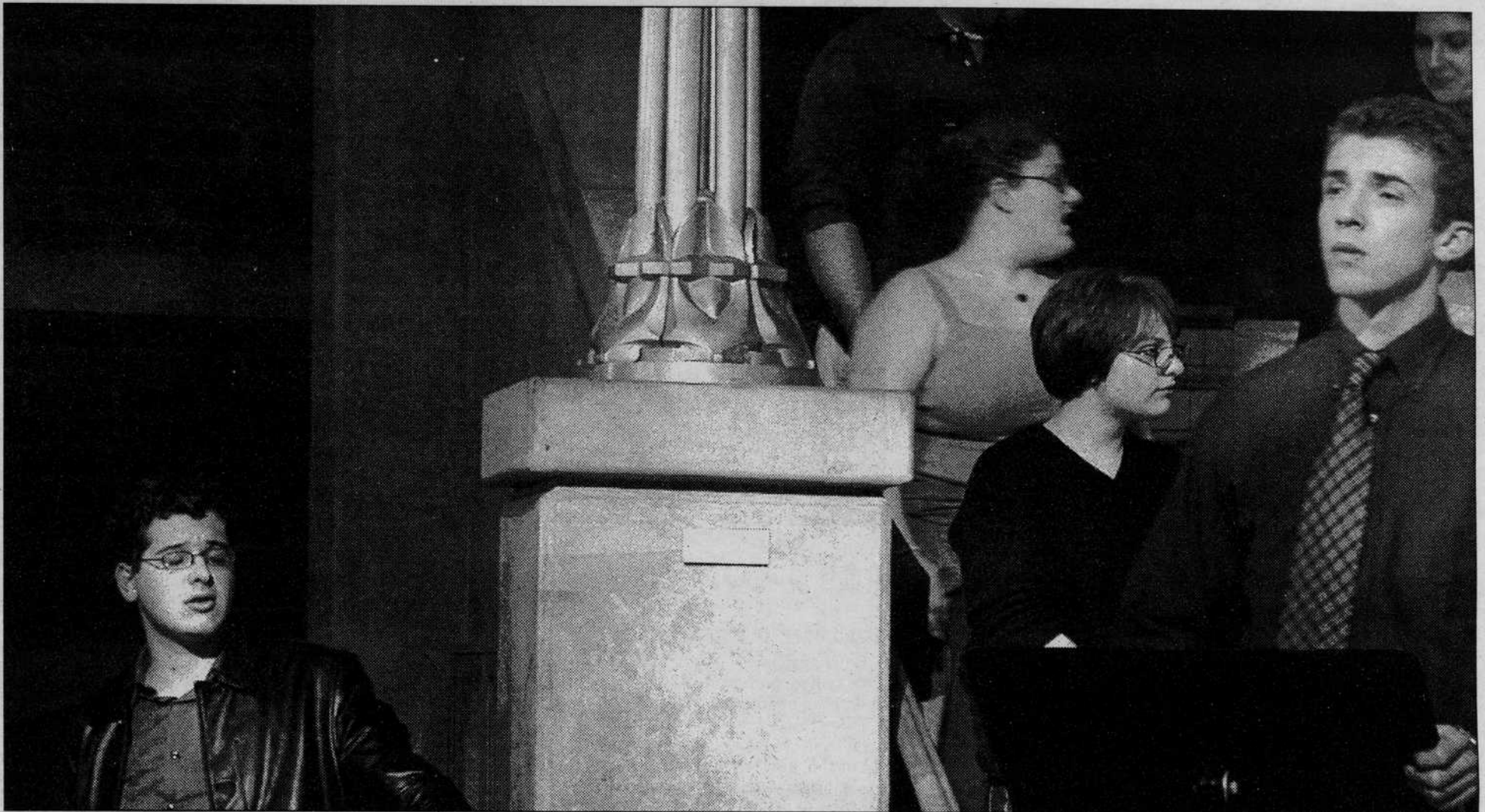


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Thursday, February 21, 2002



Photos by Adam Jones Emerald

## POLITICAL OPERA

■ The University will showcase a classic opera blended with social commentary

By Lisa Toth  
Oregon Daily Emerald

**A**dultery and U.S. political commentary will add a modern twist to an upcoming presentation of the mythological 1744 opera "Semele."

The University Opera Ensemble, under the direction of Assistant Professor of Voice Mark Kaczmarczyk, will present an updated production of the George Frederic Handel opera. The two performances, held in the atrium of Willamette Hall, will be held at 8 p.m. Feb. 23 and at 3 p.m. Feb. 24.

