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Critic Raves About Laitman's Opera *The Scarlet Letter* World Premiere

Ellis Widner of The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette was ecstatic in his praise of last week's world premiere of Lori Laitman's opera *The Scarlet Letter*.

"Composer Lori Laitman has written gorgeous music that works hand-in-glove with the words of librettist David Mason and underpins the very essence of this psychological-social drama."

"Based on its world premiere Thursday at the Reynolds Performance Hall at the University of Central Arkansas, this great story seems be on its way to becoming great opera..... It is mostly sung dialog, but the few arias are at key moments are stunningly effective...Laitman's music can turn on an emotional dime, from the tense and emotionally complex confrontation between convicted adulteress Hester Prynne (soprano Christine Donahue) and Roger Chillingworth (baritone Robert Holden), the resurfaced husband determined to learn the identity of the child's father, to the achingly tender lullaby she sings to her daughter after Chillingworth departs. Laitman also shows great skill in the combination and repetition of motifs to heighten tension and revive a social-emotional subtext. At times, her music suggests the lushness of Stephen Sondheim."

The opera, based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's 19th century American masterpiece, was commissioned by The University of Central Arkansas. The composer was thrilled with the performance: *"As a composer you are always dependent upon others to make your music come to life. For an opera, one is dependent on a whole community of talent. I was very fortunate to have found a fantastic community at The University of Central Arkansas. The amount of talent and dedication each person gave to **The Scarlet Letter** was staggering. It was my true pleasure to work closely with all involved, and a thrilling sensation to watch everyone give their all to "birth" this opera."*

Source:

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