

## On Stage

# The Portland Opera presents *The Cunning Little Vixen*

Premiering March 25. When the curtain rises, audiences will enter a world somewhere between a circus and an adventure playground, where forest creatures sing, glide, soar and glow.

Inspired by a series of newspaper cartoons in the 1920s, *The Cunning Little Vixen* concerns the adventures of a young female fox and the forester who tries to capture and tame her. The lives of humans and animals are interwoven in the continuing search for freedom, love and renewal. Rather than a fairy tale, this opera is an allegory – a folktale along the lines of Aesop's fables or the Brothers Grimm.

"This piece is real, direct and unsentimental," declares stage director Keith Warner. Warner has directed opera productions throughout North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. He comments

that "while the animal characters and the imaginative design concept will appeal to children, this is not a Disney version of life in the woods." Dark at times, *Vixen* is a thoughtful and inspiring exploration of the natural world and how humans and animals come to terms with their place in the cycle of life.

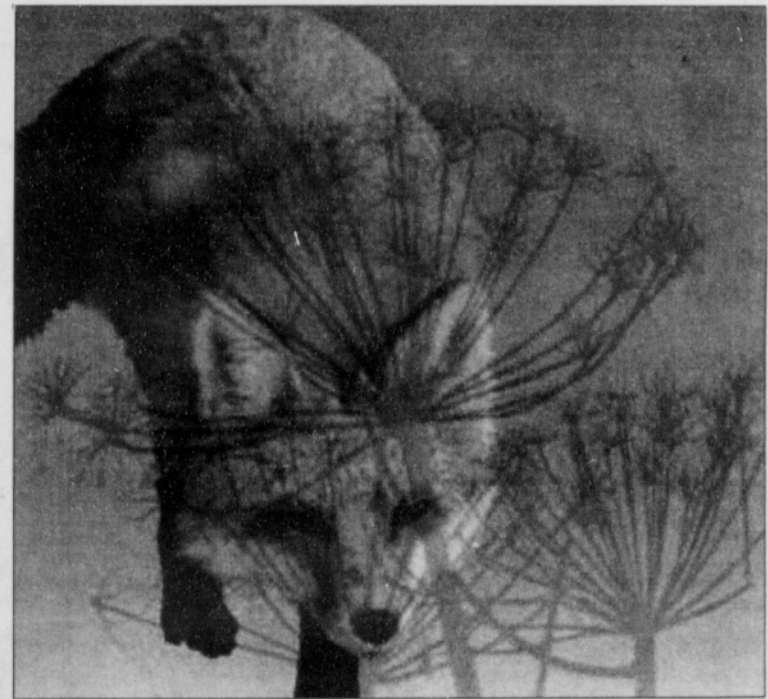
Janacek is one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most distinctive and original composers. In creating this lush, unique score, Janacek drew inspiration from Czech folk songs and the everyday inflections of his Moravian dialect.

The music is at once both rhythmic and lyrical, and it is this tension of opposites that audiences have found so stirring.

Set designer John Conklin's ingenious multi-level sets propel the performers into the sky and beneath the earth using swings, high wires, trampolines and even rollerblades. Conklin's unique approach led to an unusual

collaboration for this production: he is designing the sets in conjunction with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade children at Applegate Elementary and Metropolitan Learning Center in Portland. "Children's drawings reflect the freedom of life and imagination that is a central theme in *Vixen*," explains Conklin. "They represent an abstract, liberated world."

To match this innovative approach to set design, costumer Constance Hoffman has created costumes that are a clever blend of both human and animal traits. The Blue Jay, for example, wears a rain coat and has his hair spiked back like a punk rocker. The caterpillar is wrapped in a cocoon-like shawl, while the Dragonfly wears goggles and a bomber jacket.



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# MARCH EVENTS

**JON KOONCE & THE GAS HOGS**  
Thursday, March 9, at 7pm

**THE STEVE BRADLEY GROUP**  
Thursday, March 16, at 7pm

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION**  
Friday, March 17, 4pm to 11pm  
Irish Bands · Irish Dancers · Irish Coffee  
Leprechauns · Storytelling · Family Fun

**CRAIG CAROTHERS**  
**SONGWRITERS IN THE ROUND**  
Sunday, March 19, Doors at 7pm, Show at 7:30pm  
Admission \$7

**I & I**  
"Reggae Inna Afrikan Stylee"  
Thursday, March 23, at 7pm

**BATTLE OF THE BANDS 2000**  
**STEVE BRADLEY GROUP**  
**WITH JON KOONCE**  
VS  
**THE X ANGELS**  
Thursday, March 30 at 7pm

All ages welcome · No cover charge unless noted



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