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OPERA OF  
CHICAGO

*Richard Strauss*

# Salome

# Lyric

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Lyric

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*Lyric*

# Welcome to your Lyric

# From the Chair and the General Director

Welcome to Lyric Opera of Chicago!

*Salome* premiered in 1905 in Dresden, and opera would never be the same. Word of Richard Strauss' work got out — it helped that it set the text of a scandalous Oscar Wilde play — and at its next run, in the Austrian provincial city of Graz, Gustav and Alma Mahler, Schoenberg, Zemlinsky, Webern, and Puccini were all in the audience. Strauss' music sounded like nothing that had come before — bitonal and dissonant, yes, but sweeping and sensual at the same time. He called it "a scherzo with a fatal conclusion." It was strikingly modern, but also timeless.

Its American premiere, at the Metropolitan Opera in 1907, caused such outrage that it wasn't performed again there until 1934. It has since become a repertoire staple, although it's been 19 years since its last Lyric

performance. This is the second production in our season to come from Sir David McVicar, and it presents a stark and riveting vision of the work; it is the first outing for this production in the United States.

Above all, the opera depends on a profoundly compelling exponent of the title role, and we are fortunate to welcome American soprano Jennifer Holloway to Lyric for her debut on our stage. Known throughout the opera world as one of the leading Salomes of our time, she has performed the role to acclaim, most recently at the Vienna and Berlin State Operas. Nicholas Brownlee makes his Lyric debut as the



object of her abhorrent obsession, Jochanaan. He is a recent recipient of the prestigious Richard Tucker Award and a Grand Prize winner at the Metropolitan Opera's Laffont Competition.

They are joined by two true Lyric favorites. Brandon Jovanovich, playing Herod, has sung ten roles here since the 2009/10 Season, most recently Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and Gherman in *Queen of Spades* in 2019/20. And finally there is the formidable Tanja Ariane Baumgartner, who last dazzled us as Fricka in the first two operas of our most recent *Ring* cycle.

Speaking of that, perhaps you've heard the news: Our *Ring* cycle, cut short by the pandemic, will rise again starting in the 2029/30 season. We hope to see you there, and, of course, many, many times before. Enjoy the performance, and thank you for being with us at Lyric!

  
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# The **2025 | 26**

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# Princesses of the Past

The title role in *Salome* is demanding in every respect — and since the work's premiere, she has been sung by legendary sopranos, including many incandescent performances at Lyric.

By F. Paul Driscoll



Don Reff

Deborah Voigt's performance in the 2006/07 Season at Lyric was a legendary success.

For more than a century, sopranos (and music critics) have been haunted by Strauss's seemingly impossible combination of requirements for his ideal Salome: "A sixteen-year-old princess with the voice of Isolde." The *Salome* libretto, devised by Strauss from a German translation of Oscar Wilde's extravagantly flowery French text, immediately establishes the girl's youth and loveliness with Narraboth's opening exclamation, "Wie schön ist die Prinzessin Salome heute Nacht!"

Unlike Wilde's play, the opera libretto omits specific reference to the figurative loss of Salome's virginity, but

the implications of Strauss's violently colored score are inescapable as the composer charts Salome's life-changing journey from an innocent to a woman consumed by titanic lust. Strauss expresses the complicated inner life of Salome with vocal requirements as challenging as any in the repertoire.

In order to achieve the full impact of the opera's punishing final scene, Salome must sound fresh, eager, and uncalculating as she meets the crashing, demonic power of Strauss's orchestra: If Salome snarls her way through the scene, in the manner of a villainous schemer, the opera's macabre spell is broken.



Wikipedia



Wikipedia



From left: Marie Wittich (seen here as Sieglinde) sang the title role in the 1905 premiere in Dresden; Scottish soprano Mary Garden became Chicago's first Salome, at the Auditorium Theatre in 1910; the German Inge Borkh sang the role in the Lyric premiere in 1956.

**Lyric's first Salome**, in 1956, was Inge Borkh, a ravishing German soprano whose experience included training as an actress and a dancer as well as Sieglinde in Bayreuth, Beethoven's Leonore in Edinburgh, and Elektra in San Francisco. Borkh's glamorous, athletic, full-voiced Salome established the Lyric tradition of casting singers who meet the dramatic as well as the vocal demands of the role. American soprano Felicia Weathers, whose Salome opened Lyric's 1968 season, told local broadcaster Studs Terkel that she had sung the role in more than a dozen productions before her Chicago performances, averring that whatever the *Salome* production scheme, she maintained her basic idea for the character — to be convincing as a young girl who "showed her youth and absolute innocence [while] she is a part of this corrupt society."

Weathers was succeeded as Salome at Lyric by four of 20th-century opera's most celebrated singing actresses — Anja Silja (1971), Grace Bumbry (1978), Maria Ewing (1988/89), and Catherine Malfitano (1996/97). Lyric's most recent exponent of Salome, Deborah Voigt, had what the *New York Times*'s Anthony Tommasini called "a personal and artistic triumph" in Francesca Zambello's striking new 2006 production. In her staged role debut as Salome, Voigt capped her reputation as one of the greatest Strauss interpreters of her era.

**The Salome at the work's premiere**, Marie Wittich, was 37 and at the peak of her vocal prowess when she created the title role at Dresden's Konigliches Opernhaus. Already a veteran member of the Dresden ensemble at the time,

Wittich counted several Wagner heroines among her successes there. Her vocal suitability for *Salome* was never seriously questioned, but Strauss was considerably less enthusiastic about the soprano's stage presence. Wittich was a handsome woman, and a vibrant, intelligent singer, but she was neither slim nor lithe, much to the annoyance of Strauss, who referred to his *Salome* as "Tante" (Auntie). Wittich also opted not to perform *Salome*'s "Dance of the Seven Veils," which was taken on by a ballerina from the Dresden company. This odd double-casting practice was also used when *Salome* had its 1907 U.S. premiere, at the Metropolitan Opera, which cast the magnificent Swedish-American diva Olive Fremstad, another formidable Wagnerian, as the princess and drafted company ballerina Bianca Froelich for the dance.

The city of Chicago's first *Salome* was the beautiful Scots prima donna Mary Garden, who made her debut in the role for Oscar Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera Company in 1909. Garden was a charismatic performer who gave full play to the opera's dramatic possibilities, although critic James Gibbons Huneker termed her voice "a serious mirage." Garden chose to perform *Salome* in French, executed the dance herself and — according to *The New York Sun*'s critic W. J. Henderson — "deliberately spoke" rather than sang, several of *Salome*'s more taxing lines.

When Garden's *Salome* reached the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago in 1910, she caused a full-out scandal. The president of the Chicago Law and Order League wrote a furious (and well-publicized) letter to the Chief of Police, saying, "Miss Garden wallowed around like a cat in a bed of catnip...I would not call it immoral. I would say it



Formidable diva Anja Silja sang *Salome* at Lyric in 1971 — and would return in the work as Herodias in 1996/97; Jennifer Holloway as *Salome* at Atlanta Opera.

is disgusting." The opera's scheduled third performance in Chicago was moved out of town to Milwaukee in an attempt to quiet the local controversy.

**Now, with considerable excitement,** and for a less censorious public, Lyric Opera of Chicago welcomes Jennifer Holloway as the latest troubled princess in the royal line of Salomes who have dazzled the city. *Salome* is an opera with a great tradition at what was first known as the Civic Opera House; Holloway's vocal prowess and dramatic imagination make her a worthy successor to the legendary artists who have preceded her. ■

*F. Paul Driscoll is the former editor of OPERA NEWS.*

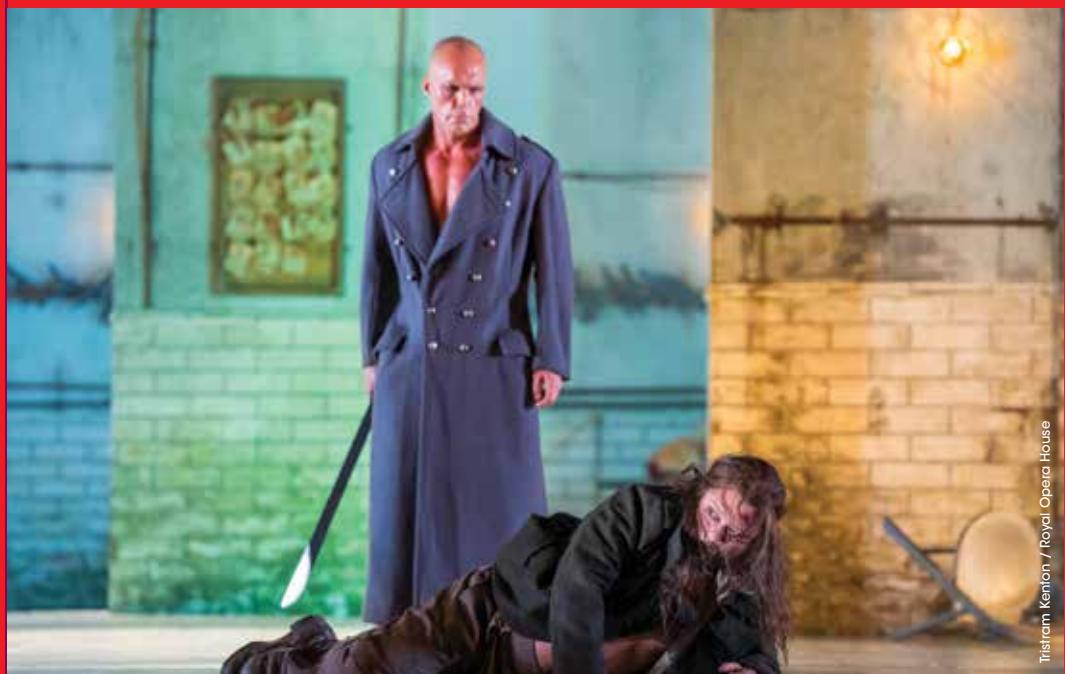


Roffman Photography - Atlanta Opera

Based on Oscar Wilde's one-act play, *Salome* has been thrilling and fascinating audiences for more than a century. Lyric brings Sir David McVicar's decadent production — which is set in pre-war fascist Italy and sheds a harsh light on the timeless greed and entitlement of the elite — to Chicago.

This gory thrill ride returns to Lyric for the first time in 20 years starring Jennifer Holloway in the demanding title role of a teenage femme fatale whose infatuation has fatal implications, alongside Lyric favorites Brandon Jovanovich and Tanja Ariane Baumgartner.

*Salome* drips with decadence that matches Strauss's lyrical score and German libretto. From the infamous "Dance of the Seven Veils" to Salome's shocking last kiss, this production will leave you breathless.



