

DARON HAGEN

Composer, Author, Director

Overview

The impeccable craftsmanship, social conscience, and emotional accessibility of creative polymath Daron Hagen's compositions moved *Opera News* to declare, "Daron is music." He is also a stage director, auteur filmmaker, librettist, conductor, collaborative pianist, and the author of the critically acclaimed memoir, *Duet With the Past*. His works are performed worldwide; his catalogue spans over four decades and includes 14 operas and two internationally-lauled composer-directed opera films, 6 symphonies (major works celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ASCAP's 75th, the New York Philharmonic's 150th, the Curtis Institute's 75th, the University of Wisconsin Madison School of Music's 100th, and Yaddo's 100th), 14 concertos, over 50 chamber works, dozens of choral works, and over 500 widely-sung art songs.



Daron Hagen and Ashley Putnam debut *Phantoms of Myself* at the 92nd Street Y, New York City, May 10, 2000. p/c: Hiroyuki Ito / Getty Images

This Season

Film Noir: Concerto for Electric Guitar for D.J. Sparr is being premiered by a consortium of orchestras; *Everyone Everywhere*, a 50-minute oratorio celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for The Cecilia Chorus of New York with orchestra and soloists is premiered at Carnegie Hall. His second operafilm, *9/10: Love Before the Fall*, (simultaneously staged by Hagen with one cast and filmed with another cast on location at an Italian restaurant in Chicago) co-produced by his own Burning Sled Media, 534 Productions, and the Chicago College of Performing Arts and made possible in part by a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, opened at film festivals internationally in September. Two new

CD-releases on Naxos include Lyric Fest's *The Art of Song* and Duo YUMENO's *Heike Quinto*. He is in pre-production to direct his next two operafilms: *I Hear America Singing* (Pittsburgh, April 2024), and *New York Stories* (Eugene Opera, April 2025). Hagen has been commissioned by the Buffalo Philharmonic to compose *City of Light*, a major new work celebrating JoAnn Falletta's 25th season as music director of the orchestra.



Foundation Bellagio Residencies; the Camargo Foundation Residency; the Barlow Endowment Prize & Commission: the Gelin Tanglewood

The cast (l. to r.) of the opera film *9/10: Love Before the Fall*: Barbara Grecki (Lulu), Carlos Jaquez Gonzalez (Tony), CeCe Jude Hastreiter (Bibi), Daron Hagen (director/composer), Gilda Lyons (Trina), Roger Zahab (Charon), Robert Frankenberry (Cory), and Cameron Dammann (Orfeo) photographed at the beginning of the first day of location shooting at La Storia Restaurant in Chicago, IL April 7, 2022.

p/c: Mike Grittani

Plaudits

Hagen has received the prestigious Academy Award (2015) and the Charles Ives Fellowship (1983) from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; the Guggenheim Fellowship; the Kennedy Center Friedheim Prize; the Columbia University Beams Prize; the ASCAP-Nissim Prize, and both the ASCAP Samuel Barber and Irving Berlin Scholarships; two Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Residencies; the Camargo Foundation Residency; the Barlow Endowment Prize & Commission: the Gelin Tanglewood Fellowship; citations for excellence from the National Federation of Music Clubs and the College Band Directors National Association; and development awards from ASCAP, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Mellon Foundation, the Readers Digest Fund, and Opera America.



Daron Hagen reads from his memoir *Duet with the Past* at Oblong Books, Rhinebeck, New York, 2021. p/c: Karen Pearson

Kentucky Opera, and his musical *I Hear America Singing* for the Skylight Music Theater, as well as productions at the McCarter Theater in Princeton and Symphony Space in New York City, among others.

Writer, Performer, Director

His critically-acclaimed memoir, *Duet With the Past*, was published in 2019 by McFarland. As a stage director, he has mounted new productions of his own works for the Kentucky Opera, Skylight Music Theater, and the Buffalo Philharmonic, among others. As a conductor he has led world premiere recordings of several of his operas; he has appeared on three discs as a collaborative pianist for his art songs. In 2017, he founded the [New Mercury Collective](#), a group of creative performing artists with whom he develops and produces his new theatrical and film projects. Hagen made his debut as a stage director with Kentucky Opera and has directed productions of his operas *A Woman in Morocco* and *New York Stories* for

Filmmaker

For his auteur composer/filmmaking debut, the visionary operafilm *Orson Rehearsed*, released on Naxos Records (and [DVD/Blu-ray](#)) in March 2021, Hagen wrote the libretto/screenplay and score (both acoustic and electro-acoustic), stage (and film) directed, shot the film for the movies-within-the-film and staged opera, edited the film, and mixed the soundtrack. Presently garnering laurels at film festivals [worldwide](#), it may be seen on the major streaming platforms, and is receiving bookings for both theatrical screenings and physical productions in over a dozen countries. His second operafilm, *9/10: Love Before the Fall* (for which he served all of the creative roles as before, with the addition of conducting the orchestra) is now screening at festivals; his next two are in pre-production: *I Hear America Singing*, and *New York Stories*; a third, *Deception in Prayer*, is currently in development.



