

# PLURABELLE

An opera in two or more acts, steeped in the “Anna Livia Plurabelle” chapter of *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce, and drawing out and upon some of the 3,000+ references to opera that he fused into his flourishing text.

- The first opera based on Joyce’s crowning masterpiece – one of the defining books of our time.
- Two women discuss the world: familial and societal tumult; personal and sexual intrigue; cyclical and mutable nature and history; decay, decline, and death; and rhythmic, ritualistic, and labyrinthine imaginings. At the end of the opera, one woman turns into a tree, the other to a stone.
- Joyce said that his book “is the first look into the bowl of creation ... the reader participates in the birth or the end of the world when it happens. Everyone is anyone and every moment is any moment.”
- *Begetter / Librettist*: Thomas Peter O’Brien – Independent writer and visual artist. Born in New York, Peter is the ninth of ten children. He has written or edited 11 books and publishes widely on literature and art. His multi-year artwork *LOTS OF FUN WITH FINNEGANS WAKE* has been exhibited in Antwerp, Hong Kong, Montreal, New York, and Philadelphia, and is published and collected internationally. He lives in Toronto.
- *Composer*: Augusta Read Thomas – University Professor of Composition, University of Chicago. Born in New York, Gusti is the tenth of ten children. Championed and performed by Alsop, Barenboim, Boulez, Sir Andrew Davis, Maazel, Ken-David Masur, Ozawa, Rostropovich, Salonen ... 90+ recordings containing her music have been released. She is a multiple award, prize, and fellowship winner. She lives in Chicago.
- There are manifold innovations and explorations throughout **PLURABELLE**
  - 7 lead singers, 4 main female chorus, 4 main male chorus, up to 25 additional chorus
  - Up to 25 dancers, as water – they are evident before the opera begins, and after it ends
  - The first 4 singers come out of paid seats (not end-of-row seats)
  - On stage: a massive rock and tree, which serve as instruments – rock as percussion, tree as strings
  - Complementing Joyce’s interest in sex, gender, and metamorphosis (“daughtersons,” “him herself,” “manorwombanborn”) the main 4 female and 4 male chorus members disrobe as they sing the first collective aria of the second act, and then switch clothes / colours for the remainder of the opera
  - The libretto integrates various languages: Armenian, Avestan, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindustani, Irish, Italian, Kiswahili, Latin, Persian, Sanskrit, Spanish ...
  - The opera invokes and celebrates various operas / composers: Bach, Bellini, Bizet, Debussy, Fauré, Gay, Glinka, Handel, Haydn, Meyerbeer, Mozart, Puccini, Rossini, Strauss, Verdi, Wagner ...
- The first US\$25,000 of philanthropic support has been raised, tax receipted, and distributed.
- Donors and supporters are acknowledged and thanked in multiple ways.
- The first 20-25 minutes (the opening and a scene from Act II) will be composed, orchestrated, sung, and recorded (both audio and video) by December 2025. Approaches to commissioning opera companies will follow, including The Metropolitan Opera, Paris Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Irish National Opera, Teatro Lirico Giuseppe Verdi (Trieste), and the Canadian Opera Company.
- “This virtuosic world of wonders you have created. Quite amazing, quite mind-boggling.” – Johannes Debus, Music Director, COC, and guest conductor with The Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe Opera, etc.
- “... terrific ... makes the reader sit up and pay attention differently ... inspired adaptation ... I’m thrilled.” – Linda Hutcheon, FRSC, OC, University Professor Emeritus, U of T, co-author of four books on opera.
- “... a fascinatingly adept re-assembling and textual orchestration of these pages ... a tone truly captured and a ritual truly engendered.” – Matthew Jocelyn, formerly with Paris’s Opéra Bastille and Canadian Stage
- “Augusta Read Thomas’s compositional voice exemplifies her extraordinary intellect, brilliant craftsmanship, and enormous heart. She is a miracle.” – Carol Rodland, Viola and Chamber Music Faculty, The Juilliard School
- Material available upon request:
  - Bio notes and selected composition and publication credits by the composer and the librettist.
  - Draft Libretto / Draft Budget / Thematic Overview / Two Annotated Excerpts / Next Steps.