

SPRING 2019 OPERA SEASON

BRAVO

The Secret
World of Og
MARCH 23, 2019

Hansel
and Gretel
APRIL 6-14, 2019

The Grapes
of Wrath
MAY 11-19, 2019

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OPERA
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Opera Season

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Yntema

Welcome to the Detroit Opera House, home of the David DiChiera Center for the Performing Arts.

The 2019 Spring Opera Season is supported by a generous grant from General Motors. We are delighted to have you join us as we continue our exploration of great literature-turned-opera with Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, based on the Grimm's



fairy tale, and Ricky Ian Gordon and Michael Korie's *The Grapes of Wrath*, based on the classic novel by John Steinbeck.

Michigan Opera Theatre has long been committed to artistic excellence, presenting opera and dance performances of the highest caliber to our patrons. But just as important is our commitment to community engagement, providing ongoing initiatives that inspire and enlighten, as well as support the ongoing

evolution of the opera art form.

This season we continue to introduce our Page to Stage initiative, a program exploring the original texts and themes of our operas based on literary masterworks, including Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* and Voltaire's *Candide*, in addition to *Hansel and Gretel* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. With a combination of study guides, expert lecturers, performances and more, Page to Stage has partnered with area libraries, book stores, book clubs and schools to provide a deeper context to our operas, as part of our commitment to our community. We encourage you to visit our website, www.MichiganOpera.org, to stay up-to-date on events near you. Study guides and additional resources are also available on our website for further study, even after today's performance has finished.

In recognition of our commitment to increasing the awareness and celebration of the opera and dance art form in Southeast Michigan, MOT is pleased to have been awarded two major grants that (when matched) will enable our organization to expand our programming of opera productions and dance presentations throughout Southeast Michigan. We are the proud recipient of a \$1 million grant from the Knight Foundation aimed at presenting new contemporary works, with a focus on presenting non-traditional operas and engaging new audiences. In addition, The William S. Davidson Foundation recently awarded MOT with a \$4 million grant to support continued artistic excellence, expand our community and educational outreach, as well as to seed support for necessary facility improvements to our historic Detroit Opera House.

Next season has recently been announced and will include a thrilling opera series, including Wolfgang Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, Giacomo Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Terence Blanchard's *Champion* and Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*. In addition, our dance series will include the return of the Joffrey Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem, celebrating its 50th anniversary, and American Ballet Theatre in performances of *Swan Lake*, a co-presentation with University Musical Society. It will also include the Detroit Opera House debut of French contemporary ballet company, Malandain Ballet Biarritz, and perennial favorite *The Nutcracker* with BalletMet.

We invite you to join us for great opera and dance offerings. We are prepared to accept your reservation for next season at the designated subscription booths in the lobby of today's performance. Thank you for your support!

Regards,

Wayne S. Brown
President and CEO, Michigan Opera Theatre

Welcome to the second half of our 2018-19 opera series, continuing our celebration of great literary works turned opera! Following Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* and Voltaire's *Candide*, we are excited to present *Hansel and Gretel*, the classic Grimm's fairytale, and John



Steinbeck's Great American Novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*. While two completely different stories, they offer a balance between a whimsical fantasy and a harsh reality, one with a happy ending and the other more dire but with a sense of hope.

For more than 200 years, *Hansel and Gretel* has been an essential part of the fairy tale canon, a story told to children for centuries. While the original fairy tale was published in 1812 and Engelbert Humperdinck's opera published in 1893, this 21st century production offers a twist – literally. Director and master puppeteer Basil Twist takes the fantasy to the next level with flying angels, dancing gingerbread and a larger-than-life witch. I am proud to conduct the opera alongside him for a magical work unlike anything you've seen before.

With *The Grapes of Wrath*, the Great American Novel turns into the Great American Opera. Composer Ricky Ian Gordon and librettist Michael Korie take this poignant American story and bring it to life through music. Though set nearly 100 years ago in a completely different part of the country, the Joad family's journey for survival explores themes of exploitation and injustice as well as compassion and kindness in the worst of times. Set to Gordon's distinct contemporary American musical style with Korie's insightful adaptation, the work is a true American opera with everlasting themes that resonate long after the opera has finished.

Looking ahead to next season, we are excited to present a line-up of thrilling operas that will keep you on the edge of your seat. This fall, we present two dark comedies: Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, productions with the power to make you laugh and squirm at the same time. Our 2020 spring opera series includes Terence Blanchard's "opera in jazz," *Champion*, about American boxer Emile Griffith, and concludes with Leoncavallo's heart-wrenching tragedy, *Pagliacci*. The series also includes a community presentation of Puccini's only comedy *Gianni Schicchi*, featuring our MOT Studio Artists.

We hope you enjoy today's performance and encourage you to join us next season for future productions at the Detroit Opera House!

Stephen Lord
Principal Conductor, Michigan Opera Theatre

Hansel and Gretel

APRIL 6-14, 2019

MUSIC

Engelbert Humperdinck

LIBRETTO

Adelheid Wette, based on the Grimm's fairy tale

WORLD PREMIERE

Deutsche Nationaltheater and Staatskapelle Weimar - Weimar, Germany, December 23, 1893

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Melissa Graff

ASST. CONDUCTOR

Stefano Sarzani

SUPERTITLES

Dee Dorsey

REPETITEUR

Jean Schneider

STAGE MANAGER

Ken Saltzman

The Witch realized by the Jim Henson Company
Hansel and Gretel is a co-production of Houston Grand Opera and Atlanta Opera

CAST

(In order of vocal appearance)

Gretel	Deanna Breiwick
Hansel	Emily Fons
Gertrude	Mary-Hollis Hundley
Peter	Russell Braun
The Sandman	Katherine DeYoung*
The Dew Fairy	Cheyenne Coss*
The Witch	Matthew DiBattista

Puppeteers

Torri Lynn Ashford, Kate Brehm, Lute Breuer, Sean Burpee, Dorothy James, Carrie Morris, Joel Orr, Justin Perkins

*Michigan Opera Theatre Studio Artist

SYNOPSIS

Act I

In the forest stands the rustic cottage of Peter the broommaker. Hansel and Gretel have been left to themselves by their parents. Gretel puts down the stocking she is knitting to recite a nursery rhyme, which Hansel interrupts with cries of hunger. She shows him a pitcher of milk hidden in the cupboard but will not let him drink it. To keep him happy, she begins to teach him how to dance. Suddenly, the door bursts open and Gertrude, their mother, comes in and angrily reproves them for their horseplay. When Hansel laughs at Gretel's punishment, his mother chases him around the hut; the milk pitcher falls to the floor and smashes. Gertrude is furious that dinner is ruined, the broommaking abandoned and Gretel's stocking left incomplete, so she chases both children into the woods to find some wild strawberries. She puts her head down on the table, grieved by poverty and hunger, just as the happy voice of her husband, Peter, is heard in the distance. He quickly tells his wife that he sold his brooms to a wedding party for the best price he has ever received. He opens his sack and begins taking out food of all kinds. He then asks where the children are. When Gertrude tells him they have gone to the woods, he is horrified. He tells her about the Witch who lives there and bakes children into gingerbread. In frustration, Peter pulls down the curtains to discover a raven – the Witch's familiar – which has been eavesdropping. The two rush off to find Hansel and Gretel.

In a forest glade, Gretel is making a crown of wildflowers as Hansel picks the last of the wild strawberries. A cuckoo calls, and the children parrot the bird's call, eating strawberries all the

while. As darkness falls, they realize that they cannot refill the basket and, worse, that they are lost. Their fears multiply as they imagine animals behind every tree. An old man appears. He scatters gold sand and promises restful sleep. After the Sandman leaves, the two children kneel to say their prayers and fall asleep. The glade is gradually transfigured as angels surround the sleeping forms and keep guard during the night.

Act 2

The Dew Fairy awakens Gretel, who drags the sleepy Hansel to his feet. The mist evaporates, trees vanish, and a candy house appears. Hungry, they begin nibbling at the sweet treats on the house. Then Hansel hears a voice from inside the house. A 12-foot tall ravishing femme fatale of a witch comes out of the house along with a pack of gingerbread children who capture Hansel and Gretel. When they refuse her flattery, she puts a spell on them and claps Hansel in a cage as she also transports us to the inside of her house. Gretel is released to go into the house to set the Witch's table. In a fit of joy at her prospective banquet, the Witch chases the gingerbread children until she grabs one as an appetizer. Cleverly, Gretel whispers the Witch's magic words, which break the spell on Hansel; she then asks the Witch to show her how to make the oven work. As the Witch leans in, Hansel and Gretel push her in and slam the door. The oven gets hotter and hotter until it explodes. Hansel and Gretel see that all the gingerbread children have suddenly become real children, still asleep. Hansel again recites the Witch's spell, and the youngsters spring to life. As Peter and Gertrude rush in and embrace their offspring, a huge gingerbread cake of the Witch is discovered. Everyone joins in giving thanks to the Lord.

.PROFILES

Suzanne Mallare Acton (Chorus Master)

Chorus Master Suzanne Mallare Acton has received wide acclaim for her choral direction involving more than 125 productions in seven languages. Conducting credits include *West Side Story*, *The Music Man*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *Daughter of the Regiment*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata* and *Carmina Burana* with The Michigan Opera Theatre; *My Fair Lady* and *La Traviata* for Dayton Opera; *The Merry Widow* and *Madama Butterfly* for Artpark; and *Tosca* for Augusta Opera. Ms. Acton is the founding Director of the MOT Children's Chorus. She is also the Artistic and Music Director of metro Detroit's Rackham Choir.



Torri Lynn Ashford (Puppeteer)

Torri Lynn Ashford has performed with local ensemble-based theatres including A Host of People, The Hinterlands and Carrie Morris Art Productions. She has studied puppetry with Puppet Art Theatre (Detroit), eventually heading puppet workshops and summer camps. At present Torri Lynn is a teaching artist with Living Arts (Detroit) and a touring puppeteer with Bread and Puppet Theater located in Glover, Vermont.



Russell Braun (Peter)

Renowned for his luminous voice "capable of the most powerful explosions as well as the gentlest covered notes" (*Toronto Star*), baritone Russell Braun rightfully claims his place on the concert, opera and recital stages of the world.

This season Mr. Braun returns to the Canadian Opera Company as Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*. He will also star in *Hell's Fury*, a staged performance of Hanns Eisler's Hollywood Songbook at the Luminato Festival. In concert, he sings one of his signature pieces, Britten's *War*

Requiem, with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, at the Proms in London and with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.



Last season included a return to the Salzburg Festival as Pentheus in *The Bassarids*, to the Theater an der Wien for Alfred III in *The Visit of the Old Lady* and to the Calgary Opera as Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*.

Kate Brehm (Associate Puppet Director, Puppeteer)

Kate Brehm is a movement specialist who performs and devises original works of visual theater using objects and physical performance. Her company, imnotlost, has been producing performances and events in New York City since 2003. Well-known for its large and unusual puppet objects, uncanny stories and madcap character, imnotlost is part of the fabric of a vibrant New York City puppetry scene. Select directing and/or design credits include *The Poofs* at Theater for One box in Times Square, *Dark Space* at Chashama on 42nd Street and *The Eye Which We Do Not Have* at Dixon Place.



