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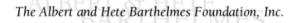






























The Anne & Henry Zarrow FOUNDATION

TAKE ME OUT TO THE ...OPERA?



Welcome to Tulsa Opera's live outdoor performance of *Rigoletto*!

In its first performance for a live, in-person audience since the coronavirus outbreak, Tulsa Opera returns to the stage — um, baseball field — for its 2020-21 season opener, Verdi's Rigoletto. We are so excited to see everyone once again!

"Challenging times call for creative solutions," says Tulsa Opera General Director & CEO Ken McConnell. "We are delighted to be partnering with ONEOK Field and the Tulsa Drillers Management as we present this first opera of our 2020–21 season."



Prepare yourself for an utterly unique operatic experience, as Tulsa Opera Artistic Director Tobias Picker and James Robinson — one of America's most inventive and sought-after stage directors — reimagine Verdi's classic with a scaled-down orchestra and singers strategically positioned on the socially distanced baseball diamond.

"Our new 'baseball' Rigoletto taps into the fascinating, but little-known history of the cultural intersection between baseball and opera in the U.S.," says Picker, pointing to the connection between live sports and arts that dates back to the 1800s when people often went to ballparks to watch live operas.

"We are thrilled to be able to present this production at this most extreme and challenging time in the history of American opera," Picker adds.

Presenting tonight's live opera performance was no easy task, as Tulsa Opera followed all necessary protocols and took every precaution — from months of preparation to opening night — to ensure the health and safety of all audience members, performers, and staff. Originally scheduled to open on this date at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center, our baseball-themed *Rigoletto* allows for a larger audience in a more open, outdoor setting with rigorous health protocols in place.

American stage director **James Robinson** is Artistic Director at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis. He previously directed productions for the Dallas, Houston Grand, Metropolitan, and San Francisco operas. Among his recent highlights is a widely acclaimed production of *Porgy and Bess* created for the Metropolitan Opera; Dutch National Opera, Amsterdam; and English National Opera.

MEET THE CAST

Soprano and Oklahoma native **Sarah Coburn** performs the leading role of Gilda, Rigoletto's daughter. A Tulsa Opera favorite, Coburn has sung at leading opera houses around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera and Wiener Staatsoper.

Tenor **Joshua Wheeker**, a graduate of the Young Artist program at LA Opera, sings the role of the Duke of Mantua, a role he debuted last summer at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

Bass Morris Robinson, a regular on the stage of The Metropolitan Opera, sings the role of Sparafucile, a murderer for hire. A graduate of the Met's prestigious Lindemann Young Artist Program, Robinson has appeared in principal roles at LA Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Teatro alla Scala, and others.

Mezzo-soprano **Allegra De Vita** is cast as Maddalena, sister of Sparafucile, following performances in recent years at the Washington National Opera, as well as at the Glimmerglass and Spoleto Festivals.

Baritone **Todd Thomas**, whose Verdi has been heard at Lyric Opera of Chicago and Florida Grand Opera, among other companies, appears as the opera's title character, Rigoletto, the Duke's jester.

Bass **Kevin Thompson** performs the role of Count Monterone.

Thompson has appeared on the stages of the New York City Opera and Teatro Lirico Giuseppe Verdi, among others, as well as in concert at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and The Kennedy Center.

Conductor **Steven White**, who recently made his San Diego Opera debut in *Rigoletto* and has also conducted Verdi in productions at the Metropolitan Opera, leads from the pit in his Tulsa Opera debut.

Several Tulsa Opera Filstrup Resident Artists also make their debuts, including soprano **Julia Laird** as Giovanna, tenor **Chris Mosz** as Matteo Borsa, baritone **Andrew René** as Marullo, and bassbaritone **Elliott Wulff** as Count Ceprano.

Tonight's performance is the second time a Verdi opera has been staged outdoors in Tulsa. In 1933, University of Tulsa music professor Albert Lukken organized a massive production of Aida on the university's football field, then called Skelly Stadium.