Tristam Kenton / Royal Opera House

*Salome*

*Lyric*

# Salome



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# Salomé

**New-to-Chicago production** | Opera in German

Music by **Richard Strauss**

Libretto from **Hedwig Lachmann's** German translation  
of **Oscar Wilde's** play *Salomé*

January 25, 29 | February 3, 6, 11<sup>M</sup>, & 14, 2026

## CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Narraboth  
Page  
First Soldier  
Second Soldier  
Jochanaan  
A Cappadocian  
Salome  
A Slave  
Herod  
Herodias  
First Jew  
Second Jew  
Third Jew  
Fourth Jew  
Fifth Jew  
First Nazarene  
Second Nazarene

## Actors

**Lenessa Age, Jon Beal, Becca Blatt, Miles Borchard, Tony DiFalco, Emerson Elias, Adam Fane, Graham Hawley, John B. Leen, Irene Lo, Chris Logan, Alyson Lyon, Daniel Martin, Talia Neidorf, Carrie Lee Patterson, and Michael Saubert**

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**Christopher Humbert, Jr.**<sup>\*</sup>  
**Nicholas Brownlee**<sup>+</sup>  
**Sankara Harouna**<sup>\*</sup>  
**Jennifer Holloway**<sup>+</sup>  
**Angela De Venuto**  
**Alex Boyer**<sup>+</sup>  
**Tanja Ariane Baumgartner**  
**Bille Bruley**<sup>+</sup>  
**Travon D. Walker**<sup>\*</sup>  
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First performed by Semperoper Dresden, Germany on December 9, 1905.  
First performed by Lyric Opera of Chicago on October 17, 1956.

<sup>+</sup> Lyric debut  
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# Synopsis

PLACE | **The palace of Herod**

It is night. In the banqueting hall, Herod and his second wife, Herodias, entertain guests from Rome, Egypt, and Jerusalem. Outside, Narraboth, the captain of the King's Guard, stares longingly in at Salome, Herod's stepdaughter. Herodias's Page, himself obsessed with Narraboth, tries to distract him, fearing that his infatuation can only bring misfortune.

From the depths of an old cistern where he has been imprisoned, the voice of Jochanaan (John the Baptist) is heard by the soldiers who guard him. To them, his prophesies are incomprehensible and they warn a curious Cappadocian servant that it is forbidden for anyone to see him. Salome suddenly appears. Unable to endure the lascivious gaze of her stepfather any longer, she has fled the banquet, longing to bask in the pure rays of the moonshine. Jochanaan's voice echoes from the cistern, cursing her mother. Salome is intrigued and demands to see him, refusing Herod's order to return to the table. The soldiers refuse but Salome uses her power over the besotted Narraboth and he orders the prophet to be brought out before her.

Jochanaan is dragged out of his prison and rails against the marriage of Herod and Herodias, an incestuous match made possible by the murder of Herod's brother, Philip, Herodias's former husband. Salome is appalled but fascinated. Despite the frantic pleas of Narraboth, she conceives a passion for the prophet that quickly turns to an obsession. In turn, she longs to touch his body, run her fingers through his hair and, finally, to kiss his mouth. The distraught Narraboth stabs himself in the heart. Salome does not even notice, so intense is her desire to kiss the prophet. Jochanaan repulses her in disgust and commands her to seek the forgiveness of the Son of Man. Uncomprehending, Salome tries again to kiss him and he curses her before the soldiers throw him back into the cistern.

Herod now comes in pursuit of Salome, wife and guests in tow. He slips in Narraboth's blood — an ill omen that drives the paranoid Tetrarch to distraction. He denies Herodias's demands to return to the banqueting hall and orders the servants to bring food and wine. He tries to persuade Salome to join him, even offering her own mother's throne beside him, but she refuses.

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**Richard O. Ryan**

*Salome* is produced by the Royal Ballet and Opera. This production was first seen at the Royal Opera House, London on February 21, 2008.

Lyric Opera of Chicago gratefully acknowledges the support of the Irma Parker German Opera Endowed Chair.

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**APPROXIMATE TIMINGS**  
This production will be performed with no intermission.  
Act 1 1 hour 40 minutes

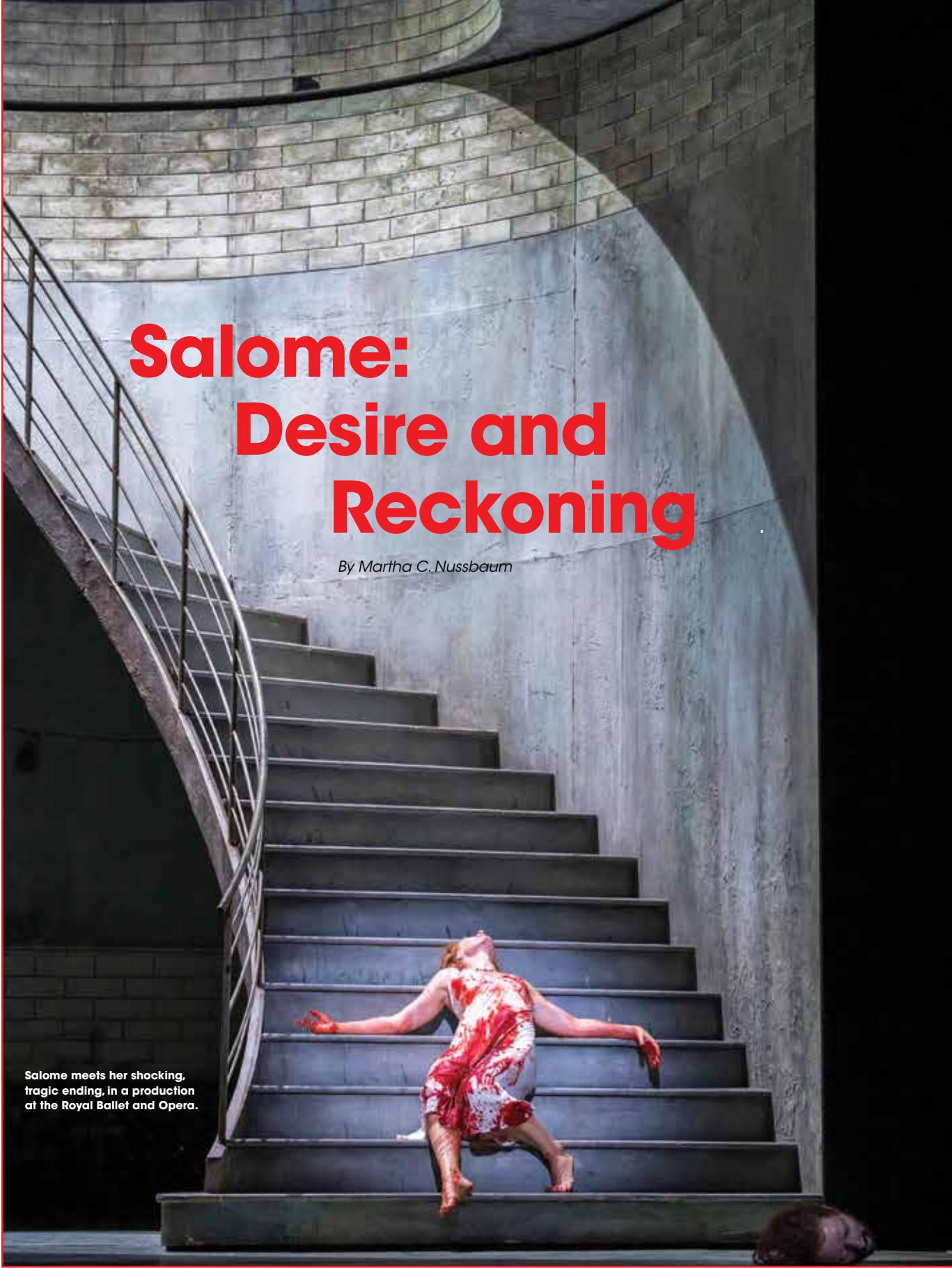
Jochanaan is heard again, railing against Herodias who furiously asks why Herod will not turn him over to the Temple Authorities in Jerusalem. The superstitious Herod, though himself not a Jew, prefers to keep him in captivity; he has heard rumors that this man may be the prophet Elias, returned to Earth. The Jews from Jerusalem are appalled by this suggestion and a noisy theological debate erupts between them, interrupted by Jochanaan's voice proclaiming the coming of the 'Savior'. Two guests from Nazareth interpret this to Herod. The Messiah, they say — to the amused disbelief of Herodias — has come and already is working miracles in the land, turning water to wine and raising the dead.

Herod stops his ears to the prophet. He asks Salome to dance for him. Once again she declines, but he is determined and promises her whatever she desires as a reward. Salome makes him swear before the assembled guests, and despite the angry protestations of her mother, agrees. She dances before Herod.

An enraptured Herod asks her to name her price. She demands to be given, on a silver dish, the head of Jochanaan. Horrified, Herod refuses, but Salome, to the delight of her mother, is adamant. In mounting panic, Herod offers Salome jewels and power, half of his kingdom, even the Veil of the Sanctuary of the Temple of Jerusalem itself. She denies him. Herod finally agrees and the Executioner, Naaman, is given the death-ring by Herodias herself. He descends into Jochanaan's prison as Salome, frantic with impatience, listens above. Hearing something fall to the ground below, she fears the Executioner's nerve has failed him and cries for help from the terrified Page and the soldiers. But she is wrong; the bloody head of Jochanaan is duly brought to her. Seizing it, she triumphantly sings to it. Jochanaan can no longer deny her the kiss she sought.

As Herod climbs the stairs to his palace, Salome's longing is fulfilled. Herod pauses on the stairs and commands her death.

*Sir David McVicar*



# Salome: Desire and Reckoning

*By Martha C. Nussbaum*

Salome meets her shocking, tragic ending, in a production at the Royal Ballet and Opera.

**Power and seductive charm,** utterly without accountability: alarming to contemplate, horrifying to encounter. In Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), an enchanting and glamorous youth has a piece of very good or very bad luck: his face and body show no trace of his vile, destructive, and selfish life, remaining beautiful and apparently kind — while his portrait, hidden away, tells the story of who he has really become, body and soul. (Eventually, confronting the portrait at last, he commits suicide by stabbing it in the heart.) This idea of a sensuality unfettered by accountability — and of an eventual reckoning — continued to fascinate Wilde, and in *Salome* (1892), he creates a female Dorian, her unchecked power over others through sensuous beauty and royal rank creating a total absence of moral concern. Because, unlike Dorian, she has no telling portrait, we (and the orchestra) must witness who she is for ourselves. Composer Richard Strauss uses Wilde's play to create a terrifying opera, his searing and superbly crafted music imparting new depth to the play's ideas.

The opera has always elicited passionate, and contradictory, reactions. Strauss's conservative father disliked the fraught and nervous work, saying, "It is exactly as if one had one's trousers full of maybugs." By contrast, composer Gustav Mahler called it "one of the greatest masterpieces of our time." The controversy continues. Musicologist Joseph Kerman, known for his pithy put-downs, called Salome's final monologue (admired by most critics as the work's finest passage) a "sugary orgasm." But on the whole Mahler's view has prevailed: it is among Strauss's finest works, and it deserves its secure place in the repertory.

The opera's basic story — Salome's dance before Herod, his promise to give her whatever she asks for, her request for the head of John the Baptist on a platter, and Herod's reluctant compliance — is already told in the Gospels by both Mark and Matthew. But there she is simply called the "daughter of Herodias": the name Salome appears only in later sources. (Ironically, the name is related to Hebrew "shalom," "peace.") In the Gospels it is at her mother's bidding that she makes her fatal request and to her mother that she delivers the grisly platter. She has no personal motives, so far as we are told.

Salome never had a strong grip on outer reality... but now she has retreated fully into her own mind.

Salome's dance became famous in art and literature through the ages. Many later sources (including the 19th-century French writers Gustave Flaubert, Stéphane Mallarmé, and Joris-Karl Huysmans, all well-known to Wilde) focus on Salome's seductive sensuality. The German poet Heinrich Heine suggested in 1843 that Salome developed a morbid fascination with the severed head, an idea that clearly influenced the playwright. In the 1870's, the painter Gustave Moreau created a series of Salome paintings — including one of her dance and one called "The Apparition," which, following Heine, depicts her fascination with the head. Both images are known to have obsessed the playwright, who reports that he kept dreaming about her. But the key idea that Salome's request is motivated by frustrated desire and a thirst

for revenge is Wilde's original contribution, in pursuit of which he basically sidelines Herodias.

