

THE OLD MAID AND THE THIEF

GIAN CARLO MENOTTI

PLUS OPERA & MUSICAL SCENES

BRENT WILSON
DIRECTOR

SHIO TEPPER
MUSIC DIRECTOR & PIANIST

ANAIIS LIBUNAO
COSTUME & MAKEUP DESIGN

JAMIE BIRKETT
SCENIC & LIGHTING DESIGN

STUDIO THEATRE
VC PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
4700 LOMA VISTA RD
VENTURA, CA 93003

EST 1926
Ventura
COLLEGE

FEBRUARY
5-7
2026

THURS / FRI @ 7 PM
SATURDAY @ 2 PM

ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY VALENTINA D'ANDREA

THE PROGRAM

(Total run time is approximately 95 minutes including a short intermission)

PART I-Scenes

Five Forever

from *Little Women*

Jo-Hannah Rezendes

Laurie-Oscar Cendejas

Meg-Alexis Zapata

Amy-Gabriella Gobuyan

Beth-Mariah Young

Debut performances of

A Gentleman in Moscow

Three scenes composed by Sio Tepper

The Poem

The Barbershop

The Count and Nina

Nina-Hannah Rezendes

Count Rostov-Oscar Cendejas

Yaroslav, the barber-Alexis Zapata

Grumpy Man-Mariah Young

Lily's Eyes

from *The Secret Garden*

Dr. Craven-Kimble Ouerbacker

Archie-Oscar Cendejas

Forget about the boy

from *Thoroughly Modern Millie*

Millie-Alexis Zapata

The Stenogs-

Hannah Rezendes, Gabriella Gobuyan, Isabelle Soto

Flannery-Mariah Young

Light

from *Next to Normal*

The Scenes Company

~SHORT INTERMISSION~
(60's Trivia)

Part II
The Old Maid and the Thief
libretto and music by Gian Carlo Menotti

Cast in order of vocal appearance

Hosts-Oscar Cendejas and Audrey Cunningham
Ms.Todd-Audrey Cunningham
Ms. Pinkerton-Rori Escudero
Laetitia-Kate Unger
Bob-Miles Jefferson

The Team

Director	Brent Wilson
Music Director	Sio Tepper
Scenic design/props	Jamie Birkett
Costume/Makeup design	Anais Libunao
Set Build	Tyson Sauthoff
Front of House	Gabriel Aragon
Marketing Content	Brian Hotchkin
Invoicing and Licensing	Laura Solis-Teteris
Lights	Paul

Costume Crew

Esmeralda Hinojosa, Rowena Muller, Mariana Garcia, Maritza Garcia

Director's Note about A Gentleman in Moscow

Few (if any) books have impacted me as much as *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles. The premise is rather simple: a man is deemed outspoken against an oppressive government and sentenced to house arrest in a hotel for the rest of his life. Within that simplicity, a remarkable story unfolds—one that teaches the main character, Count Alexander Rostov, how to find purpose while confined to the attic of the Metropol Hotel in Moscow, in the Soviet Union.

As Rostov lives out his sentence at the Metropol, decades of profound change sweep across the Soviet Union beyond its walls, and we are introduced to a cast of characters who come to play significant roles in his life.

I'm not particularly keen on labeling something a musical or an opera. When I read this book, it immediately made sense to me as a music drama. The characters are so vivid—and the story itself contains so much music—that commissioning a new work felt like the natural next step.

I'm intentionally not saying much more about the plot, because I hope each of you will read the novel. The scenes you'll hear tonight were selected by Sio and me as the right place to begin. They occur near the start of the story and won't spoil much—other than Rostov losing his magnificent mustache.

I'm grateful that Sio felt this was a project worth taking on, and I knew she would be the right person to compose the music. Our goal is for the complete work to be produced at Ventura College in the coming years.

Please enjoy this exciting new commission, with the composer at the piano.

Brent Wilson

SYNOPSIS of The Old Maid and the Thief

This one-act opera, divided into 14 scenes, is about an old maid, Miss Todd, who is a busybody in her small town. Though she is of high standing in her community, her love life has been bare for over forty years. Her housemaid Laetitia is a young, catty eavesdropper who is wary of becoming an Old Maid like her employer. Bob, a wanderer, comes to Miss Todd's door one afternoon while the town gossip, Miss Pinkerton is visiting. Enamored of his beauty, Laetitia easily convinces Miss Todd to let him stay. Getting acquainted with each other Laetitia then convinces Bob to stay by promising him more food and accommodations without any cost.

The next day Miss Todd learns from Miss Pinkerton of an escaped convict matching Bob's description is in the area. Distressed she tells Laetitia that Bob is undoubtedly the thief and they must get rid of him. Once again, Laetitia, insinuating that Bob is in love with her, convinces Miss Todd to let him stay. Undeterred, she leaves money out for Bob to "steal". Eventually unable to continue financing Bob, she resorts to stealing from her neighbors. Meanwhile, Laetitia is falling in love with the wanderer and sings "Steal Me Sweet Thief" an aria of her love for him, asking him to steal her away before time ravages and withers her looks.

Miss Pinkerton encounters Miss Todd and warns her to "Keep all the doors locked, keep all the windows closed" because the thief is in town and has stolen from the neighbors (when it is really Miss Todd who has been stealing from her neighbors.) Intending to leave the next morning Bob sings "When the Air Sings of Summer" (Bob's Bedroom Aria). To prevent him from leaving Laetitia asks him what he wants. He replies he would like to "have something to drink." Miss Todd, who, being a good prohibitionist, doesn't have any in the house and would scandalize the town if she was seen buying liquor, forms a plan with Laetitia to break into a liquor store.

The next day Miss Pinkerton visits Miss Todd at home and informs her that the liquor store has been violated and the owner attacked. A drunken Bob interrupts their conversation, singing loudly upstairs. She also says that the police are going to search every house to find the thief. Forcing Miss Pinkerton out the door, Miss Todd and Laetitia confront Bob about his true identity.

Explaining the police were on their way, Miss Todd plans to run away with Bob. Bob refuses to run away because he has done nothing wrong. Miss Todd "Is your love for me so small that you would see me in prison." Bob "Small? I don't love you at all" Miss Todd rages and leaves saying she would call the police and blame all the theft on him.

Glumly, Bob and Laetitia duet on whether to stay and face the charges or leave, Laetitia winning the argument. They steal all Miss Todd's valuables including her car and ride off together. Miss Todd returns to find everything stolen and collapses in grief.

Please check out the Performing Arts website at Ventura College for a list of upcoming events in the Performing Arts Center.

We cannot offer unique program without the kindness of our donors. If you're interested in giving to the Performing Arts, please visit

<https://venturacollegefoundation.org/donate/>

When you make your donation, please indicate how you'd like to see your donation implemented into our programs.

SPECIAL THANKS

Luvi Avendano, Brian Hotchkin, Olivia Barker, Christina Ramsey, the VC Music Faculty, Helen Yunker, Miriam Schwab, Laura Solis, Gabriel Aragon, and Anthony Mansueto