As COVID-19 changes the way opera companies do business all over the world, we want to thank you for choosing to spend an evening with Tulsa Opera. We are so very glad you're here.

Sincerely,

Ken McConnell General Director & CEO Tobias Picker
Artistic Director







Rigoletto

An opera in three acts by Giuseppe Verdi Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

CAST

Rigoletto Todd Thomas* Sarah Coburn Gilda Duke of Mantua Joshua Wheeker* Morris Robinson* **Sparafucile** Maddalena Allegra De Vita* Count Monterone/Chorus Kevin Thompson* Marullo/Chorus Andrew René+* Matteo Borsa/Chorus Chris Mosz†* Elliott Wulff+* Count Ceprano/Chorus Julia Laird+* Giovanna

Conductor Steven White* lames Robinson* Director Video Director Frank Zamacona **Properties Master & Artisan** Bryan Johnson Steve Colby Sound Designer & Mix Engineer Costume Designer Maegan Swick Nan Luchini **Production Stage Manager** Principal Pianist Lyndon Meyer **Assistant Director** lames Blaszko Announcer Kirk McAnany Aaron Beck Subertitle Caller Supertitle Translation and Preparation Aaron Beck

*Indicates Tulsa Opera debut † Indicates member of the Tulsa Opera Filstrup Resident Artist Program

Tulsa Opera Orchestra

Sound System by Axiom Audio

We'd like to thank Epidemiologists Dr. Mary B. Williams, Dr. Aaron Wendelboe, Dr. Katrin Kuhn, and Dr. Gary Raskob for assisting in the development of our COVID safety procedures and Dr. Timothy Young and Ascension St. John for COVID Testing Assistance.

ONEOK FIELD

Friday, October 9, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

There will be no intermission for this performance.

Run Time: 90 Minutes End Time: 9PM

We invite you to stay after the performance for a fireworks presentation.

The Tulsa Opera Orchestra operates under an agreement with the American Federation of Musicians Local 94.

Stage and Wardrobe labor provided under agreement with IATSE local 354 and IATSE local 904.

Hotel accommodations for this production are generously provided by The Mayo Hotel and Holiday Inn Express.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

At a ball in his palace, the Duke sings of a life of pleasure with as many women as possible, mentioning to Borsa that he has seen an unknown beauty in church and desires to possess her but also wishes to seduce the Countess of Ceprano. Rigoletto, the Duke's hunchbacked court jester, mocks the husbands of the ladies to whom the Duke is paying attention, including the Count Ceprano, and advises the Duke to get rid of him by prison or death. The Duke laughs indulgently, but Ceprano is not amused. Marullo, one of the guests at the ball, informs the courtiers that Rigoletto has a "lover", which astonishes them. The courtiers, at Ceprano's suggestion, resolve to take vengeance on Rigoletto for making fun of them. The festivities are interrupted by the arrival of the elderly Count Monterone, whose daughter the Duke had seduced. Rigoletto provokes him further by making fun of his helplessness to avenge his daughter's honor. Monterone confronts the Duke, and is immediately arrested by the Duke's guards. Before being led off to prison, Monterone curses both the Duke for the attack on his daughter and Rigoletto for having mocked his righteous anger. The curse terrifies Rigoletto, who believes the popular superstition that an old man's curse has real power.

Preoccupied with the old man's curse, Rigoletto approaches the house where he is concealing his daughter from the world and is accosted by the assassin Sparafucile, who walks up to him and offers his services. Rigoletto declines for the moment, but leaves open the possibility of hiring Sparafucile later. Rigoletto contemplates the similarities between the two of them. Sparafucile kills men with his sword, and Rigoletto uses "a tongue of malice" to stab his victims. Rigoletto opens a door in the wall and embraces his daughter Gilda. Rigoletto has been concealing his daughter from the Duke and the rest of the city, and she does not know her father's occupation. Since he has forbidden her to appear in public, she has been nowhere except to church and does not even know her own father's name.

