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NEWS

For Immediate release

***Amahl and the Night Visitors* to be performed as fall opera at Ouachita on Nov. 19-22**

By Kelsey Bond

November 5, 2015

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University will present its fall opera, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, with the opening performance on Nov. 19 at 7:30 p.m. in Jones Performing Arts Center. Performances continue at 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 20-21, with a matinee on Nov. 22 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets can be purchased for \$12 each at www.obu.edu/boxoffice.

Amahl and the Night Visitors is an opera in one act by Gian Carlo Menotti. It is a retelling of the story of the Magi from the point of view of a young disabled boy named Amahl, who lives in poverty with his mother near Bethlehem. When the three wise men stop by their meager hut and seek shelter, the mother is blinded by the lure of what the wise men's gifts for baby Jesus would do for her family. The mother is caught trying to steal some of the treasure but instead receives an unexpected blessing from the Lord.

"With the plot of the opera based on the familiar search of three kings for the young Christ child, the subject matter is also very timely, especially considering the fact that we're about to enter the Christmas season," said David Stanley, instructor of music at OBU and director of the show.

"This production is a fantastic reminder to the audience of the significance of giving or offering whatever you may have during this time of the year, no matter where you are in life," Stanley added. "It's also a great opportunity to enjoy beautiful music performed in a very atmospheric production."

Operas are typically performed traditionally, sticking to the original music with very few exceptions, but that doesn't mean the performance won't be suited for the audience.

"There will be a couple of elements that will bring a fresh, contemporary perspective to the production," Stanley said, "elements that will help modern audiences relate to the message and bring the story a contemporary context."

There are also plans to add non-traditional elements to both the opening and closing of the show. Beth Crisler, a junior vocal performance major from Bella Vista, Ark., said, "I don't want to give any of it away, but I think it gives the whole experience a very Christmasy vibe. It really just brings it home." Crisler is one of two actresses cast as Amahl's mother; she will appear on Nov. 20 and 22.

Seth Russell, a senior from Crossett, Ark., plays King Melchior as his final leading role as a vocal performance major. He said the unique perspective of Ouachita's cast and crew will make the performance stand out, with "the ideas of the actors, the voices, the instrumental musicians and the directors all making the music of Menotti come to life."

Like Russell, Crisler understands the burden placed on the cast and crew to make an opera something special.

"The biggest challenge I've had with this role is really getting into the character of a mother who is truly desperate. The mother and Amahl are completely down on their luck, they're hungry and they're cold," Crisler said. "Not only have I never been a mother, but I've never been in this kind of situation before. It's

been a very rewarding experience to put myself in the mother's shoes and try to understand what she is going through.”

Tickets are \$12 each and may be purchased from the OBU Box Office weekdays from 1-5 p.m. Tickets also may be purchased online at www.obu.edu/boxoffice. Current Ouachita students may receive one free ticket upon presentation of their student ID at the box office. For more information, call the box office at (870) 245-5555 during business hours.

FOR A LIST OF CAST AND CREW MEMBERS, VISIT <http://www.obu.edu/news/2015/11/05/amahl-and-the-night-visitors-to-be-performed-as-fall-opera-at-ouachita-on-nov-19-22>.