

THE MAKING OF AMERICANS

**Libretto, Direction, Choreography and Media
Design by Jay Scheib**

A new opera composed by Anthony Gatto adapted from the
novel by Gertrude Stein

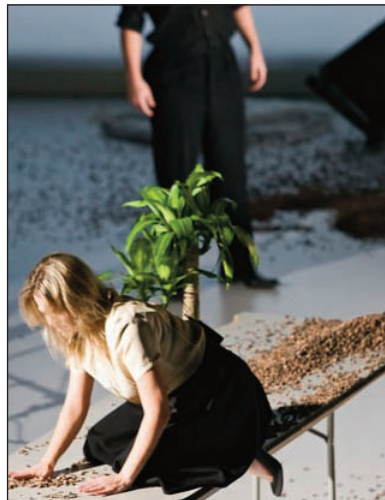
Performances History

The Making of Americans was developed at Massachusetts Institute of Technology with performances in Kresge Little Theater in November 2008 followed by its World Premiere at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, December 2008.



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Performances by **Rachel Calloway**, **David Echelard**, **Bradley Greenwald**, **Michael Müller**, **Elizabeth Munn**, **Pamela Stein**, and actress **Tanya Selvaratnam**; **JACK Quartet**, **Zeitgeist**, Stage design and installation by **Chris Larson**, Lit by **Peter Ksander**, Clothes by **Oana Botez-Ban**, Video Design by **Jay Scheib**, Sound Design **Peter Whincop**, Additional Design **Sara Brown**, Assistant Direction and Stage Management **Susan Wilson**, Music Direction by **David Pinkard**, Produced by **Thomas Kriegsmann / ArKtype** and **Beth Morrison Projects** in association with **Jay Scheib**, Music Composed by **Anthony Gatto**, Libretto after the novel by Gertrude Stein, Direction and Choreography by **Jay Scheib**





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About the play

The Making of Americans was conceived as a cross-media opera for small orchestra, string quartet, six singers, an actor and a chorus of families, and was adapted from Gertrude Stein's 900-plus page cubist novel of the same name. Stein's *The Making of Americans* was first published in 1925 in France. Her contribution to an environment of extraordinary experimentation in the arts was realized in her telling of a history of everyone everywhere at every time. Her novel is a painstaking description of exactly that—Humanity in America through the lens of a single family's progress across three generations. The result is a detailed motion portrait de-

scribed in slightly repeating aspects from an array of ever-shifting perspectives. Through her obsessive description of both the mundane and the fantastic events of living, succeeding at living, failing at living and coming eventually to the end of living, Stein's portrait of "a decent family's progress" becomes not only a meaningful meditation on the making of American people, but a profound and moving history of the making of America itself.

"Some time then there will be every kind of a history of every one who ever can or is or was or will be living...Sometime then there must be a history of every one who ever was or is or will be living,"



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Press Quotes

In the applied method of Stein, Scheib goes for a cross-pollination of artistic forms. In addition to the musical performance by singers and orchestra, spoken voice performance, and streaming and freeze frame video projections, the production integrated fluid choreography. The odd thing about the dancers that Scheib chose for this production is that they were not per se professional dancers, but students or graduates of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in such subjects as neuroscience. Nevertheless, the dancing was every bit as moving as anything on stage by known modern dance companies founded by such greats as Alvin Ailey, Paul Taylor, or Merce Cunningham.

Karren Alenier, Scene 4 Magazine



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Images