When Rigoletto has gone, the Duke appears and overhears Gilda confess to her nurse Giovanna that she feels guilty for not having told her father about a young man she had met at the church. As she declares her love, the Duke enters, overjoyed. Gilda, alarmed, calls for Giovanna, unaware that the Duke had given her money to go away. Pretending to be a student, the Duke convinces Gilda of his love. When she asks for his name, he hesitantly calls himself Gualtier Maldè. Hearing sounds and fearing that her father has returned, Gilda sends the Duke away after they quickly trade vows of love. Alone, Gilda meditates on her love for the Duke.

Later, Rigoletto returns while the hostile courtiers outside the walled garden get ready to abduct the helpless girl. They tell Rigoletto that they are actually abducting the Countess Ceprano. He sees that they are masked and asks for a mask for himself; while they are tying the mask onto his face, they also blindfold him. Blindfolded and deceived, he holds the ladder steady while they climb up to Gilda's room with her father's unknowing assistance Gilda is carried away by the courtiers. Left alone, Rigoletto removes his mask and blindfold, and realizes that it was in fact Gilda who was carried away. He collapses in despair, remembering the old man's curse.

ACT II

The Duke is concerned that Gilda has disappeared. The courtiers then enter and inform him that they have captured Rigoletto's mistress. By their description, he recognizes it to be Gilda and rushes off to the room where she is held. Rigoletto enters singing and feigning nonchalance, but also looking anxiously for any trace of Gilda, whom he fears may have fallen into the hands of the Duke. The courtiers pretend not to notice his anxiety, but quietly laugh at him with each other. A page boy arrives with a message from the Duke's wife - the Duchess wishes to speak to her husband - but the courtiers reply suggestively that the Duke cannot be disturbed at the moment. Rigoletto realizes this must mean that Gilda is with the Duke. To the courtiers' surprise, he reveals that Gilda is his daughter. He first demands, then tearfully pleads with the courtiers to return her to him. Rigoletto attempts to run into the room in which Gilda is being held, but the courtiers block his way. After a time, Gilda enters, and Rigoletto orders the courtiers to leave him alone with her. Gilda describes to her father what has happened to her in the palace and he attempts to console her. Monterone is led across the room on the way to prison and pauses in front of the portrait of the Duke to regret that his curse on the libertine has had no effect. As the guards lead Monterone away, Rigoletto mutters that the old man is mistaken; he, Rigoletto, the dishonored buffoon, shall make thunder and lightning rain from heaven onto the offender's head. He repeats this vow as Gilda pleads for mercy for her lover the Duke.

ACT III

Rigoletto and Gilda arrive outside. The Duke's voice can be heard from inside. Sparafucile's sister, Maddalena, has lured him to the house. Rigoletto and Gilda listen from outside as the Duke flirts with Maddalena. Gilda laments that the Duke is unfaithful; Rigoletto assures her that he is arranging revenge.

Rigoletto orders Gilda to put on a man's clothes to prepare to leave for Verona and tells her that he plans to follow later. After she leaves, he completes his bargain with the assassin, who is ready to murder his guest.

With falling darkness, a thunderstorm approaches and the Duke decides to spend the rest of the night in the house. Sparafucile directs him to the upstairs sleeping quarters, resolving to kill him in his sleep.

Gilda, returns dressed as a man and stands outside the house. Maddalena, who is smitten with the Duke, begs Sparafucile to spare his life. Sparafucile reluctantly promises her that if by midnight another victim can be found, he will kill the other instead of the Duke. Gilda, overhearing this exchange, resolves to sacrifice herself for the Duke, and enters the house. Sparafucile stabs her and she collapses, mortally wounded.

At midnight, when Rigoletto arrives with money, he receives a corpse wrapped in a sack, and rejoices in his triumph. Weighting it with stones, he is about to cast the sack into the river when he hears the voice of the Duke. Bewildered, Rigoletto opens the sack to discover his dying daughter. For a moment, she revives and declares she is glad to die for her beloved and dies in his arms.