Deanna Breiwick (Gretel)

American soprano Deanna Breiwick makes her Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* and will perform Rosasharn in *The Grapes of Wrath* with MOT later this season. Hailed by the *New York Times* for her "sweet sound and floating high notes," a series of house and role debuts encompass Ms. Breiwick's 2018-19 season. She will return to the Metropolitan Opera as a Shadow in *Marnie*, debut Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* with Opera Omaha, debut the role of Cunegonde in *Candide* with Des Moines Metro Opera and Norina in *Don Pasquale* for a house debut with Berkshire Opera Festival. Orchestral highlights include a return to the Charleston Symphony for Handel's *Messiah*. Ms. Breiwick is a native of



Seattle and holds degrees from The Juilliard School and Mannes College of Music. She spent several years in Europe as an Ensemble member of Opernhaus Zürich.

Lute Breuer (Puppeteer)

Lute Breuer is a New York-based puppeteer. Broadway performance credits include *War Horse* at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre, *The Pee Wee Herman Show* at the Stephen Sondheim Theatre and *The New York Spectacular* at Radio City Music Hall. He performed in the national and international tours of Mabou Mines' *Peter and Wendy* as well as directing puppetry for The Yin Mei Dance Company in Beijing. Other productions have taken him to Rio, Moscow, Mexico City, Seoul and Edinburgh. Additional New York productions include *Rite of Spring* at Lincoln Center, *Sisters Follies* at Abrons Art Center, *Charcoal Boy* at Here, *The Lighthouse Keeper* at Dixon Place and *Pip's Island* currently running in Times Square. He has worked with Basil Twist on multiple occasions and is very happy to do so again.



Sean Burpee (Puppeteer)

Puppeteer Sean Burpee makes his stage debut with *Hansel and Gretel*. He is a former advertising executive in New York City working for BuzzFeed and Slate Magazine. In addition to puppetry, he is a passionate artist specializing in embroidery, pottery and ink drawings. He is also a graphic designer working with clients such as Jonathan Van Ness (*Queer Eye*), Throwing Shade podcast, Comedy Bang Bang, Conan O'Brien and LeVar Burton.



Cheyenne Coss (Dew Fairy)

As the Michigan Opera Theatre Studio soprano, Cheyenne Coss most recently appeared in *Candide* as Paquette and Immigrant. She is a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music and recently made her San Francisco debut in the role of Aminta in *The Shepherd King* with the Merola Opera Program.

Cheyenne has also performed with Chautauqua Opera, Charleston Symphony Orchestra and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. She has won several competitions, including First Place in the William C. Byrd Young Artist Competition, the David Daniels Young Artist Competition and second place in the FAVA Grand Concours Competition. This season, Cheyenne makes her debut as Pamina in *The Magic Flute* with Opera Grand Rapids and Toledo Opera. She hails from Eaton Rapids, Michigan and is a proud alumna of Oakland University.



Katherine DeYoung (Sandman)

Traverse City, Michigan native Katherine DeYoung is the resident mezzo-soprano of the Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. In addition to the Sandman, her Michigan Opera Theatre roles this season include Old Lady in *Candide* and Mae in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Last summer, she performed as an apprentice with Santa Fe Opera. She also recently completed her master's degree at the University of Houston where she performed Isabella in *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, Gertrude in *Romeo and Juliet* and Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible*. Her favorite role performed is the title role in *Carmen* with Opera in the Ozarks. Katherine is a District Winner of the 2018 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and is an alumna of Michigan State University.



Matthew DiBattista (Witch)

Matthew DiBattista returned to Michigan Opera Theatre this season as Monsieur Triquet in *Eugene Onegin* prior to singing the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*. He made his debut with MOT last season as Matteo Borsa in *Rigoletto*. Described as "brilliant" and "mega-talented" by *Opera News*, he has performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and Boston Symphony Orchestra, as well as



other major orchestras, festivals, and conductors across the United States and abroad. Recent performances include Goro in *Madama Butterfly* and Scaramuccio in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Santa Fe Opera, as well as Normano in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Don Basilio in *The Marriage of Figaro* with Boston Lyric Opera and the First Jew in *Salome* with Minnesota Orchestra. He can also be heard in recording as the title role in *Judgment of Midas* with Albany Records. Mr. DiBattista is an alumnus of University of Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.

Emily Fons (Hansel)

Mezzo-soprano Emily Fons is impressing audiences and critics alike through her remarkable versatility as an interpreter of Mozart and baroque music as well as of Rossini and more modern composers.

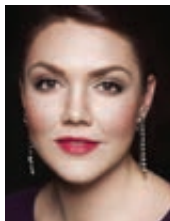


This season, Ms. Fons returns to Michigan after having performed in concert at the David DiChiera Grand Salute and as Sesto in *Julius Caesar*. She also appears as Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro* with San Diego Opera, Laurene in *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* with Seattle Opera and the title-role in *The Coronation of Poppea* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

Last season, Ms. Fons performed the roles of Ruby in *Cold Mountain* with North Carolina Opera, Sister Helen Prejean in *Dead Man Walking* with Kentucky Opera, the title role in *L'enfant et les sortilèges* with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and both a reprisal of *L'enfant* and La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi* at the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy. Other concert appearances included *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra.

Mary-Hollis Hundley (Gertrude)

Soprano Mary-Hollis Hundley returns to the Detroit Opera House as Gertrude in *Hansel and Gretel* following her soloist performance in *Alessandra Ferri: Art of the Pas de Deux*. Performance highlights include Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with Opera on the James, Meg Page in *Sir John in Love* with Bronx Opera, Musetta in *La bohème* with Tulsa Opera, High Priestess in *Aida*



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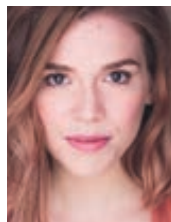
with Sarasota Opera and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Virginia Opera. Ms. Hundley was an apprentice with Santa Fe Opera, a Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and a Studio Artist with Sarasota Opera. She was a Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Regional Finalist, a George London Foundation Finalist and a Richard Gaddes Fund Career Grant Recipient with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. She holds a Master of Music

degree in Voice from Mannes College of Music and a bachelor's degree in Arts Administration and Music with the University of Kentucky.

Dorothy James (Puppeteer)

Dorothy is a Brooklyn-based puppeteer who has performed off-Broadway at 59E59 and at Radio City Music Hall. Specializing in devised puppet theater, she has developed work at St. Ann's Warehouse, The Object Movement Residency, The

Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and FigurTeateret in Norway. Her work can be seen in BBC's new children's series *Moon and Me*, Amazon's *Patriot* and various music videos. Dorothy is also a paper cut artist and avid baker.



Stephen Lord (Conductor)

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), and he is continually praised for conducting both traditional and contemporary operatic works. For 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 emeritus for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and was formerly the music director of Boston Lyric Opera.



In addition to this work in Saint Louis and Detroit, he has been a frequent guest conductor at the Canadian Opera Company, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, San Francisco Opera and the English National Opera, returning there for four consecutive seasons.

An outstanding mentor and discoverer of young talent, he has been directly responsible for the initial work of Lawrence Brownlee, Russell Thomas, Morris Robinson, Susan Graham, Christine Goerke, Patricia Racette and literally scores more of today's best singers.

Carrie Morris (Puppeteer)

Carrie Morris is a director and performance artist producing work that combines puppetry, multimedia and the gestural language of experimental theater. As a director and puppet designer, her work has been seen in the NYC Fringe Festival, The Athens Museum of Art, Seattle's Annex Theater, the Canadian Fringe Festival and is an invited artist working

with the Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra. She holds BFA in directing from NYU and an MFA in Studio Art with a focus on multimedia and experimental puppetry from University of Michigan. She is a J. William Fulbright grantee in the field of performance art for creative work in multimedia shadow puppetry in Solo, Indonesia. Her work has been supported by the Princess Grace Foundation, the Knight Foundation, the Erb Family Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and from 2011-2015 she served as the Program Manager of Puppetry and Performing Arts for the Detroit Institute of Arts.



Gordon W. Olson (Lighting Design)

Before assisting on the Broadway productions of *Good People* (World Premiere) and *Jerusalem* (Tony Nominated - Best Lighting Design) in 2011, Gordon Olson spent three years as Resident Lighting Designer with Florida Grand Opera, where his designs for *Madame Butterfly*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Così fan tutte* won critical praise. Between 2006-2008, Gordon served as the Lighting Supervisor for Houston Grand Opera, where he designed the lighting for a world premiere production of *Hansel and Gretel*. Other design engagements include *Pagliacci* with San Antonio Opera and *Into the Woods* with the Renaissance Theatre. To date, Gordon has been involved with the lighting of over 90 productions in his professional career. He received his BFA from the University of Arizona in 2001 and his MFA from the University of Texas - Austin in 2004. Currently Gordon is a Lecturer in Lighting Design at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.



Joel Orr (Puppeteer)

Joel Orr is the founding Artistic Director of Bobbindoctrin Puppet Theatre. He has written and directed several puppet plays, including *The Black Box*, *Corpus Struwwelpeter*, *Ivan the Fool*, *The Mauist*, *The Crime of the Assistant Master Butler*, *The*

Crucifer, *Ant Sandwich* and *My Cold Dead Fingers*. Through Bobbindoctrin, Joel has enjoyed many collaborations with Houston arts groups, including the *Danse Macabre* trilogy with Two Star Symphony, *The Long Christmas Ride Home* (by Paula Vogel) with Unhinged Productions, *Rot* (by John Harvey) with Mildred's Umbrella Theatre Company, *The Danube* (by Marie Irene-Fornez) and *The Noblest of Drugs* (by Joel Orr, directed by Jason Nodler) with Infernal Bridegroom Productions. Joel has also performed as an actor in Houston with The Catastrophic Theatre, in roles including Nagg in Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* and Hubert in Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*. This is Joel's third outing with Basil Twist's production of *Hansel and Gretel*, having previously performed with The Houston Grand Opera and the Atlanta Opera.



Justin Perkins (Puppeteer, Puppet Repair Manager)

Justin Perkins is a theater artist based in New York. He designs and builds objects for performance and also performs as a puppeteer and actor. In recent months, Justin and his work have appeared at Abrons Arts Center, Ping Chong + Company, Ringling International Arts Festival (Sarasota), Miller Theater at Columbia University, La Mama, Triskelion Arts and more. His visual art unifies, sometimes uneasily, the organic with the mass-produced, baroque refinement with punk anarchism. Justin lives in Brooklyn and was born in New Hampshire. Justin teaches puppetry and filmmaking in public schools and community centers in NYC. He holds degrees in theater from Vassar and Sarah Lawrence Colleges.



Kimberley S. Prescott (Associate Director)

Kimberley S. Prescott is excited to return to Michigan Opera Theatre where she last assistant directed *Julius Caesar* in 2012. The majority of her work has been at opera companies like the Baltimore Opera, WolfTrap Opera, the Washington Opera, the



Atlanta Opera, Palm Beach Opera, the Kentucky Opera, Opera San Antonio, Los Angeles Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City and Seattle Opera where she worked on the 1995 production of *Der Ring auf des Niebelungen*. Kimberley has also worked abroad with opera houses in Italy, France, Germany, Scotland and Ireland. Her home company from 1994-2006 was the Houston Grand Opera where she stage managed over 50 productions including 12 world premieres (such as *Harvey Milk*, *Florencia en el Amazonas*, *Little Women*, *Cold Sassy Tree* and *The Little Prince*) and multiple outside projects. Kimberley's current home is as the Production Stage Manager for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis where she has worked since 2008 and has staged managed, among other productions, the world premieres of *The Golden Ticket*, *Champion*, *27* and *Shalimar the Clown*.