Wilde's drama — written in the winter of 1891-92 in French for a London production starring the great actress Sarah Bernhardt — was ultimately refused production in London by the censors, since British norms forbade the representation on stage of Biblical characters. Bernhardt said she would try to arrange a production in Paris, but this never happened. The play was published in French in 1893 to great admiration, and in English a year later — in a translation made by Wilde's lover, Lord Alfred

Douglas, whose French was very bad. Wilde made some essential corrections, but did not begin from scratch, and the English version we have is unsatisfactory, full of awkwardness and archaic "thees" and "thous," a sad contrast with Wilde's graceful French. Someone should do a new one! Meanwhile, the play was eventually mounted in Paris in 1896, though not with Bernhardt.

By then, however, Wilde was in prison — sentenced to two years at hard labor for consensual sex acts with men (all in their twenties and treated by Wilde with courtesy and generosity). The trial judge, revealing British attitudes of the time, said: "It is the worst case I have ever tried." Health broken, Wilde died in France in 1900. But while still in prison, he wrote one of his best works, in the form of a book-length letter to Douglas: *De Profundis*, a meditation on love, suffering, Christ's life as paradigm, a person's responsibility to cultivate his own soul — themes highly pertinent to his Salome, and



Malin Byström as Salome and John Daszak as Herod in the unsettling, legendary dance at the Royal Ballet and Opera.

Tristram Kenton / Royal Opera House

to Strauss's opera. Douglas the addressee, a beautiful young narcissist incapable of love and driven by vindictive fantasies (against his father), could be seen as a Salome prototype, though Wilde himself, loving and generous to the end, did not so see him.

**The play, meanwhile,** had become a hit across Europe. A production at Max Reinhardt's Kleines Theater in Berlin, in a translation by Hedwig Lachmann from Wilde's French, was especially noteworthy. The German poet Anton Lindner had approached Strauss in 1902, proposing a verse libretto for an opera based on Wilde's play, and he sent a few samples. But when Strauss saw the Reinhardt production, he decided to work directly from the German text of the play. He proved a wonderful librettist, judiciously cutting about one-third of the play's dialogue, streamlining verbose language, eliminating several minor characters, and arranging the whole in the service of a tightly organized musical conception that goes beyond Wilde's words in its emotional power. By 1905 the work had its premiere.

*Salomé* is both an opera and a dramatic tone-poem. Its psychological and dramatic themes are advanced as much by the extraordinary orchestration as by the words that are sung. Strauss, as skillfully as Wagner before him, uses musical *leitmotifs* to trace the evolution of themes and characters, and his virtuosic use of individual instruments — perhaps especially woodwinds — gives them a key expressive role, from the opening clarinet glissando that introduces

the princess to the end of the opera — including, along the way, the first known symphonic use of the "heckelphone," an extended bass oboe with a wider bore, known for its penetrating sound.

Two aspects of Strauss's musical realization have been panned by critics: the music for Salome's dance, and the music written for Jochanaan (John the Baptist). The famous dance was probably written after the rest of the opera, since the version Strauss played for Mahler did not yet contain it (he said he would do it later). It is indeed, as critics say, little more than a pastiche of other parts of the opera, though it does achieve its dramatic purpose. But the attacks on Jochanaan's music as banal and simplistic are, I believe, misguided, because Strauss made clear in letters that he fully intended to depict the prophet as an "imbecile," "more or less a clown," and for that reason gave him a "pedantic motif." Beneath this creative decision lies the primary difference between Wilde and Strauss. Wilde was profoundly religious — not in the conventional high-church Victorian sense, but devoted to the personality and moral message of Christ, who, as he writes in *De Profundis*, "could bring peace to souls in anguish," and cause those who had lived entirely for pleasure to hear "for the first time the voice of love."

In Wilde, then, Salome's tragedy is that she sees only her own desires and fails entirely to hear the prophet's powerful message. Strauss, by contrast, had no use for religion, and in the opera he turns the prophet into a banal figure whom Salome's narcissistic

desires clothe in a beauty of her own invention. Critics may disagree with Strauss's conception, but they should not say that he did not execute his purpose.

**But the heart of Strauss's** music-drama is the Princess, and here he achieves, all agree, a stunning success. Salome is a child who never became fully human — and this production, which shows her as very young, emphasizes this. All young children initially feel that they are the centers of the universe — what (Strauss's contemporary) Freud called "infantile omnipotence." But in a loving family they soon understand that their actions can hurt those who love and sustain them, and this crisis jolts them into recognition of the reality of others. Salome has two strikes against her: terrible parents — one utterly selfish, the other a would-be pedophile — and unlimited royal power. She therefore never undergoes any check to her omnipotence. She moves through the world arranging everything to accord with her desires, as we see early on from her manipulation of the charmed Narraboth, whom she destroys without even acknowledging his existence. A leading post-Freudian analyst, conversing with a narcissistic patient of this sort, speaks with him of a "struggle that never was," the struggle that might have checked omnipotence and opened the door to concern and even love. Salome never encounters any such struggle, nor does she have any models of sanity and concern to steer her toward it. So she sees the world as a toy of her own mind, a mind at times delighted, at others petulant and vindictive.

Salome gets her wish, as usual. The head is delivered to her on a silver platter. She then launches into one of opera's most remarkable and brilliant monologues — around seventeen minutes long — addressing the head with hair-trigger alternations between rapture and fury, tightly organized musically around a series of harmonic oppositions that signal the ambivalence of her passion. Salome never had a strong grip on outer reality, a world peopled by other human beings, but now she has retreated fully into her own mind, declaring her obsession with his mouth, his body, his hair, which she now triumphantly possesses. Repeatedly she berates Jochanaan for not returning

her desirous gaze — as if he were alive — but she then announces her triumph over his resistance by proclaiming that she is alive and he is dead. She notices no contradiction.

She kisses the head with passion and then spirals into a demented declaration of her complete success. Forgetting that he never returned his gaze or listened to her, she is now utterly, serenely, delighted: She has kissed his mouth. The music, in the key of C sharp major, expresses the sweet climax of her passion. (This is what Kerman means by the "sugary orgasm" comment, wrong if used to put down Strauss, but accurate if it refers to Strauss's insight into his character's complete detachment from all awareness of her failure and of the hideous crime she has committed.)

But Strauss has a surprise in store. Two measures after the triumphant C-sharp major vocal line ends, we are assailed, in the orchestra, by a grotesquely dissonant chord, with no harmonic preparation or resolution — Newman calls it a "spasm"

— that has riveted critics and audiences ever since, although quite a few pronounce it "sickening" and "disgusting."

What does the shocking dissonance mean? In all the pages written about this chord, I find too little recognition that it is not, cannot be, inside Salome's mind, depicting a sense of failure or self-awareness. She is too far lost in fantasy for that. Deliberately Strauss has positioned it after her happy triumph ends, as an external commentary on what we have just witnessed. Although nobody will have the last word about Strauss's intriguing mystery, I propose that it is the opera's analogue of the picture of Dorian Gray — the true portrait of the monstrous ugliness of Salome's words and deeds. The reckoning that she horribly avoided has come at last, although she is utterly unable to grasp it. And sure enough: Herod now commands his soldiers, "Kill that woman." And they do. **L**

*Martha C. Nussbaum is Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at The University of Chicago. Her new book, The Republic of Love: Opera and Political Freedom, appears in April 2026.*



# Artist profiles



## JENNIFER HOLLOWAY SALOME

**Lyric debut**

The soprano began the 2025/26 Season performing *Salome* in concert with the WDR Symphony Orchestra in Cologne and Bucharest. She appears this season also as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* at the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, before taking on Elsa in a new production of *Lohengrin* at the Rome Opera. She makes her role debut as the title character in Barber's *Vanessa*, in a debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. She will be heard at the Vienna State Opera as Kundry (*Parsifal*) and at the Hamburg State Opera as Chrysothemis (*Elektra*). In 2026, the Bayreuth Festival has engaged Holloway as Adriano in the first-ever production of *Rienzi* in the festival's history. Other recent highlights include her role debut as Kundry at Oper Frankfurt; her house debut at Oper Zürich as Beethoven's Leonore (*Fidelio*); *Salome* at the Vienna State Opera, the Berlin State Opera, and the Deutsche Oper Berlin; and Chrysothemis (*Elektra*), Elisabeth (*Tannhäuser*), Sieglinde (*Die Walküre*), Senta (*Der fliegende Holländer*), Leonore (*Fidelio*), and Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*) at the Hamburg State Opera. Further engagements included Senta at the Semperoper Dresden, Cassandra (*Les Troyens*) and Senta at the Bavarian State Opera, Sieglinde in concert with the Orchestre de Paris under Jaap van Zweden and at the Vienna Konzerthaus under Joana Mallwitz.



## ALEX BOYER HEROD

**Lyric debut**

In 2025, the tenor made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick*, and also appeared in their new production of *Salome*. With West Edge Opera he recently made a role debut as Senator Robert F. Kennedy in the world premiere of Nicolas Benavides' opera *Dolores*. Future productions include performances with Pacific Opera Northwest as Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, a return to West Edge Opera as Quint in *The Turn of the Screw*, Opera San Jose as Don Josè in *Carmen*, and Sacramento Opera for Cavaradossi in *Tosca*. Boyer made several role and house debuts in 2024, including Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Modesto Symphony, Puccini's *Messe di Gloria* with the Golden Gate Men's Chorus, Siegfried in *Legend of the Ring* with West Edge Opera, and Remendado in *Carmen* at San Francisco Opera. Previous highlights include Cavaradossi in *Tosca* (Opera San Jose, Livermore Valley Opera, Cinnabar Theater), and the Duke in *Rigoletto* with Opera in the Heights. Boyer also performed Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Idaho Falls Symphony (as well as with the Quad City and Glacier Symphony Orchestras) and Tybalt in *Romeo et Juliette* with Opera San Jose. In 2022 he was heard as Cassio in *Otello* with Livermore Valley Opera, and had numerous concert performances including Festival Opera at Piedmont Center for the Arts.



## NICHOLAS BROWNLEE JOCHANAAN

**Lyric debut**

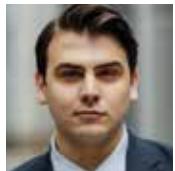
The bass-baritone is the 2025 recipient of the Richard Tucker Award, First Prize winner of the Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition, winner of the Zarzuela Prize at Operalia, and Grand Prize Winner of the Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition. This season, Brownlee debuts with Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería as Jochanaan for a recording of *Salome*. He returns to Bayerische Staatsoper for a new production of *Die Walküre* (Wotan), Bayreuther Festspiele in *Der fliegende Holländer* (title role), Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia for *Salome* (Jochanaan), and to Oper Frankfurt in *Peter Grimes* (Captain Balstrode), *Tosca* (Scarpia), and *Tristan und Isolde* (Kurwenal). On the concert stage, he debuts with the Houston Symphony for Act II of *Tristan und Isolde* (Kurwenal and Melot), returns to the Los Angeles Philharmonic for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, and appears at the 2025 Richard Tucker event. Future seasons include debuts with Teatro Real, Teatro Colón, and Deutsche Oper Berlin, as well as returns to Gran Teatre del Liceu, Bayerische Staatsoper, Oper Frankfurt, Bayreuther Festspiele, and Opernhaus Zürich.



