

SPRING 2017 OPERA SEASON

BRAVO



*The Girl of the
Golden West*

APRIL 1-9

The Hobbit

APRIL 29

Cyrano

MAY 13-21



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BRAVO

The Official Magazine
of Michigan Opera Theatre

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Welcome to the Detroit Opera House and the conclusion of our 2016-17 season. This season has been bittersweet for us – a time of artistic triumphs and signs of a promising future, coupled with the impending finale of David DiChiera’s tenure as Artistic Director of Michigan Opera Theatre. At the end of this season, we transition artistic leadership to our recently-appointed Principal Conductor, Stephen Lord.



David’s impact on both MOT and the city of Detroit has been tremendous. It was David’s vision in 1971 to build an opera company in Detroit when others said it could not be done. He jumpstarted development in Detroit’s Entertainment District with the renovation of two historic theaters – first Music Hall, and then 20+ years later our present-day Detroit Opera House. He has championed artists of color, advocating for color-blind casting and commissioning diverse operas. He has also supported the development of new operas and the next generation of composers and performers, maintaining opera as a living, breathing art form relevant to both present and future audiences.

As David transitions to Artistic Director Emeritus, we are proud to honor the work that he has done with a special DiChiera Grand Salute on May 19, 2017, the eve of the final weekend of performances of his opera, *Cyrano*. This star-studded evening will feature performances by world-renowned artists, many of whom have been influenced by David. We hope you will join us for this very special capstone event!

Stephen Lord’s appointment as Principal Conductor is particularly poignant, because it brings David’s legacy full circle. David hired Stephen for his first professional engagement in 1975, and he has since become a world-

renowned artist who has been a frequent conductor with MOT. With Stephen providing artistic leadership, we are confident of a great future ahead, built on a solid foundation of quality productions, community engagement, and patron support. In April, our audiences will see *The Girl of the Golden West*, conducted by Stephen in his first performance as Principal Conductor. Our season will end in May with *Cyrano*, David’s masterwork that received its world premiere with Michigan Opera Theatre in 2007.

As we look to the future, we are proud to announce our 2017-18 season, a combination of old favorites and exciting new material. Our opera season will include Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, Puccini’s *Tosca* and Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro*. It will also include *The Summer King* by Daniel Sonenberg, based on the life of legendary Negro League baseball player Josh Gibson, as well as *27*, by composer Ricky Ian Gordon and librettist Michael Korrie. This new opera, which will feature our MOT Studio Artists, is about the Paris salon of Gertrude Stein and her circle of artist friends, including Henri Matisse, Ernest Hemingway and Pablo Picasso, as they navigate life through two world wars.

Our dance season features the return of the American Ballet Theatre in a lavish production of *Romeo and Juliet*. It also includes Ballet Hispanico, Dance Theatre of Harlem, The Paul Taylor Dance Company, and a brand new production of *The Nutcracker* with the Cincinnati Ballet. We are especially pleased to announce that a highlight for next season will feature the incomparable Kathleen Battle in recital at the Detroit Opera House – an event not to be missed!

We hope you will join us for the remainder of this season and an exciting season ahead!

Wayne S. Brown
President and CEO
Michigan Opera Theatre

As I look back over the past 46 years, I am deeply grateful to the countless individuals, foundations and corporations, along with a wonderful board and staff, who have supported my efforts to provide our community with the glorious art forms of opera and dance. It has been the sense of family which I have enjoyed and which has energized and nurtured the growth and success of the Michigan Opera Theatre.



The Girl of the Golden West

April 1-9, 2017

MUSIC

Giacomo Puccini

LIBRETTO

Guelfo Civinini and Carlo Zangarini

WORLD PREMIERE

Metropolitan Opera -
New York, New York
Dec. 10, 1910

CONDUCTOR

Stephen Lord

DIRECTOR

Mario Corradi

CHORUS MASTER

Suzanne Mallare Acton

ORIGINAL SET DESIGN

Eugene Lee

Additional Scenery Designed by Scott Marr

COSTUME DESIGN*

Matthew LeFebvre

LIGHTING DESIGN

Kendall Smith

HAIR & MAKEUP DESIGN

Joanne Weaver

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

Roberto Kalb

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Andrew Neinaber

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER

Christopher Barbeau

STAGE MANGER

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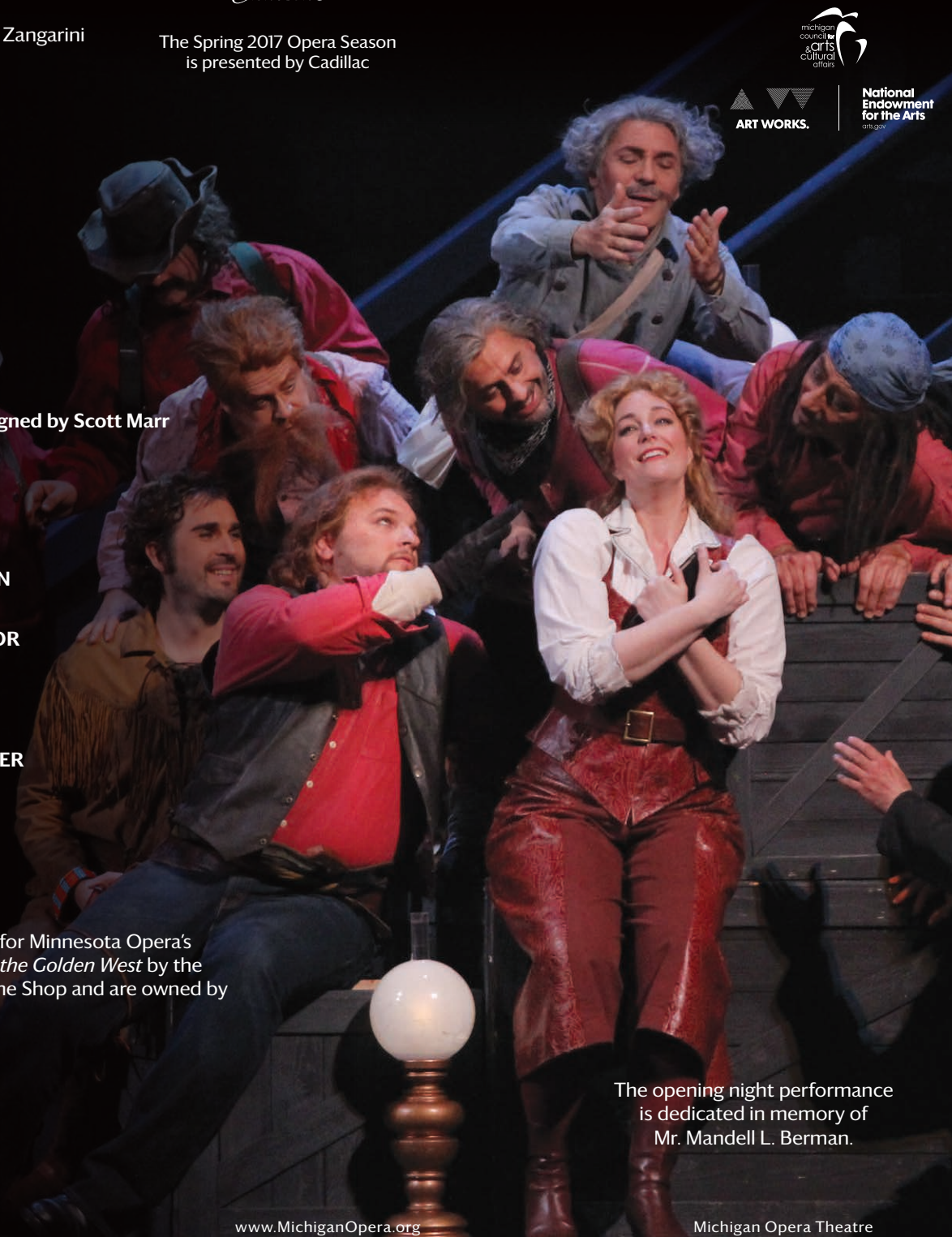
*Costumes were created for Minnesota Opera's production of *The Girl of the Golden West* by the Minnesota Opera Costume Shop and are owned by Minnesota Opera.



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The opening night performance
is dedicated in memory of
Mr. Mandell L. Berman.

CAST

(In order of vocal appearance)

Bello:..... Hadleigh Adams
Joe:..... Benjamin Robinson
Harry:..... Jonathan Blalock
Nick:..... Dennis Petersen
Happy:..... Nicholas Davis
Sid:..... John McCullough
Sonora:..... Jeff Byrnes+
Trin:..... Joseph Michael Brent+
Larkens:..... Dominik Belavy
Jack Rance:..... Mark Delavan
Jake Wallace:..... Harry Greenleaf
Ashby:..... Brent Michael Smith+
Minnie:..... Meagan Miller (April 1,5,8);
 Melissa Citro (April 9)
Postiglione:..... Jason Thomas
Dick Johnson:..... Rafael Davila (April 1,5,8); Jeff Gwaltney (April 9)
Jose Castro:..... Jesús Vicente Murillo
Wowkle:..... Briana Elyse Hunter+
Billy Jackrabbit:..... Glenn Healy

+Michigan Opera Theatre Studio Artist

nobody will harm her or touch the gold. She shyly invites him to visit her in her cabin later that evening.

ACT II

In Minnie’s cabin in the mountains, the Indian woman Wowkle sings a lullaby to her baby and bickers with the child’s father, Billy Jackrabbit. Minnie arrives and excitedly prepares for her meeting with Johnson. Alone with him, she gives in to his declarations of love and they kiss. Johnson, full of doubt as to how to tell her about his true identity, is about to leave, but she asks him to stay for the night as it has begun to snow. When several shots are heard, Johnson hides in the closet. Rance appears with some of the men and tells Minnie that they are concerned for her safety—they have discovered that Johnson is Ramirrez. Minnie claims to know nothing and the men leave. She then angrily confronts Johnson, who makes excuses about his past and declares that when he met her he decided to give up his former life. Deeply hurt, Minnie sends him away. Another shot rings out. Johnson, wounded, staggers back into the cabin and Minnie hides him in the attic. Rance returns, certain he has found his man, and demands to search the room. Minnie refuses and the sheriff is about to give up when a drop of blood falls on his hand from above. Johnson is forced to surrender, but Minnie has an idea—she challenges Rance to a game of poker. If he defeats her, she will give herself to him; if he loses, Johnson goes free. Minnie cheats and wins. Rance leaves.

ACT III

Johnson has been nursed back to health by Minnie. Again on the run from Rance and his men, he is eventually captured in the forest. As the miners prepare to hang him, Johnson asks for one last mercy—that Minnie believe him free and far away (“Ch’ella mi creda”). Rance is enraged, but the men hesitate. At that moment, Minnie rides in, wielding a pistol. When her pleas to spare Johnson prove fruitless, she reminds the men how much they owe her. The miners finally give in and release Johnson. He and Minnie ride away to start a new life together.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

A miners’ camp in California, 1849–50. At sunset at the Polka Saloon, Nick, the bartender, prepares for the miners’ return from the hills. Jake Wallace, a traveling minstrel, sings a sentimental song that causes Jim Larkens to break down in tears. The men collect money for his passage back home. Trin and Sonora both bribe Nick to help them win the heart of Minnie, the owner of the bar, with whom all the men are in love. Sid cheats at cards and Jack Rance, the camp’s cynical sheriff, marks him as an outcast. The Wells Fargo agent Ashby arrives with news of the imminent capture of the Mexican bandit Ramirrez and his band. An argument breaks out between Rance and Sonora, each claiming Minnie will be his wife. Things almost get out of hand when Minnie herself appears. The men calm down and sit to listen to Minnie’s bible teaching. Later, alone with her, Rance confesses his love to

Minnie (“Minnie, della mia casa”). But she is not interested and, recalling her happy childhood, paints a different picture of her ideal love (“Laggiù nel Soledad”).