In theater with two of the Orsons from Louisiana State University's revival of *Orson Rehearsed*, Baton Rouge, LA, 2022. p/c: Brett Hebert

Recordings, Publishing, Representation

Hagen's music is recorded on the Affetto, Albany, Arsis, Belle Fleur, Bridge, Centaur, CRI, GPR, Klavier, MSR, Navona, Naxos, New World Records, Sierra Classical, and Sony Classical labels. His music was published exclusively by EC Schirmer in Boston (1982–90); and then by Carl Fischer Music in New York (1990–2006); he then self-published under the [Burning Sled Media](#) imprint for twenty years. The entire Burning Sled catalogue moved to Peermusic in 2022; he is now exclusively published by [Peermusic Classical](#) and represented by Kathy Olsen at [Encompass Arts](#). Hagen was a Manhattanite for 28 years; he and his wife, composer, and vocalist Gilda Lyons, moved Upstate in 2011 to raise their sons.



Conducting a scoring session for the soundtrack of the operafilm *9/10: Love Before the Fall* at Ganz Hall, Chicago, 2022. p/c: Mike Grittani

Arts Advocate, Educator

A Lifetime Member of the Corporation of Yaddo (1992-), Hagen served as president of the Lotte Lehmann Foundation (2003-2008), as a Trustee of the Douglas Moore Fund for American Opera (2005-18), and as a member of the boards of Joy in Singing (2003-05) and Composers Recordings Incorporated (2001-05).

As Founding Director of the Perpetuum Mobile Concerts in New York and Philadelphia (1984-90), Hagen programmed and presented new works by over a hundred contemporaries. He oversaw premieres of new works for orchestra and chamber ensembles by over a hundred composers and conductors as artistic director and chair of faculty of the Seasons Music Festival in Yakima, Washington (2005-

13). Composer-in-residence for the Denver Chamber Orchestra (1993-94) and the Long Beach Symphony (1991-93), he currently serves on the Distinguished Mentors Council of Composers Now (2015-) and co-chairs the composition program at the Wintergreen Music Festival (2014-).

Hagen was active as a professional music copyist and editor for much of the early part of his career. Following a stint at the Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music in Philadelphia (1981-1986) serving as a member of teams that hand-copied the first performance sets of works by historical figures from George Antheil to Carlos Salzedo, Moravian composers to living composers, Hagen worked exclusively for private clients (1986-1994) including Elliot Carter, David Diamond, Gian Carlo Menotti, George Perle, Ned Rorem, and Virgil Thomson, before accepting a desk at Chelsea Music (1994-1997) and joining teams as a union copyist attached to Broadway shows for The Really Useful Group, Disney Theatrical, Cameron Macintosh, Jujamcyn, Liza Minelli, and others. He stopped working as a copyist and engraver in 1997.



Directing Michael Brent and Joseph Flaxman in *A Woman in Morocco* at Kentucky Opera, Louisville, KY, May 6, 2015. p/c: Pat MacDonough, *the Louisville Courier Journal*

A prolific and dedicated educator, Hagen was a Lecturer on Music at New York University (1988-90) where he conducted the NYU-Washington Square Chorus; he was an Associate Professor at Bard College (1988-97) where he taught composition, ear-training, counterpoint, and harmony. As a Visiting Professor at the City College of New York (1993-97) he taught composition and orchestration; he taught composition at the Curtis Institute of Music (1996-98) as a member of the musical studies faculty. He served as a Visiting Artist for the Russian Opera Workshop at the Academy of Vocal Arts (2011-16), coaching standard opera repertoire in masterclasses, and presenting a yearly public lecture on the musical, dramatic, and historical context of a different Russian opera. He has also been a Visiting Artist at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (2021-2022) coaching chamber music.

Hagen served twice as a Visiting Artist for the Princeton Atelier (1998, 2005), sharing the collaborative space with creative partner Paul Muldoon first in a workshop for poets, composers, and singers; second for the creation of a chamber opera about James Joyce. He has also served as artist-in-residence at the University of Nevada Las Vegas (2000-02), Baylor University (1998-99), as Miami University's Sigma-Chi Huffman Composer in Residence (1999-2000), and as the Franz Lehár Composer in Residence at the University of Pittsburgh (2006-07). The Chicago College of Performing Arts created a unique Visiting Artist position for him wherein he directed staged and filmed productions of his operas combining graduate students and professionals while mentoring composers (2017-2023). He continues to accept invitations to give vocal performance and composition masterclasses nationwide.