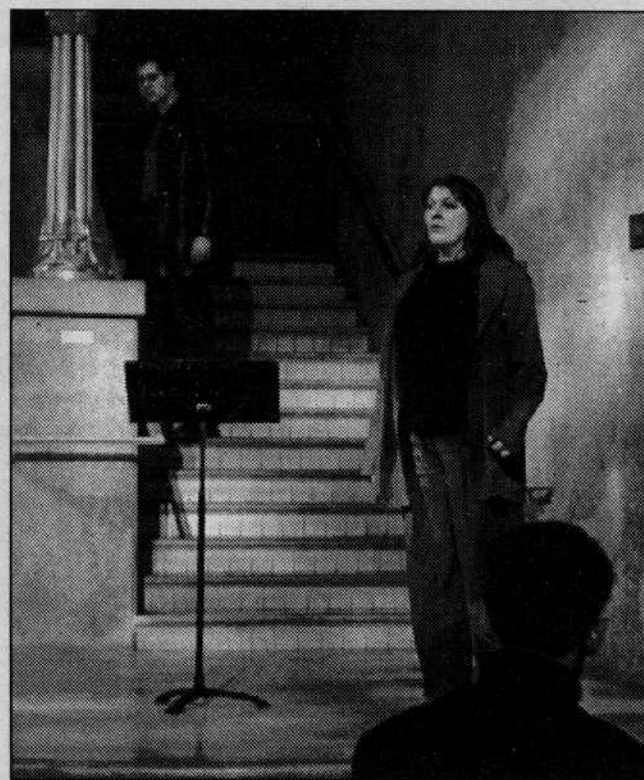
Handel had political motives in composing "Semele," and Kaczmarczyk said he has tried to modernize this element. Handel wrote the opera as a warning to King George not to elevate the king's mistress to the throne. Kaczmarczyk said he chose to update the University production as a political commentary on Washington, D.C., the

Clinton administration, Enron, government scandal and the "abuse of power and manipulation." The performers will wear modern costumes, breaking the stereotypical expectations of "stuffy and inaccessible" opera productions.

The story of "Semele," written in 1744 by Handel at the age of 60, is rooted in classical mythology. Semele, a mortal played by soprano Kim Raddatz, is in search of immortality from the god Jupiter. Tenors Andrew Brock and Brandon Finch alternate in this role. Kaczmarczyk said Semele's quest and "the meddling of gods with mortals" makes for both high drama and hysterical antics.

Following last season's production of Benjamin Britten's "The Turn of The Screw," Kaczmarczyk said he chose to present the baroque opera, sung in English, to highlight the young, talented, emerging voices in the School of Music. While the University is challenged with "a limited amount of performing space," Kaczmarczyk said Willamette Hall's atrium provides a functional and user-friendly space.

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Above: Brandon Finch (right) and Conrad Frank sing a duet in the Willamette Hall Atrium, which will be the stage for the opera opening Saturday at 8 p.m.

Left: Director Mark Kaczmarczyk listens closely to Kim Raddatz's solo in their rehearsal of "Semele" on Wednesday evening.

## Promoters confirm Ice-T will appear at Mac Court with Nelly

■ Despite recent reports, Ice-T will open the concert Sunday

By Jen West  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Ice-T is back. Or maybe he never left.

UO Cultural Forum members heard from promoters Tuesday night who said the old school staple had canceled his Sunday show with Nelly. But on Wednesday, word spread just as fast that the news was wrong and Ice-T would take the stage as scheduled.

"Ice-T is back on," said Kurt

Catlin, heritage music coordinator at the UO Cultural Forum.

Catlin said he received a call late Tuesday from concert promoter Lie Tan and producer Dwight Wood, who reported that Ice-T had canceled. Catlin said Tan and Wood had cited a variety of problems ranging from "physical problems" to contract problems, and he said they also asked the Cultural Forum not to say anything about the cancellation for a few days.

Tan said Ice-T's cancellation had not been "a sure thing," and she wanted the Cultural Forum to "hold off on telling people" until she could confirm it. She said Ice-T

might have had other engagements. But Catlin said the Cultural Forum was under the impression that the cancellation was confirmed.

Fearing there would be a "riot" when ticket holders found out, Catlin said he chose to release the information to avoid upsetting the public.

He said he received a call from Tan on Wednesday morning saying that Ice-T was still going to perform at the concert.

"Nelly is the main act," with Ice-T as the opening act, Tan said. She added that she believes most people will be coming to see Nelly.

The 7 p.m. McArthur Court show

will also feature St. Lunatics, SMG, Underground Lighthouse and Kid. Ticket prices have been reduced for a special "week of concert" sale. Tickets are offered for both seated and standing room only areas, and they are \$30 to \$35 for students and \$35 to \$40 for the general public. Tickets are available through Fastixx, the EMU Ticket Office, Face the Music and at the door.

Senior Crissy Carson, who bought her ticket the first day it went on sale, said she would be disappointed if Ice-T didn't perform, but she would not be "crushed" because she is more interested in seeing Nelly, who has newer music.

"It will be interesting to see what (Ice-T) does," she said. She said she thought it was weird that Ice-T is "taking a back seat to Nelly," when a few years ago, he would have been the headliner.

Concert promoter Tony Gilbert said his original thought was "let's bring Ice-T to the valley." He said he had scheduled a December concert in Medford but had to cancel it. He said he wanted to attempt another concert, but this time with Nelly added to the roster.

He said he liked Eugene because the city can act as a halfway point for

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