Todd Thomas Recognized by opera companies and critics alike as one of the true Verdi baritones gracing stages today, Todd Thomas continues his tenure as one of America's most sought-after artists. In the title role of Macbeth, Opera News depicted his performance as "warm and centered in his tone with subtle phrasing that emphasized the introspective, almost poetic quality of the tormented king." At Lyric Opera of Chicago's season opening performance of Verdi's Otello, Mr. Thomas heroically stepped in for an indisposed colleague at the top of the second act. The thrilling performance at

The Lyric "earned him deservedly the largest ovation at the end of the night from the glittery opening night audience." (The Chicago Classical). Engagements have also included returns to the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Monterone in Rigoletto, the title role of Verdi's Falstaff with Manitoba Opera, Sharpless in Madama Butterfly and Renato in Un Ballo in Maschera with Florida Grand Opera, the title role in Rigoletto with Atlanta Opera, Scarpia in Tosca and Rolando in La Battaglia di Legnano with Sarasota Opera, Germont in La traviata with Des Moines Metro Opera, Alberich in Das Rheingold with Pacific Opera Victoria in Canada, and lago in Otello with Arizona Opera. Mr. Thomas' made his Metropolitan Opera début as Dr. Metivier in War and Peace and subsequently returned for Roméo et Juliette. Other engagements have included Count di Luna in Il trovatore and Falstaff with the Seattle Opera; title role in Rigoletto at Michigan Opera Theatre, Opera Birmingham, Manitoba Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Atlanta Opera, and Austin Lyric Opera; Scarpia in Tosca at New York City Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Opera Lyra Ottawa, Michigan Opera Theatre, Florentine Opera of Milwaukee, Orlando Philharmonic, and Opera Carolina; the title role in Falstaff with Opera Santa Barbara; Tonio/Alfio in Pagliacci/Cavalleria Rusticana with Arizona Opera and Opera Omaha; Count di Luna in Il trovatore at the Manitoba Opera and Indianapolis Opera; Sharpless in Madama Butterfly with Opera Carolina, Opera Omaha, and Florida Grand Opera, and Amonasro in Aïda with Opera Carolina and North Carolina Opera. Mr. Thomas can be heard on the Naxos recording of Menotti's Amahl and the Night Visitors. He also recorded a solo disc, Crown Him Lord of All, with Jon Spong, organist.



Sarah Coburn American soprano Sarah Coburn is captivating international audiences with her "precision placement, mercury speed, and a gorgeous liquid gold tone, gilded by a thrilling top and bottom register" (The Globe and Mail). Following her performances as Lucie de Lammermoor at Glimmerglass Opera, the New York Observer noted "she turns out to have qualities that have made legends out of so many of her predecessors, from Adelina Patti to Maria Callas: stage charisma, a thrilling upper register and, crucially, a fearlessness about abandoning herself to opera's most abandoned heroine ...

this is a palpably exciting voice ... Ms. Coburn is a budding prima donna of exceptional promise." Ms. Coburn's 2019-2020 season included her return to Tulsa to sing Strauss's Four Last Songs with the Tulsa Symphony, and a reprisal of the role of Lucia in Lucia di Lammermoor with the Tivoli Festival and with Lyric Opera Kansas City. She was also originally scheduled to return to Opera Santa Barbara to perform Juliette in their production of Roméo et Juliette before the COVID-19 shortened 2019-2020 season. Ms. Coburn created the role of Kitty in the world premiere of Anna Karenina at Florida Grand Opera and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. She has sung Adele in Die Fledermaus with both Seattle Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre, Oscar in Un ballo in maschera with Opera Company of Philadelphia, Florida Grand Opera, and Cincinnati Opera, Olympia in Les Contes d'Hoffmann and Sophie in Der Rosenkavalier with Cincinnati Opera, Norina in Don Pasquale, Sandrina in La finta giardiniera and Susanna in Le nozze di Figaro with Florida Grand Opera. Ms. Coburn has received awards from the George London Foundation, The Richard Tucker Foundation, The Jensen Foundation, The Liederkranz Foundation, Opera Index, and was a National Grand Finalist in the 2001 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.