Basil Twist (Director)

Basil Twist is a third generation puppeteer whose work has spanned throughout opera, Broadway, dance and beyond. In addition to *Hansel and Gretel*, he has conceived and directed, *La Bella Dormente Nel Bosco*. Mr. Twist's Broadway credits include *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*, *Oh, Hello! On Broadway* and *The Addams Family*, for which he won a Drama Desk Award. In dance, Mr. Twist created the sets and puppetry for the world premiere of *Dorothy and The Prince of Oz* for The Tulsa Ballet and collaborated on a new *Nutcracker* with Christopher Wheeldon for The Joffrey Ballet. Also with Wheeldon, *Cinderella* at the Dutch National and San Francisco ballets and *A Winter's Tale* for the Royal Ballet. Mr. Twist is the sole American to graduate from the École Supérieure Nationale des Arts de la Marionnette in Charleville-Mezieres, France. His showmanship was spotlighted in New York by "The Jim Henson International Festival of Puppetry" with his award winning *The Araneidae Show*. Mr. Twist has taught at leading universities such as Stanford, Duke, New York University and Brown. He has received an Obie, Drama Desk Award, five UNIMA Awards, two Bessie Awards, a New York Innovative Theatre Award, a Henry Hewes Award, a Guggenheim, a USA Artists fellowship and a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award.



Hansel and Gretel:

Puppets Amplify Fantasy of Classic Fairy Tale

BY ERICA HOBBS

It's a tale as old as time. A young brother and sister are driven from their poverty-stricken family to fend for themselves in the woods, only to be nearly eaten by a witch who lives in a gingerbread house. In the opera, *Hansel and Gretel* presents the classic Grimm's fairy tale in Grand Opera style, including a few new characters and set to folk music-inspired themes by composer Engelbert Humperdinck. With Michigan Opera Theatre's production, *Hansel and Gretel* takes the fantasy to a whole new level - with puppets.

"Whether that be a giant witch or a tree or just a piece of fabric, the craft of puppetry is the magic of making something come alive on stage," said director and master puppeteer Basil Twist.

Twist designed the production, including the puppets, costumes and scenery, keeping his "puppeteer's touch" everywhere.

With the exception of Hansel and Gretel themselves, he said that nearly everything on stage is made through puppetry or through augmented costume. Those elements include a larger-than-life mother and father and 14 angel marionettes operated by puppeteers from high above the stage.

"Typically, there's a children's chorus on stage as the angels," he said. "But with puppets you can make them fly."

The most impressive effect of them all, however, may be the opera's antagonist: The Witch. While performed by a live singer, traditionally a male, the character requires an additional three puppeteers to manage the 15 foot costume. Inside, the singer manages everything from the waist up, including an oversized prosthetic



face, a huge headdress and arms twice the length of real arms. Three puppeteers manage the bottom, one to work the legs, one to make the costume rise up and down and one to make the whole thing move around.

"The mechanism and the puppeteers allow the singer to perform as this huge flamboyant, wild witch," Twist said. "The witch is going to eat the kid, I wanted to really see that."

Twist created the costume in partnership with the Jim Henson Company to make his original design come to life, who he said are the best people to work with in the industry.

"They were excited to do something out there with me, because I tend to do somewhat out there stuff," he said.

Though based on a children's story, Twist said *Hansel and Gretel* is not directed at kids, though it is accessible to them. He said the performance is still a Grand Opera with incredible music, and that everyone can love puppets.

"Puppets should not turn adults off to the shows," he said. "They should turn adults on to puppetry."

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE ORCHESTRA – HANSEL AND GRETEL

VIOLIN I

Eliot Heaton+
Concertmaster
Laura Roelofs+
Assistant Concertmaster
Emily Barkakati+
Kevin Filewyc+
Henrik Karapetyan+
Beth Kirton+
Andrew Wu+
Ran Cheng
David Ormai
Yuri Popowycz

VIOLIN II

Victoria Haltom+
Principal
Molly Hughes+
Bryan Johnston+
Velda Kelly+
Dan Stachyra+
Jenny Wan+
Jaqueline Nutting
Melody Wootton

VIOLA

John Madison+
Principal
Jacqueline Hanson+
Scott Stefanko+
Barbara Zmich-
McClellan+
James Greer
Julianne Zinn

CELLO

Nadine Deleury+
Principal
Yuliya Kim+
Dan Thomas+
Andrea Yun+
David Huckaby
David Peshlakai

BASS

Derek Weller+
Principal
Clark Suttle+
Aaron Keaster
Robert Stiles

FLUTE

Laura Larson+
Acting Principal
Shantanique Moore
Helen Near

OBOE

Sally Heffelfinger-
Pituch+
Acting Principal
Yuki Harding

CLARINET

Brian Bowman+
Principal
J. William King+
Lisa Raschiatore

BASSOON

Francisco Delgado+
Principal
Gregory Quick+

HORN

Andrew Pelletier+
Principal
Garrett Krohn
Carrie Banfield-Taplin+
Dave Denniston
Tamara Kosinksi

TRUMPET

David Ammer+
Principal
Gordon Simmons+

TROMBONE

Brittany Lasch+
Principal
Greg Near+
Christopher Hernacki

TUBA

Matthew Lyon

TIMPANI

Alison Chang+
Principal

PERCUSSION

John Dorsey+
Principal
David Taylor

HARP

Patricia Terry-Ross+
Principal

+ Michigan Opera
Theatre Core
Orchestra

Detroit Federation of
Musicians Local #5
American Federation of
Musicians

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE ORCHESTRA – THE GRAPES OF WRATH

VIOLIN I

Eliot Heaton+
Concertmaster
Laura Roelofs+
Assistant Concertmaster
Anna Bittar-Weller+
Kevin Filewyc+
Beth Kirton+
Henrik Karapetyan+
Andrew Wu+
David Ormai
Yuri Popowycz
Mallory Tabb

VIOLIN II

Victoria Haltom+
Principal
Molly Hughes+
Bryan Johnston+
Velda Kelly+
Dan Stachyra+
Jenny Wan+
Jaqueline Nutting
Melody Wootton

VIOLA

John Madison+
Principal
Jacqueline Hanson+
Scott Stefanko+
Barbara Zmich-
McClellan+
James Greer
Julianne Zinn

CELLO

Nadine Deleury+
Principal
Yuliya Kim+
Daniel Thomas+
Andrea Yun+
David Huckaby
David Peshlakai

BASS

Derek Weller+
Principal
Clark Suttle+
Greg Sheldon
Robert Stiles

FLUTE

Laura Larson+
Acting Principal
Dennis Carter

OBOE

Alex Hayashi
Acting Principal
Sally Heffelfinger-
Pituch+

ENGLISH HORN

Sally Heffelfinger-
Pituch+

CLARINET

Brian Bowman+
Principal
J. William King+

SAXOPHONE

Joseph Lulloff

BASSOON

Francisco Delgado+
Principal
Gregory Quick+

CONTRA BASSOON

Christian Green

ENGLISH HORN

Sally Heffelfinger-Pitch+

HORN

Andrew Pelletier+
Principal
Carrie Banfield-Taplin+

TRUMPET

David Ammer+
Principal
Gordon Simmons+

TROMBONE

Brittany Lasch+
Principal
Greg Near+
Bryan Pokorney

TIMPANI

Alison Chang+
Principal

PERCUSSION

John Dorsey+
Principal
David Taylor

HARP

Patricia Terry-Ross+
Principal

PIANO/CELESTE

Tessa Hartle

GUITAR/BANJO

Al Ayoub

+ Michigan Opera
Theatre Core
Orchestra

Detroit Federation of
Musicians Local #5
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Musicians

CHILDREN'S CHORUS – HANSEL AND GRETEL

April 4 & 6

Mallory Childs+
Megan DuRocher+
Tyler Edwards+
Nadim Ezzeddine+
Jaeden Footitt+
Jehnya Footitt^
Ava Kern^
Adam Kerr^
Molly Levin^
Anika Lopes*
Lauren Mattison*
Rachel Miltimore^

Natalie Nikolajevs^
Joslyn Phillips*
Shreya Pillai^
Skylar Reynolds*
Anna Schultz*
Keara Schultz*
Bridget Shene*
Shayla Taylor^
Isabella Vesprini+
Natalie Watson+
Claire Wolfe+
Bridgitte Zook*

April 10 & 14

Mallory Childs+
Stephanie Davidescu^
Megan DuRocher+
Tyler Edwards+
Nadim Ezzeddine+
Lillian Fellows^
Jaeden Footitt+
Jehnya Footitt^
Elizabeth Garcia^
Anika Lopes*
Reed Koesel^
Rebecca Lucksom^
Lauren Mattison*

Rachel Miltimore^
Natalie Nikolajevs^
Joslyn Phillips*
Elizabeth Pryer^
Skylar Reynolds*
Anna Schultz*
Keara Schultz*
Bridget Shene*
Piper Teasdale^
Isabella Vesprini+
Natalie Watson+
Claire Wolfe+
Bridgitte Zook*

*Gingerbread
+Puppeteer
^Chorus of Children

Members of the
Michigan Opera
Theatre Children's
Chorus

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE CHORUS – THE GRAPES OF WRATH

Soprano

Brandy Adams
Carol Ambrogio-Wood
Alaina Brown
Claire Chardon
Jenny Cresswell
Fidelia Darmakasih
Sandra Periord
Heidi Zook

Tenor

Gregory Ashe
Brent Doucette
Camron Gray
Richard Jackson, Jr.
Brandon Motz
Robert Skylis
Greg Ashe
Seth Johnson
Adrian Leskiw
David Roberts

Alto

Olivia Johnson
Kaswanna Kanyinda
Madison Montambault
Kristina Riegle
Tiffanie Waldron
Antona Yost

Bass

Matthew Daniels
Kurt Frank
Branden C.S. Hood
Matthew Konopacki
David Moan
Paolo Pacheco
Frank Pitts
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The Grapes of Wrath

MAY 11-19, 2019

MUSIC

Ricky Ian Gordon

LIBRETTO

Michael Korie
based on the novel
by John Steinbeck

WORLD PREMIERE

First performed by
Minnesota Opera in St. Paul
on February 10, 2007

CONDUCTOR

Michael Christie

DIRECTOR

James Robinson

ASSOC. DIRECTOR

Richard Gammon

CHORUS MASTER

Suzanne Mallare Acton

SET DESIGN

Allen Moyer

COSTUME DESIGN

James Schuette

LIGHTING DESIGN

Christopher Akerlind

WIG & MAKEUP

DESIGN

Joanne Weaver

SUPERTITLES

Dee Dorsey

REPETITEUR

Tessa Hartle

STAGE MANAGER

Ken Saltzman

GENERAL MOTORS

2019 Spring Opera
Season Sponsor

This project is supported
in part by an award from

THE ANDREW W.
MELLON
FOUNDATION

Elaine Fontana

Conductor Sponsor

The Grapes of Wrath is a co-production of Michigan Opera Theatre and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis

CAST

(In order of appearance)

Rosasharn	Deanna Breiwick
Ma Joad	Katharine Goeldner
Pa Joad	Levi Hernandez
Uncle John	Robert Orth
Connie Rivers	Harry Greenleaf*
Ruthie Joad	Natalie Nikolajevs
Winfield Joad	Cooper Bush
Noah Joad/Prison Guard	Hugh Russell
Al Joad	Michael Day*
Tom Joad	Tobias Greenhalgh
Jim Casy	Geoffrey Agpalo
Muley Graves/Grampa/Contractor of Migrant Workers/ Patrol Guard	Dennis Petersen
Pete Fowler/Ragged Man/Bill	Matthew Konopacki
Joe/Pump Guy 1	Paolo Pacheco
Fred/Pump Guy 2	Kevin Starnes
Hank/Lou	Brent Doucette
Senator	Robert Skylis
Muley's Wife	Madison Montambault
Granma	Deborah Nansteel
Man in Suit/Inspector	Allen Michael Jones*
Constable/Joe	Brandon Spencer
Traffic Cop/Peach Checker	Frank Pitts
A Trucker/Jim	Matthew Daniels
Pump Guy 3	Richard Jackson
Mae	Katherine DeYoung*
Val	David Moan
Bill/Commissary Clerk	Branden C.S. Hood
Cropper Woman	Jenny Cresswell
Cropper Husband/George	Camron Gray
Deputy	Gregory Ashe
Cabin Mistress	Kaswanna Kanyinda
Washroom Guard	Seth Johnson
Jake	Brandon Motz
Soprano	Sandra Periord
Boy in Barn	Bennett Vesprini

*Michigan Opera Theatre Studio Artist

SYNOPSIS

Setting: Oklahoma, Southwestern United States and California in the mid-1930s

Prologue

The sharecroppers recall the devastation of their native Oklahoma lands, brought about by drought and economic depression.