A stranger appears in the bar, introducing himself as Dick Johnson from Sacramento. Minnie recognizes him as a man she once met on the road. The jealous Rance orders Johnson to leave town, but when Minnie declares that she knows him, the others welcome Johnson. As he and Minnie dance, the miners drag in a man named Castro, one of Ramirrez’s band. Castro pretends that he will lead them to their hideout. He then whispers to Johnson—who is in fact Ramirrez—that he let himself be captured to lure the miners away from the saloon, in order for Johnson to rob it. The men depart with Castro, and Minnie and Johnson are left alone. She tells him about her simple life and that she is still waiting for her first kiss. When she shows him the hiding place where the miners keep their gold, he replies that as long as he is nearby,

Suzanne Mallare Acton

Chorus Master

Suzanne Acton has received wide acclaim for her choral direction involving more than 125 productions in seven languages.



Conducting credits include *West Side Story*, *Music Man*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *Daughter of the Regiment*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata* and *Carmina Burana* with *The Medium* for MOT; *My Fair Lady* and *La Traviata* for Dayton Opera; *Merry Widow* and *Madame Butterfly* for Artpark; and *Tosca* for Augusta Opera. As founding Director of the MOT Children's Chorus, Ms. Acton was instrumental in developing the inaugural 2007-2008 season. She is also the Artistic and Music Director of metro Detroit's Rackham Choir.

Hadleigh Adams

New-Zealand born baritone Hadleigh Adams has received international acclaim for his performances on stage and in concert. He



is renowned for his dynamic stage presence and ability to draw true, honest characters in his performances. His broad repertoire spans from Baroque and Bel Canto through Britten and contemporary composition. He has collaborated with some of today's greatest artists on the concert platform, and on the opera stage.

Dominik Belavy

Baritone Dominik Belavy is a Bachelor of Music student at the Juilliard School under the tutelage of Sanford Sylvan.



At Juilliard, he has been featured as Thomas Bouché in Kurt Weill's *Down in the Valley*, L'horloge Comtoise and L'arbre in Ravel's *L'enfant et les Sortilèges* and Conte Perrucchetto in Haydn's *La fedeltà premiata*. He also covered Presto in Juilliard's production of *Les mamelles de Tirésias* and Kuligin in Janáček's *Kát'a Kabanová*. Mr. Belavy has been featured in recital in New York, London and Dublin in *Drums and Guns*. He recently made his Alice Tully

Debut apart of the *Wednesday@1* series singing Vaughn-Williams' *Songs of Travel*. This season, he will debut at Opera Theatre of St. Louis as a Gerdine Young Artist, singing Yakuside in *Madama Butterfly* and Trucker Joe and Constable in Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Grapes of Wrath* and covering Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly* and Noah in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Jonathan Blalock

Highly acclaimed for his work in 20th and 21st century opera, Jonathan has appeared in a number of world premieres, including Huang Ruo's *An*



American Soldier with Washington National Opera, *The Secret Agent* with the Center for Contemporary Opera in NYC and the Armel Festival in Hungary; Jorge Martin's *Before Night Falls* with Fort Worth Opera; and Paul's Case with Urban Arias, which Alex Ross in The New Yorker declared it as one of the top ten musical events of 2014, saying, "The tenor Jonathan Blalock was transfixing in the title role; Spears's score glistened beautifully and eerily around him." In addition, Jonathan sang The Electrician in Adès' *Powder Her Face* with West Edge Opera, made his Virginia Opera debut as Cégeste in Philip Glass' *Orphée*, and has sung in the same composer's *Hydrogen Jukebox* with both West Edge Opera and Fort Worth Opera.

Joseph Michael Brent

Joseph Michael Brent is an artist of Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. Last season he appeared as 3rd SS Officer in Mieczyslaw Weinberg's *The*



Passenger, Malcolm in Verdi's *Macbeth*, and first armored man in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. In 2015, Mr. Brent made both role and company debuts as Mayor Upfold in the Bronx Opera's production of *Albert Herring* and Edgardo in the New York Opera Exchange production of *Lucia di Lamermoor*. He earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Georgia in the fall of 2014 with a dissertation on selected vocal works of Giovanni Paolo Bottesini. He is a native New Yorker, a proud

graduate of the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, and holds an undergraduate degree from the conservatory of music at Purchase College S.U.N.Y. in double bass performance. He was a student of Metropolitan Opera baritone Frederick Burchinal.

Jeff Byrnes

Baritone Jeff Byrnes returned to Michigan Opera Theatre this season as a Studio Artist.



He performed the roles of Schanuard in *La Bohème*, 1st SS Officer in *The Passenger*, Old Servant in *Elektra* and The Bonze in *Madame Butterfly*. Prior to joining MOT, he performed the role of Owen Hart in *Dead Man Walking* with Dayton Opera, and he covered Germont in *La Traviata* and Balstrode in *Peter Grimes* with Des Moines Metro Opera. Other operatic highlights include Leporello in *Don Giovanni* and the title role in *The Mikado* with the Natchez Opera Festival, and Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Sprecher in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Pilate in *St. John Passion* with CCM Opera. He was a regional finalist in the Rocky Mountain Region of the Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions in 2014.

Melissa Citro

In the 2015-16 season Ms. Citro made her Washington Opera debut as Guttrune in their new



production of *Götterdämmerung*, returned to New Orleans Opera as Rosilinde in *Die Fledermaus*, and made her debut with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in *Mahler's 2nd Symphony*. Recent engagements include her debut with the San Francisco Opera as Freia in *Das Rheingold*, and Guttrune in *Götterdämmerung*, and her role debut as Sieglinde in Wagner's *Die Walküre* with the Virginia Opera. Last season she covered Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* with San Francisco Opera, and returned to the Metropolitan Opera where she covered Renee Fleming in the title role in Dvořák's *Rusalka*. Prior to that, she joined the San Francisco Opera and the Metropolitan Opera

casts of *The Makropulous Case*, where she covered Karita Mattila as *Emilia*, and made her role debut as Senta in Lyric Opera of Kansas City's production of *Der Fliegende Hollander*. In the 2014-15 season she performed the role of Rusalka with New Orleans Opera and the title role in *La Wally* in her debut with the Dallas Opera. Future engagements include returning to the role of Minnie in *The Girl of the Golden West* with Opera Colorado.

Mario Corradi

Mario Corradi made his MOT debut in 1996 staging *Carmen* and most recently directed the fall 2015 production of *La Bohème* for the company. He began his theatrical career with the Yale University Theatre but, as he could not get rid of his (slight) Italian accent, he moved from acting to directing. Beginning with his debut in Palermo in 1982 with Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, Mr. Corradi has worked on all continents except Australia and has added more than 60 titles to his repertoire. He is the first Italian director ever to be invited to do Wagner in Germany.



Rafael Davila

Tenor Rafael Davila has quickly risen to be one of the most sought after tenors of his generation. With almost 60 roles already under his belt, in the 2014-15 season he debuted as Des Grieux in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* under Maestro Plácido Domingo's baton in Valencia, Dick Johnson in *The Girl of the Golden West* and Don Jose in *Carmen* for Minnesota Opera, and Cavaradossi in *Leipzig*. 2015-16 engagements included a return to Washington National Opera as Don José in *Carmen*, Opera de Puerto Rico as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* opposite soprano Ana María Martínez, his debut with Chicago Lyric Opera in the world premiere of the opera *Bel Canto*, his return to Valencia for *Aida*, his debut with the Macerata Festival as Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and his return to Lyric Opera of Kansas City as Don Jose in *Carmen*.



Nicholas Davis

Acknowledged for his rolling mellifluous baritone (Opera Today), Nicholas Davis is enjoying success both at home and internationally. In 2014, Mr. Davis became the first American to win first prize in the International Antonín Dvořák Singing Competition. The 2015-2016 season saw Mr. Davis' international debut in concert with the National Theatre Prague under the direction of maestro Libor Pešek. He was also hosted in recital at the American Center for the U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic. Mr. Davis made his Santa Fe Opera debut in the 2016 season as Jake Wallace in *The Girl of the Golden West* and Gregorio in Gounod's *Rome et Juliette*. This season, Mr. Davis will appear with Chicago Opera Theater, the Janesville Choral Union, debuting with the Chicago Sinfonietta, debuting with Michigan Opera Theatre, and the Glimmerglass Festival.



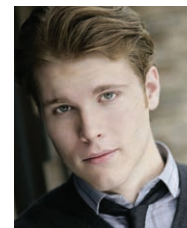
Mark Delavan

Mark Delavan is known as an international opera star with critically acclaimed performances in *Sweeney Todd* at The David Koch Theater and throughout the world. With his charismatic personality, versatile voices, and incredible guitar skills, this character actor is now in demand on screen and television! Among his operatic credits Mark Delavan counts numerous opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Berliner Staatsoper, Bayerische Staatsoper, Lyric Opera of Chicago, New York City Opera, Santa Fe Opera and Washington National Opera, to name a few. He has performed at such venues as Carnegie Hall and Royal Albert Hall, and his festival credits include the BBC Proms, Edinburgh Festival (UK), Britten Festival (Italy), Spoleto Festival, U.S.A., the Metropolitan Opera's Concerts in the Park, and the Saito Kinen Festival (Japan), among others.



Harry Greenleaf

Baritone Harry Greenleaf is a native of Wixom, Michigan who made his debut with MOT in 2016 in the role of Top in *The Tender Land*. He is a proud alumnus of the Michigan State University College of Music, and received a Master of Music at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Harry has been a Studio Artist with the Wolf Tap Opera Company and an Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera. His performances have included roles in *La Traviata*, *Les mamelles de Tirésias*, *The Little Prince*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Carmen*. In addition to *The Girl of the Golden West*, he will perform in MOT's upcoming production of *Cyrano* as *Le Bret*.



Jeff Gwaltney

Jeffrey Gwaltney was awarded the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Scholarship in 2010 and remained at the Washington National Opera under Maestro Domingo's guidance until 2012. In 2011, he was invited by Francesca Zambello to be a Glimmerglass Young Artist and returned to the festival in 2012.

At Washington National Opera, his roles have included: Abdallo in *Nabucco* and Normanno, as well as First Prisoner in *Fidelio* with the National Symphony Orchestra. His cover roles included Cavaradossi, and Oreste in *Iphigénie en Tauride* and Pinkerton.



Glenn Healy

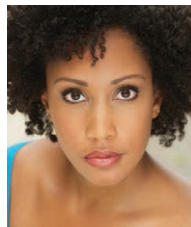
Glenn Healy, a native of San Francisco, CA, holds a Bachelor and Master in Music from the University of Michigan. Most recently, Mr. Healy was seen performing Don Inigo Gomez in Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole* and Simone in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* in the University's riveting double-bill. Outside of his scholastic preparation, Mr. Healy participated in a multitude of training programs throughout Europe. Such



credits include the Moravian Masterclass (CZ), Tyrollean Opera Program (AT), and Music in the Marche (IT).

