

IU OPERA AND BALLET THEATER NEWS

BY MARIA LEVY

Exciting news continues to come out of Indiana University School of Music's Opera and Ballet Theaters. The spring of 2005 features new offerings for both.

At the opera, last fall marked the debut of two guest stage directors: Stephanie Sundine staged the beloved Puccini classic *La Bohème* and Russian stage director Yefim Maizel followed with a beautiful production of *Eugene Onegin*. Our own Vince Liotta did the honors for *La Cenerentola*.

The spring 2005 portion of our season is no less exciting, having opened with the first collegiate production of William Bolcom's *A View from the Bridge*. We were delighted that Bolcom joined us for the first two performances, on February 4 and 5. In 1996, the IU Opera Theater performed an acclaimed production of Bolcom's *McTeague*.

In a recent conversation with Bolcom, he described *A View from the Bridge* as the most operatic of Arthur Miller's plays, and pointed

out that "making this play into an opera enabled the chorus, silent in play productions, to have a voice, with the lawyer Alfieri as its leader." The original 1955 version of *A View* was a short verse drama, much of which was usable in the new libretto (by Arnold Weinstein) because of its lyricism. However, in the opera there are two arias with brand new text by playwright Miller that is not found in other versions of the play.

Bolcom added further insight into his setting of this work by describing *A View* as "a Greek tragedy played out on the Brooklyn dockyards. Like all of Miller's plays I know, [this work] has an enormous reserve of humor and human insight often overlooked by directors. Weinstein's text, drawn

from the play's words, clarifies this important side of Miller and I hope my music does the same."

Our production premiered February 4, 2005 and featured original sets by Robert O'Hearn, who assisted Boris Aronson on the original play and agrees with Bolcom that the piece is very much like a Greek play. O'Hearn said that he "used red brick as a graphic motif to suggest the locale of the Brooklyn slums (and blood). The set is symmetrical and vertical with side piers (columns) and that is as Greek as I did it. The Brooklyn Bridge appears in the back-

ground to tie the composition together."

A View From the Bridge was staged by Professor Vince Liotta, who also staged the *McTeague* at IU in 1996—to great acclaim by the composer and the public. Guest conductor William Lumpkin was at the podium.



Left to right:
William Bolcom,
Robert O'Hearn,
and Vince Liotta