ACT 1

Having been released early from prison on parole for good behavior, Tom Joad meets up with Jim Casy, a lapsed preacher. When they get to the deserted and destroyed Joad family farm, they discover that the bank has

foreclosed on it.

Tom and Jim decide to accompany the family to California, where fruit picking jobs are supposed to be plenty. Al Joad buys an old truck, and the family loads up the few possessions they can take. Connie and Rosasharn dream of a new life and home for Moses, their unborn baby. The next day the Joads bury Grampa, who has died during the night. The family then continues their journey down Route 66.

At a diner, the Joads experience contempt from the truckers and waitresses when they try to buy only the food they can afford, but the diner owner and waitress decide to act out of compassion. Crossing the

Mojave, Granma dies during the night, but Ma keeps her death a secret until they get to California. Upon arriving, they are encouraged to see a valley of green. Ma reveals that Granma has died during the crossing. Facing an uncertain future, the family hopes for a better in life in California.

ACT 2

The Joads continue on to a Hooverville – a squalid shantytown. Ma struggles to keep the family together. Connie regrets leaving Oklahoma and storms off, never to return. The next day, the Joad men get involved with unscrupulous contractors. A woman is killed in the struggle, and Tom knocks a deputy unconscious, violating parole. Casy volunteers to stay behind and take the blame as the Joads escape to the truck. Noah Joad, feeling himself a burden on the family, goes to the creek and drowns himself.

Newly relocated at a clean, self-policing government camp, the Joads feel like people again. Local farm owners send in agitators to cause a fight during a hoedown so they can close down the camp, but the croppers remain peaceful. Pa persuades the Joads to go to a new farm. They realize that they have been brought in as scabs, triggering a riot outside the camp. Tom meets up with Jim Casy, now an agitator for farm workers' rights. When Casy is bludgeoned to death by a deputy, Tom kills him and goes into hiding. The remaining Joads find work picking cotton and taking shelter in a boxcar. During the rainy season, Rosasharn goes into labor, but delivers a stillborn child. Ma asks Uncle John to go bury Moses while Rosasharn recovers to ease her pain; Uncle John instead chooses to cast Moses' dead body into the river so that everyone can see "the fruits of their blindness." The raging river has flooded the remaining Joads out of their home. The truck is swept away in the water, and Al is lost when he goes after it. Ma, Pa, Ruthie, Winfield, and a very weak Rosasharn seek refuge in a barn, where they find a boy and his starving father. Ma intuitively knows what Rosasharn must do, and ushers everyone else outside. Rosasharn nourishes the starving man with milk from her breast.

Suzanne Mallare Acton (Chorus Master)

Chorus Master Suzanne Mallare Acton has received wide acclaim for her choral direction involving more than 125 productions in seven languages. Conducting credits include *West Side Story*, *The Music Man*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *Daughter of the Regiment*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata* and *Carmina Burana* with The Michigan Opera Theatre; *My Fair Lady* and *La Traviata* for Dayton Opera; *The Merry Widow* and *Madama Butterfly* for Artpark; and *Tosca* for Augusta Opera. Ms. Acton is the founding Director of the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus. She is also the Artistic and Music Director of metro Detroit's Rackham Choir.



Christopher Akerlind (Lighting Design)

Tony Award-winning lighting designer Christopher Akerlind has designed more than 600 theater and opera productions around the world. His work includes *The Barber of Seville* at the Metropolitan Opera and *Appomattox* and *The Abduction from the Seraglio* at San Francisco Opera. He is the former Head of Lighting Design and Director of the Design & Production Programs at the CalArts School of Theater as well as the former resident lighting designer at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. His awards include two Tonys for Best Lighting Design for *Indecent* and *Light in the Piazza*, the latter of which also won a Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Lighting Design. He also received an Obie Award for sustained excellence for his work Off-Broadway.



Geoffrey Agpalo (Jim Casy)

Geoffrey Agpalo returns to the role of Jim Casy after portraying the preacher in the production's premiere of *The Grapes of Wrath* at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. He made his

role debut there last year as Alfredo in *La Traviata* and has performed in the company's productions of *The Barber of Seville*, *Emmeline* and the world premiere of *Shalimar the Clown* where he created the role of Copinath. Geoffrey's role debuts next year include Tamino at Opera Maine, Don Ottavio at Michigan Opera Theatre and Nemorino at Sarasota Opera. He has performed in the *Cousin from Nowhere* and Lehar's *The Land of Smiles* with Chicago Folks Operetta and *The Merry Widow*, *The Consul*, *The Barber of Seville* and *The Ghosts of Versailles* while at Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music. Last year he was a recipient of the The William Matheus Sullivan Musical Foundation Career Grant. He has performed as a soloist in the Verdi *Requiem*, Beethoven's *9th Symphony*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and Medelssohn's *Lobgesang*.



Deanna Breiwick (Rosasharn)

American soprano Deanna Breiwick makes her Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* and will perform Rosasharn in *The Grapes of Wrath* with MOT later this season. Hailed by *The New York Times* for her "sweet sound and floating high notes," a series of house and role debuts encompass Ms. Breiwick's 2018-19 season. She will return to the Metropolitan Opera as a Shadow in *Marnie*, debut Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* with Opera Omaha, debut the role of Cunegonde in *Candide* with Des Moines Metro Opera and Norina in *Don Pasquale* for a house debut with Berkshire Opera Festival. Orchestral highlights include a return to the Charleston Symphony for Handel's *Messiah*. Ms. Breiwick is a native of Seattle and holds degrees from The Juilliard School and Mannes College of Music. She spent several years in Europe as an Ensemble member of Opernhaus Zürich.



Cooper Bush (Winfield Joad)

Cooper Bush, age 11, is excited to be making his professional debut with the Michigan Opera Theatre. Past credits include Winthrop Paroo in *The Music Man* and Young Shrek in *Shrek the Musical*, both with the Saline High School Drama Club. He was also an ensemble member in the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus production of *The Secret World of Og*.



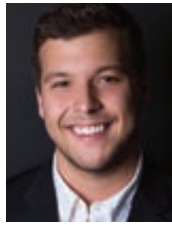
Michael Christie (Conductor)

Michael Christie is a thoughtfully innovative conductor, equally at home in the symphonic and opera worlds, who is focused on making the audience experience at his performances entertaining, enlightening, and enriching. *The New York Times* reports, "Michael Christie is a director open to adventure and challenge," and *The Cincinnati Enquirer* declares, "If Michael Christie represents the future of music in this country, the future looks promising indeed." Christie was featured in *Opera News* in August 2012 as one of 25 people believed to "break out and become major forces in the field in the coming decade." At Minnesota Opera, Christie led 24 productions over eight years, six seasons as its first-ever Music Director (2012-2018) - from staples of the repertory such as *La Traviata*, *Nabucco*, *Macbeth*, *La Boheme*, *Fanciulla del West*, *Arabella*, and *Das Rheingold* to performances of 20th and 21st century operas via Minnesota Opera's New Works Initiative, including Bernard Herrmann's only opera *Wuthering Heights*, the world premiere of Kevin Puts' *Silent Night* which won the Pulitzer Prize in 2012, the world premiere of Kevin Puts' *The Manchurian Candidate*, and the world premiere of Paul Moravec's *The Shining*.



Michael Day (Al Joad)

Michael Day is the resident tenor for the Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. This season, he performed the title role in *Candide* as well as a peasant in *Eugene Oegin*. Last season, he sang Spoletta in *Tosca*, Pablo Picasso and F. Scott Fitzgerald in *27* and Don Basilio in *The Marriage of Figaro* with MOT. Recently, Michael performed the role of Leo Hubbard in *Regina* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. His performance credits also include Indiana University Opera Theatre, Indianapolis Pro Musica, Bloomington Chamber Singers and Utah Festival Opera. Michael is a two-time Metropolitan Opera National Council District Winner and winner of the Indianapolis Matinee Musicale Competition. He holds a bachelor's degree in Music Education and Vocal Performance as well as a master's degree in Voice from Indiana University.



Ricky Ian Gordon (Composer)

Ricky Ian Gordon is a leading writer of vocal music that spans art song, opera, and musical theater. His music has been performed or recorded by notable artists such as Renée Fleming, Audra MacDonald, Kristin Chenoweth and Frederica Von Stade, among many others. Having composed operas such as *27*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *Orpheus and Euridice*, Gordon has emerged as one of today's most exciting opera composers.



Ricky has been a visiting professor at colleges and universities throughout the country including Yale, The Juilliard School, Eastman School of Music, University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and his alma mater, Carnegie Mellon. Among his honors are an OBIE Award and the Stephen Sondheim Award and many awards from The National Endowment of the Arts, The American Music Center and ASCAP.

with New York City Opera's Betty Allen and Diva Awards.

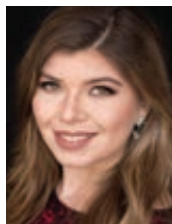
Tobias Greenhalgh (Tom Joad)

Baritone Tobias Greenhalgh performs Tom Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath*, a role for which he received acclaim with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2017. Recent work includes performances at Carnegie Hall, the Glyndebourne Opera Tour, the Festival International d'Art Lyrique d'Aix-en-Provence and Vienna State Opera. Tobias was a Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, a Filene Artist at Wolf Trap Opera, a young artist with Palm Beach Opera and was a vocal fellow with the Toronto Music Festival. He is a recent graduate of The Juilliard School, from which he earned both his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees. He is a first place winner of the 2013 Liederkrantz Competition in the opera division. Other accolades include the grand prize in the Metropolitan International Music Festival Competition, first place in the Mario Lanza Competition, second place in the Oratorio Society of New York Competition and third place in the Gerda Lissner Competition. Additionally, he is the co-creator of *Operation Superpower*, a superhero opera for kids that promotes an anti-bullying stance from early school years.



Katherine DeYoung (Mae)

Traverse City, Michigan native Katherine DeYoung is the resident mezzo-soprano of the Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. Her Michigan Opera Theatre roles this season include Old Lady in *Candide* and Sandman in *Hansel and Gretel*. Last summer, she performed as an apprentice with Santa Fe Opera. She also recently completed her master's degree at the University of Houston where she performed Isabella in *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, Gertrude in *Romeo and Juliet* and Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible*. Her favorite role performed is the title role in *Carmen* with Opera in the Ozarks. Katherine is a District Winner of the 2018 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and is an alumna of Michigan State University.