Mentors

Born in Wisconsin, Hagen's earliest musical influences were the choral directors Wallace Tomchek and Kay Hartzell; his first writing mentor was Diane C. Doerfler. He studied composition with Les Thimmig and Homer Lambrecht at the University of Wisconsin at Madison; Ned Rorem at the Curtis Institute of Music; and with David Diamond, Joseph Schwantner, and Bernard Rands at the Juilliard School. After leaving Juilliard he studied privately with Lukas Foss and Leonard Bernstein. His piano teachers included Adam Klescewski, Jeannette Ross, and Marion [Zarzeczna](#); his conducting teachers were Catherine [Comet](#) and Bernstein.

Collaborators

Major orchestral commissions and performances have come from the Albany Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Buffalo Philharmonic, Denver Chamber Orchestra, Hawaii Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, Knoxville Symphony, Long Beach Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Nashville Symphony, National Symphony, New Mexico Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Oakland Symphony, Orchestra of the Swan, Orchestra Philharmonique de Nice, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Phoenix Symphony, Seattle Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, and the Wisconsin Philharmonic, among others.

Major theatrical commissions and performances have come from the Actors Theater of Louisville, Arizona Opera, Butler Opera Center, Center for Contemporary Opera, Chicago College of the Performing Arts Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Florida Grand Opera, Kentucky Opera, Opera

Louisiane, Madison Opera, Moores Opera Center, Opera Ireland, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, Sarasota Opera, Seattle Opera, Skylight Opera Theater, Texas Opera Theater, Tulsa Opera, West Edge Opera, and dozens of college opera programs internationally.



Conferring with conductor Roger Zahab while directing *Orson Rehearsed* at the Studebaker Theater, Chicago, 2018. p/c: Elliot Mandel

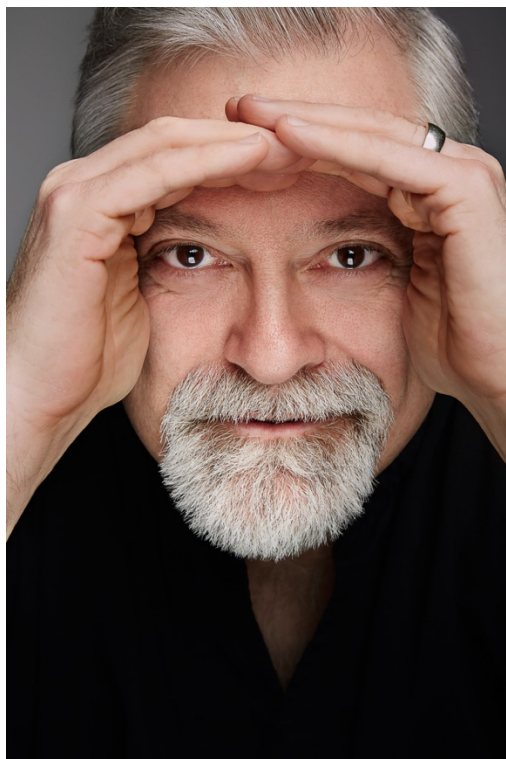
Some of the **conductors** who have conducted his music include Dean Anderson, John David Anello, Leonard Bernstein, Andrew Bisantz, Michael Borowitz, Leon Botstein, David Brophy, Dirk Brossé, Mei-Ann Chen, Michael Christie, Bobby Collins, Catherine Comet, Eugene Corporon, David Lewis Crosby, David Curtis, Lorenzo Della Fonte, John DeMain, Thomas Dvorak, JoAnn Falletta, Harvey Felder, Bruno Fernandez, Lukas Foss, Erin Freeman, Lawrence Golon, Michael Haithcock, Sharon Hansen, Mark Heron, Laura Jackson, Roland Johnson, Philip Kelsey, Kelly Kuo, Thomas Leslie, Andrew Litton, Benjamin Loeb, Zdenek Macal, Joey Mechavich, David Alan Miller, Brett Mitchell, Mark Mondarano, Michael Morgan, Stephen Osgood, Naoto Otomo, Troy Peters, Alexander Platt, Aik Khai Pung, Mark Russell, Kenneth Schermerhorn, Gerard Schwarz, Mark Shapiro, Leonard

Slatkin, James Smith, Lawrence Leighton Smith, Mark Russell Smith, William Smith, Robert Spano, Viswa Subbaraman, Somtow Sucharitkul, Alan Tinkham, Eric Townell, Angel Velez, Niklaus Wyss, Lidiya Yankovskaya, and Roger Zahab.