## TANJA ARIANE BAUMGARTNER HERODIAS

**Previously at Lyric:** Fricka/*Die Walküre* (2017/18) and Fricka/*Das Rheingold* (2016/17).

Baumgartner opened this season as Herodias in concert performances of *Salome* with the WDR Symphony Orchestra in Bucharest and Cologne. She appears at San Francisco Opera as Kundry in *Parsifal* under Eun Sun Kim and as Ortrud in a new production of *Lohengrin* (Johannes Erath/ Joana Mallwitz) at the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden. On the concert stage, she can be heard in *Das Lied von der Erde* under Zubin Mehta at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, in Mahler's Symphony No. 3 at the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, and as Brangäne in concert performances of *Tristan* at Radio France under Jaap van Zweden. Highlights of recent seasons include Klytämnestra (*Elektra*) with the Salzburg Festival, Ortrud (*Lohengrin*), Fricka (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*), Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*), and the Amme (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*) at the Vienna State Opera; Mrs. Quickly (*Falstaff*), Countess Geschwitz (*Lulu*), Charlotte (*Die Soldaten*), and Mother (*Il prigioniero*) at the Salzburg Festival; Lisa (*The Passenger*) at the Bavarian State Opera; Brangäne and Leonore in the world premiere of Glanert's *Die Jüdin von Toledo* at the Semperoper Dresden; Kundry (*Parsifal*) at the Grand Théâtre de Genève and at the Tokyo Spring Festival; Venus (*Tannhäuser*) in Hamburg in Tcherniakov's new production and at Zurich Opera; and Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*) at the Deutsche Oper Berlin.



## RYAN CAPOZZO NARRABOTH

**Previously at Lyric:** Steuermann/*The Flying Dutchman* (2023/24) and Remendado/*Carmen* (2022/23).

This season, the American tenor will make his debut at Seattle Opera singing Don José in *Carmen* and singing the Prince in *Rusalka* with Irish National Opera. Last season, he debuted the role of the Prince at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, made his Metropolitan Opera debut singing The Voice of a Young Man in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and sang Albert in *The Makropulos Affair* with Scottish Opera. For his European debut, he performed Don José in *Carmen* with the Schauspiel Zürich. In concert, while a member of Lyric's Ryan Opera Center, he performed in *Sunday in the Park with Lyric* under the baton of Enrique Mazzola. He also sang Mozart's *Requiem* with the SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Music and Rye Presbyterian Church, Handel's *Messiah* under the direction of David J. Recca, and Vivaldi's *Magnificat* with Stanwich Church and at the Rye Presbyterian Church. In the summer of 2024, Capozzo was a participant in both the Aix-en-Provence Académie and the Internationale Meistersinger Akademie in Germany.



## CATHERINE MARTIN PAGE

**Previously at Lyric:** Four roles since 2016/17, most recently Waltraute/*Twilight: Gods* (2020/21) and Eva Crowley/*An American Dream* (2018/19).

Last season the American mezzo-soprano returned to The Atlanta Opera to sing Juno in *Semele*. She joined the Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera as Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana* and Detroit Opera to sing the District Attorney in *The Central Park Five*. At Lyric she sang Waltraute/*Die Walküre* (2017/18) and Hécube/*Les Troyens* (2016/17). Recent highlights include her Atlanta Opera debut as Waltraute in *Die Walküre*; a role debut as Fricka in Dayton Opera's *Das Rheingold*; Amneris in *Aida* with Houston Grand Opera; Opera Carolina, Opera Colorado, and Opera Santa Barbara; Maddalena in *Rigoletto* with New Orleans Opera and Opera Santa Barbara; Herodias in *Salomé* with Dayton Opera; Adalgisa in *Norma* with Florida Grand Opera; Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana* with Opera Colorado; Geneviève in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Clarice in *The Love for Three Oranges* with Des Moines Metro Opera; Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff* and Eboli in *Don Carlos* for Maryland Lyric Opera; and Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice* with Kentucky Opera.



## BILLE BRULEY FIRST JEW *Lyric debut*

This season, the tenor makes debuts with Lyric Opera of Kansas City in *Of Mice and Men* (Lennie), Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Mitch), and Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería in Mexico City for a recording of *Salomé* (First Jew). Future seasons include a

debut with Houston Grand Opera. Last season Bruley made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in a new production of *Salomé* (First Jew) directed by Claus Guth and conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Additional engagements included a return to Utah Opera for *Sweeney Todd* (Beadle Bamford), and his Carnegie Hall debut in *Messiah* with Masterwork Chorus. Other recent highlights include a debut at San Francisco Opera for Mason Bates and Mark Campbell's *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* (Steve Wozniak) and, on the concert stage, debuts with the Houston Symphony in *Salomé* (First Jew) and Fort Wayne Philharmonic in Mozart's *Requiem*. He made his role debut in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Bacchus) at Arizona Opera and returns to Austin Opera for *Sweeney Todd* (Beadle) and The Santa Fe Opera for *Der fliegende Holländer* (Steuermann).



## TRAVON D. WALKER SECOND JEW

**Previously at Lyric:** Four roles since 2024/25, most recently Parpignol/*La Bohème* and Son/*Blue* (both 2024/25).

Last season, the third-year Ryan Opera Center tenor made company debuts with Opera Philadelphia in *The Anonymous Lover* and the North Carolina Symphony, followed by a return to Wolf Trap Opera as a Filene Artist (*Dialogues of the Carmelites* and *Carmen*). Walker received his master's degree from Rice University, where he sang Sam Kaplan/*Street Scene*. A native of Hinesville, Georgia, he completed his undergraduate studies at the Eastman School of Music. The tenor was invited to participate in Renée Fleming's 2023 SongStudio and Joyce DiDonato's 2024 Masterclass Series, both at Carnegie Hall, as well as the 2023 Britten Pears Young Artist Programme. Other engagements include the Sinfónica de Minería (Mexico City), Erie Philharmonic, and Houston Grand Opera. Walker received an Encouragement Award from the Kansas City District in the 2023 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, the 2024 Best Vocal Artist Award from the American Opera Society, and the 2024 Luminarts Cultural Foundation Men's Voice Fellowship. Travon D. Walker is sponsored by an **Anonymous Donor, Robert & Isabelle Bass Foundation, Inc., the Boykins, Ford, and Mages families, and Cynthia Vahlkamp & Robert Kenyon.**



## DANIEL LUIS ESPINAL THIRD JEW

**Previously at Lyric:** Three roles since 2024/25, most recently Beppe/*Cavalleria rusticana*/*Pagliacci* (2025/26) and Don Curzio/*Le nozze di Figaro* (2024/25).

A second-year Ryan Opera Center member, the Cuban-Dominican tenor from Sarasota was a national winner of the 2024 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, received a 2025 Sara Tucker Study Grant, and was in residence at the 2025 Aix-en-Provence Festival Académie and Ravinia Festival's Steans Institute. This season at Lyric Espinal will appear also in *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*; he debuted with the company in 2024/25 as Jacquinio/*Fidelio*. This summer Espinal makes his debut with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as Frederic/*The*

*Pirates of Penzance*. A graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, Espinal continued his studies at Yale University, where he received a Master of Musical Arts degree. His roles there included Tom Rakewell/*The Rake's Progress*, Rinuccio/*Gianni Schicchi*, and Male Chorus/*The Rape of Lucretia*. The tenor previously participated in San Francisco's Merola Opera Program for two summers. *Daniel Luis Espinal* is sponsored by **Lead Sponsor the J. Thomas Hurvis Endowment, in loving memory of Dick Kiphart** and cosponsors **Fred & Phoebe Boelter, Margo & Michael Oberman & Family, and Jennifer L. Stone**.



**ZHENGYI BAI**  
**FOURTH JEW**

**Lyric debut**

In the 2025/26 season, the Chinese tenor will make his Metropolitan Opera debut in the holiday presentation of *The Magic Flute* as Monostatos, a role he will reprise in Barrie Kosky's production in German at LA Opera and Opera San Antonio. Bai will also sing the lead role of the Madwoman in Britten's *Curlew River* with Opéra national de Lorraine in France. Other recent highlights include Prince Nilksy in Peter Sellars's new production of Prokofiev's *The Gambler* with the Salzburg Festival, Monostatos at San Francisco Opera, Fong See in *On Golden Mountain* at LA Opera, Prince Charmant in *Cendrillon* with Opera Orlando, Colin in *The Anonymous Lover* with Boston Lyric Opera, Pang in *Turandot* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Goro in *Madama Butterfly* with Virginia Opera, Florentine Opera, and Kentucky Opera, Der Bucklige in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* with San Francisco Opera, the First Prisoner in *Fidelio* with San Francisco Opera, Dancing Master/Lamplighter in *Manon Lescaut* with San Francisco Opera, Remendado in *Carmen* with San Francisco Opera, and Alessandro in *Il rÈ pastore* with Merola Opera.



**BENJAMIN R. SOKOL**  
**FIFTH JEW**

**Lyric debut**

Originally from Westbury, New York, Sokol is a first-year Ryan Opera Center bass-baritone. This season at Lyric he will also appear in *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*. He recently received his bachelor's and master's degrees in music and professional studies certificate from the Manhattan School of Music. Sokol was a winner of the 2025 Eisenberg-Fried Concerto Competition, semi-finalist in the 2025 George and Nora London Foundation Competition and 2023 Premiere Opera Foundation Competition, finalist in the 2022 Opera Index Competition, and winner of the 2021 Milnes Opera Idol Competition. He has previously participated in the artist-development programs at San Francisco's Merola Opera (Commendatore/*Don Giovanni*), Chautauqua Opera Company and Conservatory, and the Taos Opera Institute. He has also been with the Milnes VOICE Programs for several years, participating in the Florida VOICE Project and Milnes VOICE Studio and performing at the Savannah VOICE Festival. *Benjamin R. Sokol* is sponsored by **David & Janet Fox** and **Penelope R. Steiner**.



**ALEKSEY BOGDANOV**  
**FIRST NAZARENE**

**Lyric debut**

This season the baritone debuts with The Atlanta Opera in *Götterdämmerung* (Alberich) and San Diego Opera in *Carmen* (Escamillo), and returns to San Francisco Opera for *Rigoletto* (Il Conte di Monterone). Future seasons include a debut with The Dallas Opera as well as returns to San Francisco Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and The Atlanta Opera. In the 2024/25 Season, he made his debut with Pacific Symphony in a staged production of *Das Rheingold* (Donner), and returned to the Metropolitan Opera for *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Der Einäugige), Palm Beach Opera for *Roméo et Juliette* (Capulet), and The Glimmerglass Festival for *The Rake's Progress* (Nick Shadow). On the concert stage, he appeared with the Cathedral Choral Society in Ethel Smyth's *Mass in D* and with The Clarion Choir in Rachmaninoff's *Spring Cantata*. Recent operatic highlights include debuts at Gran Teatre del Liceu in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (Crespel/Luther), Royal Swedish Opera in *La fanciulla del West* (Rance), and performances of *Tosca* (Scarpia) with companies including Kaohsiung Philharmonic Cultural & Arts Foundation, Palm Beach Opera, Austin Opera, and Hawaii Opera Theatre.