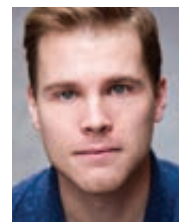
Katharine Goeldner (Ma Joad)

With an elegant combination of warm, rich vocal tone and assured artistry, Katharine Goeldner is recognized as one of today's finest mezzo-sopranos. Highlights include Delilah in *Samson and Delilah* with Virginia Opera; Ma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; Jacqueline Onassis in *JFK* in Montreal and Fort Worth Opera; Amneris in *Aida* with Utah Opera; Thirza in *The Wreckers* for Bard SummerScape festival; Giovanna Seymour in *Anna Bolena* at the Metropolitan Opera and Welsh National Opera and Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Ascanio in *Benvenuto Cellini*, Nicklausse in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* and Schoolboy in *Lulu* at the Metropolitan Opera. She was a favorite at New York City Opera where she appeared as Erika in *Vanessa*, Ruggiero in *Alcina*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, and in the title role of *Carmen*, and was honored



Harry Greenleaf (Connie Rivers)

Wixom, Michigan native Harry Greenleaf is the resident baritone of the Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. This season, he performs the Captain in *Eugene Oegin* and performs the roles of Fiorello and Sergeant in *The Barber of Seville*. He also performed Dr. Pangloss in *Candide*. Previous MOT credits include Leo Stein and Man Ray in *27*, Sciarrone in *Tosca*, Marullo in *Rigoletto*, Le Bret in *Cyrano*, Jake Wallace in *The Girl of the Golden West*, Moralès in *Carmen* and Top in *The Tender Land*, a role he recently reprised with Des



Moines Metro Opera. He has been a Studio Artist with the Wolf Trap Opera Company, an Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera and a Young Artist with the Glimmerglass Festival. He holds a Master of Music degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and is an alumnus of the Michigan State University College of Music.

Levi Hernandez (Pa Joad)

Baritone Levi Hernandez plays Pa Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath*, a role he performed in 2017 with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. With a velvety tone and a stage presence which exudes confidence and charm, he is gaining momentum as a sought after artist on the operatic stage. He has performed recently with Opera Colorado as Marcello in *La bohème*, with Chicago Opera Theater as Inspector Kildare in *Elizabeth Cree*, with Intermountain Opera as Ford in *Falstaff* and with the San Diego and Madison operas as Alvaro in *Florencia en el Amazonas*. Previously, he has performed *The Triptych* and *The Girl of the Golden West* at the Metropolitan Opera and the San Francisco Opera and *Madama Butterfly* at Houston Grand Opera, Arizona Opera and Chattanooga Symphony & Opera. He also recently performed Handel's *Alexander's Feast* with Music of the Baroque, the *Messiah* with Northwestern University and Shuisky in Dvorak's *Dimitrij* with the Bard SummerScape festival.



He has performed recently with Opera Colorado as Marcello in *La bohème*, with Chicago Opera Theater as Inspector Kildare in *Elizabeth Cree*, with Intermountain Opera as Ford in *Falstaff* and with the San Diego and Madison operas as Alvaro in *Florencia en el Amazonas*. Previously, he has performed *The Triptych* and *The Girl of the Golden West* at the Metropolitan Opera and the San Francisco Opera and *Madama Butterfly* at Houston Grand Opera, Arizona Opera and Chattanooga Symphony & Opera. He also recently performed Handel's *Alexander's Feast* with Music of the Baroque, the *Messiah* with Northwestern University and Shuisky in Dvorak's *Dimitrij* with the Bard SummerScape festival.

Michael Korie (Librettist)

Michael Korie writes lyrics to musicals and librettos to operas; for his work in both he received the Marc Blitzstein Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Writing for musical theater, he created the lyrics to composer Scott Frankel's music for *War Paint*, *Grey Gardens*, *Far From Heaven*, *Happiness*, *Doll* and *Meet Mister Future*. Their scores have been nominated for Tony and Drama Desk Awards, received The Outer



Critics Circle Award, and have been produced on Broadway and at Playwrights Horizons, Lincoln Center Theater and theaters throughout the nation as well as in Europe and South America. Michael's librettos to operas composed by Stewart Wallace include *Where's Dick?*, *Kabbalah*, *Hopper's Wife*, *Harvey Milk* and *SuperMax*, set to premiere in 2020. His opera works have been produced at San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Minnesota Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, BAM Next Wave Festival, Carnegie Hall and Disney Los Angeles Symphony Hall. Michael collaborated with co-lyricist Amy Powers on the lyrics to the musical *Doctor Zhivago* composed by Lucy Simon, and produced in Australia, Korea, Scandinavia, and on Broadway in 2015.

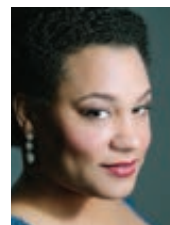
Allen Moyer (Set Design)

Scenic designer Allen Moyer has worked with a range of theater productions in opera, ballet and Broadway. His opera credits include *Orfeo ed Euridice* for the Metropolitan Opera, *Die Fledermaus* for the Canadian Opera Company/ English National Opera plus productions for Santa Fe Opera, San Francisco Opera, Opera Theater of Saint Louis, Houston Grand Opera, Scottish Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Seattle Opera and New York City Opera. He also designed the recent premiere of *The Count of Monte Cristo* for the Theater St. Gallen in Switzerland. His ballet credits include the *Sylvia* for the San Francisco Ballet and *Romeo and Juliet: On Motifs of Shakespeare* for the Mark Morris Dance Group. Broadway credits include *Grey Gardens*, *Lysistrata Jones*, *The Lyons*, *After Miss Julie*, *Thurgood*, *Little Dog Laughed*, *In My Life*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *The Constant Wife*, *Reckless*, *The Man Who Had All the Luck* and *A Thousand Clowns*. Off Broadway credits include *Giant*, *A Minister's Wife*, *The New Century*, *Passion Play*, *Mr. Marmalade*, *The Dazzle*, *Landscape of the Body*, *A Few Stout Individuals*, *Lobby Hero* and *This is Our Youth*.



Deborah Nansteel (Granma)

Mezzo-soprano Deborah Nansteel returns to Michigan Opera Theatre as Granma in *The Grapes of Wrath*, following performances of Grace in *The Summer King* and La Duegne in *Cyrano*. Highlights from her career include her Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as Gertrude in *Roméo et Juliette*, a world-première performance of Douglas Pew and Dara Weinberg's opera *Penny* with Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative and the creation of the role of Lucinda in the world première of the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Jennifer Higdon's adaptation of *Cold Mountain* at Santa Fe Opera. Deborah is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music where she earned an Artist Diploma in Opera and a Master of Music in Voice.



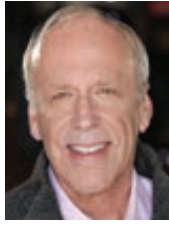
Natalie Nikolajevs (Ruthie Joad)

Natalie Nikolajevs is a member of the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus (MOTCC) and a frequent performer in mainstage Michigan Opera Theatre productions. She recently performed the title role in MOT's production of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and performed in MOTCC's production of *The Secret World of Og*. Previous credits include the Shepherd Boy in MOT's production of *Tosca* last season and a sailor in MOTCC's production of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Natalie studies dance at Dearborn Dance Academy and also enjoys performing in musicals. Her favorite musical theatre roles that she has played are Marie in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*, Molly in *Annie* and Iago in *Aladdin Jr*. Natalie would like to thank Suzanne Acton for always being supportive of her, her mother for taking her to every rehearsal and for helping her practice and Michelle Martin for coaching her for auditions.



Robert Orth (Uncle John)

Robert Orth has performed over 130 roles in opera and musicals. He was named "Artist of the Year" by both New York City Opera and Seattle Opera. Highlights include John Buchanan in *Summer and Smoke* broadcast nationally on Public Television; the Lodger in *The Aspern Papers* at the Kennedy Center; the Lecturer in *A Waterbird Talk* in Chicago; the title role in the world premiere of *Harvey Milk* in Houston, New York, and San Francisco; Frank Lloyd Wright in *Shining Brow*; Owen Hart in the world premiere of *Dead Man Walking*; Richard Nixon in *Nixon in China* in St. Louis, and subsequently in Portland, Chicago, Cincinnati, Denver, Vancouver, Toronto, London and Berlin; Uncle John in the world premiere of *The Grapes of Wrath* Minnesota; Stubb in the world premiere of *Moby Dick*, Blazes in *The Lighthouse* in Dallas; Howie Albert in the world premiere of *Champion* in St. Louis and Simon Powers in *Death and Powers* in Dallas.



Dennis Petersen (Grampa)

Hailed by *The Chicago Tribune* as a "Wonderfully natural singing actor" 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. Dennis is a tremendously respected character tenor, performing over 100 roles during his extensive career, such as Father Greenville in *Dead Man Walking*, which he sang at the opera's New York City premiere; Mime in both *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*, which he performed to great acclaim with Seattle Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, The Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera; Herod in *Salome* which he sang with major opera companies such as Minnesota Opera and San Francisco Opera. Dennis also sang the role of the School Master in the Japanese Tour of *Cunning Little Vixen* with the Saito Kinen Festival, returning there to sing Goro in *Madama Butterfly*.



James Robinson (Director)

American stage director James Robinson is Artistic Director at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where he has mounted productions including Chin's *Alice in Wonderland* (American premiere), Ash's *The Golden Ticket* (world premiere), Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* (also presented at the Wexford Festival) and Adams' *The Death of Klinghoffer* and *Nixon in China*.

Elsewhere, James has directed new productions for Houston Grand Opera (*Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Giulio Cesare* and *Abduction from the Seraglio*), San Francisco Opera (*Norma*, *Il Trittico* and *L'Elisir d'amore*) and the Canadian Opera Company (*Norma*, *Elektra* and *Nixon in China*). For the Santa Fe Opera, he has directed new productions of *Capriccio*, *Così fan tutte* and *The Rake's Progress* and numerous productions for the New York City Opera (*La bohème*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Il viaggio a Reims*). His work has also been seen at the Australian Opera, the Washington Opera, the Los Angeles Opera, the Seattle Opera, the Royal Swedish Opera, the Dallas Opera, the Minnesota Opera and Chicago Opera Theater. Additionally, he has created productions for the London Symphony Orchestra (Bernstein's *Mass* and Honegger's *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher*), the Hollywood Bowl (*Amadeus*), Carnegie Hall, and the Minnesota Orchestra.



Hugh Russell (Noah Joad)

Canadian baritone Hugh Russell continues to receive high praise for his charisma, dramatic energy and vocal beauty. He is widely acclaimed for his performances in the operas of Mozart and Rossini, and is regularly invited to perform with symphony orchestras throughout North America. At the center of his orchestral repertoire is Carl Orff's popular *Carmina Burana*, which Mr. Russell has performed with The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San



Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, among others. *The New Orleans Times-Picayune* said, "Baritone Hugh Russell also grasped the theatrical nature of Orff's work, nearly stealing the show with a voice that ranged from organ-deep rumbles to flute-like falsetto - and an acting style that drew roars of laughter as he captured the bullishness of an intoxicated medieval abbot."

Recent and future engagements include *Candide* in concert with Seoul Symphony Orchestra and Utah Symphony and *Carmina Burana* with Kansas City Symphony.

