

For Immediate Release
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THE SCARLET LETTER
Opera by Lori Laitman
WORLD PREMIERE
November 6, 2008
Donald W. Reynolds Theater
University of Central Arkansas, Conway, AR

**Laitman's New Opera "The Scarlet Letter" in High Gear for
November World Premiere**

Acclaimed American composer **Lori Laitman** is busy putting the final touches on her new two-act opera, based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's literary masterpiece, to premiere at the University of Central Arkansas on November 6, 2008.

"I am thrilled with the way everything is coming together", says Laitman. "We have brilliant conducting by Maestro **Israel Getzov**; superb stage direction by **Diane Kesling**, a fine set, great costumes and inventive lighting by **William Henshaw**, and a terrific group of musicians. I am grateful to all the wonderful people at UCA who have worked tirelessly to ensure a resounding success on opening night."

The opera, commissioned by The University of Central Arkansas through **Robert Holden** and The UCA Opera Program, provided the prolific American composer, renowned for her masterful compositions for voice, an opportunity to collaborate with the contemporary poet **David Mason**.

For poet **David Mason**, turning Hawthorne's tale into his first opera libretto was an immensely gratifying task. In a recent interview he mused: "*The Scarlet Letter is better suited to opera than any novel I have ever read. To begin with, its dramatic structure has particular clarity and resonanceThis is an exciting story about duplicity and love, the tragic possibility of America. Hawthorne's prose has offered me several lines for adaptation, but my primary goal has been to use spare, often lyrical verse as a way of revealing character and heightening drama...I was hearing a kind of music when I wrote which corresponds very closely to what **Lori Laitman** has been composing. This is one of the most natural collaborations I have ever engaged in. It's an opportunity for me to*

grow as a poet, and a profound honor to find words I have written taken up and transmuted by other artists".

For **Lori Laitman**, creating this opera has also been an experience of tremendous excitement and growth. *"My collaboration with **David Mason** has been one of the greatest joys of my life. His talent awes me and his beautiful words gave me all of the inspiration I needed. Although this was my largest musical undertaking to date, the approach to the composition was the same one I always use: to compose dramatic music that underscores the emotional content of the words but that also creates musical lines of great beauty. From start to finish, there is a consistent universe of sound. Scored for three main leads and chamber orchestra, the opera is set in two acts, approximately 2 hours in length. Musical motives are used and reused, and combined in different ways, creating a psychological underpinning for each of the characters, and several major arias arise from the drama."*

"The Scarlet Letter" is a production of The University of Central Arkansas Opera Theater. The Opera is in two acts, composed by Lori Laitman to a libretto by David Mason.

Cast:

Conductor: Israel Getzov
Stage Direction: Diane Kesling
Sets, Lighting and Costumes: William Henshaw
Hester Prynne: Christine Donahue
Arthur Dimmesdale: John Garst
Roger Chillingworth: Robert Holden
Mistress Hibbons: Martha Antolik

Performances:

November 6, 2008 at 7:30 pm (pre-performance talk at 6:45 pm)
November 9, 2008 at 3 pm (pre-performance talk at 2:15 pm)

Location: The Donald W. Reynolds Theater, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, AR

Tickets: UCA Ticket Central Box Office, Tel: (501) 450-3265; Email: boxoffice@uca.edu

Source:

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