

FACT SHEET

Exhibition: *Creating the Modern Stage: Designs for Theater and Opera*

Press Preview: Thursday, May 21, 2009, 10 AM to NOON

Dates: May 22 through August 16, 2009

Summary: *Creating the Modern Stage: Designs for Theater and Opera* examines the extraordinary innovations in scenic design during the twentieth century. Modern technology and materials allowed for innovative approaches to stage sets. New theories concerning the role of the actor and the set in theatrical performances encouraged a radical departure from long standing practices and the literalism of the nineteenth-century stage. Imagination and vision were encouraged and a vital and varied stagecraft emerged throughout England, Europe, Russia, and America.

Content: The exhibition comprises over fifty drawings notable for advancing stagecraft and the art of set design. The selection derives entirely from the Morgan's holdings, principally from the collection originally formed by the celebrated American set designer Donald Oenslager (1902–1975). Drawings by visionaries such as Edward Gordon Craig, Ludwig Sievert, Alexandra Exter, Robert Edmond Jones, and Donald Oenslager, among others demonstrate the major developments in set design during the twentieth century.

These colorful drawings are enriched with related material including musical scores, rare books, and autograph manuscripts as well as more than thirty performance photographs documenting the finished set. *Creating the Modern Stage: Designs for Theater and Opera* is divided into four thematic sections to emphasize the international scope of advances in set design.

- Origins of Modern Scenic Theory
- Destroying Tradition
- Russian Avant-Garde
- The American Stage

Organization and Sponsors:

This exhibition is organized by Jennifer Tonkovich, curator of drawings and Prints with the assistance of Elizabeth Nogrady, Moore Curatorial Fellow, The Morgan Library & Museum.

Creating the Modern Stage: Set Designs for Theater and Opera is made possible through the generosity of Jane and Robert Carroll and Eliot and Wilson Nolen. Generous assistance is also provided by the David L. Klein Jr. Foundation and the Tobin Theatre Arts Fund.

Education and Programs:

Family Programs

Opera ABCs: Children's Guide to *Porgy and Bess*

Join opera singer and educator Jennifer S. Greene for an interactive and family friendly exploration of excerpts from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* performed by live artists. Appropriate for ages 6–12. **Saturday, May 30, 2 to 3 PM**

Tickets: Adults: \$8 for Non-Members; \$6 for Members; Children: \$2

Blocking Out Space

Discover how to block out space for the stage in this engaging art-making workshop with Studio in a School installation artist Jo Beth Ravitz. Children will learn how artists conceive space for the stage and then will construct their own unique set design models out of wooden blocks. Appropriate for ages 6–12.

Saturday, June 13, 2 to 4 PM

Tickets: Adults: \$6 for Non-Members; \$4 for Members; Children: \$2

Gallery Talk

Creating the Modern Stage: Designs for Theater and Opera

Elizabeth Nogrady, Moore Curatorial Fellow, Department of Drawings and Prints, The Morgan Library & Museum. **Friday, June 12, 7 PM**

Roundtable Discussion

Designer Spotlight: Creating the Modern Stage

Join award-winning designers for an engaging discussion on the creative process as well as the challenges they face when transforming sketches into fully realized productions. Participants include set designer and co-chair of the design department at the Yale School of Drama Ming Cho Lee (*King Lear* and the original 1967 Off-Broadway production of *Hair*), lighting designer Jennifer Tipton (New York City Ballet and the Paul Taylor Dance Company), and set designer Michael Yeargan (*South Pacific* and the forthcoming Metropolitan Opera production of Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*). The program will be moderated by New York City Opera dramaturg Cori Ellison. **Tuesday, June 23, 6:30 PM***

*The exhibition *Creating the Modern Stage: Designs for Theater and Opera* will be open at 5:30 PM especially for lecture attendees.

For more information on these and other public programs, please contact the Education department at (212) 590-0333.

About the Morgan:

A complex of buildings in the heart of New York City, The Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today it is a museum, independent research library, musical and performing arts venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. A century after its founding, the Morgan maintains a unique position in the cultural life of New York City and is considered one of its greatest treasures. With the 2006 reopening of its new campus, designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, the Morgan reaffirms its role as an important repository for the history, art, and literature of Western civilization from 4,000 B.C. to the twenty-first century.

Hours & Location:

Tuesday to Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Closed Mondays and Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

Admission:

Adults \$12; children (under 16) \$8; seniors (65 and over) \$8; students (with current ID) \$8; free to members and children 12 and under (must be accompanied by an adult). Admission is free on Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m.
Admission to the McKim rooms is without charge during the following times:
Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m.; Friday, 7 to 9 p.m.; Sunday, 4 to 6 p.m.
Admission is not required to visit the Morgan Shop.

For further information please contact Sandra Ho, Communications and Marketing department, (212) 590-0311, or at media@themorgan.org.