James Schuette (Costume Design)

James Schuette's recent work as a set and/or costume designer includes *Chess Match No. 5* with the SITI Company, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* with Asolo Repertory Theatre, *Steel Hammer* with the Actors Theatre of Louisville and the SITI Company, *The Daughter of the Regiment* with Madison Opera, *Macbeth* at Glimmerglass Opera, *27* and *Emmeline* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, *Dr. Sun Yat-Sen* at Santa Fe Opera and *Dolores Claiborne* at San Francisco Opera.



His work has been seen at American Repertory Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, BAM, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, Classic Stage, Court Theatre, Goodman Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Mark Taper Forum, Manhattan Theatre Club, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Playwrights Horizons, Seattle Rep, Signature Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Trinity Repertory Theatre, UCLA's Royce Hall, Wexner Center, Yale Rep, Boston Lyric Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Seattle Opera, New York City Opera, Washington National Opera and internationally.

Bennett Vesprini (Boy in Barn)

Bennett Ontario Vesprini is an 11-year-old musician, singer and actor. He is homeschooled but also attends the Suzuki Royal Oak Institute of Music. He has been singing and playing the piano since the age of 5. He also plays the classical and electric guitar as well as the electric bass. He sings a capella in the group "Vesprini Quartet" along with his three siblings. He has been in several commercials and television shows. He is most known for playing Tocho in the Cinemax drama *Banshee*. He made his theatrical debut in the beloved opera *The Summer King*, where he sang in the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus. His hobbies are roller skating, playing games and creating songs.



Joanne Weaver (Wig/Make-up Design)

Born in England, Joanne Weaver came to the United States 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 Michigan Opera Theatre credits include *The Magic Flute*, *Macbeth*, *The Passenger*, *Frida*, *The Merry Widow*, *Faust*, *Margaret Garner*, *Cyrano* and *The Pearl Fishers*.



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In Memoriam

John Dingell Board of Trustees 1999-2019

Michigan Congressman John Dingell was not only a devout public servant but a longtime supporter of Michigan Opera Theatre. He and his wife Debbie Dingell have been strong advocates for more than 25 years, including serving as members of the MOT Board of Trustees since 1999. As the longest-serving member of Congress, with a career spanning nearly 60 years, Congressman Dingell was instrumental in passing laws championing the automotive industry, civil rights, healthcare and the environment. We are grateful for his generous support for our organization and service to our country. Our hearts go out to Congresswoman Dingell during this difficult time. John Dingell, 1926-2019.

The Grapes of Wrath:

Transforming The Great American Novel into The Great American Opera

BY ERICA HOBBS

While historically a European art form, opera has expanded over the years to include works by composers and librettists from around the globe. These operas explore a broader range of human experiences, including American stories ranging from Civil Rights to baseball to life in Appalachia, often sung in English.

In *The Grapes of Wrath* opera, composed by Ricky Ian Gordon with a libretto by Michael Korie, John Steinbeck's Great American Novel is turned into the Great American Opera.

In the midst of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, the story follows the Joad family on their quest for survival, traveling from drought-ridden Oklahoma to the farms of California. Along with hordes of other migrant workers, the Joads struggle to find work and living wages, constantly facing starvation and injustice.

Korie said the novel explores themes of corporate indifference and the failure of the American dream.

"When people see the opera, they're bowled over how true it is, even though it took place 90 years ago," he said. "You realize these themes are cyclical in America. Inequities you believe to be resolved turn out not to be."

Gordon said the novel is significant, because its themes resonate worldwide, even though it is an American story.

"The story is about people who have very little who are asked to give it up by the people who have a lot. Those who have nothing give their bodies and their kindness and generosity, while those who exploit them live off of their sacrifices," he said. "The story is current, universal and biblical."

Korie said *The Grapes of Wrath* opera offers a compelling perspective



on the work, because it is experienced in one sitting.

"It's an accrual of incidents that are unbroken and supported by constant music, so it grabs hold of you and doesn't let go," he said. "When you read a novel you can say, 'This is too much, I need a rest, I'll come back to it.' With the opera, you can't come in and out of it, you're swept up in the whirlwind."

This is not the first adaptation of the novel, which also includes a film in 1940 and a play in 1990. But Korie said the opera is unique in that it can provide more context to the story. He said the novel includes documentary-like background chapters, which provide insight into the larger plight of the farmers outside of the characters. While these chapters are largely omitted from other interpretations, Korie said the opera is able to convey these chapters through use of the chorus, reminiscent of ancient Greek choruses, and inserting the primary characters.

The prologue of the opera, based on the first chapter of the book which provides background information on the drought and the Dust Bowl, is presented by the principal characters mingled in among the chorus. Another example dramatizes the middle Joad brother, Al, buying a lemon of a used truck, reinvented from Steinbeck's background chapter on how car lot dealers took advantage of desperate migrants.

"It's a more complete *Grapes of Wrath* than the play or the film," he said.

Novel, opera or otherwise, Gordon said one of the glories and tragedies of *The Grapes of Wrath* is its utter and extreme resonance at this moment in time.

"People never change. There are always kind and compassionate people and always exploitative people." He said. "It's the story of mankind."

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE CHILDREN'S CHORUS
PRESENTS:

The Secret World of Og

By Dean Burry

Saturday, March 23, 2019 2:30pm

WORLD PREMIERE

Enwave Theatre of the Harbourfront Centre,
Toronto, Canada by Canadian
Children's Opera Company, May 12, 2010

PHOTO: ROD MILLINGTON FOR SARASOTA OPERA

CONDUCTOR
Dianna Hochella

DIRECTOR
Christopher Hazlett

**PRINCIPAL CHORUS
CONDUCTOR**
Dianna Hochella

**PREPARATORY CHORUS
CONDUCTOR**
Jane Panikkar

CHOREOGRAPHER
Jennifer Meeks

SET DESIGN
Donna and Mark Buchalter for
Sarasota Opera

COSTUME DESIGN
Allison White for Sarasota Opera

**ADDITIONAL COSTUME
DESIGN**
Suzanne Hanna

LIGHTING DESIGN
Heather DeFauw

HAIR/MAKEUP DESIGN
Elizabeth Geck

PROPERTY MASTER
Monika Essen

STAGE MANAGER
Nan Luchini

SUPERTITLES
Dee Dorsey

MICHIGAN
OPERA
THEATRE
CHILDREN'S CHORUS

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Cast

Understudies listed in parentheses.

Penny.....	Isabella Vesprini (Alex Beck)
Pamela.....	Natalie Nikolajevs (Breah Marie Willy)
Patsy.....	Rebecca Lucksom (Lillian Fellows)
Peter.....	Nadim Ezzeddine (Stephanie Davidescu)
Pollywog.....	Bridget Shene (Anika Lopes)
Yukon King.....	Molly Levin (Alex Beck)
Earless Osdick.....	Skylar Reynolds (Gabrielle Duso)
Sheriff.....	Jaeden Footitt (Nina Georgeff)
Deputy.....	Nina Georgeff (Natalie Watson)
Butcher.....	Grace Watson (Nina Georgeff)
Merchant.....	Breah Marie Willy (Megan DuRocher)
Hook.....	Adam Kerr (Shreya Pillai)
Smee.....	Lauren Mattison (Joslyn Phillips)
Chief.....	Nina Georgeff (Natalie Watson)
Translator.....	Claire Wolfe (Anna Schultz)
Poor Rabbit.....	Lillian Fellows (Claire Wolfe)
Sad Rabbit.....	Shreya Pillai (Gabrielle Duso)

SYNOPSIS

Penny and Pamela read in their playhouse. Banished for painting the windows green, their younger sister Patsy sits outside with her snake, Snavely. Pamela sees a green creature enter through a trap door to steal toys and books but, feeling the others will not believe her, says nothing.

The girls' brothers, Peter and Pollywog, and Earless (the cat) and Yukie (the dog) come to play dress up. Without them noticing the green creature reappears and takes Pollywog and Earless. When Pamela tells them about her earlier encounter, the siblings and Yukie descend through the trap door to save them.

In the tunnel, Penny tells the others to hide while she investigates. She enters a cavern with mushroom houses inhabited by green beings that seem to only say "OG!" Though Yukie tries to protect her, she is captured by Ogs dressed as cowboys and led to jail. On the way she spots Earless in a butcher's cage but is powerless to help. Reunited with Pollywog at the jail, Penny is amazed to hear the Sheriff speaking English.

Using a tube of green paint, Pamela and Patsy disguise Peter as an Og. He frees Earless but raises suspicion when paint rubs off his hands. During their escape, two Ogs named Hook and Smee assume Peter is Peter Pan and call on their 'pirates' to capture the pair. Peter pretends Earless is the crocodile from the fairytale, and the Ogs flee.

At the jail, Pollywog steals the Sheriff's gun and frees Penny. It becomes clear that the Sheriff's gun is only a toy and the Ogs are pretending. Penny plays along and

captures the Sheriff just as Peter and Earless arrive. Continuing to play, the siblings disguise Peter as the sheriff, write a note to their sisters to be delivered by Earless, and make their escape.

The Ogs intercept Earless and think the note is in code. They pretend to be spies in search of infiltrators but run in fear when Snavely escapes from Patsy's pocket. Delighting in their terror, she runs after the Ogs with Snavely in her hand.

In the cavern the Ogs discuss the invaders as Peter, Penny, and Pollywog arrive with their hostage, the Sheriff, and demand to know what is going on.

In the form of a pageant, the Ogs explain that originally the only word they had was "OG". After discovering a book, they stole more and learned to talk like the characters in the stories. Their only fear is the Snake People who live up the river.

The children explain they must return home, but the Ogs worry they will tell others of their existence. While trying to escape, Peter 'shoots' Hook with the toy gun and the Ogs become enraged. Meanwhile more Ogs arrive with news of Snavely, who they think is a Snake Person. The siblings tell the Ogs they have a secret weapon to defeat the Snake People but will use it only if they are released and the Ogs stop using the tunnel beneath their playhouse. The Ogs agree, and Patsy returns with Snavely hidden. With the crisis averted all agree that, while make-believe can be fun, the real adventure is life itself.

—Synopsis by Sarasota Youth Opera

Dean Burry, Composer and Librettist

Composer and librettist Dean Burry was born in St. John's, Newfoundland and grew up in the town of Gander. In 1998, while working as an educator with the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto, he was commissioned to write *The Brothers Grimm*. The opera has been seen by over 165,000 children across Canada since 2001 and has been produced in North America and Europe. At well over 500 performances, *The Brothers Grimm* is believed to be the most performed Canadian opera.

Other major works include *The Hobbit* for the Canadian Children's Opera Company and Sarasota Opera, *The Scorpions' Sting* for the Canadian Opera Company, *The Vinland Traveler* and *Le nez de la sorcière* for Memorial University of Newfoundland, *Pandora's Locker* for The Glenn Gould School, the CBC serial radio opera *Baby Kintyre* (released on the Centredisc and Naxos labels in September, 2014), and *Beacon of Light* for Rising Tide Theatre. He was recently appointed the Artistic Director of the Canadian Children's Opera Company and is a professor at the Glenn Gould Professional School of the Royal Conservatory of Music.

Burry was the 2011 recipient of the Ontario Arts Foundation's *Louis Applebaum Composers Award* for excellence in the field of music for young people. His most recent compositions include *Tempest in a Teacup*, which premiered in Guiyang, China, *The Bells of Baddeck*, *The Sword in the Schoolyard* (VIVA! Youth Singers of Toronto), the song cycle *The Highwayman*, and a Montreal Chamber Music Festival commission of *Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang* featuring Canadian tenor Ben Heppner.

