

# “Aletheia”

**Abbie Conant**, *text, trombonist, singer, and actress*  
**William Osborne**, *composition, text, direction,  
sound design, and stage set*

Monday, September 18, 2017  
7:30 p.m. Ashurst Hall



## PROGRAM NOTES

The word "*aletheia*" is one of several ancient Greek words for truth and roughly means "creating a space where truth can appear." Aletheia is an opera singer who is delighted that she has been asked to perform for an opera gala. She only needs to go down to the courtyard and impress the people with her performance . . . but she reconsiders, desperate . . . should she really sing? Why won't her feet move? Does she not know that she lives in a cage, a cage in the form of an iron maiden?

She prepares herself, puts on her makeup, looks out the window, and observes the wealthy patrons, and comments on what she sees. But, in the ruins of Detroit, the opera house in the middle of the city has been neglected, everything has completely collapsed, a grand piano lies tipped over on its side like a dead whale . . . Aletheia asks herself if her heart can survive. She tries to telephone Jeremy . . . a former lover? No answer. She speaks with him anyway . . . talk to me . . . She plays an instrument that stands at the side of her cage . . . She is alone . . . or? She hears a women's choir . . . Madness? Hope? Death? Transcendence? Truth? Hope that her song can revive the rusting city?

Much more info about *Aletheia* can be found here:  
<http://www.osborne-conant.org/Aletheia-English.htm>

## ARTIST PROFILES

ABBIE CONANT's struggles against sexism in the orchestral world have become legendary. The story of her epic fight and ultimate victory against egregious gender discrimination in the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra where she won the position for principal trombone at a screened audition in 1980, inspired writings in print publications ranging from *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal* to Malcolm Gladwell's book *Blink*, which was on the NYT Bestseller List for eighteen weeks. It was also presented in a ninety-minute documentary film broadcast nationally on German national television. After winning her lengthy court case, Ms. Conant won a full-tenured professorship at the University of Music in Trossingen, Germany, and left the orchestra in 1993.

After attending the Interlochen Arts Academy for three years, she became a student of Dr. Karl Hinterbichler at the University of New Mexico. She then received her B.M. *cum laude* at Temple University with Dee Stewart of the Philadelphia Orchestra and her M.M. at The Juilliard School with Metropolitan Opera Orchestra principal, Per Brevig. In addition, she holds an Artist Diploma from the Cologne University of Music with Branimir Slokar. While completing her studies she participated in the Colorado Philharmonic (an intensive training orchestra,) the Yale Summer Chamber Music Institute at Norfolk where she studied with John Swallow, and the Spoleto Festival dei Due Mondi in Italy. From there, she won her first position as principal trombone of the Royal Opera of Turin, Italy. Her next position was principal trombone of the Munich Philharmonic for thirteen years where she was awarded the official honorable title of Kammersolistin der Stadt München after ten years of exemplary musical service to the city of Munich, Germany.

Ms. Conant has been the subject of several featured cover articles in various brass publications: *International Trombone Association Journal*, *British Trombone Journal*, *The Brass Herald*, and others. Her CD of trombone and organ music is widely acclaimed. She has been a guest on NPR's *Performance Today* as well as on the West German Radio, Southwest German Radio, Canadian Broadcast Company, and New York City's classical station WQXR.

She has had film roles in the feature film *The Devil's Triangle*, directed by Vadim Glowna, and in the epic thirteen-film story of a German composer's life and times, *Die zweite Heimat* ("The Second Homeland") by director Edgar Reitz.

Ms. Conant has students in many different orchestras and teaching positions including two former students in the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra, the Stuttgart State Opera, the Southwest German Radio Orchestra, The Hamburg Symphony, the Regensburg Symphony, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, to name a few.

WILLIAM OSBORNE was born 1951 in Deming, NM, the grandson of homesteading cotton farmers. He worked his way through college at the University of New Mexico and received a BA in 1973. He then studied with George Crumb for five years while living in Philadelphia and New York, and with Franco Donatoni for two years at the L'Academia di Chigiana in Siena and the L'Academia di Santa Cecilia in Rome. He has received two ASCAP awards, a Doctoral Fellowship to Columbia University, alternate to the American Rome Prize, and a major prize from the Theater Commission of the City of Munich for his Beckett productions. He founded The Wasteland Company in 1984 along with his wife Abbie Conant as the main performer to explore women's roles in music theater.

