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NOTED COMPOSER LEE HOIBY TO PERFORM



One of the leading contributors to the American lyric stage, composer and Sullivan County resident Lee Hoiby's immense contribution to the song repertoire is recognized by American singers everywhere. The great American soprano Leontyne Price has championed his music, introducing many of his best-known songs and arias to the public.

On **July 14**, Hoiby brings one of his own pieces, "Last Letter Home," to the Weekend of Chamber Music's 14th Summer Festival, "Beethoven Schubert & the Americans" at the Eddie Adams Farm in Jeffersonville, NY. Baritone David Trombley, who is also a Sullivan County resident, will sing with Hoiby at the piano. The composer will also be on hand at 7pm Friday evening **July 13** for "At Work & Play Behind the Notes," the Festival's free, open rehearsal, to meet with the public and discuss his work before its 8pm Saturday performance.

Relevant to America at war today, "Last Letter Home" is set to the words of 34-year-old US Army Pfc. Jesse Givens' letter to his wife before he died in Iraq in May, 2003. To Melissa, his five-year-old son Dakota (nicknamed 'Toad') and his unborn child Carson (nicknamed 'Bean') Givens wrote: "I would like to think I made a positive difference in your life," and he says to them, "Please find it in your heart to forgive me for leaving you alone."

Trombley has enjoyed a career of opera and concert performances across the United States. He created leading roles in the world premieres of Philip Glass' "The Fall of the House of Usher" and Hugo Weisgall's "He and She." Trombley also sang a lead in the world premiere of "Skull and Bones," an oratorio by Henry Brandt. He has performed with American Repertory Theatre, Columbus Opera, the Opera Ensemble of New York and the Delaware Valley Opera, among other companies, and is director of the Sullivan County Community Chorus.

Born in Wisconsin in 1926, Hoiby became a piano prodigy as a child, studying with notable pianists Gunnar Johansen and Egon Petri. He was introduced to opera by his teacher at the Curtis Institute of Music, Gian Carlo Menotti, who involved him closely in the Broadway productions of *The Consul* and *The Saint of Bleeker Street* in the early 1950s. His 1971 setting of Tennessee Williams's *Summer and Smoke* was declared "the finest American opera to date" by Harriet Johnson of the New York Post.

Hoiby's style is an elegant and unobvious bridging of the lyrical worlds of Gershwin and Verdi, which can be profoundly moving or smoothly good-humored. There are significant contributions to the piano repertoire in his body of work, including two piano concertos and a volume of solo works, and his choral music is widely performed in churches throughout the USA and in Great Britain. Time Magazine applauded Hoiby's one-act opera, *The Scarf*, and his opera, *Natalia Petrovna*, was praised by the distinguished Washington critic Paul Hume, who wrote that the closing octet was "of overwhelming beauty, a supreme moment in opera."

Tickets to the Saturday concert are \$25, free for students 18 and under, and are available online at WCMconcerts.org. For information, call 845-932-8527 or 845-887-4803.