Christopher Hazlett, Director

Christopher Hazlett has worked as a director, assistant director, and producer of theatre and opera for fifteen years. After training at Wayne State University, he worked on a wide range of theatre projects at Detroit-area venues including Performance Network Theatre, Jewish Ensemble Theatre, and 1515 Broadway. He also directed the Roper School's Theatre Arts program, for which he directed thirteen plays and musicals. Christopher is delighted to be back at Michigan Opera Theatre, where he has been an assistant director for productions of *The Barber of Seville*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and, most recently, *The Summer King*. Other production highlights include Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*, *Twelfth Night*, *Old Wicked Songs*, and *Candide*.



Dianna Hochella, Conductor

Dianna Hochella 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.

Jane Panikkar, Preparatory Chorus Conductor

Jane Arvidson Panikkar 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.

Nadim Ezzeddine (Peter), a 6th grader at Power Middle School in Farmington Hills, is enjoying his first year at MOTCC. He looks forward to performing in MOT's *Hansel and Gretel* in April. He has performed in the children's ensemble in St. Dunstan's production of *Oliver!* and *MuppetBabies Forever!*



Molly Levin (Yukon King) is in 8th grade at Berkshire Middle School. This is her fifth year at MOTCC where she has played Fili (*The Hobbit*), Cousin Hebe (*H.M.S. Pinafore*) and has performed in several MOT operas. She plays piano and is on an ice hockey team.



Rebecca Lucksom (Patsy) is a 9th grader at Northville High School. She has been singing with the MOTCC for four years and has performed in *The Mikado*, *The Hobbit*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, and MOT's *La Bohème*, *Carmen* and *Tosca*. Rebecca has taken piano and violin lessons and plays flute in her high school band.



Natalie Nikolajevs (Pamela) is enjoying her second MOTCC season. She previously performed in MOTCC's *H.M.S. Pinafore* (Sailor, Sir Joseph/Dick Deadeye understudy). With MOT, credits include *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (Amahl) and *Tosca* (Shepherd Boy). She will appear in *Hansel and Gretel* and *The Grapes of Wrath* (Ruthie).



Skylar Reynolds (Earless) is a sophomore at Holly High. It's her third year in MOTCC, and she's Head Chorister. Skylar has been in

The Hobbit, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Carmen* and *Tosca*, and is currently a Gingerbread in *Hansel and Gretel*. She has also performed in 15 musicals with Kidz Theatre Kompany in Fenton.



Bridget Shene (Paul) is a 6th grader in Walled Lake. Bridget has performed in MOTCC's *Mikado* and *The Hobbit* as well as Meadowbrook Theater's *A Christmas Carol*. You might have seen Bridget on the American Girl Catalog Cover. Bridget loves to play and dance with her puggle, Buckeye.



Isabella Vesprini (Penny) is a homeschooled 8th grader, who has been a member of the MOTCC for three years. She has performed in *The Mikado* and *The Hobbit*. She has also performed in MOT's productions of *Carmen* and *The Summer King*. The role of Penny is her first leading role.



Alex Beck (Penny understudy, Yukon King understudy) has participated with the MOTCC in *The Very Last Green Thing*, *The Mikado*, *The Hobbit* and *H.M.S. Pinafore*. She has been a chorus member in several main stage performances with MOT. Alex also plays violin and she loves listening to music and animals, especially her three cats.

Stephanie Davidescu (Peter understudy) was born in Montreal, Quebec (CA) and attended the first three years of elementary school at a vocational music program, learning to play piano and musical theory. She currently lives in Windsor, ON, Canada. This is her second year in MOTCC. She has performed in *A Winter Fantasy* and *H.M.S. Pinafore*. She hopes to pursue a successful career in acting.

Megan DuRocher (Merchant understudy) is an 8th grader at Algonquin Middle School. This is

Megan's second year with the MOTCC. Megan was in last season's *H.M.S. Pinafore* and MOT's *Tosca*. She also enjoys playing guitar, bass guitar, and piano. Megan's voice has also been featured in the movie *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

Gabrielle Duso (Earless Osdick understudy, Sad Rabbit understudy) is an 8th grade student at Brownell Middle School in Grosse Pointe Farms. This is her third year in MOTCC. She has enjoyed performing in *The Hobbit* and *H.M.S. Pinafore* with MOTCC and MOT productions of *Carmen* and *Tosca*.

Lillian Fellows (Poor Rabbit, Patsy understudy). This is her first year with MOTCC. Lillian's a 7th grader at Brownstown Middle School. She has performed in *Camp Rock 2* with AOP. She has been singing with Seaway Choral for four years. Lillian also sings the National Anthem at numerous Woodhaven High School events.

Jaeden Footitt (Sheriff) is 15, homeschooled, and a lifelong Detroit in Historic Boston-Edison. In his seventh year singing with MOTCC he's had the lead roles of The Boatswain (*H.M.S. Pinafore*) and Oin (*The Hobbit*). Outside of the Opera House, Jaeden is in the pre-professional contemporary dance company at ArtLab J.

Nina Georgeff (Chief, Deputy, Sheriff understudy, Butcher understudy) is a freshman at Berkley High School. She has participated in all of the children's operas in the past six years and with MOT in *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, and *Tosca*. She has had the opportunity to record a commercial for Farm Rich.

Adam Kerr (Hook) is a 7th grader at Holy Family Regional School. This is his 3rd season with the MOTCC. Past performances include *The Hobbit* and *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Adam is looking forward to his first upcoming main stage production, *Hansel & Gretel*. When not performing, he loves to play the piano, saxophone, and takes vocal lessons. This summer Adam has been awarded a scholarship and has been invited to attend BLFAC International Exchange Program.



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Anika Lopes (Pollywog understudy) is a 7th grader at Shrine Catholic Academy. She has been with MOTCC since she was 9 years old. This is her first year in Principal Chorus. Last year Anika appeared in *The Summer King*. Outside of school and MOTCC she enjoys gymnastics, volleyball, playing piano and volunteering.

Lauren Mattison (Smee) is a 6th grader at The Roeper School. She enjoys percussion, piano, and designing buildings. This is her second year at MOTCC, where she has played a sailor in *H.M.S. Pinafore*. She has participated in various productions, such as: *Annie*, *Cinderella*, *The Lion King*, and *Comedy of Errors*.

Joslyn Phillips (Smee understudy) is in 6th grade at Bloomfield Hills Middle School. This is Joslyn's second year with MOTCC. She previously participated in MOTCC's *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Joslyn also enjoys playing the piano and singing in the choir for her church, Kirk in the Hills.

Shreya Pillai (Sad Rabbit, Hook understudy) is an eighth grader at West Middle School in Rochester Hills. This is her first year at MOTCC and *The Secret World of Og* is her first production. Shreya dances and enjoys playing basketball. She is a student council member in her school and also is a cheerleader. She also learns Indian classical dance and music.

Anna Schultz (Translator understudy) is a sixth grader at Cranbrook. In her four seasons with MOTCC, she has been in *The Mikado*, *The Hobbit*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, and *Tosca*. She is thrilled to be part of *The Secret World of Og* as well as *Hansel and Gretel* this season. Anna enjoys reading, Irish dancing, singing, and musical theater.

Grace Watson (Butcher) is a freshman at Berkley High School. Grace is a third year member of MOTCC where she has participated in *The Hobbit* and *H.M.S. Pinafore*. She has also performed in *Carmen* and *Tosca* with MOT. Grace enjoys playing

trumpet in her school marching band, playing her guitar, and singing in her school and church choirs.

Natalie Watson (Chief understudy, Deputy understudy) has been a member of MOTCC for six years. She also enjoys playing piano, clarinet and musical theater. Some of her favorite roles she has performed are Marie (*Cinderella*), JoJo (*Seussical*), and Dori (*The Hobbit*).

Breah Marie Willy (Merchant, Pamela understudy) is a freshman at Troy High School. This is her second year with MOTCC, with performances in *The Nutcracker*, *Tosca*, and *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Breah is very excited to be in this year's children's opera, *The Secret World of Og*.

Claire Wolfe (Translator, Poor Rabbit understudy) is a freshman at Berkley High School. This is her second season in MOTCC and she will be in *Hansel and Gretel* this spring. She's been in *Tosca* and *H.M.S. Pinafore* with the Opera and enjoys singing and running on the track team at her school.

Og Searchers:

Abigail Armstrong
 Alex Beck
 Amelia Borys
 Megan DuRocher
 Gabrielle Duso
 Tyler Edwards
 Lillian Fellows
 Nina Georgeff
 Ava Hawkins
 Mia Martin
 Emma Palmer
 Shreya Pillai
 Anna Schultz
 Natalie Watson
 Breah Marie Willy
 Claire Wolfe
 Brigitte Zook

Chorus of Ogs

Mallory Childs
 Maureen Conway
 Stephanie Davidescu
 Ashton Fell
 Jaeden Footitt
 Elizabeth Garcia
 Ava Kern
 Adam Kerr
 Reed Koesel
 Anika Lopes
 Lauren Mattison
 Eleanor Neds-Fox
 Sabrina Palmer
 Joslyn Phillips
 Elle Pierre
 Elizabeth Pryer
 Shayla Taylor
 Piper Teasdle
 Grace Watson
 Jeremiah Williams

Oglings (Preparatory Chorus)

Izabela Atanaskovski
 Cooper Bush
 Tala Deeb
 Myla Garceau
 Hannah Gray
 Mya Horne
 Cedrick Johnson
 Oscar Kotlarz
 Riya Nambiar
 Sarah Nuttle
 Reagan Ondra
 Maria Panikkar
 Mark Panikkar
 Chiara Pirra
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 Joe Roman
 Keara Schultz
 Alexandria Simon
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 Sana Wasnik

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 Synthesizer: Xavier Suarez
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Call for Auditions

MOTCC is looking for singers age 8-16 with unchanged voices to audition for the 2019-2020 season.

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 Studio Overview

The five resident artists of the Michigan Opera Theatre Studio represent some of the most exciting emerging talent in opera today. Coming to Detroit from all different areas of the country, from September to June these young opera professionals gain valuable experience through myriad performance opportunities in mainstage and community productions and regional outreach presentations. Throughout their one or two-year residency, Studio Artists benefit from advanced individual training and guidance from MOT's Director of Resident Artist Programs, American tenor, Richard Leech, and Principal Coach/ Accompanist, Tessa Hartle, and hone their skills through master classes and instruction from an array of world class professionals,

guest artists and coaches.

In its fourth year, supported by a major grant from the William Davidson Foundation, the program serves as a central component of MOT's enhanced presence in the community through our productions in the Detroit Opera House, community venues and through recitals and special events. An important and unique element of the program is that MOT's community initiative productions are now selected and mounted specifically for the Studio Program. This season, with Studio Artists filling the leading roles, Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* and Gian Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* represent MOT's fifth consecutive season of producing opera in community venues.

"The Michigan Opera Theatre Studio serves as a central component of MOT's enhanced presence in the community. The Studio Artists benefit from the guidance of some of the leading coaches in the opera industry."

– Wayne S. Brown,
President and CEO of
Michigan Opera Theatre



RICHARD LEECH

Director of Resident Artist Programs

American tenor Richard Leech is one of the most celebrated tenors of his generation. From the Met to Vienna and Carnegie Hall to the Hollywood Bowl, for more than three decades he made his home on the stages of the world's great opera houses and symphonies. Also on the voice/opera faculty of Rutgers University through 2018, he recently began as visiting faculty for the University of Michigan. His leadership role with the MOT Studio allows Mr. Leech to utilize all aspects of his broad experience as he oversees the development of some of opera's most exciting emerging artists and brings their performances to our stage and into our community.

