

COMPLETE LIBRETTO

The Whole Truth

A Chamber Opera in Seven Scenes

Music
Robert Paterson

Libretto
Mark Campbell

Based on the short story of the same name by
Stephen McCauley

Commissioned by UrbanArias,
Robert Wood, Executive and Artistic Director

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CAST

Megan 1, Soprano. A young woman of about 30 years old.

Megan 2, Mezzo-Soprano. A young woman of about 30 years old.

The Man, Baritone. About 30 years old, but playing all of the male roles which range in age from 25 to 60 years old.

A note on casting: The two Megans should look alike as much as possible. Casting twins is impossible, of course, but it's optimal that they not be physically far apart in height, weight, etc. They should wear the exact same costume: casual but conservatively stylish: Eileen Fisher.

SETTING

A bed (which doubles a psychiatrist's couch, a dentist's chair, a low table, and an actual bed). The bed is placed on the vertical with the head above the foot of the bed. Either a real bed (recommended) or a projection of the bed may be used. Curtains may be lowered in front of the bed to indicate bed coverings or tablecloths. Similarly, backdrops could be employed in a similar fashion like large flip charts on an easel with the stand-up bed being the "easel."

Behind the bed is a row of life-sized cardboard cutouts, all turned away, that represent the men in Megan's life.

The cardboard cut-outs are life-sized (or possibly larger). They are:

- Psychiatrist 1. A bespectacled, balding man in his early 60s, sitting in a psychiatrist's chair leaning forward with a notepad as if listening intently.
- The Lover. A somewhat handsome man in his thirties: thinning hair, tall, in decent shape. He should be dressed in a dentist uniform with dental instruments in his hands.
- The Husband. Pleasant-looking if boring man. Dressed in a polo shirt and ill-fitting khakis or Bermuda shorts. He should stand in a slouchy pose.
- The Carpenter. A very handsome guy in his late 20s who almost looks like he stepped out of a calendar. Long hair, scruffy, free spirit, the opposite of the husband. He wears a tool belt.
- Psychiatrist 2. A younger, sexier version of Psychiatrist 1, again with a notepad.

These cardboard cutouts should have strong spines in the back to keep them upright at all times. In general, when a scene involves one of these characters, the cut-out is turned to face the audience while the others are turned away. If they are placed onstage in a line, they should be ordered as above.

Scene 1. The Office of Psychiatrist 1.

[Lights up on Megan 1 and 2. They stand next to each other, as if lying on a psychiatrist's couch. The Man enters and turns around the cutout of Psychiatrist 1 to face the audience and positions it opposite to the two Megans. The Man stands behind or next to it.]

MEGAN 1: [To Psychiatrist 1.]

All in all, my marriage is fine.
The only reason
I have a lover
Is my fear of getting too close
To my husband.

MEGAN 2: [To Megan 1.]

All in all, your marriage is crap.
The only reason,
You took a lover,
A fellow dentist,
Is that you are totally bored
With your husband,
And your fear of getting too close
To your lover
Is what made you have the affair
With the carpenter,
Who last June did work on the den.

MEGAN 1: [To Megan 2.]

I can't tell *him* that.
That's like telling my own father.
Besides he finished the den
And I won't see the carpenter
Ever again.

MEGAN 2: [To Megan 1.]

Though you
Hope you do.

MEGAN 1: [To Megan 2.]

SHUSH.
It all makes perfect sense.
When I say...
[To Psychiatrist.]
I'm getting too close
To my husband...

MEGAN 2:

You really mean your lover.

MEGAN 1: [To Megan 2.]

Easy.
When I talk about...
[To Psychiatrist.]
The passion and sex,
I get with my lover...

MEGAN 2:

You really mean the carpenter.

MEGAN 1: [To Megan 2.]

Easy.

MEGAN 2:

Easy.
And when you talk of the boredom
In your marriage...

MEGAN 1:

I talk of...
[To Psychiatrist.]
The boredom
In my *first* marriage...

MEGAN 2:

Which you made up.
Imagine.
An entire *first* marriage—
Total fiction!

MEGAN 1: [To Megan 2.]

Easy.

MEGAN 2: [To Megan 1.]

Easy.

MEGAN 1: [To Megan 2.]

Easy.

MEGAN 2: [To Megan 1.]

Easy.

MEGAN 1, 2:

Easy.

MEGAN 1: [To Megan 2.]

(I based it on my parents' marriage.)

MEGAN 2:

As long as you keep your story straight.

MEGAN 1/MEGAN 2:

It's all good...

MEGAN 2:

As long as you keep your story straight.

MEGAN 1/MEGAN 2:

It's all good—just great.
Just great.
It's all good.