Briana Elyse Hunter

Briana Elyse Hunter is a Studio Artist with the Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. Her previous credits include Jo March in Michigan Opera Theatre's *Little Women*, as well as roles in *Carmen*, *Cendrillon*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Iolanta*, *Summer and Smoke*, *Silent Night and Ragtime*. She has worked under the direction of The Royal Shakespeare Company as both actress and vocal soloist in an original production *For Every Passion Something that premiered at the Fringe Festival in Scotland*. She was a 2014 recipient of the Lys Symonette award in the KWF's Lotte Lenya Competition. She has been on the rosters of Santa Fe Opera, Knoxville Opera, American Opera Projects, Opera in the Heights, I SING BEIJING, Sarasota Opera, El Paso Opera, and Music Academy of the West where she sang the title role of *Carmen* under the tutelage of the great Marilyn Horne.



Stephen Lord

Stephen Lord joined Michigan Opera Theatre as Principal Conductor in November 2016 and he will lead the company's artistic activities through the 2018-19 season.



Opera News named Lord one of the "25 Most Powerful Names in U.S. Opera" (one of four conductors). He is continually praised for conducting both traditional and contemporary operatic works of his debut with San Francisco Opera, conducting *Rigoletto*, one critic observed, "He partnered his singers perfectly and gave everything its proper weight – he was master of the score's details and the orchestra played superbly for him." He is currently music director of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and was music director of Boston Lyric Opera. He now serves as artistic director of opera studies at the New England Conservatory, overseeing all aspects of the opera training program and conducting one main stage production a year.

In addition to his opera endeavors, Stephen Lord has conducted at Carnegie Hall for PDQ Bach's annual concerts and at the Berkshire Choral Festival Institute. He teaches Master Classes at various institutions including Yale University, The Blossom Festival, the Hartt School of Music, and Westminster Choir College, and he serves as an adjudicator in vocal competitions such as the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions, Opera America's George London/Sullivan Grants, and the Richard Tucker Foundation.

Johnathan McCullough

Baritone Johnathan McCullough spends the 2016-17 season as both an Emerging Artist at Opera Philadelphia and a Diploma Candidate in Opera at the Curtis Institute of Music. Season highlights include his European debut in a new production of Rameau's *Zoroastre* with Komische Oper Berlin. Next season highlights include Mr. Grotowicz in the World Premiere of *Elizabeth Cree* by Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell as well as Moralès in *Carmen*, both with Opera Philadelphia.



Operatic credits include J. Robert Oppenheimer in *Doctor Atomic*, Il Conte in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Tarquinius in *The Rape of Lucretia*, Schaunard in *La bohème*, Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*, Lescaut in *Manon*. Johnathan was also part of the 2012 YAVA summer program at Houston Grand Opera where he covered the title role in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd's *Prince of Players*.

Johnathan is a recipient of a 2013 Career Bridges grant and a 2012 George London Foundation Encouragement Award.

Meagan Miller

Acclaimed for the expansive colors, rich tones and texture of her voice, soprano Meagan Miller is making celebrated debuts on important stages worldwide, interpreting the leading ladies of Mozart, Strauss, Verdi and Wagner. Her compelling stage presence,



intelligently nuanced portrayals and varied repertoire have been applauded at such distinguished opera houses as the Bayerische Staatsoper, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Hamburg State Opera, New National Theatre Tokyo, Metropolitan Opera, Oper Leipzig, Opera Monte Carlo, Teatro Massimo di Palermo, Volksoper Wien, Washington National Opera, and Wiener Staatsoper, among others. Orchestral engagements have taken Ms. Miller to such venues as Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw, Hong Kong's Cultural Center, Los Angeles' Hollywood Bowl, Melbourne's Hamer Hall, Minneapolis' Orchestra Hall, New York's Avery Fisher Hall and Carnegie Hall, Rotterdam's De Dolen, Scotland's Edinburgh International Festival, and Washington, DC's Kennedy Center.

Jesús Vicente Murillo

A native of Detroit, Bass-Baritone Jesús Vicente Murillo made his professional debut at the age of 18 with Michigan Opera Theater as The Android in *The Very Last Green Thing* and returns to MOT as Jose Castro in *The Girl of the Golden West*. Mr. Murillo's career has included appearances with The Ohio Light Opera as Kalman Zsupán in *Der Zigeunerbaron*, Giorgio in *The Gondoliers*, Mr. Jackson in *Silk Stockings*, and Jenkins in *Lady, Be Good!*; Arbor Opera Theater as Colline in *La bohème*; Main Street Opera Theater as King Balthazar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*; Seagle Music Colony as Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, and Bill Calhoun in *Kiss Me, Kate*; The University of Michigan Gilbert and Sullivan Society as Giuseppe Palmieri in *The Gondoliers*, King Hildebrand in *Princess Ida*, and Sir Marmaduke in *The Sorcerer*. For the rest of the 2016-17 season, he will be performing Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola* with Opera Louisiane, Bob Noxious in *The Final Battle for Love* with Thompson Street Opera, and will be covering Ali Hakim in *Oklahoma*, and Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto* with Charlottesville Opera.



Dennis Petersen

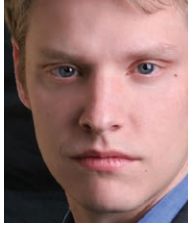
Through his innate sense of style, command of languages, and superior acting abilities, tenor Dennis Petersen is sought after for a variety of operatic

roles, including Tristan in *Tristan und Isolde*, Florestan in *Fidelio*, the Captain in *Wozzeck*, Aegisth in *Elektra*, Canio in *Pagliacci*, and the title role in *Peter Grimes*.



Benjamin Robinson

Benjamin Robinson, described as a “charming lyric tenor,” is a native of Raleigh, North Carolina and is progressively becoming known for his “emphatic characterizations” and “easy vocal production and... luscious instrument.” This season Benjamin sang Basilio/Curzio in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Salt Marsh Opera, Larry/Matt in *The Face on the Barroom Floor* with Chelsea Opera (“musically strong, dramatically satisfying” - Opera News) and the Britten *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*.



Brent Michael Smith

Brent Michael Smith is an artist of Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. Last year he was an Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera, where his performance as Billy Jackrabbit in *The Girl of the Golden West* received critical acclaim by Opera News as a “standout.” Colorado Music Buzz praised him for “making the most of his brief appearances.”



He received his Master of Music degree under the tutelage of John Hines. He received his Bachelor’s in music in piano performance from Hope College (Holland, MI). Mr. Smith is a first-place winner in the Grand Rapids Opera Competition (2012).

Kendall Smith

Lighting Designer
Kendall Smith has designed lighting for more than 70 productions with MOT, making his debut in 1988 with *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, and most recently designed lighting for the company’s spring 2015 production of *The Merry Widow*. His work has been featured in numerous productions by

respected companies, theaters, and festivals including Florida Grand Opera, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Minnesota Opera, and Walnut Street Theatre.



Joanne Middleton Weaver

Wig and Makeup Designer
Born in England, Joanne Weaver came to the U.S. in the late 1980s. She began apprenticing with what was then

Washington Opera, now Washington National Opera. Ms. Weaver has since designed at many opera companies throughout the U.S., including Glimmerglass Opera, Central City Opera, Sarasota Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City and Des Moines Metro Opera. Her notable MOT credits include *The Magic Flute*, *Macbeth*, *The Passenger*, *Frida*, *The Merry Widow*, *Faust*, *Margaret Garner*, *Cyrano* and *The Pearl Fishers*.



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PUCCINI'S GOLDEN GIRL: A New Work for the New World

BY AUSTIN STEWART

The *George Washington* steamed into New York harbor on 16 November 1910, in time for Giacomo Puccini to join rehearsals of *The Girl of the Golden West* (also known as “*La fanciulla del West*”) at the Old Metropolitan Opera. Puccini’s career spanned 40 years, though a total output of 12 operas attests to a painstaking self-criticism and review of potential subject matter. The composer had often struggled to find stories that inspired his imagination, though the novelty of a Western set in the Sierra Nevadas had recently sparked a creative flurry. Puccini first crossed the Atlantic in 1907 to supervise the American premiere of *Madama Butterfly*. While here he saw many plays, including *The Girl of the Golden West* by David Belasco, the “Bishop of Broadway,” known for his eccentric demeanor, cleric-collared shirts, and unwavering commitment to theatrical realism. As with *Madama Butterfly* before, it would be Belasco’s words that inspired Puccini’s only American saga.

While the composer may have been growing tired of “*Bohème, Butterfly* and company,” they established a burgeoning American market for his music, magnifying his fame worldwide and a demand for new operas. The exotic element of the American West and the golden girl’s Broadway success naturally appealed to Puccini, though he still had only an elementary understanding of English—and of the play’s content for that matter. He sent his copy of the script to the Italian poet Carlo Zangarini (whose mother was from Colorado), and the three-year process of translating and transforming Belasco’s play into *The Girl of the Golden West* began.

In June 1910, after two years wrought by personal scandal and public embarrassment, Puccini



Enrico Caruso (Johnson) and Emmy Destinn (Minnie) in a publicity shot for the premiere production of *The Girl of the Golden West*, 1910. (Metropolitan Opera Archives, New York)

formally signed a contract with the Metropolitan Opera to bring his American opera to the stage. The management also granted his request that the premiere be conducted by Arturo Toscanini, with assistance in the staging provided by Belasco himself. He was also granted luxury casting with arguably the two greatest voices of the day scheduled to create the roles of Johnson and Minnie: the Italian tenor Enrico Caruso, and the Czech soprano Emmy Destinn. Puccini had already heard Caruso sing Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*) in 1907, and though he was never an overly enthusiastic proponent of the tenor, he was assured that he would carry the role of Johnson admirably. The beloved Bohemian of the operatic world, Emmy Destinn had become one of the most sought after singers from New York to London and Berlin, revered especially for her interpretation of the title roles in Richard Strauss’s *Salome* and Puccini’s *Tosca*.

Caruso and Destinn first sang

together at the Metropolitan Opera during her debut season of 1908; in that season alone they appeared opposite each other in *Aida*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Pagliacci*, and more. This also marked the first season when the Met was not managed by Austro-German impresarios. Two years later, *The Girl of the Golden West* was the first commission made by the Met’s new Italian managers, a major upheaval from its traditional repertory of Wagner, Bellini, Gounod, and Verdi. The Caruso-Destinn duo was together again, and failure was not an option.

Belasco later wrote in his memoirs: “It was necessary to harmonize this incongruous collection of nationalities and make them appear as Western gold-miners – to create through them an atmosphere of the wild Californian days of 1849... Never before had I dealt with a more tractable and willing company of stage people.” The playwright hailed from San Francisco, born there during the Gold Rush in 1853; there was only one American

cast in the opera, while the rest of the cast included 10 Italians, a Bohemian, a Spaniard, a Frenchman, and two Germans. On Belasco rested the responsibility of capturing the Wild West in the stage action, along

with the added challenge of teaching the singers how to carry themselves as Americans. There was also the issue of "kissing like an American," in which Belasco had to direct Caruso away from his Italian instincts, a scene amusingly captured by a *Times* reporter: "No, he doesn't grab hold of her roughly. He comes forward this way, see? With his arms out-stretched. Just a little one [kiss]." For his own part, the reporter of this incident boasted, "People will pay \$10 a seat and \$120 for grand tier boxes next Saturday night, but they won't see Belasco show Caruso how to kiss a young lady saloonkeeper. Money can't buy everything."