**SIHAO HU**  
**SECOND NAZARENE**

**Lyric debut**

The first-year Ryan Opera Center baritone from Shenzhen, China, studied at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama in Cardiff. This season at Lyric, he will also appear in *Madama Butterfly*. Hu participated in more than 50 performances across his homeland as well as abroad throughout his undergraduate studies. Highlights of his operatic experience include creating the title role of *Tàng Xian Zu* for its world premiere in 2017 and reprising it at the Sydney Opera House, the Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, and the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno, Czech Republic. Other roles in his repertoire include Ping/*Turandot*, Silvio/Pagliacci, Barmann/Falscher Verrat, Figaro/*Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Chorèbe/*Les Troyens*, Germont/*La traviata*, the title role/*Don Giovanni*, Guglielmo/*Così fan tutte*, and Conte Almaviva/*Le nozze di Figaro*. *Sihao Hu* is sponsored by **Lead Sponsor Peter Scheuermann** and cosponsors **Drs. George Dunea & Sally Metzler-Dunea, Richard W. Shepro & Lindsay E. Roberts, and Ms. Gay K. Stanek**.



**SCOTT CONNER**  
**FIRST SOLDIER**

**Lyric debut**

This season Conner will make role debuts singing Zuniga in *Carmen* and Aldeano Three in *El último sueño de Frida y Diego* at the Metropolitan Opera, and return to Opera Philadelphia to sing Lord Sidney in Rossini's *Il viaggio a Reims*. In the 2024/25 Season he performed One-Armed Brother in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and Jose Tripaldi in *Ainadamar*.

at the Met. The season included also his role and house debut as Ramfis in *Aida* with Arizona Opera. In concert, he sang Mozart's *Requiem* with the Jacksonville Symphony, and joined the Defiant Requiem Foundation for Verdi's *Requiem*, performed in partnership with the Dallas Symphony. Recent engagements include returns to Santa Fe Opera as Pistola in *Falstaff* and the Police Commissioner in *Der Rosenkavalier*, the Voice of Neptune in *Idomeneo* and the role of the Police Commissioner in Robert Carsen's production of *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Met, as well as Ashby in *La fanciulla del West* with The Cleveland Orchestra, the King of Clubs in *The Love for Three Oranges* at Des Moines Metro Opera, and his Canadian Opera Company debut as the Second Soldier in *Salomé*.



### CHRISTOPHER HUMBERT, JR. SECOND SOLDIER

**Previously at Lyric:** Four roles since 2024/25, most recently Captain of the Guard/*Medea* (2025/26) and 3rd Policeman/*Blue* (2024/25).

Originally from Akron, Ohio, the third-year Ryan Opera Center bass-baritone will also appear at Lyric this season in *Madama Butterfly*. In 2024/25, he sang Ceprano/*Rigoletto* and 2nd Prisoner/*Fidelio*. Other engagements this season include soloist in Haydn's *Creation* with the Seattle Symphony and in the Verdi *Requiem* with the Nashville Symphony. He has performed widely throughout his home state, including appearances with Opera Columbus, Mid-Ohio Opera, and Nightingale Opera Theatre. Other engagements include Boston Lyric Opera, Detroit Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, the Seagle Festival, Utah Festival Opera, and Annapolis Opera. Humbert was invited for the 2025 Young Singers Project at the Salzburg Festival and is a former participant in the artist-development programs at Palm Beach Opera and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Humbert is recipient of a 2025 Luminarts Cultural Foundation Men's Voice Fellowship and a 2024 American Opera Society of Chicago Scholarship Award. *Christopher Humbert, Jr. is sponsored by Lead Sponsor Patricia Frank and cosponsors Maria C. Green & Oswald G. Lewis, Mary Houston, in loving memory of James Houston, and the Bill & Orli Staley Foundation.*



### SANKARA HAROUNA A CAPPADOCIAN

**Previously at Lyric:** Marullo/*Rigoletto* (2024/25) and Benny Paret and Benny Jr./*Champion* (2023/24).

A Chicago native, the second-year Ryan Opera Center baritone will appear later this season in *Madama Butterfly*. The summer of 2025 featured Harouna's debut with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's *This House* as well as with the Grant Park Music Festival. He joined Portland Opera as a Resident Artist in the 2023/24 Season, where he was seen in *Le nozze di Figaro* and *The Snowy Day*. A former apprentice artist at Des Moines Metro Opera, he performed there as Moralès/*Carmen* and Homecoming Soldier/Redler's *The Falling and the Rising*. Other previous engagements include Greensboro Opera, Atlanta Opera, Dayton Opera, Kentucky Opera, and Cincinnati Opera. In concert, Harouna performed Mozart's *Missa Brevis* with

the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra. The baritone has participated in the artist-development programs of Atlanta Opera, Kentucky Opera, and Dayton Opera. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Music in Vocal Performance at Kentucky State University. *Sankara Harouna is sponsored by Lead Sponsors Michael Steinberg and Salme Harju Steinberg and cosponsors Mary Ellen Hennessy and Virginia Tobaison.*



### TOMÁŠ NETOPIL CONDUCTOR

**Lyric debut**

Netopil is currently in his first season as Chief Conductor of the FOK-Prague Symphony Orchestra. From 2018 to 2024, he was Principal Guest Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic, and from 2013 to 2023 served as General Music Director of Aalto Musiktheater and Philharmonie Essen. He was Music Director at the Prague National Theatre from 2008 to 2012. Recent highlights include productions at Geneva Opera (*La Clemenza di Tito*), Berliner Staatsoper (*Madama Butterfly*), National Theatre Tokyo (*Die Zauberflöte*), Prague National Theatre (*Rusalka*), and Oper Köln (*Don Giovanni*). Symphonic engagements include Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Tonkünstler Orchestra Vienna, Oslo Philharmonic, Antwerp Symphony, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, and Sydney Symphony, and he continues regular relationships with Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo and Orchestre National des Pays de Loire. He opened the 2025/26 Season with Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and works with orchestras such as Fort Worth Symphony and Naples Philharmonic. Netopil is a frequent collaborator with Concentus Musicus Wien and Collegium 1704, and has numerous upcoming performances and recording projects with the new ensemble Silentium. Netopil's most recent recordings are with the Czech Philharmonic and include Richard Blackford's Cello Concerto with soloist Alisa Weilerstein, and Dvořák's *Legends and Rhapsodies*, both with the label Pentatone.



### SIR DAVID McVICAR ORIGINAL DIRECTOR

**Previously at Lyric:** 13 productions since 2001, most recently *Medea* (2025/26) and *Don Carlos* (2022/23).

Recent highlights for the renowned Scottish director include a new *Ring* cycle at La Scala; *Medea*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and *Roberto Devereux* at the Metropolitan Opera; *Médée* at Paris Opera and Geneva's Grand Théâtre; *Macbeth* at Canadian Opera; and *Maria Stuarda* in Madrid. Among other highlights at Lyric, he has previously directed *Macbeth* (2021-22), *Il trovatore* (2018/19, 2014/15, 2006/07), *Wozzeck* (2015/16), and *La clemenza di Tito* (2013/14). Other productions include, for La Scala, *Les Troyens*, *La Calisto*, and *I masnadieri*; for Opera Australia, *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro*; for the Vienna Staatsoper, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Falstaff*; and many more for the English National Opera, Glyndebourne, Scottish Opera, Opera North, Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, the Salzburg Festival, the Mariinsky Theatre, and many other major companies. In 2012 he received a knighthood for his services to opera, and was made a Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres.



## JULIA BURBACH REVIVAL DIRECTOR

**Lyric debut**

Burbach began her operatic career as an observer at the Bayerische Staatsoper

Munich. She was a staff director at the Royal Ballet and Opera in London and worked with multiple directors and revived major productions worldwide. Recent highlights include: *La Cenerentola* (ENO, London Coliseum), *Der fliegende Holländer* (Opera Holland Park), *Partenope* (Oper Frankfurt), *Alcina* (Oper Wuppertal), *L'elisir d'amore* (Státní Opera Prague), *Eugene Onegin* (Theater Lübeck), *Der singende Teufel* (Theater Bonn), *Manon Lescaut* (Theater Kiel), *Götterdämmerung* and *Siegfried* (Hackney Empire), *Eugene Onegin* (Opera Holland Park), *La Bohème* (Theater Bielefeld), *Edmea* (Wexford Opera Festival), *Die Walküre* (Hackney Empire), *Wundertheater* (Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe), *Semele* (Shanghai International Festival), *Die Walküre* (Opéra National de Bordeaux), *Das Rheingold* (OFFIE nomination 2020) and *Die Walküre* (OFFIE nomination 2020, both at Grimeborn Festival), *L'amico Fritz* (Opera Holland Park), *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* (Alte Münze Berlin), *The Fairy Queen* (Bury Court/Wilde Renate Berlin), *Tosca* (Grimeborn Festival), *Madama Butterfly* (Grimeborn Festival/Bury Court), as well as *The Rape of Lucretia* (Grimeborn Festival) which was awarded an OFFIE 2020 for best opera.



## ES DEVLIN DESIGNER

**Lyric debut**

The artist and designer's opera work includes *Carmen* (Bregenzer Festspiele), *Otello*

(the Metropolitan Opera), and *Don Giovanni* (Royal Ballet and Opera), among others. Recent theatre work includes: *Hamlet* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Dear England* (National Theatre, West End, and UK National Tour); the Broadway transfer of the Almeida production *The Hunt*; Tony Award winning *The Lehman Trilogy* (including West End and Broadway transfers); *The Motive and The Cue* and *The Crucible* (National Theatre and West End transfers); *Coriolanus*, *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, and *Ugly Lies the Bone* (National Theatre); *A Number* (Old Vic); *Girls and Boys* and *The Nether* (Royal Court Theatre); *Faith Healer* (Donmar Warehouse); *Hamlet* (Barbican); and *Chimerica* (Almeida Theatre). Other designs and collaborations include: *Come Home Again* for the Tate Modern; *Conference of the Trees* for COP26 in Glasgow; *Memory Palace* for Pitzhanger Manor; stage sculptures for Beyoncé, The Weeknd, U2, Kanye West, Saint Laurent, and Dior; the 2021 and 2022 Super Bowl halftime shows; Olympic ceremonies in London and Rio; and the UK Pavilion at EXPO 2020.



## WOLFGANG GÖBBEL ORIGINAL LIGHTING & PROJECTION DESIGNER

**Previously at Lyric:** *La damnation de Faust* (2009/10).

The late German lighting designer's extensive opera work includes productions in Hamburg, Leipzig, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Essen, Mannheim, Aachen, Stuttgart, Munich, and Frankfurt as well as Deutsche Oper in Berlin, Staatsoper Berlin, Komische Oper Berlin, Wiener Staatsoper, Volksoper Wien, De Nederlandse Opera Amsterdam, La Monnaie Brüssel, Vlaamse Opera Antwerpen and Gent, English National Opera, Royal Ballet and Opera, Opera North, Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Grand Teatro del Liceu Barcelona, the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, National Theatre Tokyo, Houston Grand Opera, Teatro Regio Torino, Théâtre du Châtelêt, and Teatro alla Scala Milano. He was a guest at the Aldeburgh Festival, Festival d'automne, Bregenzer Festspiele, Salzburger Festspiele, Edinburgh International Festival, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Holland Festival, Spoleto Festival dei due mondi, Styriarte Graz, Wiener Festwochen, and Theatre festival Moscow, and in 1997 was nominated for the Lawrence Olivier Award for "Outstanding Achievement in Opera" (Best lighting design *Tristan und Isolde* at the English National Opera and *Midsummer Marriage* at the Royal Ballet and Opera).



