

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE



## AN OPERA BY KATE SOPER

*Opera in two acts and two epilogues*

*Music and libretto by Kate Soper*

*Inspired by “Le Roman de la Rose” by Guillaume de Loris and Jean de Meun*

**Inspired by** the bizarre and audacious 13<sup>th</sup> Century poem of the same name, *The Romance of the Rose* mixes medieval and contemporary allegory to dramatize the ways in which love, sex, and music wreak havoc on our sense of self. Lulled into a dreamlike state by a seductive M.C., the members of the audience follow their modern-day avatar The Lover into a surreal landscape brimming with riddles. On a mission for the conquest of a literal rose, The Lover meets The God of Love, Lady Reason, Shame, and their retinues – but as the fable unfolds, these allegorical figures begin to warp, revealing the fractured sense of identity at the core of all human experience. Meanwhile, the music itself – with modernistic shrieks and wails, madrigalistic finery, auto-tuned didacticism, and lush Romanticism – freely beguiles, charms, and terrifies with no moral allegiances.

**CAST:** seven singing actors (three sopranos, mezzo, tenor, two baritones)

**ENSEMBLE:** clarinet, saxophone, piano/keyboard, electric guitar, harp, percussion, violin/viola, cello, and live electronics.

## *ROMANCE OF THE ROSE*

### CREATIVE TEAM

**KATE SOPER** is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated composer, performer, and writer whose work explores the slippery continuums of expressivity, intelligibility and sense. She has been hailed by *The Boston Globe* as “a composer of trenchant, sometimes discomfiting power” and by the *New Yorker* for her “limpid, exacting vocalism, impetuous theatricality, and mastery of modernist style.” She has received awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Koussevitzky Foundation, and others, and has been commissioned by groups such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the American Composers Orchestra, and the Mivos Quartet. Her critically-acclaimed previous operas include *Here Be Sirens* (2014), *I Was Here I Was I* (2014), and *Ipsa Dixit* (2017).

Director **MICHAEL RAU** specializes in new plays, opera, and digital media projects. He has worked internationally in Germany, the UK, Ireland, Canada, and the Czech Republic. He has created work in New York City at The Public Theater, PS122, The Culture Project, HERE Arts Center, Ars Nova, The Bushwick Starr, The Brick, 59E59, 3LD, and Dixon Place, and has directed productions regionally at the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, MA, Chicago, and Cleveland. He has served as an assistant for John Turturro at Classic Stage Company, Les Waters at A.R.T., and Robert Woodruff at San Francisco Opera, and as an associate director for Francesca Zambello’s critically acclaimed productions of *Showboat* and *Aida*. He is a New York Theater Workshop Usual Suspect, a graduate of Wesleyan University and received his MFA in Theater Directing from Columbia. He is Assistant Professor of Theatre at Stanford University.

Creative Producer **ANNIE HOLT** is originally from San Francisco CA, and earned a BA in Dramaturgy from the University of Virginia (2006). She received her PhD in Theatre from Columbia University (2014), where she went on to teach in the interdisciplinary humanities Core Curriculum from 2014-16. During her time in NYC, she was co-founder and artistic director of the experimental collective Morningside Opera, praised for “bold imagination and musical diligence” by the *New York Times*. Holt also worked in arts advocacy and service with the New York Opera Alliance; in the 2015-16 season she served as that group’s executive director, managing their first annual New York Opera Festival. She is Assistant Professor of Theatre at the University of Oklahoma.

Named “The Best Classical Music Ensemble of 2018” by *The New York Times*, **THE WET INK ENSEMBLE** is a collective of composers, performers and improvisers dedicated to adventurous music making. Over its 20-year history of outstanding achievement in the programming and presentation of contemporary music, Wet Ink has collaborated with a broad range of renowned artists, from Evan Parker to George Lewis, and is equally committed to promoting the works of young and underrepresented composers, from today’s most promising emerging voices to the next generation of artists.