

Audition notice
Santa Monica College Opera Theatre
An American Tragedy by Tobias Picker

When: Monday, December 7, 2009 @ 7 pm – 10pm

Where: Santa Monica College, 11th & Santa Monica Blvd, room 107 (Edye Second Space)

What: *An American Tragedy* – West Coast Premiere, commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera in 2005

Contact: Gail Gordon gailrgordon@earthlink.net

Please email for an audition appointment prior to December 2, 2009.

Audition Requirements:

*2 arias – one MUST be sung in English

*Sight-read one selection in English

Performance dates: May 8th & 9th of 2010

Location: The Broad Stage

Rehearsal period: February through May of 2010.

Performance is through SMC Opera Workshop (dates to be determined)

Performances will be fully staged with orchestra. The composer, Tobias Picker will be in residence May 2 – 9th at Santa Monica College.

The Characters

Clyde Griffiths (baritone): A young American man.

Hortense (soprano): A beautiful young maid.

Grace Marr (soprano): A worker at Samuel Griffiths' factory.

Roberta Alden (soprano): A pretty worker at Samuel Griffiths' factory—later, Clyde's fiancée. **Bella**

Griffiths (soprano): Clyde's cousin, daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth.

Elvira Griffiths (mezzo-soprano): Clyde's mother, a missionary.

Elizabeth Griffiths (mezzo-soprano): Samuel's wife.

Sondra Finchley (mezzo-soprano): A beautiful, wealthy woman. She is a close friend of the wealthy Griffiths family.

Young Clyde (boy soprano)

Samuel Griffiths (tenor): Clyde's uncle, a wealthy industrialist.

Gilbert Griffiths (tenor): Clyde's stuck-up cousin, son of Samuel and Elizabeth.

Reverend McMillan (tenor): A minister who visits Clyde before his execution.

Orville Mason (bass): District Attorney.

3 additional children's voices

SATB chorus

The Inspiration

Dreiser based the book on a notorious criminal case. On July 6, 1906, resort owners found an overturned boat and the body of 20-year-old Grace Brown at Big Moose Lake in Up state New York. Chester Gillette was put on trial and convicted of killing Brown, though he claimed that her death was an accident. Gillette was executed by electric chair in 1908. The murder trial drew international attention when Brown's love letters to Gillette were read in court. Dreiser saved newspaper clippings about the case for several years before writing his novel. Clyde Griffiths was based on Chester Gillette, down to having the same initials.