

*Richard Danielpour*  
**THE GRAND  
HOTEL  
TARTARUS**

*A New Opera. Now Being Served.*



*Music and Libretto by*  
**RICHARD DANIELPOUR**

*Runtime*  
**110 MINUTES**

*Premiered by*  
**OPERA UCLA 2024**

*The Grand Hotel Tartarus* is a darkly comic opera exploring themes of sin, redemption, and choice. Six strangers arrive at a luxurious but mysterious hotel with no memory of how they got there. Hosted by the enigmatic Mr. Lucian—later revealed to be Lucifer—they slowly realize they are in Hell, each confronting the moral failings that led them there.

Lucian offers a choice: Will they remain in the seductive comfort of the hotel, where desires are eternally fulfilled, or pursue the challenging path to Heaven, requiring humility, grace, and forgiveness?

*The Grand Hotel Tartarus* presents a poignant exploration of human nature, leaving audiences to reflect on their own moral choices and the possibility of redemption. Can we truly change, or are we prisoners of our own flaws?

*Video Preview*



## Cast of Characters

**Dr. Veronica Vera (lyric soprano):** Cuban-American physician in her late 30's, on the faculty of a reputable medical school in California.

**Maria Maledetto (lirico-spinto soprano):** Italian-American, 40 years old, daughter of a prominent organized crime boss in New York. Sadistic in nature, she is unscrupulous and stops at nothing to exact revenge.

**Eleni Nikopoulos (mezzo-soprano):** Greek-American heiress business tycoon in her 50's, owner of a famous hotel chain. She is famous for abusing her employees and not paying her lawyers. A woman with a short temper.

**Senator Frank Falmouth (tenor):** United States Senator and real estate developer, in his late 60's. His complete lack of moral compass has enabled him to live in a world of lies. He has amassed compromising information about his many enemies, allowing him to remain in power in spite of his many unethical and illegal activities. His great weakness is attractive women; he cannot seem to keep his hands off them.

**General Curtis "Butch" Laturb (lyric baritone):** One-star Marine Corps general in his 70's. A war criminal whose wrongdoings were never punished. He has spent a good portion of his life trying to drink away the horrors of his past actions and behavior.

**Cardinal Georg Rottweiler (bass):** Prominent middle-aged member of the Catholic Curia in Rome. Addicted to gambling, he has embezzled and stolen hundreds of thousands of dollars from the Vatican Bank. In addition, he has protected abusers in his Church from prosecution. Aware of the suffering of the victims, he did nothing to help.

**Mr. Lucian (bass-baritone):** Hotel manager of the Grand Hotel Tartarus, elegantly dressed. A well-spoken man who appears to be in his 50's, although no one knows exactly how old he really is. He has the manner of a dispossessed European aristocrat.

**Three Guest Services Women (soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto):** Employees of the hotel who answer to Mr. Lucian. They sing together and nearly always appear together. They are often provocatively dressed in the manner of high-class sex workers. Originally envisioned as musical theater singers who can dance.

**Three Bellman (tenor, baritone, bass-baritone):** Employees of the hotel who answer to Mr. Lucian. They almost always sing together as if they have one brain. Originally envisioned as musical theater singers who can dance.

**Chorus (min. 18 SATB, 24 preferred):** Permanent guests of the hotel, they spend most of their time eating, gambling, and fornicating. They also serve as an off-stage chorus at the end of Act Two as the voices of Heaven.



Left to Right: Dominic Delzompo (Bellman 3), LaMarcus Miller (Mr. Lucian), Sam Song (Bellman 2), Andres Delgado (Bellman 1)  
Photo credit: @tasopapdakis



Left to Right: LaMarcus Miller (Mr. Lucian), Leela Subramaniam (Dr. Veronica Vera), Jared Jones (Cardinal Georg Rottweiler)  
Photo credit: @tasopapdakis





Left to Right: Chloe Cruz (Guest Services Woman 1), Tiffany Orlian (Guest Services Woman 2), Aran Denis (Guest Services Woman 3), LaMarcus Miller (Mr. Lucian), Dominic Delzompo (Bellman 3). Ben Lowe in background (General Laturb)  
Photo credit: @tasopapdakias



Shannon Delijani (Eleni Nikopoulos)  
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## *Instrumentation*

Flutes (2<sup>nd</sup> doubling Alto Flute)  
2 Oboes (2<sup>nd</sup> doubling English Horn)  
2 Clarinets in B $\flat$  (2<sup>nd</sup> doubling Clarinet in A)  
2 Bassoons

3 Horns in F  
2 Trumpets in C  
2 Trombones (Tenor & Bass)

Timpani  
Percussion (2 players)  
Piano  
Harp

Strings (min. 9,8,6,6,4\*)

\*At least one Double Bass with C-extension required

*The Grand Hotel Tartarus* may be performed with or without an intermission of approximately 20 minutes.

# *Synopsis*

*by Peter Kazaras*

*The Grand Hotel Tartarus* is a comic nightmare about what might be in store for us all.

Six guests appear at a hotel with no idea how they got there. Through the course of twenty-four hours, most of them eventually realize what has happened. One in particular chooses an alternate fate.

## Act I, Scene I

Six guests arrive in the lobby of The Grand Hotel Tartarus. They are Dr. Veronica Vera, Maria Maledetto, Eleni Nikopoulos, Senator Frank Falmouth, General Curtis (“Butch”) Laturb, and Cardinal Georg Rottweiler. They are greeted by Mr. Lucian, the hotel manager, and by his team of Three Bellmen and Three Guest Services Women. A Chorus of Hotel Guests also welcome the new arrivals.

Since their rooms are not yet ready, they wait in the lobby for a dinner that has been specially curated and prepared for them. Everyone except Veronica has something to say about the situation. Eleni is especially vehement.