On 10 December 1910 came the true "first night" for the Metropolitan Opera, and by all reports, the golden girl's premiere was flawless in every way. The audience included J. Pierpont Morgan, John Jacob Astor, the

Guggenheim and Vanderbilt families, as well as Blanche Bates—the stage and early film actress who had created the role of Minnie on Broadway—who, it was said, left the performance in tears. The *Times* reported: "Miss Destinn



Giacomo Puccini

in the title role earned new laurels, both as singer and actress. She portrayed the simple charm of the girl and also showed the tremendous depths of the first love that had come into her life. She sang as she never

had here before, particularly in the second act, when her vocal art was taxed to the utmost." And Caruso, a seasoned hunter and relatively rugged individual as far as opera singers go, was lauded that "Despite his nationality he looked the part, and he acted it with naturalness. Vocally he was glorious... In the final duet his voice and Miss Destinn's had appealing qualities that brought tears to many eyes." Puccini was elated: "I am unutterably happy. The performance has been perfect. I have no doubt now of its success;" while Belasco, reminiscing about childhood scenes and his own forty-

niner father, stated that "the scenes I loved so well ... were glorified by the art of the greatest living composer, Giacomo Puccini." No fewer than 55 curtain calls were offered to the composer and cast throughout the evening, and at the final curtain, Puccini was presented a solid silver wreath designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany himself.

The premiere of *The Girl of the Golden West* sparked a windfall off new "American" works, inspired by armchair adventures in the West, Native American legends, immigrant stories, and adaptations of Old World classics. It opened America as an operatic topic – "operatized America," as one commentator put it – painting in musical drama the clash of classes, races, money and morality, and cultures present in the western United States during the Gold Rush. With *The Girl of the Golden West*, Puccini's inventiveness and command of the orchestra, the realism and novelty of the story, and its happy ending transported the folklore of the Wild West from the dirt-floored big tops of Buffalo Bill's traveling shows to the stages of the world's finest opera houses. It's in one of those temples of art that we still enjoy this classic work of Americana, produced by an Italian for the ages.

The April 1 performance is dedicated in memory of Mr. Mandell 'Bill' Berman, Michigan Opera Theatre Trustee 2001 - 2016.



Bill Berman was a longtime supporter of Michigan Opera Theatre and an avid Detroit philanthropist. Bill was a former Trustee and donor whose contributions spanned decades. After returning to Detroit from serving in World War II as a U.S. Naval officer, Bill launched a prolific development company, building homes and apartments all across the Midwest. Along with his wife Madge, Bill was committed to making a difference in the lives of others. As a leader in the community, he served as president of the Council of Jewish Federations of North America and co-founded the Jewish Education Service of North America. Bill and Madge later founded the Berman Theatre at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield and the Berman Center for Jewish Education at Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield. Their generosity has impacted the lives of many and enriched Detroit's cultural community. Bill's presence at MOT will be truly missed. In honor of his commitment and all that the Bermans have contributed to MOT, the April 1 performance of *The Girl Of The Golden West* is dedicated to his memory. Bill Berman, 1917 - 2016.

The Hobbit

A children's opera by Dean Burry

April 29, 2017



CONDUCTOR
Dianna Hochella

DIRECTOR
Kelsey Ross

PRINCIPAL CHORUS DIRECTOR
Dianna Hochella

PREPARATORY CHORUS DIRECTOR
Jane Panikkar

SET DESIGN
Jeffrey W. Dean

COSTUME DESIGN
B.G. Fitzgerald
Additional Costume Designs by
Suzanne Hanna

LIGHTING DESIGN
Heather DeFauw

HAIR & MAKEUP DESIGN
Elizabeth Geck

PROPERTY MASTER
Monika Essen

STAGE MANAGER
Nan Luchini

SURTITLES
Dee Dorsey

ORCHESTRA
Eliot Heaton, Violin
Nadine Deleury, Cello
John Dorsey, Percussion
Joseph Jackson, Piano

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Cast

In order of appearance
Understudies in parenthesis

Old Bilbo Baggins - Fred Buchalter

Elf Maidens (Eagles):

Amarind - Samantha Radman

Gallind - Amber Ohlsson

Cwelulind - Jessica Decker

Lanthirind - Melody Balos

Lasslind - Katherine Fuller

Naurind - Alexandra Beck

Young Bilbo Baggins - Cavelle

Doucet-Lefebvre (Jaeden Footitt)

Gandalf - Tyler Bouque

Dwarves:

Dwalin - Edward Eichenhorn

Balin - Rachel Miltimore

Fili - Molly Levin

Kili - Shiloh Beaton

Dori - Natalie Watson

Nori - Hazel Ward

Ori - Gabrielle Duso

Oin - Jaeden Footitt

Gloin - Laura Rosales

Bifur - Matteo Papadopoulos

Bofur - Soleil Garcia-Johnson

Bombur - Kevyn Roessler

Thorin - Emma McDonald (Soleil Garcia-Johnson)

Lalaith - Xaneveya Davidson

Hwiniol - Portteia Davidson

Elrond, Elf Lord - Ryan Blankenburg
(Natalie Corrigan)

Great Goblin - Noah Trudeau
(Benjamin Ward)

Bolg - Kristen D'Souza

Colg - Skylar Reynolds

Gollum - Jehnya Footitt (Isabella Vesprini)

Eagle Lieutenant - Katherine Fuller

Eagle Lord - Samantha Radman

Thranduil - Natalie Corrigan (Ryan Blankenburg)

Bard the Bowman - Brooke Pacifico

Master of Lake-Town - Benjamin Ward (Skylar Reynolds)

Smaug - Tyler Bouque

Thrush - Melody Balos

SYNOPSIS:

The Story of THE HOBBIT, an opera by DEAN BURRY

The Hobbit, an opera by Dean Burry, is based on the book of the same name by J.R.R. Tolkien. The opera was composed in 2004 and tells the story of a hobbit (a very small person who lives in a house in the ground) named Bilbo Baggins.

At the beginning of the opera, Bilbo, as an old hobbit tells the audience that they are about to see an opera about his life. A long time ago he found a very dangerous magic ring and many elves, dwarves and humans have gathered to decide what to do with it. He bids everyone good luck and the opera begins.

It is a bright sunny day in the town of Hobbiton. Hobbits are going about their business: farming, cleaning and dancing. A wizard named Gandalf appears and says that he wants Bilbo to go on an adventure. Hobbits don't like adventure and he bids Gandalf "good day" – but not before inviting him to tea.

Later, the doorbell rings, but instead of a wizard, it is a dwarf, followed by another...and another until thirteen dwarves sit at Bilbo's table eating his food and drinking his drink. Gandalf appears as well, and Thorin, the leader of the dwarves tells Bilbo they need his help as a burglar to reclaim their gold, stolen by Smaug the dragon. Bilbo is again frightened but agrees to go on the quest.

After leaving his home to travel to Smaug's lair, far away in the Lonely Mountain, the dwarves and Bilbo find some beautiful swords that were in the treasure of some trolls. They bring them to the Elf Lord Elrond in the town of Rivendell. He tells them that the swords are called Glamdring and Orcrist and are very ancient. Bilbo is given a knife, which to him is as big as a sword. Elrond tells them that they will need the swords, as there are many dangers in their path.

While crossing the Misty Mountains, the company is captured by a horde of goblins and taken before their king, The Great Goblin. Just as they are about to be killed, Gandalf the Wizard appears with a flash of magical light. Thorin kills the Great Goblin with his

sword and they escape, chased by more screaming goblins.

On the way out, Bilbo is lost and finds himself alone in a cave with a nasty little creature named Gollum. On the ground, Bilbo finds a magic ring, which can make him invisible. Gollum wants to eat Bilbo, but after a game of riddles, Bilbo puts on the ring and escapes.

Now back together on the other side of the mountain, the company is again attacked by goblins and wolves. They climb into the trees, which the goblins light on fire. When all seems lost, a group of giant eagles flies down and saves them, carrying them to the edge of the evil forest of Mirkwood, where Gandalf leaves them.

In Mirkwood they encounter giant spiders and the angry Elf-king Thranduil. They are captured, but this time it is Bilbo, with the help of his magic ring that saves them.

After a brief stop at Laketown, where humans live, Thorin and company travel to the Lonely Mountain where Smaug the dragon lies sleeping on their treasure. Bilbo has a conversation with him, but is tricked into revealing that they had help from Laketown, which Smaug flies off to destroy. With help from a small bird called a thrush, Bard, the captain of Laketown learns of a weak spot in Smaug's belly. With his last black arrow he kills the dragon, but not before Laketown burns down.

Learning that the dragon is dead, the armies of Laketown and the Elf King of Mirkwood arrive at the Lonely Mountain to claim their share of the treasure. Thorin refuses, but when an army of goblins and wolves arrives, the Men, Dwarves and Elves realize they must fight together. There is a massive battle and many are killed, including Thorin. However, the dragon is now dead and the goblin army destroyed. There will be peace in the land. Bilbo, accompanied by Gandalf, return to Rivendell and sing a song of joy with the Elves.

Gandalf/Smaug - Tyler Bouque

Tyler Bouque, a senior at Troy High School, returns to the Detroit Opera House stage after singing as a MOTCC chorister from 2010-2013.



Four years later, he continues to pursue classical singing and intends to study vocal performance and music composition in college this fall. Tyler's knowledge and passion for opera was cultivated during his time with MOTCC. Tyler is an intern for Rackham Choir, and currently studies voice with Professor Drake Dantzer at Oakland University.

Elrond, and Elf Lord - Ryan Blankenburg

Ryan Blankenburg (Elrond) is a sophomore at The Roeper School.



Within Ryan's five years at MOTCC, she has played YumYum (*The Mikado*) and Amy (*The Very Last Green Thing*) and has been a member of MOT's *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute*, *La Bohème* and *Turandot*. She also enjoys piano, saxophone, and drums.

Old Bilbo - Fred Buchalter

Fred is thrilled to be invited to share the stage with the wonderful MOTCC.



No stranger to the Detroit Opera House, Fred has performed in over eighty productions with Michigan Opera Theatre in the chorus as well as in several roles. When not involved with MOT, he can be found on stage at many local theatre companies, including Meadowbrook Theatre, Jewish Ensemble Theatre and Planet Ant. Fred also spends each December as a caroller for holiday nights at Greenfield Village. In addition to performing regularly, Fred recently retired from CBS Radio after over 30 years in the business.

Thranduil, King of Wood Elves - Natalie Corrigan

Natalie has been a part of MOTCC for four years and loves the thrill of performing. She has been in various plays, operas, and musicals, including: *Peter Pan (Captain Hook)*, *The Sound of Music (Louisa)*, and *Brundibár (The Dog)*. She hopes to pursue her love of singing as a career.



Bilbo - Cavelle Doucet-Lefebvre

Cavelle is thrilled to be playing Bilbo. He caught the theatre bug at age 8 as a munchkin. Roles include Micheal Banks (*Mary Poppins*), Horton (*Seussical Jr.*), and Jafar (*Aladdin Jr.*). Cavelle also enjoys playing saxophone and juggling with his dad the Stilt Guy.



Gollum - Jehnya Footitt

Jehnya Footitt, 15, is homeschooled in Detroit's Boston-Edison neighborhood. This is her fifth year with MOTCC, and she has enjoyed each opera she has performed in. She plays piano, violin, guitar, and especially loves to learn new languages. A dancer since the age of 3, she looks forward to her role as Gollum.