Two doctoral dissertations have been written about William and Abbie's music theater and multimedia work, one by Dr. Jesús Fernando Lloret González at the University of Málaga, and one by Dr. Jessica D. Butler at the University of Iowa. In recent years, William and Abbie have toured to over 165 cities in America and Europe to great critical acclaim with his compositions. Their European venues have included the Munich Biennale, Stuttgarter Tage für Neue Musik, Hamburg State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Freiburger Theater Festival, State Theater of Kassel, Frankfurt's Theater am Turm, Munich's Gasteig Cultural Center, and Nuovo Forme Sonare in Rome. They have performed at most of America's major music schools including The Juilliard School, New England Conservatory, Yale University, Eastman School of Music, Oberlin, Peabody Conservatory, Indiana University, San Francisco Conservatory, Cal Arts, McGill, University of California at Berkeley, Ithaca College, and University of Northern Texas.

He also has written numerous scholarly articles about women in music, music sociology, and philosophical/theoretical concepts. His article "Sounding the Abyss of Otherness: Pauline Oliveros' Deep Listening and the Sonic Meditations" is published in *Women Making Art* (New York: Lang 2000). His article "Art Is Just an Excuse: Gender Bias in International Orchestras" was published in the *Journal of the International Alliance for Women in Music*, where it initiated international protests against the Vienna Philharmonic and worldwide press coverage including reports on NPR, an interview of William on ABC's *Good Morning America*, and front page articles on both *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*. In January 2000, MSNBC published a major article about his work, "Taking on the Vienna Philharmonic," on its new website. His article "Symphony Orchestras and Artist-Prophets: Cultural Isomorphism and the Allocation of Power in Music" was published in *Leonardo Music Journal*—a joint venture of the International Society for Art, Science and Technology and the M.I.T. Press. In 1998, he received a Special Recognition Award from the International Alliance for Women in Music for his services to women in music.

Conant and Osborne will perform *Aletheia* in twenty-eight cities this season.

University of New Mexico	September 11
Arizona State University	September 14
Northern Arizona University	September 18
Eastern Michigan University	February 16
University of Michigan	February 19
Wright State University	February 21
Indiana University of Pennsylvania	February 23
Duquesne University	February 25
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania	February 28
Yale University	March 2
West Chester University	March 5
SUNY Potsdam	March 7
University of Montreal	March 9
Boston University	March 13
Temple University	March 16
University of Connecticut	March 20
University of Massachusetts	March 21
New York University	March 24
New School/Mannes	March 27
Peabody Conservatory	March 29
Virginia Commonwealth University	April 2
Lenoir-Rhyne University	April 4
University of Kentucky	April 6
Miami University (Ohio)	April 9
University of Louisville	April 10
University of Cincinnati—College Conservatory of Music	April 11
Eastern Illinois University	April 16
Illinois State University	April 18



## 2017-2018 Horizons Concert Series

*join us for these exciting performances in Fall 2017...*

**“Alethea”** featuring Abbie Conant, *text, trombonist, singer, and actress* & William Osborne, *composition, text, direction, sound design, and stage set*

7:30 p.m. Monday, Sep. 18, Ashurst Hall

*Aletheia is a musical theater work composed by William Osborne for singer/instrumentalist, computer-controlled piano, and quadraphonic electronics. The word “Aletheia” is one of several ancient Greek words for truth and means “creating a space where truth can appear.”*

**“Variations”** featuring Jeffrey Swann, *piano*

7:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 30, Ashurst Hall

*Jeffrey Swann, the President’s Distinguished Artist in Residence, presents a program of variations built around Beethoven’s monumental Diabelli Variations.*

**“War and Peace”** featuring HELIOS

7:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 12, Ashurst Hall

*The early-music choral ensemble HELIOS—named after the Sun God—presents a program of Renaissance music on war and peace in commemoration of Veteran’s Day. The ensemble currently includes two NAU School of Music alumni.*

*Tickets required. \$20 Adults, \$12.50 Seniors & NAU Employees, free for children & NAU students with ID.*

For tickets, contact the Central Ticket Office  
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