Some of the **instrumentalists** with whom he has collaborated include Rieko Aizawa, John Aley, Thomas Bagwell, Ralph Berkowitz, Michael Brofman, Bruce Brubaker, Stephen Caplan, Stephen Colburn, Tracy Cowden, Adrian Daurov, Roberto Diaz, Lara Downes, Jocelyn Dueck, Linda Edelstein, Joel Fan, Cris Frisco, Robert Gallagher, Teo Gheorghiu, Gary Graffman, Lisa Hasson, Sören Hermansson, Doug Hill, Kelly Horsted, Sara Kapps, Kathy Kelly, Jeffrey Khaner, Yoko Reikano Kimura, Kevin Krentz, Anthea Kreston, Yumi Kurosawa, Jaime Laredo, Michael Ludwig, Peter Marshall, David McGill, Ghenady Meirson, Michaela Paetsch, Marc Peloquin, J.J. Penna, Leonard Raver, Luis Garcia Renart, Sharon Robinson, Charles Ross, Sara Sant'Ambrogio, Verne Seilert, Livia Sohn, Ignat Solzhenitsyn, Robert Stallman, Tanya Stambuk, Hikaru Tamaki, Laura Ward, Ross Monroe Winter, Bruce Wolosoff, Christine Wright-Ivanova, Di Wu, and Brian Zeger.

Some of the **singers** with whom he has collaborated include Justine Aronson, Brian Asawa, Gabrielle Barkidjija, Kelly Ann Bixby, Meg Bragle, Michael Brent, Bille Brule, William Burden, Luretta Bybee, Steven Condy, Mark Crayton, Phyllis Curtin, James Demler, Stephanie Doche, Todd Duncan, Jane Eaglen, Steven Eddy, Elem Eley, Ashley Emerson, Lauren Flanigan, Joseph Flaxman, Kitt Reuter-Foss, Robert Frankenberry, Joseph Gaines, Bradley Garvin, Carol Greif, Nathan Gunn, Karen Hale, Brenda Harris, Heather Johnson, Patrick Jones, Seth Keeton, Judith Kellock, Carol Kimball, Paul Kreider, Dimitrie Lazich, William Lewis, Kate Lindsey, Shavon Lloyd, Gilda Lyons, Trevor Martin, Charles Maxwell, Dillon McCartney, Susanne Mentzer, Rebecca Myers, Marni Nixon, Kurt Ollmann, Robert Orth, Sidney Outlaw, Carolann Page, Charlotte Page, Keith Phares, Suzanne du Plantis, Gabriel Preisser, Ashley Putnam, Leandra Ramm, James Reese, Heidi Moss Sali, Randall Scarlatta, Brent Michael Smith, Michael Sokol, Paul Sperry, Laura Strickling, Nathaniel Sullivan, Elisa Sutherland, Daniel Teadt, Mark Thomsen, Brian Thorsett, Elaine Valby, Claire Vangelisti, Karen Vuong, Ben Wager, Douglas Webster, Stephanie Weiss, Robert White, Jorell Williams, Caroline Worra, Ariana Wyatt, Jennifer Zetlan, and Darynn Zimmer.

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Portrait by Karen Pearson.

Some of the **stage directors, choreographers, and librettists** with whom he has collaborated include Edward Albee, Diane Coburn Bruning, Ken Cazan, Martha Collins, Robert DeSimone, William Douglas, Jonathan Eaton, Scott Gilmore, Barbara Greeki, Rob Handel, Stephanie Havey, Dennis Jesse, Romulus Linney, Charles Maryan, J.D. McClatchy, Gardner McFall, Gian Carlo Menotti, Paul Muldoon, Chas Rader-Shieber, Buck Ross, Boris Sokoloff, Mark Streshinsky, Gore Vidal, and Stephen Wadsworth.

Some of the **ensembles** with whom he has worked include the Albany Pro Musica, Amelia Piano Trio, American Repertory Singers, Amernet String Quartet, Beijing New Music Ensemble, Borromeo String Quartet, Brass Ensemble of the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Brooklyn Art Song Society, Cassatt String Quartet, Cavani String Quartet, The Cecelia Chorus of New York, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Curtis on Tour, Debussy Trio, Duo YUMENO, Elements String Quartet, Entelechron Piano Trio, Euclid String Quartet, Fifth House Ensemble, Finisterra Piano Trio, Horszowski Trio, Interwoven, Kings Singers, Lark Quartet, Lehner Piano Trio, Lyric Fest, Milwaukee Choral Artists, Music of Our Time, New Asia Chamber Music Society, New World Trio, Oakwood Chamber Players, Present Music, Prometheus Piano Trio, The Sound Ensemble, Speculum Musicae, Sweet Plantain String Quartet, Voxare String Quartet, and the Wisconsin Brass Quintet.

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[DISCARD PREVIOUS ITERATIONS.]

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