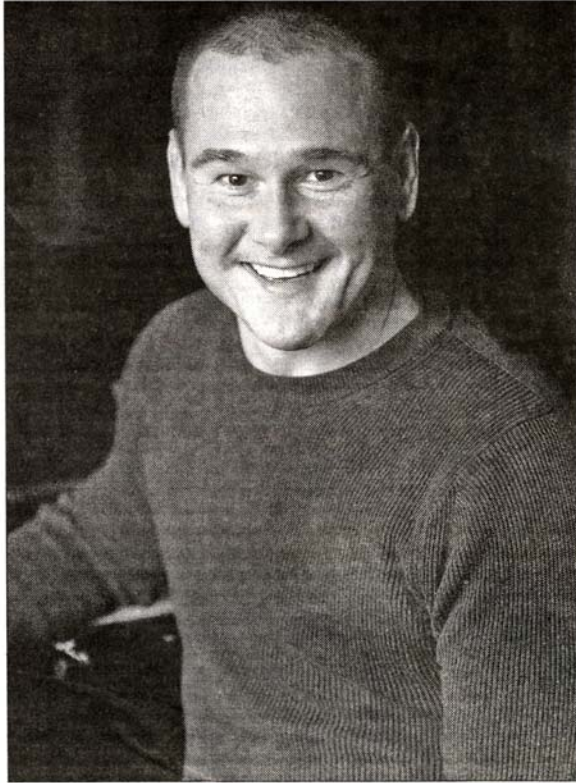


DAILY NEWS

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Jay Meetze brings Puccini's "Tosca" to parking garage of Williamsburg's Northside Piers tonight. Photo by Mike Albans/Daily News

Opera on the piers, with a touch of garage music

BY RACHEL MONAHAN
DAILY NEWS WRITER

IT WILL BE just a parking garage in one of Brooklyn's exploding condo market buildings — except tonight, it'll be a place to see an opera.

The Opera Company of Brooklyn will perform Puccini's "Tosca" in an indoor ground-floor parking garage of Williamsburg's Northside Piers, built by a partnership, including luxury developer Toll Brothers.

Tonight's show already is sold out, but the company's artistic director is promising more performances in unusual places.

"Our goal is always to offer cheap tickets and perform in unusual venues for those people who feel intimidated walking into the great opera houses," said company director and conductor Jay Meetze. "It's to bring in the newer, younger audiences."

Like the Vertical Player Repertory — the opera company that performed in September on an old Red Hook oil tanker — the Opera Company of Brooklyn has performed on the water, too, at Bargemusic at Fulton Ferry Landing.

They've also performed in a private penthouse in Manhattan and at the Brooklyn Museum of

Art's "Eternal Egypt" exhibit.

Intimate settings also help foster singers starting their careers, said Meetze.

"They get performance opportunities without leaving New York or giving up their day jobs," he said.

The free tickets were snapped up by 100 opera fans within 15 minutes, Meetze said.

The company's next available show is "The Barber of Seville" in March somewhere in downtown Brooklyn.

Meetze overflows with ideas for future opera venues.

He's talked about creating progressively elaborate performances in honor of each condo tower completed by Northside Piers. He also has eyed the lobbies of buildings and even closed storefronts.

He hopes someday to perform in an even more unusual venue: a private jet — one with a piano — which he admits would require the assistance of a sound engineer.

"Fortunately, opera's kind of loud," he said.

The acoustics of the Williamsburg garage are to be improved for the performance with a large carpet and drapes to prevent echoes. Northside Piers is bringing in heaters and floodlights.

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