## CHRIS MARAVICH REVIVAL LIGHTING DESIGNER

Lyric's lighting director served in the same position from 2006 to 2012 at San Francisco Opera, where he created lighting for many productions including *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, *Così fan tutte*, *Turandot*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Il trittico*, *Tosca*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Don Giovanni*, *Nixon in China*, and *Attila*. He has collaborated on the lighting designs for *Wozzeck* (Finnish National Opera, Grand Théâtre de Genève), *Doktor Faust* at Staatsoper Stuttgart, *Tannhäuser* for Greek National Opera, and *La fanciulla del West*, *The Makropulos Case*, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, *Il trovatore*, *Samson et Dalila*, and *Macbeth* for San Francisco Opera. Maravich has also designed lighting for LA Opera, Opera Colorado, San Diego Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Florida Grand Opera, Madison Opera, Cal Performances, and Opera San José. He currently serves as lighting supervisor for The Joffrey Ballet. Chris Maravich is supported by the **Mary-Louise and James S. Aagaard Lighting Director Endowed Chair**.



## 59 STUDIO VIDEO DESIGNERS

**Lyric debut**

59 Studio, based in London and New York, conceives, directs, designs, and delivers large-scale story-driven artworks, stage shows, events, and immersive experiences. Recent design for theatre and events includes: *Ragtime* (Lincoln Center), *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier*

& Clay (Metropolitan Opera), *Stranger Things: The First Shadow* (West End/Broadway, Tony and Olivier Awards), *Aida* (Metropolitan Opera), *Camelot* (Vivian Beaumont Theatre, Lincoln Center), *Pictures From Home* (Broadway), *Flying Over Sunset* and *Intimate Apparel* (Lincoln Center Theater), *The Last Ship* (Northern Stage/UK tour/US tour), *Oslo* (Lincoln Center/National Theatre/Harold Pinter Theatre), *Wonder.land* (Manchester International Festival/National Theatre), *An American in Paris* (Broadway/London/US tour), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Broadway), *The Forbidden Zone* (Salzburg Festival/Schaubühne Berlin), *Les Misérables* (world tour), *War Horse* (NT/Worldwide tours), and the London 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony. Highlights as video designers for opera include *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* (Santa Fe Opera), and *Marnie*, *Two Boys*, *Doctor Atomic*, *Satyagraha*, and *The Pearl Fishers* (Metropolitan Opera/ENO).



### ANDREW GEORGE ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHER

**Previously at Lyric:** Six works since 2007/08, most recently *Don Carlos* and *Macbeth* (both 2022/23).

Born in Wales and trained at the Laban Centre, George's work has been seen at the Royal Ballet and Opera in *Andrea Chénier* (also Barcelona), *Les Troyens* and *Adriana Lecouvreur* (also La Scala, Metropolitan Opera, Barcelona, Vienna, Paris), and *Salomé*. For the English National Opera, he choreographed *Agrippina* (also Barcelona), *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Die Walküre*. At Lyric, he previously choreographed *Wozzeck* (2015/16), *Rusalka* (2013/14), *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (2012/13), and *Giulio Cesare* (2007/08). His work has been seen at the Metropolitan Opera (*Agrippina*, *Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci*, *Anna Bolena*, *Giulio Cesare*, and *Don Giovanni*); Santa Fe Opera and Scottish Opera (*Falstaff*); and Glyndebourne (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Giulio Cesare* (also Lille), and *Carmen* (also Copenhagen and Dallas). In addition to numerous productions for Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, and Opera North, his work has been seen in Paris at the Châtelet (*A Little Night Music*) and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées (*Ariodante*, *Semele*, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*); and at La Scala (*Tannhäuser*).



### EMILY PIERCY REVIVAL CHOREOGRAPHER

**Lyric debut**

Recent engagements for the choreographer include *La traviata* (Glyndebourne), *Salomé* (Royal Ballet and Opera), *Carmen* (Glyndebourne, Royal Danish Opera, Opera Vest, Norway), *Privates on Parade* (Michael Grandage Company), and *The Thrill of Love* (New Vic). As a dancer and actor, she has performed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Parsifal*, *Giulio Cesare*, and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Glyndebourne), *Moving in Time* (New Adventures/TEA Films), *La Bohème* and *Agrippina* (English National Opera), *Nutcracker!* (New Adventures, Sadler's Wells Theatre), *Play Without Words* (New Adventures, National Theatre UK), *Car*

*Man* (New Adventures, Old Vic), *Cinderella* and *Swan Lake* (New Adventures, Piccadilly Theatre, Los Angeles, Broadway), *Swan Lake* (BBC/NVC film), and *Die Zauberflöte* (film).



### NOELLE KAYSER REVIVAL CHOREOGRAPHER

**Previously at Lyric:** Ballet Mistress / *Jenůfa* (2023/24) and Dancer & Assistant Choreographer/*Carmen* (2022/23).

An award-winning choreographer, director, and multi-disciplinary performer based in Chicago, Kayser is the inaugural resident choreographer for Open Space, a Whim W'him Choreographic Shindig winner, the 2025 BalletX Choreographic Fellow, and a 2026 Ballet Collective Commission for Developing Choreographers recipient. She has created work for companies including Dance Aspen, DanceWorks Chicago, Visceral Dance Chicago, and SAIT II, among many others. She was the founding rehearsal director and administrator for PARA.MAR Dance Theatre, and is currently the Artistic Liaison for South Chicago Dance Theatre. Kayser's short dance film "dust" — produced by Open Space — has been screened in Germany, Sweden, Greece, South Korea, Mexico, Italy, London, and throughout the U.S. In addition to her choreographic work, she has performed works by Gustavo Ramírez Sansano, Ihsan Rustem, Wen Wei Wang, Danielle Agami, Robyn Mineko Williams, and Alice Klock, among others. She has performed with companies such as NW Dance Project and Visceral Dance Chicago, among others. As an actor, Kayser has narrated 16 audiobooks for Audible, appeared in advertising campaigns, and performed in numerous stage productions. Most recently, she won the 2024 Jeff Award for Best Ensemble for her performance as Selene in *The Penelopiad* at the Goodman Theatre, and starred in Anna Long's short film *Death in the Desert* (Best Actress in a Short at the Idyllwild Film Festival & Best Short Drama at the Breckenridge Film Festival).



### JOHN METZNER WIG & MAKEUP DESIGNER

The versatile designer first joined the staff of Lyric for the 2022/23 Season. He has previously collaborated with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Lookingglass Theatre, and Court Theatre. He served for nine years as Head of Wig and Makeup for Webster University's Conservatory of Theatre Arts, and designed hair and makeup for more than 50 performances at The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. Other regional credits include work at The Muny, Great River Shakespeare Festival, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where he designed for *The Pirates of Penzance*, among many other productions. His advanced training includes wig styling at the Wig Room Training Academy and London School of Wig Making. *John Metzner is supported by The Marlys A. Beider Wigmaster and Makeup Designer Endowed Chair.* L

# Orchestra & Chorus

## MUSIC DIRECTOR

Enrique Mazzola

*The John D. and Alexandra C. Nichols Endowed Chair*

## MUSIC STAFF

Michael Banwarth

Kseniia Polstiankina Barrad

William C. Billingham

Aaron Breid

Kyle Dickson

Levi Hammer

Susan Miller Hult

Tess Jackson

Keun-A Lee

Chi-Yuan Lin <sup>▲▲</sup>

Noah Lindquist <sup>\*</sup>

Francesco Milioto

Jerad Mosbey

Jacob Niemann <sup>▲</sup>

Stefano Sarzani

Madeline Slettedahl

Morgan Stevenson

Marika Yasuda

## ORCHESTRA

### Violin I

Robert Hanford, *Concertmaster*,

*Mrs. R. Robert Funderburg  
Endowed Chair*

Emily Nebel,  
*Assistant Concertmaster*

Eleanor Bartsch

Alexander Belavsky

Kathleen Brauer

Renée-Paule Gauthier

Laura Miller

Liba Shacht

Heather Wittels

Bing Jing Yu

### Violin II

Yin Shen, *Principal*

John Macfarlane,  
*Assistant Principal*

Injoo Choi <sup>\*\*</sup>

Diane Duraffourg-Robinson

Ann Palen

Irene Radetzky

John D. Robinson

David Volfe

### Viola

Carol Cook, *Principal*

Terri Van Valkinburgh,  
*Assistant Principal*

Amy Hess

Melissa Trier Kirk

Rebecca Swan

### Cello

Calum Cook, *Principal*

Mark Brandfonbrener

William H. Cernota

Ana Kim

Walter Preucil

### String Bass

Samuel Shuhan,

*Acting Principal*

Andrew L. W. Anderson

Gregory Sarchet

Collins R. Trier

### Flute

Marie Tachouet, *Principal*

Dionne Jackson,  
*Assistant Principal*

Alyce Johnson

### Piccolo

Alyce Johnson

### Oboe

Paul Lueders, *Principal*

Judith Zunamon Lewis,  
*Assistant Principal*

### English Horn

Judith Zunamon Lewis

### Clarinet

Heesoo Kim, *Principal*

Susan Warner,  
*Assistant Principal*

### Bass Clarinet

Susan Warner,

*Acting*

### Bassoon

Premar Tilson, *Principal*

Lewis Kirk, *Assistant Principal*

### Contrabassoon

Lewis Kirk

### Horn

Abigail Black, *Principal*

Fritz Foss, *Assistant Principal/Utility  
(Third Horn <sup>\*\*</sup>)*

Robert E. Johnson <sup>\*</sup>

Samuel Hamzem

Neil Kimel

### Trumpet

William Denton, *Principal*

Rebecca Oliverio,

*Acting Assistant Principal*

### Trombone

Jeremy Moeller, *Principal*

Mark Fisher, *Assistant Principal*

Will Baker

### Bass Trombone

Will Baker

### Tuba

Andrew Smith, *Principal*

### Timpani

Edward Harrison, *Principal*

### Percussion

Douglas Waddell,

*Acting Principal*

Eric Millstein,

*Acting Assistant Principal*

### Harp

Lynn Williams, *Principal*

### Librarian

John Rosenkrans, *Principal*

### Stage Band Contractor

Christine Janicki

## EXTRA MUSICIANS

Cristina Buciu, *violin*

Christine Chon, *violin*

Carmen Kassinger, *violin*

Olga Kossovich, *violin*

Kate Carter, *violin*

Karin Gambell, *violin*

Sheila Hanford, *violin*

Hana Kim, *violin*

Rose Armbrust Griffen, *viola*

Bea Chen, *viola*

Joey Fischer, *viola*

Bruno Vaz da Silva, *viola*

Ben Fryxell, *cello*

Mara McClain, *cello*

Isidora Nojkovic, *cello*

Jeremy Attanaseo, *bass*

Nick Delaurentis, *bass*

Sam Waring, *oboe*

Margaret Butler, *bass oboe*

Trevor O'Riordan, *clarinet*

Elizandro Garcia Montoya,  
*clarinet*

Wagner Campos, *bass clarinet*

Hanna Sterba, *bassoon*

Vincent Karamanov, *bassoon*

Adam Unsworth, *horn*

Renee Vogen, *horn*

Greg Flint, *horn*

Dave Inmon, *trumpet*

Dave Gaguer, *trumpet*

Mark Fry, *bass trombone*

Sarah Christianson, *timpani/percussion*

Michael Kozakis, *percussion*

Rich Janicki, *percussion*

Josh Jones, *percussion*

Joel Cohen, *percussion*

Lauren Hayes, *harp*

Michael Banwarth, *celeste*

## STAGEBAND MUSICIAN

William C. Billingham,  
*harmonium*

The Lyric Opera Orchestra string sections utilize revolving seating. Players behind the front desk change seats systematically and are listed alphabetically in the roster above.