Elizabeth Geck

Wig and Makeup Designer

Elizabeth Geck has been MOTCC's Wig and Make-up Designer since the ensemble's inaugural season. Ms. Geck has assisted with several new productions including *Aida*, *Cyrano*, *Margaret Garner*, and *Pearl Fisher*. Elizabeth designed wigs and make-up for Motor City Lyric's production of *Amahl and the Night*



Visitors as well as Grosse Pointe Theater's production of *West Side Story*.

Dianna Hochella

Dianna Hochella (Conductor) is the assistant director and conductor of Michigan Opera Theatre's Children Chorus. Ms.



Hochella serves as Choral Director for Clague Middle School in Ann Arbor, MI. As a member of the Michigan Opera Theatre Chorus, Ms. Hochella has performed on the MOT main stage productions in the world premiere of *Cyrano* and *Margaret Garner*. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree in music education from Radford University in Virginia and a Master of Music degree in vocal performance from the University of Michigan. Her passion is teaching and sharing her love of opera and great singing with young singers.

Thorin - Emma McDonald

Emma, 13, is looking forward to attending Windsor's Walkerville Creative Arts High School this fall. Performing since age 3, she's earned many awards on her musical journey. Emma is grateful to MOTCC for the exceptional training and the opportunity to play Thorin in *The Hobbit*, marking her 30th theatrical production!



Jane Arvidson Panikkar

Jane Arvidson Panikkar (MOTCC Preparatory Conductor) is the conductor of the Michigan Opera Theatre's Preparatory



Chorus. Jane is also a professional pianist, trumpeter, vocalist, music educator and composer. For the past four years, Jane has been on the music faculty at Concordia University conducting the chamber choir, while also maintaining a private

voice studio, and performing and conducting in the area. Jane is in high demand as a collaborative pianist, as well as directing and conducting for professional and amateur theater companies.

Kelsey Ross

Kelsey Ross (Director) is an up-and-coming stage director based in Detroit. This is her second production with MOTCC, having directed 2015's *The Very Last Green Thing*. Ms. Ross has worked as an assistant director with Michigan Opera Theater, Des Moines Metro Opera, Boston University Opera Institute, and the Boston Conservatory. This summer she will be a Young Artist Director with the Glimmerglass Opera Festival.



Azog, the Great Goblin - Noah Trudeau

Noah Trudeau is a ninth grade honor student at Trenton High School. Noah has been with MOTCC for four years and a section leader for two. He has performed in main stage operas, community outreach programs and completed musical theater training at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp and Baldwin Wallace University.



ELF MAIDENS



Amarlind - Samantha Radman

Samantha is a second year chorister and a sophomore at the International Academy of Macomb. As a participant in choir and drama at her school, she is very involved in the arts. She performs at a local restaurant and was the soloist in her school's fall production.

Gallind - Amber Ohlsson

Amber Ohlsson, in her fourth year at MOTCC, has appeared in the productions of *Brundibár*, *The Very Last Green Thing*, *La Bohème*, *The Mikado*, and *Carmen*. She is in her third year with the PCEP Orchestra as a violinist, in Liberty Middle School Choir, and a member of National Junior Honors Society.

Gwelulind - Jessica Decker

This is Jessica's first year with the MOTCC. She enjoyed performing in the main stage production of *Carmen* this fall. She is also a member of the Ferndale Middle School Jazz Choir.

Lanthirlind - Melody Balos

Melody is thrilled to play an Elf Maiden in her fourth (and final) children's opera with the MOTCC. She would like to thank her entire MOTCC family for making the past four years phenomenal

and Mrs. Hochella and Ms. Acton for helping her to learn and grow as a performer.

Lasslind - Katherine Fuller

Katherine Fuller is a vibrant 15 year old, 10th grade student from Wyandotte, MI., enjoying her fifth season with MOTCC. Katherine has sung in many shows including three main stage operas, *La Bohème*, *Turandot*, and *Carmen*. Kate enjoys playing alto sax, volunteering, and creating beautiful art work in her spare time.

Naurilind - Alexandra Beck

Alexandra is a 6th grade student who loves music, reading and animals. In addition to performing with the MOTCC, Alexandra is an accomplished violinist. This is her third year with the MOTCC, and so far, *The Hobbit* is her favorite opera.

Opera in Concert
Handel's *Ariodante*
 Starring **Joyce DiDonato**, mezzo-soprano

The English Concert
Harry Bicket, artistic director
Christiane Karg, soprano
Joëlle Harvey, soprano
Sonia Prina, contralto
David Portillo, tenor
Matthew Brook, bass-baritone
Tyson Miller, tenor
 Tuesday, April 25 // 7:30 pm
 Hill Auditorium

First among equals in a spectacular cast, Joyce DiDonato sparkles in this brilliantly melodic tale of obsession and betrayal, which will be performed in concert with conductor Harry Bicket and The English Concert. "Joyce sings, and the world is suddenly brighter." (*Gramophone*)

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DWARVES



Dwalin - Edward Eichenhorn

An 8th grader at West Hills in Bloomfield Hills, this is Eddie's fifth year in MOTCC. His favorite roles include: Koko in *The Mikado* (MOTCC), Gavroche in *Les Misérables* (Bloomfield Hills High), Gingy in *Shrek* (Sky's the Limit). When not singing, Eddie is playing baseball or podcasting about his beloved Tigers.

Balin - Rachel Miltimore

Rachel Miltimore is enjoying her seventh season with MOTCC and serves as Head Chorister. Her favorite roles at MOT have been as a Spirit in *The Magic Flute* and Pooh-Bah in *The Mikado*. She regularly performs the National Anthem for the Detroit Tigers. She loves to play the piano, read, ski, swim and travel.

Fili - Molly Levin

Molly Levin has been singing with MOTCC for three years and has performed in the children's chorus of *Carmen*, *The Mikado*, *La Bohème* and *The Very Last Green Thing*. She loves the musical community at the Detroit Opera House!

Kili - Shiloh Beaton

Shiloh is proud to be a third year member of MOTCC. This is her first principal role in this group. Look out for her face, as she has also done live performance, print, commercial and film work. Shiloh dedicates this performance to Grandma's Bev and Rose.

Ori - Gabrielle Duso

Gabrielle Duso is a 6th grade student at Brownell Middle School in Grosse Pointe Farms. This is her first year with MOTCC. She has performed in several school and local theatre productions. Gabrielle loves singing and acting!

Nori - Hazel Ward

Some of Hazel's favorite roles have been Young Cosette in *Les Misérables*, Gretl VonTrapp in *The Sound of Music*, Molly in *Annie*, and Alice in *Alice in Wonderland*. Hazel recently recorded a national commercial for Disney! Hazel would like to thank MOTCC for a wonderful experience and opportunity to sing, grow and make lifelong friendships!

Dori - Natalie Watson

Natalie Watson is a 6th grader at Salk Elementary in Fraser. This is Natalie's fourth year in MOTCC. She has been in several theatrical productions, enjoys playing piano and is the 2016 overall winner of the MAC-Open Piano/Vocal Competition. Natalie is excited to perform the role of Dori.

Oin - Jaeden Footitt

Jaeden Footitt is 13, homeschooled, and a lifelong Detroit living in the Historic Boston-Edison neighborhood. This is his fifth year singing with MOTCC. Outside of the Opera House, Jaeden is classically trained in ballet at the Academy of Russian Classical Ballet. He plays piano, ukulele, and electric guitar. He is an avid turophile.

Gloin - Laura Rosales

Laura Rosales is 14 years old. This is her fourth year with MOTCC. She performed in *Brundibár*, *The Very Last Green Thing*, *The Mikado* and took part in *The Nutcracker*, *La Bohème* and *Carmen*.

Laura sang the National Anthem during a Tiger's game and was recently chosen for a Disney advertisement.

Bifur - Matteo Papadopoulos

Matteo Papadopoulos, a fourth-year MOTCC Chorister and 7th grader at The Roeper School, is excited to play the role of Bifur in *The Hobbit*. He has performed in MOT main stage productions including *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute* as the First Boy, and Verdi's *Macbeth* as the Third Apparition.

Bofur - Soleil Garcia-Johnson

Soleil Garcia-Johnson is multi-dimensional musician and performer; she performs professionally as a pianist and has earned highest honors in several competitions. As a vocalist, Soleil has performed with MOTCC in *Carmen* and *La Bohème*, and recently recorded "Dream Big, Princess" for Disney.

Bombur - Kevyn Roessler

Kevyn, a 7th grader at Covington, is performing in his fifth MOTCC opera. He's also appeared in several MOT mainstage productions: 2015; *La Bohème* (Little Boy) 2016; *Macbeth* (Third Apparition) and 2016; *Carmen*. He's been in over 12 musicals; favorite roles were Danny in *Grease, Jr.* and Daddy Warbucks in *Annie, Jr.*

GOBLINS, ELVES, AND LAKE PEOPLE



Bolg - Kristen D'Souza

Kristen D'Souza is excited to play Bolg in MOT's production of *The Hobbit*. This is her second year with the MOTCC. She has previously participated in *La Bohème*, *The Mikado* and *Carmen*. Kristen is a freshman at Rochester Adams High School. She thanks her family for their encouragement and support.

Golg - Skylar Reynolds

Skylar is so excited to be in her first year in the MOTCC! She loves to sing and act, having been in 16 productions. Skylar is the President of the National Junior Honor Society at Holly Middle School, and enjoys studying American History.

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE

CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Lalaith - Xaneveya Davidson

Xaneveya Davidson, in her fourth and final season, has enjoyed being in over eight operas with MOTCC and has plans to further her experiences in the arts through her college education. She is in her ninth year in piano and is involved in Varsity Singers at Marysville High School.

Hwiniol - Portteia Davidson

Portteia Davidson, in her fourth year at MOTCC, has appeared in the productions of *Brundibár*, *Turandot*, *The Very Last Green Thing*, *La Bohème*, *The Mikado*, and *Carmen*. She is a seven-year violist, takes part in Marysville Winter Guard, and is in her third year with Oakland Youth Orchestra.

Master of Laketown - Benjamin Ward

Benjamin is 15 in 9th grade at Dearborn High School enjoying his third year in principal chorus after one year prep. Since age 6 he has been actively engaged with voice, piano and violin activities; participated in *The Happy Prince*, *The Very Last Green Thing*, *The Mikado*, *La Bohème* and *The Nutcracker*.

Bard the Bowman - Brooke Pacifico

Brooke is enjoying her first year with MOTCC. She is an 8th grader at Seneca Middle School. Brooke enjoys doing theater (especially musical theater.) She recently played as Violet in *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* and Maureen in *Honk!* She also enjoys singing, dancing, and playing piano.

CALL FOR AUDITIONS

MOTCC's 2017-2018 season will include *H.M.S. Pinafore* by Gilbert and Sullivan and the Principal Chorus will be in a MOT main stage opera.

For more information or to schedule an audition, visit motcc.org or contact MOTCC Chorus Administrator, Twannette Nash at TNash@motopera.org or (313) 680-6682

Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus (MOTCC) is a ground breaking ensemble and first of its kind for Metro Detroit children. Founded in 2007, the MOTCC with children ranging from 8-16 years old has charmed audiences of all ages, embracing diverse cultures and traditions in an extensive range of genres from folk songs to opera. Come see the MOTCC perform!



