Whose opera?

Or perhaps more appropriately, what's opera? Can the subject matter be commonplace, the music something besides classical? And what separates it from a dramatized song, or more confusingly, musical theater? Can it be over even if the fat lady doesn't sing?

Whose Opera?, the class, convened at the beginning of this Spring term. We made up a peculiar blend of singers, composers and writers, each one of us with distinct skills and tastes. We spent the first few weeks of term testing combinations of composers, writers and singers, much in the manner that a mad scientist might test combinations of chemicals, lasers and robots. We instituted a one-week turnaround cycle for those first weeks, where between one class and the next a piece would be written, composed and made performable by these teams. Every week represented an exciting blank slate, with a new vision and a fresh, intriguing set of faces. Eventually, some of these projects began to emerge as winners and were later expanded upon, while others fell by the wayside. These are the pieces that came forward as the some of the strongest, holding our interest through the early mornings and late nights. If they lack polish here or there, it is because they are still brand spanking new, and because we collectively may have bitten off a tad bit too much, despite our incessant, enthusiastic chewing. Nonetheless, we hope they will entertain.

Jesse Bartlett-Webber gets full credit for the posters and the cartoon on the front of this program. Special thanks to Mike Del Prete, who joined our team of musical misfits midway through, and of course to Yoshiko Sato, who has been reading our ambiguous scores with brilliant artistry since the beginning. Thanks also to Bruce Williamson, who worked with us for a time, and to Kitty, whose idea it was to have this class and who has variously been teacher, director, musician, producer and critic at the times when these roles needed filling.

Whose Opera? is Jesse Bartlett-Webber, Danny Brylow, Joshua Goldstein, Lara Hoffman, Sarah King, Lyzy Lusterman, Kaley McMahon, Becca Moulton, Rae Noyes, Eli Phillips, Annie Schwartz, Matthew Souther, Doug Von Korff & Morgan Whitaker

programs by Matthew Souther
Spyz
libretto by Danny Brylow, music by Doug Von Korff
Yoshiko Sato, piano; Mike Del Prete, bass; Jesse Bartlett-Webber, drums

American Spy (baritone)
Double Agent (soprano)
Her Henchmen (tenors)

SCENE ONE
SCENE TWO
SCENE THREE
SCENE FOUR
SCENE FIVE

Spitz
libretto by Morgan Whitaker, music by Jesse Bartlett-Webber
Yoshiko Sato, piano

Preacher
Missy Lou
Dianne

Enfeci:ion
libretto by Morgan Whitaker, music by Jesse Bartlett-Webber
Yoshiko Sato, piano

The Clown (baritone)
The Child (soprano)
The Fortune Teller (mezzo-soprano)

You're free to applaud at the end of songs, scenes, good jokes and statements you agree with, but we're going to save our bows for the end.