

Elmer Gantry

a new American opera

Herschel Garfein (libretto) is presently at work on the music and libretto for the operatic adaptation of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. [www.rgdead.com] Excerpts from the opera were given an orchestral reading by New York City Opera in May, 2006, as part of VOX 2006: Showcasing American Composers.

Garfein emerged as a theatrical composer and writer with his landmark dance triptych *Mythologies* for choreographer Mark Morris. The first section, *Championship Wrestling After Roland Barthes*, was commissioned by the Brooklyn Academy of Music "Next Wave" Festival in 1985. The complete trilogy, comprising ...*Wrestling...*, *Striptease* and *Soap-Powders & Detergents* has been performed to acclaim and controversy in Brussels, Boston and New York (the latter performances conducted by Mr. Garfein.)

Since that time, Mr. Garfein has written numerous concert works – orchestral pieces, chamber music, songs – while continuing to compose, write and direct music/theatre. Richard Dyer, writing in the *Boston Globe*, has called Mr. Garfein "a triple-threat man. A strong composer, as we knew; a strong librettist, with a knack for the poetry of plain English, and a strong stage director."

Mr. Garfein collaborated with famed experimental theatre group Mabou Mines and noted mezzo Lorraine Hunt, writing both music and lyrics for *Sueños* (Off-Off- Broadway; Manhattan Triplex Theater). In 2001, he composed incidental music for a new Off-Broadway production of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, directed by Sir Peter Hall (Theatre for a New Audience). Other music/theatre credits: libretto and direction of *Edison Invents*, a one-man show for Broadway baritone Ron Bohmer, and the Westfield (NJ) Symphony. Viktor Ullmann's *The Emperor of Atlantis* (adaptation and direction; Northeastern University and Merkin Hall, NYC); *Third Person* (libretto for a musical based on a Henry James story; workshop at The York Theatre, NYC); *White Jazz* (lyrics for musical; workshop at NYU).

In the concert realm, he is the composer of *American Steel*, an orchestral work commissioned by the Alabama Symphony, which premiered in Birmingham in March, 2002. Other recent works include *String Quartet No.2 ('Hidden Things')*; *Music for The Nature Theater of Oklahoma*, a large-scale orchestral work; and *Places to Live*, a symphonic suite commissioned by The Boston Classical Orchestra in honor of its 20th Anniversary. *Places to Live* was named by the *Boston Globe* as one of the "year 2000's best."

He received his musical training at Yale University, New England Conservatory, and the Experimental Music Studio at MIT.

For his compositions, Mr. Garfein has received grants and awards from: The National Endowment for the Arts, The Massachusetts Artists Foundation Fellowship (twice), The Massachusetts Cultural Council, The National Institute of Opera/Musical Theater, the Jerome Foundation, American Dance Festival, the Sundance Institute, and the MacDowell Colony.

Mr. Garfein is an Adjunct Professor in the Program for Vocal Performance at the Steinhardt School, New York University. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife, Vicki Bernstein, and their five-year-old twins, Hadi and Lev.