/TUTTI
Love Me, Love My Cats ............................................................................................. Stephanie
Kleptomaniac ............................................................................................................... Quinn/TUTTI
Social Media Celebrity .............................................................................................. Kaylee/Pat
Art Feeds the Soul ...................................................................................................... Milan
That One! Which One? ............................................................................................... Ally/Carlee
Order Up! ..................................................................................................................... Stephanie/Quinn
The Dilemma of Daters (And Singers) ........................................................................ TUTTI
Hi! Shy? … Could It Be? ............................................................................................. Carey/Will
Finale ............................................................................................................................. TUTTI
Cast

In Order of Appearance

Quinn (the Bartender) ............................................................................................................ Cameron Shidler
Stephanie (the Waitress) ......................................................................................................... Claire Sattler
Kaylee (the Dating and Social Media Coordinator) ................................................................. Morgan Reetz
Pat ........................................................................................................................................... Cole Stephenson
Billie ......................................................................................................................................... Asia-Danielle Keane
Milan ......................................................................................................................................... Milan Hale
Carlee ......................................................................................................................................... Carlee Carpenter
Sheryl ......................................................................................................................................... Karlee Nelson
Allie ........................................................................................................................................... Alice Pauly
Cassie ......................................................................................................................................... Cassandra Scheer
Aaron ......................................................................................................................................... Arthur Bardole
Carey ......................................................................................................................................... Sophia Pike
Will ............................................................................................................................................ Will Epping
Mia ............................................................................................................................................. Mia Nollett
Stage Manager/Projections ....................................................................................................... Zachary Hodgson

Special Thanks

Mary Creswell and Jennifer Rodgers, ISU Voice Faculty
ISU Theatre, especially Will Coeur
Lawrence Curry, ISU Music Building Manager
Chad Jacobsen, ISU Recording Studio
Shelby VanNordstrand and University of Nebraska Omaha Opera Theatre
Des Moines Metro Opera Guild - Ames Chapter

Contributions

Contributions to ISU Opera Studio are received with gratitude. These funds enhance various performance opportunities and expand the scope of what Opera Studio can offer the community. Checks can be made payable to “Opera Studio General Support Fund.” Send contributions to:

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THANK YOU!
About SPEED DATING TONIGHT:

Notes From the Composer

SPEED DATING TONIGHT! is what I call a “new number opera.” Much of traditional opera is based on musical numbers: arias, duets, ensembles, finales. SpDT! is similarly structured but with some twists. First, connecting material such as recitative is minimized. As for the songs and ensembles themselves, most of the material is not gendered and not limited to one vocal type. Even the order of the pieces is up to the producer. The cast needn’t be based on a 50/50 gender balance. (It doesn’t need to be binary either). In the over 100 productions, the smallest cast has been four and the largest around 50.

The opera starts and ends with a frame and premise that isn’t varied. At a local pub, the Bartender, Waitress, and Dating Coordinator get ready for the event and greet the daters as they enter. We are introduced to two nervous characters: Carey (“I could just die”) and Dater #22 (“OMG, WTF”), who has a singing birthday card. The actual speed dating starts and the show ends when everyone has had their song, duet, or trio. There are a few subplots to hold the show together. The finale starts with the Waitress commenting in a Brechtian manner about the event (“Daters are a lot like singers”). Dater #22, a failure so far, gives it one more try, and in a parody of Mozart’s Papageno/Papagena duet, finally finds his true love, a fellow cell phone addict. The daters exit and the Bartender and Waitress decide to go have a coffee.

Since the first production – commissioned, produced and directed by Dean Anthony at the Janiec Opera of the Brevard Music Center staff – SpDT! has been produced over 100 times. The episodic, inclusive structure of the opera proved very useful during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021.

--Michael Ching