PHOTO: COURTESY JONES PHOTOGRAPHY

MOTCC Principal and Prep Chorus

THE HOBBIT CHORUS

Goblins

Brooke Bugajewski
Portteia Davidson
Henry Graff
Alexander Opalikhin
Beatrix Reilly
Arsh Wasnik
Brigitte Zook

Wood Elves

Kristen D'Souza
Micah Hobbs
Emily Johnson
Brooke Pacifico
Emma Palmer
Skyler Reynolds

Wargs

Amelia Borys
Jehnya Footitt
Nina Georgeff

Rebecca Lucksom
Ryan Lutes
Mia Martin
Grace Watson

Lake People

Stephanie Barroso
Xaneveya Davidson
Noah Lash
Kathryn Migrin
Isabella Vesprini
Benjamin Ward

Hobbits, Goblins, and Elves (Preparatory Chorus)

Neah Bloch
Adrielle Caldwell
Mallory Childs
Noah Costakes
Sadie Douglass

Tyler Edwards
Myla Garceau
Sienna Ilitch
Cosette Keil
Ava Kern
Adam Kerr
Reed Koesel
Juliana Lee
Anika Lopes
Maria Panikkar
Madeline Quint
Delaney Reilly
Emeline Rice
Ava Roessler
Elina Sauve
Lehli Sauve
Anna Schultz
Bridget Shene
Chloe Szymanski
Piper Teasdale
Liam Zafarana

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Twannette Nash, Chorus Administrator
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Maria Cimarelli, Preparatory Chorus Accompanist
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Hobbit Costume Assistant: Patricia Sova

Cyrano

May 13-21, 2017

MUSIC
David DiChiera

LIBRETTO
Bernard Uzan

ORIGINAL ORCHESTRATION
Mark Flint

REVISED ORCHESTRATION
Steven Mercurio

WORLD PREMIERE
Michigan Opera Theatre, Oct. 13, 2007
Opera in three acts
Approximately three hours with two intermissions
Sung in French with English surtitle translations

CONDUCTOR
Steven Mercurio

DIRECTOR
Bernard Uzan

CHORUS MASTER
Suzanne Mallare Acton

SET AND COSTUME DESIGN
John Pascoe

LIGHTING DESIGN
Donald Edmund Thomas

HAIR AND MAKEUP DESIGN
Joanne Weaver

PROPERTY DESIGN
Monika Essen

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Maria Todaro

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER
Kara Wooten

STAGE MANAGER
Ken Saltzman

SUPERTITLES
Roberto Mauro

A Co-Production of Michigan Opera Theatre, Florida Grand Opera and Opera Company of Philadelphia.

Scenery Constructed by Ravenswood Studio, Inc., Chicago, Illinois.

Costumes constructed by Michigan Opera Theatre Costume Shop
Costume Materials Provided by Haberman Fabrics, Royal Oak, Michigan.

Millinery created by Audry Hawkins, Detroit, Michigan.

Properties constructed by West End Studios, Detroit, Michigan.



The Spring 2017 Opera Season
is presented by Cadillac

The opening night
performance is
presented in honor of
Lee and Floy Barthel



CAST
(In order of vocal appearance)

Marquis de Brisaille:..... Brent Michael Smith+
Marquis De Cuigy & Capucin: Randall Scotting
Ligniere: Bradley Smoak
Christian:..... Sebastien Gueze (May 13, 17, 20);
 Jason Slayden (May 21)
Ragueneau: Rolando Sanz
Le Bret:..... Harry Greenleaf
Un Inconnu:..... Jeff Byrnes+
Montfleury (speaking): Bernard Uzan
Cyrano:..... Marian Pop (May 13, 20); John Viscardi (May 17, 21)
De Guiche: Kyle Albertson
La Duegne:..... Deborah Nansteel
Roxane: Sarah Joy Miller
Carbon: Stephen Lusmann
 +Michigan Opera Theatre Studio Artist

Synopsis

Act 1

Scene 1

The audience at the Hotel Bourgogne anticipate a performance by the famous actor Montfleury. Christian de Neuville, a handsome new recruit in the Gascon Guards, points out to his drunken friend, Lignière, a woman in one of the boxes with whom he is in love. Lignière tells Christian that she is Madeleine de Robin, known as Roxane. She is beautiful, rich, and intellectual. Christian laments that he is too stupid and coarse to win the heart of such a refined woman. The baker-poet Ragueneau and the soldier Le Bret enter looking for one of the Gascon Guards, Cyrano de Bergerac, who has banned Montfleury from performing for a month. They describe Cyrano as being eloquent and brave, but as being much ridiculed because of his abnormally large nose, a subject on which he is extremely sensitive. Lignière goes out drinking, and Christian is told by a mysterious man of an attempt at Lignière's life. That night when Lignière

goes to the Porte de Nelle on his way home, he will be met by one hundred men sent by a nobleman who is upset that Lignière wrote a poem making fun of him. Christian goes to save Lignière.

The performance commences, but in the middle of it Cyrano chases Montfleury offstage and pays off the theater manager. A nobleman tries to insult Cyrano by saying simply that his nose is "very large". Cyrano counters by coming up with many other more interesting insults the nobleman could have used. Swords are drawn and Cyrano wounds the nobleman. Le Bret tells Cyrano that he is making too many enemies, and Cyrano in turn confesses his love for Roxane. He says that he loves Roxane but she will never be able to love him in return because of his large nose. Roxane's nurse arrives to tell Cyrano that Roxane requests a meeting with him at Ragueneau's bakery the next day, and Cyrano accepts. Cyrano then learns of the plot against Lignière, and determines to take on the mob himself.

Scene 2

Cyrano arrives at the bakery, eagerly anticipating his meeting with Roxane.

Ragueneau's wife, Lise, enters with some of Ragueneau's manuscripts that she has turned into paper bags for pastries, to Ragueneau's dismay. Roxane's nurse arrives with Roxane and Cyrano gets her out of the room by telling her to go out into the streets and eat some pastries, and then read the poetry written on the bags. Alone with Cyrano, Roxane confesses her love for a man. Cyrano thinks it is him who she loves, but it is actually Christian. Roxane makes Cyrano promise to protect Christian in battle.

The cadets arrive, praising Cyrano. Christian and Le Bret are among them. Cyrano proceeds to tell the story of how he fought the hundred men at the Porte de Nelle, and Christian interjects several references to Cyrano's nose. Cyrano orders the room cleared and is alone with Christian. Cyrano tells Christian that he is Roxane's cousin, and Christian confesses his love. The two become fast friends. They eventually decide that Cyrano will write letters to Roxane under Christian's name.

Act 2

Roxane is waiting for a meeting with Christian. She and Cyrano converse about Christian's "refinement". Cyrano exits before Le Comte de Guiche enters. He is in love with Roxane and asks her to become his lover before he goes to war against the Spanish. She declines, but not before convincing him to allow Cyrano and Christian's company to stay in Paris.

Christian later arrives, and tells Cyrano that he no longer needs his services, and that he can win Roxane on his own. But when he tries, he fails miserably, angering Roxane with his "loss of charm". Cyrano tells Christian that he will feed him words to say to Roxane. Christian then woos Roxane, who is on her balcony. Eventually Cyrano takes over, speaking while Christian mouths words. Christian climbs up the balcony and kisses Roxane. A Capucin monk, delivering to Roxane a message that De Guiche still wants to meet with her, agrees to marry Christian and Roxane. The couple celebrate their love while Cyrano laments that he has lost Roxane. De Guiche arrives and, seeing that Roxane and Christian are married, orders Cyrano, Christian, and their company to report to go to war against

the Spanish. Roxane makes Cyrano promise that Christian write to her every single day.

Act 3

Scene 1

At the battlefield in Arras, the soldiers are asleep. Christian, Carbon, and Le Bret are among them, and Le Bret awakens to find Cyrano running to the camp from enemy lines. He has gone out every day to deliver "Christian's" letters to Roxane. De Guiche arrives and chastises them. After Cyrano insults De Guiche, he waves a white handkerchief as a signal to a spy to tell the Spanish to attack, and ensuring certain death for Cyrano and the guards. Roxane later arrives with Rageneau, bring food. She has crossed enemy territory to see Christian. Cyrano tells Christian about the letters, and gives him a letter to sign so he can give it to Roxane if he dies. Christian notices a mark on the letter, and Cyrano replies that it is one of his tears, as dying is not so terrible as never seeing Roxane again. Roxane tells Christian that she would love him even if he were ugly, and he realizes that she loves Cyrano, not him. Christian convinces Cyrano to tell Roxane about the letters, then rushes into battle. Just as Cyrano is about to do so, Le Bret and Carbon enter carrying the mortally wounded Christian. Cyrano tells Christian that he told Roxane and that she loves him, and Christian dies.

Scene 2

Fifteen years later, Roxane lives at a convent, mourning the loss of Christian. Cyrano comes to her every day, delivering his Gazette, or news from the outside world. Cyrano comes to visit her, and tell her news, and Roxane notices blood on his head. Cyrano confesses that he has been brutally beaten by one of his enemies, and is dying. Before he dies, Cyrano requests he read Christian's farewell letter to her one last time. Roxane notices that Cyrano is not reading the letter, but he is reciting it. She realizes then that it was Cyrano she loved all along. Cyrano dies in Roxane's arms.

Suzanne Mallare Acton

Chorus Master

Suzanne Acton has received wide acclaim for her choral direction involving more than 125 productions in seven languages.

Conducting credits include *West Side Story*, *Music Man*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *Daughter of the Regiment*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata* and *Carmina Burana* with *The Medium* for MOT; *My Fair Lady* and *La Traviata* for Dayton Opera; *Merry Widow* and *Madame Butterfly* for Artpark; and *Tosca* for Augusta Opera. As founding Director of the MOT Children's Chorus, Ms. Acton was instrumental in developing the inaugural 2007-2008 season. She is also the Artistic and Music Director of metro Detroit's Rackham Choir.



Kyle Albertson

Bass-baritone

Kyle Albertson is renowned not only for his versatile voice, confidence, and style, but also for his ability to bring a character to life on stage. Of his recent role début as Bartolo in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at Fort Worth Opera, *The Dallas Morning News* raved: "With a drop-dead gorgeous bass-baritone, Kyle Albertson is younger than the usual Dr. Bartolo, but he's no less delightful an object of mockery. When he turns on his falsetto to demonstrate an aria from his youth, he sounds like the famously out-of-tune Florence Foster Jenkins." This season, Mr. Albertson will be making quite a large number of débuts, including a role début of Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* at Northern Lights Music Festival; a house début at Lyric Opera of Chicago for their production of *Das Rheingold*; plus role and house débuts as Donner in Minnesota Opera's first production of *Das Rheingold*, in which he also covers Wotan; Lieutenant Horstmayer in *Silent Night* with Opera San Jose, Magnifico in *Cenerentola* with El Paso Opera, and DeGuiche in *Cyrano* here at Michigan Opera Theatre. He will also perform a solo in Bruckner's *Te Deum* with Houston Symphony.



Jeff Byrnes

Baritone Jeff Byrnes returned to Michigan Opera Theatre last season as a Studio Artist. He performed the roles of Schanuard in *La Bohème*,

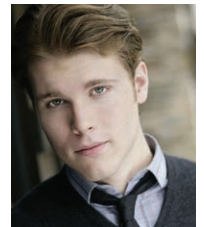
1st SS Officer in *The Passenger*, Old Servant in *Elektra* and The Bonze in *Madame Butterfly*. Prior to joining MOT, he performed the role of Owen Hart in *Dead Man Walking* with Dayton Opera, and he covered Germont in *La Traviata* and Balstrode in *Peter Grimes* with Des Moines Metro Opera. Other operatic highlights include Leporello in *Don Giovanni* and the title role in *The Mikado* with the Natchez Opera Festival, and Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Sprecher in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Pilate in *St. John Passion* with CCM Opera. He was a regional finalist in the Rocky Mountain Region of the Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions in 2014.



