

The Developers

Sharyn Pirtle ~ Stage Director



Sharyn Pirtle enjoys a prolific artistic career that incorporates performing, directing, and teaching. She has performed in theaters across the U.S. and Europe in roles as diverse as Cherry in Louis Nowra's play *Cosi*, Despina in *Cosi fan tutte*, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Blanche in *Les Dialogues des Carmelites*, and Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*. Musical theater roles include Mae Jones in *Street Scene*, Chastity in *Anything Goes*, Ado Annie in *Oklahoma!*, Ilona in *She Loves Me!* and Golde in *Fiddler on the Roof*. For the New York International Fringe Festival, Ms. Pirtle recently wrote, produced, and starred in her own one-woman piece entitled *What's Cookin' with Betty Ann?*, a tribute to her southern roots, Betty Crocker and the 1950's.

As stage director, Ms. Pirtle's career has taken her from Tel Aviv to London and from Boston to San Francisco. In recent seasons, she staged the second cast in the Goran Jarvefelt production of *Cosi fan tutte* for Houston Grand Opera as well as the second casts of *Tosca* and *Otello* for the Florida Grand Opera and San Francisco Opera companies, respectively. She created a new production of Mark Adamo's *Little Women* at the Ash Lawn Opera Festival, praised by the composer as both "visually elegant and dramatically detailed". Other highlights include *Don Giovanni* set in Revolutionary Mexico for Opera in the Heights and the world premiere of the Holocaust opera *Bonhoeffer* at the Moores Opera House, which the Houston Chronicle called "particularly memorable... (it) gnawed at one's conscience." Her new production of *Don Pasquale* for Opera in the Heights achieved acclaim by the Houston Press, which wrote "Sharyn Pirtle added new life to this age-old story."

Other regional credits include choreographing a new production of *Le nozze di Figaro* for the Michigan Opera Theater and creating new productions of *La Traviata* and *La Cenerentola* for the Ash Lawn Opera Festival. In February of 2004, Sharyn conceived and directed a Juilliard Opera Center independent project production of *Cosi fan tutte* set on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Other recent productions include *Amahl and the Night Visitors* for the Motor City Lyric Opera in Detroit, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* for the Portland Opera and *Le nozze di Figaro* for the Houston Grand Opera, praised by

Charles Ward of the Houston Post as "simple, disciplined story-telling (which) can't be beat."

In addition to her busy directing career, Ms. Pirtle is deeply committed to the cause of arts education for underserved children, and is the founder and artistic director of Young at Arts, a performing arts organization that serves young artists in The Bronx and southern Westchester County. A graduate of Houston's High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Ms. Pirtle received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Voice and Opera from the Eastman School of Music and did graduate work at Yale University. Ms. Pirtle resides in Mt. Vernon, NY, with her husband, lighting designer Shawn Kaufman, their daughter and their terrier Artemis.

Samantha Sutton ~ Co-Artistic Director



Sam Sutton is a composer, arranger and performer working in many areas of artistic production including film, television, theater and dance. Her broadcast television composer credits include *Rocky and the Dodos* (Children's ITV, Nickelodeon, and various stations worldwide); *The Outlaw* and *Bird Becomes Bird* (Channel 4); and *Waiting* (S4C). She has scored many independent films that have played at festivals around the world, notably the award-winning *Wrong Powder* (British Short Film Festival), *Gina and Stella* (London Film Festival) and *Basic Emotions* (Los Angeles Film Festival). Live commissions include

One to Four for the Eurythme Dance Group *Kosmos* (UK tour), and incidental music for *A Handful of Rain* (Uptrodden Productions at the New End Theatre, Hampstead) and *Love and Despair* (Edinburgh Festival). As an arranger and musical director, she has worked for the English National Opera's Bayliss program.

Born in England, Sam studied clarinet, piano and composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Chetham's School of Music, before obtaining B.A., M.A. and M.Phil. degrees in music at Cambridge University. After Cambridge, Sam obtained a

postgraduate diploma in Screen Music at the U.K. National Film and Television School.

Sam is co-founder and musical director of Fantasia Music School, which is based in the South of England and holds a series of residential summer courses for young instrumentalists. She has held posts as tutor for the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and the Enfield Youth Symphony Orchestra and spent two years as conductor for the Enfield Concert Band. She has over ten years experience teaching individual and group lessons in piano, clarinet, saxophone, theory and composition both in schools and privately.