



Operacon

with Somtow Sucharitkul

March 12–15, 2015, Milwaukee, Wis.

A four-day relaxacon in conjunction with the Milwaukee world premiere of "The Snow Dragon," the latest opera by award-winning sf and horror writer Somtow Sucharitkul (aka S.P. Somtow).

Events will include opening night at the opera and a post-show party at the Skylight Music Theatre on Friday, March 13, directors' and composer's talks, hanging out in the con suite with Somtow and other fans, games and videos and enjoying such Milwaukee specialties as cheese, fish fry, cheese, bratwurst, cheese, summer sausage, cheese, bheer, cheese, German fare, cheese, brandy old fashioneds, cheese, frozen custard, cheese curds and more cheese.

Come as you are for opening night or get out your formalwear, historic garb or steampunk finery.

Premiering Friday, March 13, 2015, at the Skylight Music Theatre in Milwaukee, Wis., "The Snow Dragon" is a chamber opera in English with music and libretto by Somtow Sucharitkul, based on his 1982 short story, "The Fallen Country." (Originally published in the Ace Books anthology "Elsewhere," the story was also adapted into a young-adult novel with the same name, published by Bantam in 1986.) After its Milwaukee world premiere, the opera will head to Thailand for a special performance in honor of King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

"The Snow Dragon" is the Thai-American composer and author's seventh opera. "In writing this work," Somtow says, "I hope to bridge many genres. This work connects opera and fantastic literature, speaks directly to young people in an accessible style which sacrifices none of the subtleties of 'classical opera.'"

Its melodically inventive music brings in the eerie tropes of fantasy and horror film music, making the score very accessible to an audience new to opera, with hummable tunes.

The opera's plot centers on young Billy Binder, who escapes from his painful life to a fantastic world of eternal snow, where he rides a dragon, fights monsters and rescues princesses. Yet the world is ruled by the evil and omnipresent Ringmaster. Defeating the Ringmaster in the fantasy kingdom is key to overcoming Billy's real-world problems, but that's easier said than done.

Viswa Subbaraman, artistic director of Skylight Music Theatre (and previously with Opera Vista in Houston and the Orchestre National de France), will provide music direction, and the stage director is Matthew Ozawa, whose credits include the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Houston Grand Opera.

Somtow Sucharitkul (aka S.P. Somtow)

Somtow Sucharitkul, pseudonymously known as S.P. Somtow and fondly called "Uncle Somtow" by sf fans across the U.S., has authored more than 50 books. Born in Thailand and reared in the U.K., Somtow began com-posing music while living in Thailand in the 1970s.



In 1979, he moved to the United States and became a fantasy and science-fiction writer and fan, regularly attending sf cons and gaining renown for such works as "Starship & Haiku"; the "Aquiliad," "Mallworld" and "Riverun" series; and "The Bird Catcher," as well as acclaimed horror novels including "Vampire Junction."

Somtow won the John W. Campbell Award, the World Fantasy Award, the International Horror Guild Award, the American Horror Award and many others.

In 2001, Somtow moved back to Thailand, refocused on music and founded Bangkok Opera, the country's first opera company, to produce his "Madana," the first full scale grand opera by a Thai composer. Along with Bangkok Opera/Opera Siam, Somtow now directs Siam Sinfonietta and the Siam Philharmonic Orchestra. For his contributions to Thai arts, Thailand's Ministry of Culture gave him its Silpathorn Kittikhun Award.

Skylight Music Theatre

More than 50 years old, Milwaukee's Skylight Music Theatre has achieved international recognition for its broad and adventuresome repertoire of baroque opera, European operetta, Gilbert and Sullivan, Broadway musicals, contemporary chamber operas and original musical revues. The Skylight produces over 90 performances each season, winning praise for artistic excellence and virtuoso ensemble productions.

Milwaukee

Set on Lake Michigan and crossed by rivers, Milwaukee is a city of contrasts: Its elegant Santiago Calatrava-designed art museum and the mechanistic Harley-Davidson Museum; hearty German fare and authentic Southeast Asian cuisine; the horticultural shrine of The Domes and the geek mecca of American Science & Surplus; beer and frozen custard; fashionable boutiques and thrift stores. There's lots to see and do.

Hotel Information

Our hotel is the luxurious Hilton Milwaukee City Center, 509 W. Wisconsin Ave., in downtown Milwaukee. A classic art-deco structure built in 1927, the newly renovated hotel boasts a AAA Four Diamond rating. It's close to many shopping and dining options, and a short walk from the Milwaukee Public Museum, one of the nation's largest natural-history museums.

Room rates are just \$100 for double-double or king rooms. We have a limited block at this rate, so please make reservations as soon as possible!
The room block closes Feb. 1.

Reserve at tinyurl.com/operacon-hotel or call (414) 935-5940 and be sure to say you're with Operacon.

Operacon Memberships

Membership rates:

Full attending: \$110 *as supplies last.*

No opera: \$55 *through Feb. 15, 2015.*

Supporting: \$25.

Full attending memberships include tickets for the best seats in the house for "The Snow Dragon" (regularly priced at \$77 plus service fees), post-show party with the cast, transport to the theater for the opera, talks by the director and composer, a fabulous con suite, a signed limited-edition libretto and many other treats.

The earlier you buy your membership, the better the opera seat we will hold for you. Please note:
Opera tickets are limited and we cannot guarantee tickets.

No-opera memberships are for folks who want to hang out with us for the weekend, but don't care to go to the show. Supporting membership gets you the pleasure of supporting the arts plus copies of our publications, and you can upgrade to full attending at today's price even after rates go up. (Supporting memberships are not transferrable.)

Buy memberships at fijagdh.com/operacon or mail a check payable to Richard Smith to Operacon, 2337 N. Lefebber Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53213.

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