## Act I, Scene II

Over after-dinner drinks, General Laturb and Senator Falmouth try to pump each other up as they remember and exult in their belligerent lives.

When Eleni Nikopoulos and Maria Maledetto hear what the men are saying, they shriek epithets at them across the lobby. Senator Falmouth makes his escape with the Three Guest Services Women.

## Act I, Scene III

A while later, Maria, Eleni and Dr. Veronica Vera are still waiting by themselves. Maria rebuffs the friendly advances of the Bellmen. The three women continue to wonder at how and why they have arrived where they are. Veronica has an inkling of what is going on, remembering a song that her grandmother taught her—“All things sing and all things sigh, All things live, and all things die.” The others still do not understand even when Veronica points out that there are no clocks anywhere, that everyone’s watch has stopped, and that there is no phone service.

Mr. Lucian arrives to let the guests know that their rooms are ready and that they have all been upgraded to luxury suites. The guests turn on him, enraged, demanding to know what is going on. He demurs, informing them that Veronica is the only one to realize the truth: They are all in Hell—their own particular version of Hell.

Mr. Lucian is, of course, none other than Lucifer, and he informs all of the guests that it is now time for them to rest, since there will be so much to discuss in the morning. He assures them all that he will always be there to keep them from harm, in a world without end.

A Prelude to Act Two connects the two acts.

## Act II, Scene I

During the Prelude, we see some of the six guests indulging in their obsessions.

As Act II begins, it is the next morning. Veronica confesses to Cardinal Rottweiler that she shot her husband when she discovered him in an incestuous act with their daughter, Sofia. She then drove to throw the gun off a bridge and decided on the spur of the moment to jump into the bay in order to end her life — another mortal sin. The Cardinal reminds her that despite her sins being great, she still has the chance to choose salvation. He acknowledges that he has sinned, too. He shares his own remorse for having protected guilty people in his Church from prosecution, thereby causing further harm to their victims.

Maria also wishes to confess. She tells the Cardinal how she avenged the death of her crime boss father by killing all those responsible, including the other crime bosses in the boroughs of New York. She brags about the sadistic joy she derived from her gratuitous acts of violence. She remembers that she got into her car and turned on the ignition, but after that everything is a blank.

In another area of the lobby, General Laturb remorsefully acknowledges that his excessive drinking over the years was a reaction to the horrors he perpetrated in Iraq. He realizes he is an unpunished war criminal.

The Three Bellmen offer breakfast to the guests, and Maria takes particular offense. She shoots the First Bellman, who falls to the floor, apparently dead. The guests watch in astonishment as he immediately gets up and dusts himself off.

Eleni now tells her story — her husband, Harry, poisoned her, sick of their long marriage and her endless nagging. She bursts into a bitter diatribe of self-justification.

Senator Falmouth and Mr. Lucian enter with the Three Guest Services Women, discussing their charms. When the Senator cluelessly tries to make a deal to leave the Hotel, Mr. Lucian has to remind him that deals are not possible in his current situation. However, the guests will all have one more choice to make before the end of the day. Senator Falmouth remains the only guest who does not understand what has happened.

## Act II, Scene II

Later that morning, the six guests are waiting for Mr. Lucian while the Chorus sings in the just-opened casino. Mr. Lucian reassures the six guests that no one is ever held against their will at The Grand Hotel Tartarus. They have until that night to decide whether they will stay or leave. Their choice, however, is irrevocable.

All the guests immediately assume they want to go to Heaven, but Mr. Lucian points out that if they stay with him, he can arrange to fulfill all their desires for eternity. In Heaven, by contrast, it is dull — with nothing but angelic choruses singing songs without words. He acknowledges that he once himself lived there, and recounts how he fell to his current situation, banished by the love evidenced by the sacrifice of God's son. He reminds his guests that if they choose to go to Heaven, they will have to practice generosity, honesty, humility, and grace.

The Three Bellmen and the Three Guest Services Women chime in with a song praising the magnificent Grand Hotel Tartarus.

## Act II, Scene III

Late in the afternoon of the same day, the Cardinal and the General are talking candidly with each other in the lobby. General Laturb realizes that although he wants to leave, he does not have the moral strength to reform his character. He regrets not having chosen a better life on earth. Both men acknowledge that it is too late to rewind their lives and begin again.

Across the lobby, Mr. Lucian asks Veronica how he can help her. Unable to forgive herself, she bursts out that she is agonized with worry about her beloved daughter Sofia, whom she has left without father or mother. Mr. Lucian shows her a portal in the hotel lobby, through which she would always be able to check in on her daughter should she choose to stay.

Left alone, Veronica prays to God, asking for Him to show her the way to Heaven, and entrusting Sofia to His care. She begs forgiveness not only from those she may have harmed, but also finally forgives herself. She begins to hear beautiful wordless singing, seemingly in response to her prayer. The other characters watch her with curiosity, but she is the only one who can hear the music surrounding her, which eventually guides her to her ultimate destination.



L to R: Dominic Delzompo (Bellman 1), Sam Song (Bellman 2), Andres Delgado (Bellman 3), Lilia Salido Rico (Maria Maledetto)  
Photo credit: @tasopapdakís

*For more information*

please visit

[www.richard-danielpour.com/the-grand-hotel-tartarus](http://www.richard-danielpour.com/the-grand-hotel-tartarus)

*For scores and production inquiries*

contact Bill Holab Music

[www.billholabmusic.com](http://www.billholabmusic.com)



Left to Right: Jared Jones (Cardinal Georg Rottweiler), Leela Subramaniam (Dr. Veronica Vera)  
Photo credit: @tasopapdakís