

'WICKED' COMPOSER STEPHEN SCHWARTZ READIES FIRST OPERA

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Kristin Chenoweth in 'Wicked.'

You've probably heard his catchy songs from that best friend of yours who loves *Wicked*, or from the mouth of Amy Adams in *Enchanted*. And you can't help but sing along, even if you don't like musicals.

Stephen Schwartz, the composer of *Wicked*, as well as the lyricist for Disney's *Pocahontas*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *Enchanted* (and whose musicals have played at OCPAC), has recently announced that he will be writing an opera, which will have its world premiere in Southern California.

The opera is called *Séance on a Wet Afternoon*. Based on the novel by Mark McShane with the screenplay written by Bryan Forbes, the story is described as "psychological thriller." It's about a medium, Myra Foster, her husband Bill, and the spirit of their deceased 11-year-old son, Arthur, who speaks to Myra and is her contact during seances.

A look on the website finds that there are going to be no large dresses or men in frilled waistcoats in this opera. Instead, there are sketches of long trench-coats and skirt suits.

"I have always loved, listened to, and attended opera," says Schwartz on the [opera's website](#). He previously said that he was done writing for musical theater. "When I discovered this riveting story, I knew it demanded the kind of atmospheric moodiness that my music can provide. The two main characters are psychologically complex and compelling, with passionate needs and emotions. I am stretching the thematic and motific composition of my more recent musical theatre writing to create this dynamic new opera."

The opera was commissioned by Opera Santa Barbara as the first new opera for the newly reopened Granada Theater in Santa Barbara. It will also be the first collaboration between Schwartz and his son, Scott Schwartz, who will be directing.

Seance will have its world premiere on September 26 at the Granada Theater in Santa Barbara, with two performances on October 2nd and October 4th

Tickets will be available to the general public tomorrow at www.operasb.com or by calling the Granada Box Office at 805-899-2222. A preview of the score is also available on the official website.