PROFILES FROM THE PIT



John Dorsey - Principal Percussion

Working with Michigan Opera Theatre has been a long-term family affair for John Dorsey, Principal Percussion with the MOT Orchestra. John began performing with the orchestra in 1982. His wife, Dee, followed in his MOT footsteps in 1986, working in the company's production office, then as a stage manager and now as a supertitle writer and operator. More than three decades later, all four of the couple's children have been involved with MOT, performing on the Detroit Opera House stage in the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus or as supernumeraries. He said working together as a family has been fun, and he has enjoyed seeing the city change over time.

"The best part about performing in

Detroit is watching the city come back to life," he said. "It's amazing to see the transformation from the time I started at MOT in 1982 until now."

John, originally from Texas, began playing the drums at age 11. He went on to earn a Bachelor of Music degree in Percussion Performance from the University of St. Thomas in Houston before moving to Michigan to earn his Master of Music degree in Percussion Performance at the University of Michigan. In addition to performing with MOT, he is the Professor of Percussion at Eastern Michigan University and the principal percussionist of the Ann Arbor Symphony and Saginaw Bay orchestras. Outside of performing, John enjoys collecting and restoring vintage percussion instruments.



Laura Roelofs - Assistant Concertmaster

Michigan Opera Theatre Assistant Concertmaster Laura Roelofs has been a professional musician for nearly four decades. Her first job was as a resident artist and instructor – in Venezuela. She worked with the National Youth Orchestra of Venezuela (now known as El Sistema), where she helped develop a student orchestra in Ciudad Bolivar.

"The founder's passionate belief in musical training for all, regardless of income or social standing, has continued to resonate with my own idealism," she said. "I am proud to have played even a miniscule part in its mission."

Venezuela is only one of the many places Laura has lived. Though born in Philadelphia, her family moved around a lot while she was growing up, and she spent a lot of time living in Washington

D.C. She's been in Michigan playing with MOT since 2005, which she said has brought her many wonderful moments.

"My absolute favorite moment with MOT was the opportunity to perform an on-stage role in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*," she said. "It was a huge challenge to play while moving and interacting in character with a world-class countertenor, but it turned out to be an exhilarating experience."

Laura holds master's and doctorate degrees in music from Catholic University in Washington. In addition to working in the MOT Orchestra, Laura is the Associate Professor of Violin and coordinator of the string performance area at Wayne State University. She is an avid gardener and loves animals, cooking, hikes and historical/genealogy research.

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE



In remembrance of our founder and long term general director,
The David DiChiera Artistic Fund
has been established to support and honor his artistic vision.

This fund enables Michigan Opera Theatre to produce compelling opera, present innovative dance, and engage with thousands of students and members of our community through our educational and outreach programs. Most importantly, it allows MOT to preserve David's legacy and his dedication to the young people of Southeast Michigan and young emerging artists from all over the country. To contribute or for more info, please visit www.michiganopera.org or contact **Frankie Piccirilli, Chief Development Officer** at 313.237.3238 or fpiccirilli@motopera.org.

Michigan Opera Theatre gratefully acknowledges the generous corporate, foundation, and individual donors whose gifts to The David DiChiera Artistic Fund were made before March 14, 2019.

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TOURING ENSEMBLE

Last season the Michigan Opera Theatre Touring Ensemble presented more than 70 performances to students, seniors and adults throughout the state of Michigan, bringing opera to over 17,000 individuals. Performances are 30-60 minutes in length and include a Q&A session with the cast immediately following the production. Our 2019 touring season includes a variety of performances; call today to bring opera to your community!

I, Too, Sing America By Chris Jakob with poetry by Jessica Care Moore (Grades 6-12)

This new multi-media performance incorporates video, live song, narrative and poetry to highlight the stories and achievements of African-American artists and athletes who defied limitations and paved the way for integration in their fields. (Subjects: American History, Humanities, English Language Arts, Arts Education - Music and Theatre)



Jack and the Beanstalk Arranged by John Davies with compositions by Sir Arthur Sullivan (Grades K-6)



When Jack sells the family cow to a mysterious man for a handful of beans, he has no idea what kind of adventure awaits him! When the beans take root and a magical stalk grows to the sky, Jack will discover a land of giants, a golden hen and an important lesson about treating other people with kindness. Michigan

Opera Theatre's new production sets the story in the ancient West African Mali Empire and tells the tale through music from the operettas of Sir Arthur Sullivan. This new twist on an old favorite is a must-see for children of all ages! (Subjects: World History, Humanities, English Language Arts, Arts Education - Music and Theatre)

Summer Programming

Summer Serenade

Michigan Opera Theatre hosts outdoor Grand Opera concerts throughout the Metro Detroit area. Recent concerts include venues such as Grand Circus Park, the Grosse Pointe War Memorial and the Detroit Zoo.

Operetta Workshop

Operetta Workshop is perfect for young people ages 13 to 18 who want to gain experience and direction in singing, acting, stage movement, healthy vocal technique and audition skills. Taught by experienced opera and theatre professionals, Operetta Workshop will run July 8- 26, 2019 and culminate with a final performance at the Detroit Opera House.

Create & Perform

A two-week program from July 29 - August 9, 2019 in which young people ages 8-12 create their own stories, music compositions and dances, culminating in a final performance in our Black Box Theater. Participants in the Create & Perform program get to take part in all aspects of mounting a new production and will build their skills as performers, composers, designers, directors and crew members while they write and perform an original opera. Children bring their ideas and watch as they come to life in this unique, hands-on summer experience!

To learn more about any of these programs e-mail ascobie@motopera.org.

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MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE

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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.

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

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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 Angela Nelson-Heesch, Director of Development, at 313.237.3416 or anelsonheesch@motopera.org

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Historic Path to a Bold Future

The Campaign for Michigan Opera Theatre

Pursuant to a comprehensive strategic plan, the Board and Trustees of Michigan Opera Theatre have launched a *Historic Path to a Bold Future* campaign to invest \$50 million in exceptional artistic experiences, broad-based community initiatives, enhanced institutional efficiencies, and facilities improvement. This campaign is designed to ensure that the David DiChiera legacy thrives beyond his tenure by positioning MOT for continued artistic success and community engagement well into the future. The following individuals, businesses, and foundations have declared their initial leadership gifts to the campaign. As of October 31, 2018, more than \$25.7 million has been committed.

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MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE

VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION

Greetings from the MOT Volunteer Association.

I have been a music lover for many years and Michigan Opera Theatre is very important to me. Our MOTVA volunteers provide the company a tremendous level of support. We have over 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 host parties to celebrate events such as opening night performances. Last year our members logged almost 20,000 volunteer hours. Bravi!

If you are hearing about our volunteer programs for the first time and you would be interested in joining us, please give us a call. Volunteering is a great way to meet other interesting and involved patrons. Membership information is located on the MOTVA web page at michiganopera.org/get-involved/volunteers/ or call Colin Knapp at (313) 965-4271 or email cknapp@motopera.org. Colin will be happy to speak with you and connect you with a volunteer opportunity to meet your needs.



I offer my sincere thanks to all of our current volunteers. You are THE BEST!

Sincerely,

Terry Shea, President, MOTVA

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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.

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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.

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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

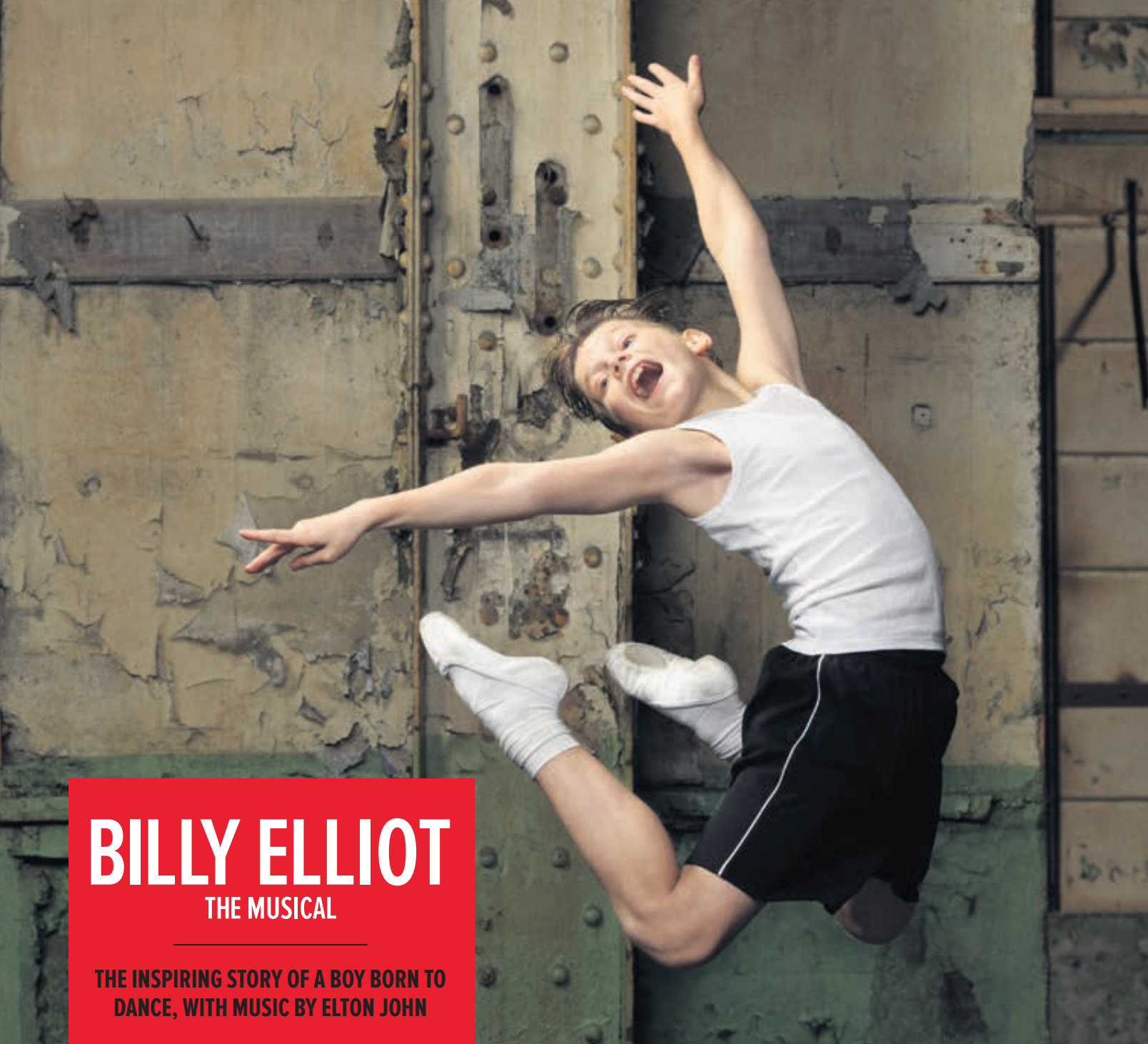
Lost and Found is located in the Safety and Security Department. Please see an usher if you have misplaced an article, or call (313) 961-3500 if you have already left the theater. Items will be held in Lost and Found for 30 days.

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



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