Harry Greenleaf

Baritone Harry Greenleaf is a native of Wixom, Michigan. He is a proud alumnus of the Michigan State University College of Music,

and received a Master of Music at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. In 2013 and 2014 he was a Studio Artist with the Wolf Trap Opera Company. While there he sang the role of Baron Douchol in *La traviata* with the National Symphony Orchestra, and Monsieur Barbu in *Les mamelles de Tirésias*. In the summer of 2015 he was an Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera, covering the role of Sonora in *La fanciulla del West*. In 2015 he debuted with Cincinnati Chamber Opera, singing *The Pilot* in *The Little Prince*. In the summer of 2016 he will perform with the Glimmerglass Festival as Anthony Hope in *Sweeney Todd*. He made his debut with Michigan Opera Theatre in 2016, singing the role of Top in *The Tender Land*, and will appear as Moralès in *Carmen*, Jake Wallace in *La fanciulla del West*, and Le Bret in Dr. David DiChiera's *Cyrano* for the 2016-2017 season.



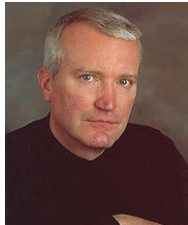
Sebastien Gueze

Despite his relative youth, the young french tenor, Sébastien Guèze, has already had tremendous success singing at internationally renowned venues such as La Fenice di Venezia, La Monnaie de Bruxelles, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Schwetzingen Festival, Festival di Spoleto, Santa Cecilia Roma, Koeln Opera, Warsaw Wielki Theater, Opera of Athens, Les Chorégies d'Orange, Paris Théâtre des Champs Elysées, Salle Pleyel, Helsinki National Opera, Tokio Oji Hall, Valencia Palao de Les Arts, Harare International Festival of the Arts (Zimbabwe), and Miami Florida Grand Opera to name but a few.



Stephen Lusmann

During the course of his rich, international operatic career, baritone Stephen Lusmann has sung more than 40 leading roles with major opera houses. On recordings Lusmann may be heard in Richard Strauss' opera *Der Friedenstag* recorded at Carnegie Hall on the Koch International label; *Operrngala* recorded at the Konzerthaus Luzern, Switzerland on Tonstudio AMOS; and on *E.E. Cummings: An American Circus*, songs by Logan Skelton, recorded on the Centaur Records label.



Steven Mercurio

This fall marks American maestro Steven Mercurio's twentieth production with MOT, after most recently conducting last fall's *The Passenger*. An internationally acclaimed conductor and composer whose musical versatility encompasses the symphonic and operatic worlds, he was Music Director of the Spoleto Festival and Principal Conductor of the Opera Company of Philadelphia for five years. Mr. Mercurio is also a sought-after collaborator for many award-winning



recordings, arrangements and film projects, most notably "Christmas in Vienna with the Three Tenors." For the stage, he has conducted more than 50 operas in seven different languages in many of the world's best loved opera houses. His most recent symphonic composition, "A Grateful Tail," based on a love of dogs, had its world premiere in Prague and is available on Eros Sound Recordings.

Sarah Joy Miller

Acknowledged as one of the industry's foremost emerging talents, Ms. Miller began turning heads at her New York City Opera and BAM débuts to great critical acclaim singing the title role of Anna Nicole Smith in the Royal Opera House commissioned opera *Anna Nicole* by Mark-Anthony Turnage. She most recently appeared as Marguerite in MOT's production of *Faust* in 2015. This season, Ms. Miller performs Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* at Opera Tampa, and Mabel in *Pirates of Penzance* at Palm Beach Opera. Miller will also perform as a featured soloist in a "Puccini to Pop" concert with Tulsa Opera.

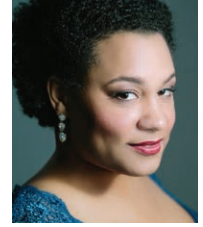


Deborah Nansteel

"A formidable display of vocal power and dramatic assurance," mezzo-soprano Deborah Nansteel recently

completed the Washington National Opera Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, where she performed many roles including

Tisbe in *La Cenerentola*, Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, Curra (cover Preziosilla) in *La forza del destino*, Paula (cover) in *Florenca en el Amazonas*, as well as The Cat in Tony Award winning composer Jeanine Tesori's *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me*. She recently earned the highly esteemed Betty Allen Award and a grant from the Sullivan Foundation.



Marian Pop

Marian Pop originated the role of Cyrano with Michigan Opera Theatre and most recently appeared as Tadeusz in last season's acclaimed production of *The Passenger*. In recent seasons, Mr. Pop has joined Theater Basel for his role debut as Posa in *Don Carlo* as well as performing Lescaut in *Manon*, Taddeo L'italiana in *Algeri*, and Prokofiev's Pantalone in *The Love for Three Oranges*. A frequent guest at the Staatsoper Stuttgart, the baritone's numerous roles with the company have included his signature performances of Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, plus Beckmesser in *Die*



The May 13 performance is dedicated in honor of Mr. Lee and Mrs. Floy Barthel, Michigan Opera Theatre Trustees since 1997.

Lee and Floy Barthel have been loyal patrons and regular attendees to Michigan Opera Theatre since its inception. When MOT began looking for a permanent home, they were first in line to offer renovation work to help create the beauty that is now the Detroit Opera House. Since opening the house doors in 1996, Lee and Floy have been steadfast supporters, continuously looking for ways to make sure the company thrives for future generations. Numerous projects have been completed in the Opera House through their support, some of which bear their name, including the Lee and Floy Barthel Costume Studio. Most recently, they have supported the improvements to the DOH Skydeck and the purchase of new vehicles for transportation needs. Lee serves on the Board of Directors. Lee and Floy both have served as Trustees with MOT for more than 18 years. In honor of their commitment and all that the Barthels have contributed to MOT, the May 13 performance of *Cyrano* is presented in their honor.



Meistersinger von Nürnberg, and Ulisse in Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*. With the Vienna Staatsoper and Volksoper, he has sung a variety of roles, including Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, Valentin in *Faust*, Ping in *Turandot*, Graf Homonay in *Zigeunerbaron*, and Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*.

Rolando Sanz

Rolando Sanz is thrilling audiences with his impeccable technique and musical depth, as well as his "[vocal] color and heartfelt interpretations" (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel). This season, Mr. Sanz sings the tenor-solo of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Asheville Symphony, and, becoming a house favorite at the esteemed opera house, returns to The Metropolitan Opera for their productions of *Salome*, *Idomeneo*, *Fidelio*, and *La traviata*.



Randall Scotting

Randall Scotting, whose "strong masculine countertenor matches his handsome muscular physique" continues to garner praise in the opera house and on the concert stage for his versatility and depth of musical interpretation. His repertoire spans from the Renaissance to contemporary works and he has been particularly praised for his performances of Baroque operas' leading men.

Recent and upcoming engagements include the title role in Handel's *Rinaldo* at Merkin Concert Hall in New York; the role of Hera in *PARIS!* with Company XIV in New York; a concert of arias from the baroque pasticcio *Andromeda* in California; Gluck's *Ezio* with Odyssey Opera in Boston; and Castrovillari's seventeenth-century opera *La Cleopatra* in San Francisco.



Jason Slayden

Winner of a 2012-13 Sullivan Career Grant, tenor Jason Slayden has been celebrated for the warmth and beauty of his voice, as well as demonstrating "considerable



subtlety as an actor". Last season included his debut with Lyric Opera of Chicago as Tybalt and the cover of Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette*, Virginia Opera as Rodolfo in *La bohème*, Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre as Alfredo in *La traviata*, Opera Santa Barbara as Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, Don José in *Carmen* with the Colorado Music Festival, and Pinkerton with the Berkshire Opera Festival. The 2016-2017 season includes Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* with Pacific Opera Victoria, and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* with Annapolis Opera.

Brent Michael Smith

Brent Michael Smith is an artist of Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. Last year he was an Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera, where his performance as Billy Jackrabbit in *La fanciulla del West* received critical acclaim by Opera News as a "standout." Colorado Music Buzz praised him for "making the most of his brief appearances."

He received his Master of Music degree under the tutelage of John Hines. He received his Bachelor's in music in piano performance from Hope College (Holland, MI). Mr. Smith is a first-place winner in the Grand Rapids Opera Competition (2012).



Bradley Smoak

With a voice of "rich presence and power" (Opera Today), American bass-baritone Bradley Smoak has rapidly emerged as one of opera's most exciting and sought-after young talents. Known for his compelling presence on both the operatic and concert stages, Smoak continues to delight audiences with his "easy charismatic charm" and unique versatility across a wide variety of musical styles and theatrical characterizations.



Bernard Uzan

Bernard Uzan returns to Michigan Opera Theatre to direct *Cyrano*, the opera for which he wrote the libretto. In addition to his longstanding relationship with MOT, including directing more than 25 productions,

Uzan's background in the performing arts includes great achievement as a General Director, Artistic Director, Stage Director, Artist Manager, Set Designer, Librettist, Educator, Actor, and most recently, published Novelist and Internet Journalist. Last year, Mr. Uzan received a lifetime achievement award from the Giulio Gari Foundation. This season, in addition to *Cyrano*, he directs *Il barbiere de Siviglia* at Toledo Opera and Opera Carolina, *Carmen* at Florida Grand Opera, and *Roméo et Juliette* at Opera Tampa following its massive co-production across five cities last season.



John Viscardi

Baritone John Viscardi, New York native and graduate of the Academy of Vocal Arts (AVA), is a rising talent notably acknowledged for his diversity of vocal repertoire. He most recently appeared as Valentin in MOT's production of *Faust* in 2015.

2015/16 season included Vaughn Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* at Carnegie Hall, *Carmina Burana* with Opera Philadelphia, Silvio in *Pagliacci* with Opera San Louis Obispo, Bill Calhoun in *Kiss Me Kate* with the Phoenicia International Festival of the Voice, Morales in *Carmen* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City.



Joanne Middleton Weaver

Wig and Makeup Designer

Born in England, Joanne Weaver came to the U.S. in the late 1980s. She began apprenticing with what was then Washington Opera, now Washington National Opera. Ms. Weaver has since designed at many opera companies throughout the U.S., including Glimmerglass Opera, Central City Opera, Sarasota Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City and Des Moines Metro Opera. Her notable MOT credits include *The Magic Flute*, *Macbeth*, *The Passenger*, *Frida*, *The Merry Widow*, *Faust*, *Margaret Garner*, *Cyrano* and *The Pearl Fishers*.



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Jeff Byrnes, Baritone
Tessa Hartle, Studio Coach/Accompanist
Briana Elyse Hunter, Mezzo-soprano
Brent Michael Smith, Bass
Angela Theis, Soprano

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Tenor		Bass	
Gregory Ashe Fred Buchalter Darren DeWitt Michael Fowler Mark Istratie Richard Jackson, Jr.	Adrian Leskiw Bradley Lieto Bradley Miller Jason Thomas Brett Thompson Jeffrey Wilkinson	Joseph Edmonds Kurt Frank Glenn Healy Branden Hood Matthew Konopacki Miroslav Manovski David Moan	Pette Moore Paolo Pacheco Luke Randall Brandon Spencer Gregory Stinson Justin Watson Norman Weber

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE CHORUS – *CYRANO*

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The American Guild of Musical Artists is the official union of the Michigan Opera Theatre Chorus.