\* *On leave, 2025/26 Season*

\*\* *Season Substitute*

▲ *Solti Foundation U.S. Opera Residency*

^^ *Ryan Opera Center Conductor*

**CHORUS DIRECTOR  
AND HEAD OF MUSIC**

Michael Black  
*The Howard A. Stotler  
Endowed Chair*

**REGULAR CHORUS**

**Soprano**  
Angela De Venuto  
Cathleen Dunn  
Desirée Hassler  
Rachael Holzhausen  
Kimberly McCord  
Heidi Spoor  
Stephani Springer  
Sherry Watkins  
Kelsea Webb  
Tara Wheeker

**Mezzo-Soprano**

Marianna Kulikova  
Ola Rafalo  
Yvette Smith  
Marie Sokolova  
Maia Surace  
Corinne Wallace-Crane  
Pamela Williams  
Michelle K. Wright

**Tenor**

Geoffrey Agpalo  
Timothy Bradley  
Hoss Brock  
William M. Combs  
John J. Concepción  
Kenneth Donovan  
Jared V. Esguerra  
Joseph A. Fosselman  
Cullen Gandy  
Cameo T. Humes  
Tyler Samuel Lee  
Joseph Shadday

**Bass**

David DuBois  
Christopher Filipowicz  
Robert Morrissey  
Rafael W. Porto  
Craig Springer  
Nicholas Ward  
Ronald Watkins  
Nikolas Wenzel  
Max Wier  
Jonathan Wilson

**CORE SUPPLEMENTARY  
CHORUS**

**Soprano**  
Cara Collins  
Megan Fleischmann  
Emily Mwila

**Mezzo-Soprano**

Christina G. Adams  
Carla Janzen  
Emily Price

**Tenor**

Joshua Benevento  
Ace Gangoso

**Bass**

Michael Cavalieri  
David Govertsen  
Nicolai Janitzky  
Ian R. Prichard

**SUPPLEMENTARY  
CHORUS**

**Soprano**  
Nicole Besa  
Alexandra Burch  
Regina Ceragioli  
Anna Donnelly  
Elizabeth Fisher  
Hayley Fox  
Julia Frodyma  
Elise Hurwitz  
Mackenzie Jacquemin  
Alexandra Kassouf  
Courtney San Martin  
Taylor See  
Emlynn Shoemaker  
Alannah Spencer  
Diana Stoic  
Ariana Strahl

**Mezzo-Soprano**

Emily Amesquita  
Robin G. Bradley  
Leah Dexter  
Elizabeth Frey  
Miya Higashiyama  
Georgia Jacobson  
Samantha McGonigal  
Quinn Middleman  
Sarah Ponder  
Marissa Simmons

**Tenor**

Jerek Fernández  
Klaus Georg  
Jianghai Ho  
Ernest C. Jackson Jr  
Nathan Oakes  
Steven Michael Patrick  
Brett Potts  
Brian Skoog  
Ryan Townsend Strand  
Tristan Tournaud

**Bass**

Evan Bravos  
Chris DiMarco  
Dimitri German  
Stephen Hobe  
Brian Hupp  
Joseph Lodato  
Dorian McCall  
Wilbur Pauley  
William Powell III  
Douglas Peters  
Dan Richardson  
Aaron Wardell

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Todd Rosenberg

*Lyric*

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° Deceased

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## May 8 & 9, 2026

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Lyric Wine Auction 2026 is a project of the Lyric Women's Board. President, **Karen Z. Gray-Krehbiel**. Wine Auction 2026 Co-Chairs, **Jenni Sorenson** and **John Holmes**.

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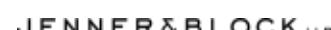
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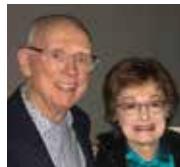


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**Michael Smallwood**,  
Vice President,  
Production and Technical  
Director, The Allan and  
Elaine Muchin Endowed  
Chair  
John Yelen, Senior Director  
of Facilities

Joe Minogue,  
Chief Engineer  
Michael LaPorte,  
Lead Engineer

Phillip Casica  
Anthony Fasano  
Brian Laurence McMahon  
Bernard McNeela  
Kevin O'Keefe  
Thomas Setina  
Eric Zawaski,  
Engineers

### TECHNICAL & PRODUCTION

**Vincente F. Milianti**, Chief  
Financial and Operating  
Officer

**Technical**  
**Michael Smallwood**,  
Vice President,  
Production and Technical  
Director, The Allan and  
Elaine Muchin Endowed  
Chair

April Busch, Technical  
Operations Director  
Maria DeFabio Akin,  
Production Design  
Director

Scott Wolfson, Associate  
Technical Director  
Brendan Henry, Technical  
Finance Manager

Kathryn Johnson, Associate  
Properties Director  
Chris Maravich, Lighting  
Director, Mary-Louise  
and James S. Aagaard  
Lighting Director  
Endowed Chair

Benjamin McCormack,  
Assistant Technical  
Director

Sarah Riffle  
Bridget Williams,  
Assistant Lighting  
Designers

Joe Dockweiler,  
Master Carpenter  
Mike Reilly, Head Flyman/  
Automation  
Chris Barker  
Robert Hull, Jr.  
Connor Ingersoll  
Chase Torringa, Rigging/  
Automation Assistants

Phil Marcotte, Head Shop  
Carpenter  
Brian Grenda, Layout  
Carpenter  
Drew Trusk, Head Shop  
Welder

Luigi Trupiano, Layout  
Welder  
Dan DiBennardi,  
Warehouse Coordinator

Dan Donahue  
Ryan McGovern  
Jeffrey Streichhirsch,  
Assistant Carpenters

Anthony Bernardy  
John Ingersoll  
Aiden McGovern  
Rory McQuillan  
Dylan O'Shea

Tyler Gil Ramos  
Jacob Sullivan  
Brian Walsh  
Isaiah Williams,  
Carpenters

Anthony Coia,  
Master Electrician  
Soren Ersbak,  
Board Operator  
Jose Villalpando,  
Titles Operator

John Clarke, Jr.  
Thomas Hull  
Dan Kuh  
Robert Reynolds,  
Assistant Electricians

Martin Childress  
Jason Combs  
Thomas Fernandez  
Nicholas Gutierrez  
Daniel Hull

Jose Villalpando  
Daniel Vuillaume,  
Electricians

Nick Charlan,  
Head Audio Technician  
Matt Eble, FOH Engineer  
Asiel Simpson  
Matt Swiatkowski

Monitor Engineers  
Bob Ladd,  
Property Master  
Bob Hartge, Properties  
Crew Head

Gordon Granger,  
Prop Carpenter  
Frank McPartlin, Armorer  
Rachel Boultinghouse,  
Upholsterer

Kevin McPartlin  
Ian Scarlato  
Taylor Torringa  
Assistant Properties

Joshua Dobbins  
John Kopecky  
Ryan Lin-Peistrup  
Michael O'Donnell, Jr.  
Johnny Rivers  
Drew Scafidi  
James Ullrich  
Properties

Michael Besancon,  
Charge Artist  
Michael Murtough  
Scenic Artist  
Alyssa Mohn, Scenic Artist  
Apprentice

Kim Buetzow, Costume  
Director, The Richard  
P. and Susan Kiphart  
Endowed Chair

Lucy Lindquist,  
Wardrobe Mistress

Lauren Crotty  
Ellouise Davis  
Nina Escobedo  
Molly Herman  
M. Kate Keefe Marcheschi

Cecilia Kinder  
Bryan McDonald  
Kathy Rubel  
Herbie Ruiz  
Marguerite Scott

Ewa Szylak  
Michelle Tan  
Maggie Zabierowski,  
Costumers

Katelynn Barker  
Louie Barrios  
Samantha Holmes  
Krystina Lowe  
Joanna Rzepka  
Sarah Santiago  
Kate Shattock  
Isaac B. Turner,  
Production Administrators

Samantha Holmes,  
Wardrobe Crew Head

Brigid Brown  
Lauren Crotty  
Nina Escobedo  
Eric Guy

Dawn-Maria Hamilton  
Mary Luchsinger  
Wendy McCay  
Moira O'Neil  
Christopher Probyn

Sarah Santiago  
Dulce Santillán  
Roger Weir  
Dressers

John Metzner, Wig &  
Makeup Designer,  
The Marlys A. Beider  
Endowed Chair  
Necole Bluhm,  
Department Coordinator  
Lynn Koroulis, Shop Manager

Brittany Powers, Wig &  
Makeup Crew Foreman

Victoria Ashmore  
Martha Contreras  
Krista D'Agostino  
Eric Daniels  
Nini Jenkins  
Chantelle Johnson  
Lauren Mateling  
Melissa Musseau  
Liv Roach  
Becky Scott  
Franni Valus,  
Wig & Makeup Run Crew

Davis Campbell  
Colin Grice  
Chantelle Johnson  
Katie Kurz  
James Ogle,  
Wig Shop Staff

**Production**  
Rachel A. Tobias, Production  
Stage Manager

Katrina Bachus  
Jordan Lee Braun  
Adam Da Ros,  
Assistant Stage Directors

Alaina Bartkowiak  
Sandra Moore,  
Stage Managers

Adrienne Bader  
Alaina Bartkowiak  
Alycia Martin  
Sandra Moore  
Tommy Novak  
Daniel Sokalski  
Peggy Stenger  
Amy C. Thompson,  
Assistant Stage Managers



**Local 2:** Stagehands

**Local 476:** Studio Mechanics

**Local 769:** Theatrical Wardrobe



**Local USA 829** of the IATSE is  
the union representing scenic,  
costume, lighting, sound  
and projection designers  
in Live Performance

*The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center identifies exceptionally talented emerging artists from around the world and provides them with comprehensive training and performance opportunities. On the world's stages, the Center's impressive roster of alumni continually proves the value of training at Lyric.*



**The 2025/26 Ryan Opera Center Ensemble**

**Sopranos**

**Adia Evans**  
**Emily Richter**

**Mezzo-sopranos**

**Alexis Pearl**  
**Camille Robles**

**Tenors**

**Daniel Luis Espinal**  
**Travon D. Walker**

**Baritones**

**Sankara Harouna**  
**Sihao Hu**  
**Finn Sagal**

**Bass-baritones**

**Christopher Humbert, Jr.**  
**Benjamin R. Sokol**

**Conductor**

**Chi-Yuan Lin**

**Pianist**

**Michael Banwarth**

**Stage Director**

**Marinette Gomez**

**Stage Manager**

**Gemma DeCetra**

Kyle Flubacker

Front row, l to r: Emily Richter, Chi-Yuan Lin, Marinette Gomez, Gemma DeCetra, Adia Evans, Michael Banwarth, Finn Sagal, Alexis Pearl

Back row, l to r: Camille Robles, Travon D. Walker, Benjamin R. Sokol, Christopher Humbert, Jr., Sihao Hu, Daniel Luis Espinal, Sankara Harouna

