



Erzsébet: The Opera

The Story of Elizabeth Báthory, the "Blood Countess"

Premiere Productions in Vermont 2011
Hyde Park Opera House, Hyde Park, October 28
Haybarn Theatre at Goddard College, Plainfield, October 29
Black Box at Main Street Landing, Burlington, October 30
Presented by the Vermont Contemporary Music Ensemble

Dennis Báthory-Kitsz, Composer and Producer
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For immediate release

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Blood Countess Opera "Erzsébet" Opens Halloween Weekend

An opera 25 years in the making opens Halloween weekend in Hyde Park, Plainfield and Burlington.

"Erzsébet," the saga of the so-called "Blood Countess of Transylvania," was written by Northfield Falls composer Dennis Bathory-Kitsz. The 75-minute monodrama starring Lisa Jablow explores the life and downfall of Elizabeth (Erzsébet) Báthory, the Hungarian countess whose alleged serial killings sparked centuries of speculation, fascination and revulsion.

"Erzsébet" runs October 28 at 8:00pm at the Hyde Park Opera House, October 29 at 8:00pm at the Haybarn Theatre at Goddard College in Plainfield, and October 30 at 4:00pm at the Black Box Theatre at Main Street Landing in Burlington. The opera is directed by Ann Harvey and the Vermont Contemporary Music Ensemble is conducted by Anne Decker.

Elizabeth Báthory was revered and feared in her time—noblewoman, ruler, polyglot, genius, negotiator, manager, mother of three—but she had a dark side, reportedly torturing and killing as many as 612 of her servants. Her story gave rise to tales of blood-bathing and vampirism; she was likely one of the models for Bram Stoker's novel "Dracula." Countess Báthory was as feared and hard-fisted a ruler as the men who also reigned in Eastern Europe—many of whom owed her money and coveted her lands and fortune. So the opera, which Bathory-Kitsz began creating in the 1980s, explores the question, "Was she the world's worst serial killer? Or was she the victim of a conspiracy?"

The role of Erzsébet is created by Lisa Jablow, noted soprano and conductor, who has studied the role since Bathory-Kitsz first approached her in 1999. Jablow reveals the complex persona of the Countess, an exhausting role in this opera with just a single character. The Vermont team also includes sculptor Pavel Kraus of Londonderry, who designed the sets; Meg Hammond and Katy Knuth of Montpelier, who created the costume; and Mark O'Maley of Plainfield, who designed the evocative lighting for the intense production.

Tickets are \$25. Tickets, information, posters, t-shirts, books and more are available at bathory.org or at the door. More information from the composer at 595-0787.

Lisa Jablow as Erzsébet Báthory • Ann Harvey, Director • Anne Decker, Conductor • Vermont Contemporary Music Ensemble, Steven Klimowski, Artistic Director • Pavel Kraus, Stage Designer • Meg Hammond & Katy Knuth, Costume Designers • Mark O'Maley, Lighting Director • Alex Vitzthum, Graphics Designer • Jim Eaton, Videographer
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