



NIC MUNI
STAGE DIRECTOR

Bold, no-holds-barred style and innovative ideas make **Nic Muni** an opera director for the 21st Century. His vision is unique, whether rethinking the standard repertoire and creating new twists to old favorites, or bringing engaging and accessible new or less familiar works to life. Having the experience of directing over two hundred productions with companies in North America, Europe, and Australia, Nic Muni is able to meet a company's needs, be it a minimalistic production or one of epic proportions.

Recent projects include *Macbeth*—Canadian Opera Company in Toronto (nominated for a DORA award for best production of 2006), *Show Boat* (in the world premiere of his own version, based on the 1927 original production)—Stadttheater Bern; *Tosca*—Theater Erfurt; *Albert Herring*, *Une Éducation Manquée* and *Le pauvre Matelot*, *Werther*, *Assassins*, *Così fan tutte*, *The Coronation of Poppea*—Cincinnati Conservatory of Music; *Faust*—Vancouver Opera, Portland Opera and Canadian Opera (nominated for a DORA award for best production of 2007), *Madama Butterfly*, *The Love for Three Oranges*—Indiana University Opera Theater, *The Turn of the Screw*—Portland Opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande* at Canadian Opera (nominated for a DORA award for best production of 2008) and the US premiere of Wagner's *Das Liebesverbot* at Glimmerglass Opera. Upcoming projects include *Postcard from Morocco* and *Of Mice and Men*—Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, *L'amico Fritz*--San Francisco Opera Merola Program, *Carmen*—Boston Lyric Opera (where he previously directed the American premiere of the Neopolitan version of Bellini's *I Puritani*); and *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda/Trouble in Tahiti*—Portland Opera.

His fruitful relationship with Houston Grand Opera and Seattle Opera has resulted in two acclaimed co-productions: *Il Trovatore*, which has been seen in Seattle, Houston, Tulsa, Melbourne, at the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto and at the San Francisco Opera, and *Norma*, which has been presented in Seattle, Houston, Cincinnati and Los Angeles. Additional work with Houston Grand Opera includes the world premiere of *Jackie O*, an opera based on the life of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis that was also presented at Banff Center for the Arts in Alberta, Canada. For the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, he has created productions of *La finta giardiniera*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and *Iphigénie en Tauride*. For The Minnesota Opera he has directed *Rusalka*, *Don Giovanni*, *Rigoletto*, and two world premieres: Libby Larsen's *Frankenstein*, *The Modern Prometheus*, and Robert Moran's *From the Towers of the Moon*. His tenure as the Artistic Director of Cincinnati Opera saw new productions of *Don Giovanni*, *Faust* and *The Turn of the Screw*, and the North American premiere of *Der Kaiser von Atlantis/The Maids*, as well as revivals of his *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Salome*, *Elektra* and *Nabucco* among others.

Internationally, his work at the Canadian Opera Company includes *Lulu*, *Rigoletto*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and *Jenůfa*, for which he received the 2003 DORA award for best theater production. In what is considered one of his most interesting projects, he directed a unique chamber version of Berg's *Wozzeck* in a co-production of the Banff Center for the Arts and Montreal Nouvelle Ensemble Moderne. Mr. Muni made his European debut at Stadttheater Gießen with *La Fille du Régiment*. Its success led to subsequent engagements at that same theater for productions of *Idomeneo*, *Die Zauberflöte*, and *The Rake's Progress*. Additional European credits include *La bohème* at the Tiroler Landestheater in Innsbruck, Austria, *Der Fliegende Holländer* at Opera Ireland; *Street Scene*—International Kurt Weill Festival in Dessau; and the world premiere of *La Conquista* by Lorenzo Ferrero at the National Theater in Prague.

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Critical Acclaim

San Francisco Opera Merola Program – *L’Amico Fritz*

“Muni’s production highlighted the class disparities at the heart of the story about a wealthy Alsace landowner who bets against love and loses, winning a bride in the process. The director’s diagonally bisected unit set, with the well-appointed dining room of Fritz’s house on one side, and the plot of land (with its all-important cherry tree) worked by Suzel and her father on the other, effectively suggested this small French-Jewish community in the wake of World War I. The indoor–outdoor design also allowed the characters to move quickly between scenes, while deftly delineating the differences between rich and poor, artifice and nature, idleness and industry.”

-San Francisco Classical Voice, 2009

Glimmerglass Opera - *Das Liebesverbot*

“Nicholas Muni’s brash staging, updated to 1950s Sicily, was a no-holds-barred descent into depravity, with guns waving, switchblades flashing, smoking, copulation and childbirth, occasionally short-circuited by sadistic fascists wielding cattle prods. This makes it sound dark and depressing, but in fact it was entertaining, fun and vital. Muni fully explored the extremes of culture clash — the club scene versus the cloister, real piety versus self-serving evangelism, louche Italy versus orderly Germany. He also humanized both Isabella, by giving her a secret cigarette stash and Fellini-esque scarf and sunglasses, and Friedrich, by introducing a silent love-child from his youthful liaison with Mariana. Muni made excellent use of Conklin’s set, with a great reveal for Friedrich, lurking functionaries on the catwalk and shadow-play against a hanging shield.

-Opera News, 2008

“Nicholas Muni directed with imagination, and generated excitement and dramatic interest from a routine distillation of a romantic triangle plot that does not have all that much to inspire. I always enjoy Mr. Muni’s stagings, and he moved the many large scenes around in a meaningful and efficient way, all the while instilling good character interaction. And a palpable sense of fun.”

-Opera Today, 2008

“Nicholas Muni, the director, moved the action into nineteen-fifties Sicily, with mostly satisfying results: Wagner meets Fellini, with a little Vegas thrown in for the Carnival scenes.”

-The New Yorker, 2008

Canadian Opera Company - *Pelléas et Mélisande*

“Canadian Opera Company’s revival of its 2000 production of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Debussy’s only completed opera (seen May 6), was most notable for infusing the work with a sense of character and drama it often lacks. Stage director Nicholas Muni allowed stylization to reside in designer Dany Lyne’s set and costumes while encouraging fully naturalistic performances from the cast. Muni ensured that the characters were not static but evolved.”

-Opera News, 2008