DiChiera Deconstructed: THE COMPOSER

BY ERICA HOBBS

When people think of David DiChiera, they think of the man that brought opera to Detroit. But before Michigan Opera Theatre, before the Detroit Opera House, there was David DiChiera, the musician, with a deep-rooted artistic passion of his own.

DiChiera's journey to music started early as a child learning to play piano in McKeesport, PA. As a young adult, DiChiera studied piano, musicology and composition at UCLA, eventually earning his PhD in 18th-century opera. His philosophy was opera as a living, breathing art form, one reflective of the times in which they exist and also of the communities in which they serve.

As a young academic with a desire to make his own music, DiChiera struggled with the opera environment of his time. Despite his passion for the creation of new works, DiChiera felt his traditional style, which contrasted with the atonal and electronic themes of the 1950s and 60s, would not be welcomed in operatic circles.

"I dreamed of being a concert pianist and expressing my emotions through my own music," he said. "But it was the 1960s, a time when writing music in any style other than atonal, serial or even electronic was considered irrelevant and redundant in academic circles, so I felt compelled to abandon my muse. There I was, a neo-romantic totally out of step with what was 'in.'"

Instead, DiChiera pursued other artistic passions that brought opera to the people. From 1962 - 73, he served on the faculty at Oakland University while producing short opera works in Detroit. In 1971, he founded Michigan Opera Theatre, which would become the crux of his life's work. His impresario career also included establishing Detroit's Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts; founding Opera Pacific in Orange County, CA; serving as General Director of Dayton Opera; serving as President of OPERA America and the restoration and creation of the Detroit Opera House.

Throughout all these endeavors,



DiChiera fought for his artistic vision of opera as a reflective, evolving art form that changed with the times. He championed diversity in opera, presenting new works from different cultures that represented experiences often untold. He nurtured the careers of minority artists and, through OPERA America, created "Opera for a New America" which supported companies' outreach to underserved communities. In his effort to encourage the development of new works, he created "Opera for the 80s and Beyond," another initiative through OPERA America that encouraged the development of new opera and musical theater.

But through it all, DiChiera maintained passion for his own music. His work included "Four Sonnets," music composed to the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay. It included children's opera, composed with his then-wife Karen DiChiera, as well as numerous smaller compositions. But it wasn't until the 21st century that the world was ready for DiChiera's own full-length opera.

"During these decades of intense operatic activity on my part, the secret composer in me observed, with growing interest, a musical environment that now allows composers to draw from all styles and past periods as well as current trends (including popular and ethnic music)," DiChiera said. "With this, I felt that perhaps I could find the courage to return to my own muse without fear of rejection. At last, I felt liberated to write

my own opera."

DiChiera knew his opera would tell a great love story and when director Bernard Uzan suggested Edmond Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac," he knew he had found it. The play tells the story of Cyrano, a nobleman and poet whose insecurities over his large nose prevent him from pursuing his true love. Instead, he assists his handsome, though less intellectually-inclined rival, Christian, pursue the heart of his beloved Roxanne in a long, frustrating story of delayed passion. For DiChiera, the character of Cyrano reflected his own journey as a musician.

"I was drawn to the character of Cyrano whose exterior life was fearless and outgoing with exciting esprit and panache, but who inside suffered a sense of overwhelming inadequacy which denied him from achieving personal fulfillment," he said.

After more than eight years of work, "Cyrano" premiered at the Detroit Opera House on Oct. 13, 2007. With a style reminiscent of the great operas of the past, "Cyrano" opened to a warm reception - the opposite of his initial fears a half-century before. The Washington Post's Anne Midgette described "Cyrano" as "utterly sincere, and affecting: a love story that comes from the heart." David Fleschler, with South Florida Classical Review, said "DiChiera's music is melodic and passionate, a fresh, energetic modern expression of rich 19th-century harmonies, with a couple of melodies that will stay with you as you leave the opera house." And Tom Purdom from Broad Street Review said "DiChiera creates an emotional climax with music in the same way playwrights achieve their effects with language and film directors work with images."

After 46 years building and leading Michigan Opera Theatre, DiChiera retires at the end of this season to Artistic Director Emeritus, winding down a successful career as opera impresario. As he looks to the future, he is ready to dedicate himself to his earliest passion as a musician and composer.

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 Mr. & Mrs. Chris Trainor
 Ms. Mary Ellen Tyszka
 Ms. Halina Ujda
 Prof. Michael Wellman
 In Honor of David Arcangeli
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Zantop

IN TRIBUTE

*November 1, 2016 - January
 31, 2017*

In Honor of Afaf Vicky Farah
 Karin Deam-Mengozzi

**In Honor of Dr. David
 DiChiera**
 Nancy Gaydos
 Reva Grace
 Barbara Heller

**In Honor of Dr. William
 Kupsky and Dr. Ali Mooin**
 David M. Kupsky
 Elizabeth Kupsky

In Honor of Michael Anspach
 Robyn Anspach

**In Honor of William Powers'
 70th Birthday**
 Sheila Kasselmann

**In Memory of Barbara
 Gibson Williams**
 Nelson and Karen Assink
 Keith Brunini
 Barbara Cook
 Nathan and Catherine Forbes
 Mr. & Mrs. James Daniel
 Kennedy
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**In Memory of Clara Gordon
 Whiting**
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In Memory of Dr. Kim Lie
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**In Memory of Elizabeth
 Watson**
 Catherine Frye

In Memory of James M. Ryan
 Shelzy Ryan

**In Memory of Roger
 Sherman, Sr.**
 Peter and Shelly Cooper

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE

AVANTI SOCIETY

Ensuring the Future

Imagine a gift that outlives you, allowing future generations to experience and enjoy the world of opera and dance. That's the goal of the Avanti Society, Michigan Opera Theatre's Planned Gift Recognition Program.

The Italian word "avanti" means "ahead," or "forward." The Avanti Society at Michigan Opera Theatre represents a designated group of friends of Michigan Opera Theatre who have made plans to include the organization in their estate plans – whether by will, trust, insurance, or life income arrangement. Membership in the Avanti Society is open to all.

In thanks for their generous support, Avanti Society members are given special benefits and recognition for their heartfelt commitment to Michigan Opera Theatre.

Avanti Society Members are Recognized:

In "Bravo" opera and dance program books and the Annual Report.

Avanti Society Members are Invited:

To an exclusive annual Avanti Society event, previews and other special events. Michigan Opera Theatre is honored that so many patron have chosen to declare their membership in the Avanti Society and designed a small lapel pin for members to wear proudly at Michigan Opera Theatre events.

AN AVANTI FOR TOMORROW

The growth of Michigan Opera Theatre's permanent Endowment Fund ensures the growth and future vitality of one of the region's greatest cultural assets. You are invited to create your own legacy – your Avanti – through Michigan Opera Theatre.

To make your gift, contact Christina Wagner, Patron Services Manager, at 313.237.3236 or cwagner@motopera.org.

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[†] in Italics – deceased members

Membership as of
November, 2016

General Information

PHOTOGRAPHY, RECORDING & COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES

Photography or recording during any performance is strictly prohibited. You are welcome to take photographs in the lobby before or after a performance and during intermission. As a courtesy to our guests, please switch all electronic devices to silent mode and refrain from using them during the performance.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Doctors and parents are advised to leave their seat location (located on ticket) and our emergency number, (313) 237-3257, with their service or sitter in case of an emergency. Please observe the lighted exit signs located throughout the theater. In the event of an emergency, please remain calm and walk - do not run - to the nearest exit. Our ushers are trained to lead you out of the building safely. A trained Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) is onsite during most events. Please see an usher or staff member to contact the EMT.

RESTROOMS

Ladies' restrooms are located off the Ford Lobby (Broadway Street entrance), down the stairs; and on the third floor (Madison Street entrance) - press "3R" on the elevator to reach this facility. Gentlemen's restrooms are located under the Grand Staircase and also on the third floor (Broadway Street side) - press "3" on the elevator to reach this facility. All third floor restrooms are wheelchair accessible. A unisex, wheelchair accessible restroom is located in the Cadillac Opera Café.

NO SMOKING

The Detroit Opera House is a smoke-free facility.

USHERS

Ushers are stationed at the top of each aisle. If you have a question or concern, please inform an usher, who will contact management. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer usher, please call the House Manager at (313) 237-3252.

LOST & FOUND

Lost and Found is located in the Safety and Security Department. Please see an usher if you have misplaced an article, or call (313) 961-3500 if you have already left the theater. Items will be held in Lost and Found for 30 days.

SERVICES

Concessions stands are located on all levels. Please note that food and drinks are not permitted in the auditorium at any time. Coat Check is located at the Guest Services desk in the Vincent Lobby (Madison Street side). Please note that the Detroit Opera House does not accept responsibility for any personal articles that are not checked at the coat check.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Website www.MichiganOpera.org
EMERGENCIES (313) 237-3257
Michigan Opera Theatre (313) 961-3500
General Information (313) 961-3500
Lost and Found (313) 961-3500
Ticket Office (313) 237-7464
Theater Rental Information (313) 961-3500
Detroit Opera House Fax (313) 237-3412
Press and Public Relations (313) 237-3403
Herman Frankel | Opera House Parking Center (313) 965-4052

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE

VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION

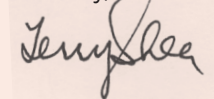
Greetings from the MOT Volunteer Association.

I have been an opera lover for many years and Michigan Opera Theatre is very important to me. Our MOTVA volunteers provide the company with a tremendous level of support. We have more than 700 members who serve as ushers, tour guides, and Boutique volunteers. Our Divas and Divos provide artist hospitality, and the Opera League and Dance Council members hold parties to celebrate moments such as opening night performances. Our members logged almost 20,000 volunteer hours last year. Bravi!!

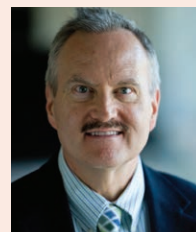
If you are not yet a volunteer please consider joining us! Volunteering is a great way to meet other interesting and involved patrons, and your MOTVA membership is tax deductible. For membership information please view the MOTVA web page at michiganopera.org/working-with-us/volunteer or call Rachele Wright at 313.237.3402. Rachele would be happy to speak with you and connect you with those volunteering in support of Michigan Opera Theatre.

This season we are celebrating the creation of Michigan Opera Theatre, as we honor the career of our Founder and Artistic Director, David DiChiera. His vision of an opera company for Michigan and an Opera House in Detroit first took shape 46 years ago. Many, many volunteers have traveled this journey with Dr. DiChiera, assuring the success of this company. To those who currently support us through the generous support of your gifts of time, I offer my sincere thanks. To those reading about our volunteer program for the first time, please consider joining.

Sincerely,



Terry Shea, President, MOTVA



MOTVA Committees, Chair(s)

Boutique, Leo Dovelle
Dance Films, Larry Glowczewski
Divas and Divos, Helen Arnoldi-Rowe
Opera House Tour Guides, Myrna Mazure
Opera League, Dodie David
Publicity, Annette Marchesi
Secretary, Nancy Moore
Special Events, Gwen Bowlby, Don Jensen & Curtis Posuniak
Ushers, Kathie Booth

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Tennant & Associates, Suite 61



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