

VIVA'S HOLIDAY

AN OPERA IN ONE ACT

PRODUCTION AND CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Helen Funston, soprano – Viva

Ms. Funston has appeared with Opera Theater Oregon for some of their most memorable performances including *Das Rheingold*, *Hercules vs. Vampires*, *Aida vs. Metropolis*, *La Bohème vs. Sunrise*, and *The Cunning Little Vixen*. She has also performed as a Young Artist at the Astoria Music Festival and as a pole dancer with Ecdysiast Pole Studio. She holds a Bachelor's from Grinnell College and a Masters of Music degree in Vocal Performance from Portland State University.



Bobby Jackson, bass-baritone – Dad

Bobby Jackson has been a professional performer in opera and musical theater for over twenty years, including performances with Portland Opera, Portland Opera To Go, Opera Theater Oregon, Broadway Rose Theater Company, Lakewood Theater Company, Mock's Crest Productions, and Pixie Dust Productions. Favorite roles include Old Deuteronomy in *CATS*, Sweeney Todd in *Sweeney Todd*, Aaron Fox in *Curtains*, and Sylvano in *La Calisto*. Other favorite shows include *The Music Man*, *Les Misérables*, *City of Angels*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Evita*, and *Jekyll & Hyde*. He holds a music degree from Portland State University.



Sadie Gregg, mezzo-soprano – Mom

Sadie Gregg has been commended by the press as a mezzo-soprano "with a rich flexible instrument" (Boston Musical Intelligencer), and "a standout" (Boston Classical Review). A Northwest native, Ms. Gregg's recent performances include *The Zoo* (Eliza) with Odyssey Opera, *Werther* (Charlotte) with Boston Opera Collaborative, and *Kátya Kabanová* and *La Traviata* with Boston Lyric Opera. Ms. Gregg's portrayal of Ottavia in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (New England Conservatory) earned an ArtsImpulse Best Supporting Actress Award nomination. Ms. Gregg's *La Cenerentola* (title role, Boston Opera



Collaborative) earned a My Entertainment World Best Actress Award nomination.
www.sadiegregg.com

Alexander Trull, tenor – Brother

Currently pursuing a Masters of Music in Vocal Performance at Portland State University, Alexander Trull comes to Portland by way of Atlanta where he recently sang with the Atlanta Opera Chorus. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from Kennesaw State University, where he performed roles in *The Magic Flute*, *Iolanthe*, *Die Fledermaus*, and other productions, in addition to a variety of choral, oratorio, and musical theater roles.



Erica Melton – Music Director

Erica Melton has worked with Opera Theater Oregon (OTO) since its founding in 2005, serving as Artistic Director since 2011. During her tenure with the organization OTO has earned a reputation for high musical standards and original programming. As Music Director from 2008-2011, Melton transformed the musical element of the company from cabaret-style performances with piano accompaniment to professional productions with chamber orchestra, including an original opera commissioned for the company in 2010. Her original arrangements of traditional operas have incorporated electric and popular instruments along with conventional symphonic elements. Melton is particularly interested in novel combinations of instruments that can serve the needs of small opera companies with varied missions and resources.



Melton holds a Master of Music in Piano Performance from Portland State University and a Bachelor of Music from UC Berkeley. She has worked as a coach accompanist with Seattle Opera, Portland State University, the University of Portland and Northwest Children's Theater. Performance credits include Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival, Mark Morris Dance Group, Berkeley Lyric Opera, and Portland Symphonic Choir. An active piano teacher and vocal coach with over 19 years of experience, Melton maintains a private studio in Northeast Portland's Alberta Arts district.

Pat Janowski – Stage Director

Veteran actor/writer/musician Pat Janowski is honored to serve as Stage Director for Viva's *Holiday*. Director of Portland's Flash Choir, she has also worked with Opera Theater Oregon and is a company member of Post5 Theater in Sellwood, where she appeared this season in *The Lover's Complaint*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *Durang Durang*. You can see her in the NBC series *Grimm* as well as TNT's *The Librarians*. Her pilot for the Cathedral Park series *Angie* premieres this fall. Pat is co-founder of the independent press *Illuminated Texts* and reads her writings at events in the region. She will be appearing with Viva Las Vegas and three other writers this spring on a panel called "Women on the Verge: Authentic Voices from Outsider Lit" at the national conference of the Association of Writers & Writing Programs in Los Angeles. Pat sings with Viva and Eve Connell in the band *Bergerette*, an a capella trio of women who sing 500-year-old French songs about sex and drinking. Pat couldn't do any of it without the wonderful support of Nora, Joe and Mark.



Christopher Corbell – Producer / Composer

Christopher Corbell has been active for over two decades in Oregon as a songwriter, musician, band leader, composer, and writer. Mostly self-taught in music while growing up, Corbell became frustrated early in his college music composition studies with the elitist gamesmanship of the "serious music" world, as well as with the attitudes of privilege that he found to be common in conservatory culture. After two years he dropped out to wander in the bountiful wilderness of indie and Americana songwriting and performance, eventually landing in Oregon (by way of New Orleans). He played for numerous bands and recording projects while also studying languages, mathematics, software engineering, and poetry.



A return to composition over the past few years was prompted by a mission to create new, relevant opera. Studies in art-song also became a passion in the course of that pursuit. Corbell founded *Cult of Orpheus* as a publishing, performance, and music production vehicle for such works, producing the group's first art-song concert in 2013. *Viva's Holiday* is his first opera.

From 2013 through 2014 Corbell served as Executive Director of Classical Revolution PDX, a nonprofit devoted to making classical music more accessible. As director he programmed and produced community-based chamber-music shows, developed new programs, expanded the board of directors, and helped foster other local, emerging composers.

Corbell founded Muse:forward in 2014 to promote new composed and experimental music in the Portland scene through open events and collaboration. He has organized (at last count) fifteen emerging-music salons under the Muse:forward aegis, featuring mostly non-curated performances by local experimental, ambient, electronic, compositional, improvisational, and genre-blurring musicians.

A champion of reforming classical music culture to fit the times, Corbell has written articles on related topics for *Oregon ArtsWatch*, *PDX Mag*, and his own Muse:forward blog.

For high-resolution headshots, interview scheduling, and any other press coverage coordination contact Christopher Corbell via music@cultoforpheus.org or 503-327-3967.