*Lyric*

# Ryan Opera Center

# Ryan Opera Center alumni around the world

## THIS SEASON



## PROGRAM STAFF

### Administration

Dan Novak  
*Director, The Ryan Opera Center  
Board Endowed Chair*

Craig Terry  
*Music Director,  
The Jannotta Family  
Endowed Chair*

Julia Faulkner  
*Director of Vocal Studies*

Logan Skirm  
*Manager*

Annika Donnen  
*Managing Librarian*

### Faculty

Julia Faulkner  
*Vocal Instruction,  
Robert and Ellen Marks Ryan  
Opera Center Vocal Studies  
Program Endowment*

Deborah Birnbaum  
Renée Fleming

Dame Jane Glover

Enrique Mazzola

Gerald Martin Moore

Matthew Polenzani

Russell Thomas

*Guest Master Artists*

William C. Billingham

Alan Darling

Laurann Gilley

Susan Miller Hult

Noah Lindquist

Celeste Rue

Hugh Russell

Eric Weimer

*Coaching Staff*

Isabelle Druc

Julia Savoie Klein

Derek Matson

Morgan Stinson

Alessandra Visconti

*Foreign Language Instruction*

Paul Curran

Peter McClintock

*Acting and Movement  
Instruction*

Orit Carpenter

Beth Clayton

*Performance Psychology*

Katrina Bachus

Louisa Muller

Rachel A. Tobias

*Production Mentors*

### Artistic/Production Personnel

Enrique Mazzola  
Donald Paulmbo  
*Conductors*

Keturah Stickann  
*Director*

Peggy Stenger  
*Stage Manager*

# Artistic roster

## SOPRANOS

Amanda Batista  
 Laura Benanti  
 Ellie Dehn  
 Adia Evans  
 Renée Fleming  
 Karen Chia-Ling Ho  
 Jennifer Holloway  
 Alexandra Loutsion  
 Ana María Martínez  
 Sondra Radvanovsky  
 Alexandra Razskazoff  
 Gabriella Reyes  
 Emily Richter  
 Karah Son  
 Jacquelyn Stucker  
 Kara Shay Thomson  
 Elena Villalón

## MEZZO-SOPRANOS

Tanja Ariane Baumgartner  
 Nozomi Kato  
 Sabina Kim  
 Daniela Mack  
 Catherine Martin  
 Yulia Matochkina  
 Cecilia Molinari  
 Alexis Peart  
 Zoie Reams  
 Camille Robles  
 Stephanie Sánchez

## CONTRALTO

Lauren Decker

## COUNTERTENOR

Ryan Belongie  
 Key'mon W. Murrah

## TENORS

SeokJong Baek  
 Zhengyi Bai  
 Brad Bickhardt  
 Bille Bruley  
 Ryan Capozzo  
 Daniel Luis Espinal  
 Evan LeRoy Johnson  
 Brandon Jovanovich  
 Anthony León  
 Matthew Polenzani  
 Rodell Rosel  
 Cameron Schutza  
 Victor Starsky  
 Eric Taylor  
 Russell Thomas  
 Travon D. Walker

## BARITONES

Aleksey Bogdanov  
 Alfredo Daza  
 Rod Gilfry  
 Sankara Harouna  
 Sihao Hu  
 Quinn Kelsey  
 Brian Stokes Mitchell  
 Zachary Nelson  
 Ian Rucker  
 Hugh Russell  
 Finn Sagal  
 Daniel Scofield  
 Luke Sutliff

## BASS-BARITONES

Nicholas Brownlee  
 Federico De Michelis  
 Jongwon Han  
 Christopher Humbert, Jr.  
 Benjamin R. Sokol  
 Alfred Walker

## BASS

Scott Conner

## CONDUCTORS

Rob Fisher  
 Domingo Hindoyan  
 Roberto Kalb  
 Enrique Mazzola  
 Tomáš Netopil

## DIRECTORS

Julia Burbach  
 Michael Cavanagh  
 Lorena Maza  
 Peter McClintock  
 David McVicar  
 Elijah Moshinsky  
 Matthew Ozawa  
 Roy Rallo

## CHORUS DIRECTOR

Michael Black

## CHOREOGRAPHERS & MOVEMENT DIRECTORS

Andrew George  
 Jo Meredith  
 Emily Piercy  
 August Tye

## ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Melanie Bacaling  
 Jordan Lee Braun  
 Jonathon Loy

## FIGHT DIRECTORS

Chuck Coyl  
 Samantha Kaufman  
 Andrew Rathgeber  
 Denise Serna  
 Sheryl Williams



The American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-CIO (AGMA), is the union that represents the singers, dancers, actors, and staging personnel at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

*Beyond the stage, and beyond the boundaries that often define opera companies, Lyric is igniting creativity across Chicago.*

*Through innovative learning opportunities, creative exploration, and artist and scholar residencies, Lyric, with your support, encourages students, educators, families, audiences, and Chicagoans from neighborhoods across the city to share their voices and embrace the power of opera as a catalyst for growth and change.*



Freddie Collier

**The first cohort of students in Lyric Unlimited's *Opera Pathfinders* program is learning about the many careers available in the field.**

*Lyric*

# Lyric Unlimited: Learning and Civic Engagement

# Finding Their Path

Lyric Unlimited's new *Opera Pathfinders* program introduces high school and college students to (sometimes unexpected) careers in opera

By Janie Ragsdale

**"Most people, when thinking about opera** and its related careers, think first of singers and members of the orchestra," says Sheran Goodspeed Keyton, Director of Civic Engagement for Lyric Unlimited. While audiences may only see and hear the work on stage and in the pit, it of course takes a host of other professionals working around the stage and behind the scenes to bring an operatic production to life. *Opera Pathfinders* — the latest program from Lyric Unlimited — brings this less visible (and audible) work into the spotlight. "This program allows young people to gain a greater understanding of what it takes to build an opera from conception to completion," explains Keyton.

Launched in the 2025/26 Season, *Opera Pathfinders* presents high school and college students in the Chicago area with the variety of accessible entry points into the world of opera. Recognizing that the art form has often been dominated by an older, less diverse demographic, *Opera Pathfinders* presents opportunities for students

to connect, grow their interests, and develop the skills and confidence needed to see themselves as future professionals with a stake in the future of the opera and the performing arts.

"Many young people go through high school, college, and well into their adulthood uncertain of what they want to do as a career. Everything feels very permanent," says Keyton. "*Opera Pathfinders* gives them a chance to explore different facets of the industry in a safe and judgment-free space."

**Over the course of the program**, participants gain an understanding of the wide variety of careers and expertise that are crucial to the success of arts institutions like Lyric, and develop the tools needed to craft their own career path in the arts. *Opera Pathfinders* participants choose from three offered tracks, allowing them to curate their experience in the program based on their interests, with each path featuring a mix of student-led activities, group discussions, workshops, and professional-led career talks.



Sheran Goodspeed Keyton, Director of Civic Engagement for Lyric Unlimited, shares insights on the program.

Freddie Collier



Students in the program engage with and learn from company leadership — like Jennifer E. Boyd, Vice President, People & Culture (at left) and Vincente Milianti, Chief Financial & Operating Officer (at right) — on the wide variety of careers available in the arts.



The **Opera Pathfinders Council** focuses on opera and performance arts from the perspective of an arts administrator. Participants are introduced to the basics of arts administration by staff members from Lyric in addition to professionals from other cultural institutions in Chicago. After learning from members of Lyric's artistic, finance, development, marketing, and human resources departments, the *Opera Pathfinders Council* tasks participants with creating and presenting on their own mock opera company, complete with a name, opera season, operating budget, and marketing plan.

The **Opera Pathfinders Producers** delve into the behind-the-scenes world of tech and production. Through discussions with members of Lyric's technical, lighting, and audio departments, this path teaches participants what it takes to bring a massive production to life on the Lyric stage. Members of the *Opera Pathfinders Producers* put these skills into practice, forming design teams to create production models with lighting and special effects as part of a final design display and presentation.

The **Opera Pathfinders Collective** provides participants with a route to learn more about opera, the

performing arts, and cultural institutions in Chicago. This track is focused on engagement, looking at opera from the perspective of an audience member. Participants attend and volunteer at Lyric programs including *Student Dress Rehearsals*, *Opera Insights* panel discussions, and *Opera in the Neighborhoods* performances. *Opera Pathfinders Collective* participants draw upon these experiences to create a final multi media presentation focused on the ways in which Lyric can grow in exemplifying high levels of accessibility for young audiences.

Through these endeavors, *Opera Pathfinders* strives to create lasting change in both the lives of participants and the broader artistic community. Regardless of which of the three tracks the students choose, *Opera Pathfinders* highlights the importance of career readiness and equips participants with the skills and resources to push the boundaries of their creativity, take their artistic practices seriously, and share their stories as they step into their roles as the next generation of opera professionals.

"Ultimately," Keyton says, "we hope students will walk away with a greater understanding of what their career path should be — and of who they are." ■

# People of Lyric

A behind-the-scenes conversation



## Katharine Gunnink

Director of Company Management

### Hometown

Cloverdale, California, up in Northern California wine country.

### When did you start at Lyric?

Summer 2023, before *The Flying Dutchman*.

### Favorite opera?

Wozzeck. I love Berg.

### Favorite opera character?

I love Salome. I loved playing Tosca — living in that character. I loved breaking my own heart.

### Favorite performer?

I grew up listening to Mirella Freni. And Teresa Stratas. She is amazing.

### Other interests of note?

I started playing hockey when I moved here. I had never played before. I can't skate. I'm the goalie.

### Can you describe your typical work day?

It depends a lot on where we are in the season. But the typical day is coming in and facilitating all the rehearsal needs for the day: making sure the artists are arriving, that everyone's making their calls, or noting if they are calling out. I'm focused on making sure that the rehearsal day continues without interruption. If someone is sick, instead of losing that whole day of rehearsal, perhaps they will want to bring the cover in and continue staging, or instead pivot a little bit and do other scenes. We have to make sure we're getting things done. And then we get the next rehearsal day schedule out so that everyone knows the plan.

### So you interact with many different people — does your work require musical training?

Knowing these operas, knowing these roles, knowing what is being asked of the artists — it really helps my work. For the majority of my working life, I was an operatic soprano. My first role in college was Mimì. I studied voice performance at the San Francisco Conservatory, and I was a resident artist in San Jose for a long time. I've sung Fiordiligi like a million times.

### What is something about your job that would surprise people?

My friends in other companies are always really surprised to find out I give a curtain speech at the dress rehearsals. They're like, *What do you mean you go out in front of the curtain?*

### A favorite moment at Lyric?

I loved *Jenůfa*. Lise Davidson was amazing, and seeing Nina Stemme throw that wig around was amazing. The production was just stunning. But my favorite moments are really the dress rehearsals. There's always a feeling of, "We made it." In the back of house, we're working so hard toward that: We've made it to the stage. It's not really the opening for me. It's the dress.

### What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

It's challenging to meet everybody's needs and still find a middle ground that makes everybody happy. All the back-of-house rooms are under our purview, and a lot goes on. Because even if it looks like it's available, it doesn't actually always mean that it's available. There might be a setup happening, or there might be stuff being stored in there. And everything is so public. Every document, even the daily schedule that I put out — if there's a mistake on it, it's not just a few people who saw it, it's the entire company.

### What do you like about working in the arts?

It's stressful and challenging, but I went to school for it, and to be able to continue to make a livelihood doing it is amazing. I love opera, and I want other people to love opera. So I love being a part of that sharing, and seeing that it's still alive and magical. 

Kyle Flubacker