Joshua Wheeker Tenor Joshua Wheeker is a graduate of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist program of LA Opera. His appearances with LA Opera include Tamino in The Magic Flute, Malcolm in Macbeth, Cacambo in Candide, Abdallo in Nabucco and Borsa in Rigoletto, as well as the cover of Tito in La Clemenza di Tito. Last Summer, Joshua appeared at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in his role debut as the Duke of Mantua in Rigoletto. He is engaged to sing Narraboth from Salome with Hawaii Opera Theatre this April, The Duke of Mantua with

Tulsa Opera in the fall, and Don Ottavio with Dayton Opera next winter. Joshua has also appeared with, Opera lowa, Aspen Music Festival, Kentucky Opera, and Des Moines Metro Opera. Joshua is the recipient of the following awards: Winner of the Western Region MONC competition 2019, 1st place in the Pasadena Opera Guild Competition 2017, in March of 2019 Joshua competed as a Semi-finalist in the MONC competition in New York on the Met stage. He is from Dayton Ohio and received his Bachelor of Music from University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music.



Morris Robinson Morris Robinson is considered one the most interesting and sought-after basses performing today. Mr. Robinson regularly appears at the Metropolitan Opera, where he is a graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Program. He debuted there in a production of Fidelio and has since appeared as Sarastro in Die Zauberflöte (both in the original production and in the children's English version) Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, the King in Aida, and in roles in Nabucco, Tannhäuser, and the new productions of Les Troyens and Salome. He has also appeared at the San Francisco

Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Theater of St. Louis, Teatro alla Scala, Volksoper Wien, Opera Australia, and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. His many roles include the title role in Porgy and Bess, Sarastro in Die Zauberflöte, Osmin in Die Entführung aus dem Serail, Ramfis in Aida, Zaccaria in Nabucco, Sparafucile in Rigoletto, Commendatore in Don Giovanni, Grand Inquisitor in Don Carlos, Timur in Turandot, the Bonze in Madama Butterfly, Padre Guardiano in La Forza del Destino, Ferrando in Il Trovatore, and Fasolt in Das Rheingold. Mr. Robinson's solo album, Going Home, was released on the Decca label. He also appears as Joe in the DVD of the San Francisco Opera production of Show Boat, and in the DVDs of the Metropolitan Opera's production of Salome and the Aix-en-Provence Festival's production of Mozart's Zaide. An Atlanta native, Mr. Robinson is a graduate of The Citadel and received his musical training from the Boston University Opera Institute. He was recently named Artistic Advisor to the Cincinnati Opera.



Allegra De Vita American mezzosoprano Allegra De Vita, whom The Georgetowner described as making "a moving, steadying impact whenever she's on stage" returns to Tulsa Opera to reprise the role of Maddalena in Rigoletto, joins Maryland Lyric Opera as the title role in Pélleas et Melisande and Meg Page in Falstaff, and in concert, joins the Fort Wayne Philharmonic for a concert of Baroque pieces, and with the New Haven Symphony, Handel's Messiah. Recently, Allegra De Vita performed Siebel in Faust with Washington National Opera, Maddalena with Austin Opera, the title

role in *Rinaldo* with the Glimmerglass Festival, Angelina in *La Cenerentola* at Dayton Opera and Boston Midsummer Opera, the

title role in *Carmen* in a semi-staged production with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic. Ms. De Vita is a 2018 graduate from the Washington National Opera's Cafritz Young Artist Program. Ms. De Vita spent three summers at the Glimmerglass Festival performing the roles of Pippo in *La Gazza Ladra*, Fulvio in the American premiere of *Cato in Utica*, and Arsamenes in *Xerxes*. Ms. De Vita was a 2015 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Grand Finalist and a 2nd prize winner with the Jensen Foundation Vocal Compeition. She was a resident artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, PA, where she performed the role of Charlotte in *Werther* and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. Ms. De Vita holds a master's degree in voice from Rice studying with Dr. Stephen King, and a BA magna cum laude in biology with a neuroscience concentration from Sacred Heart University



Kevin Thompson The American Bass, Kevin Thompson, possesses a voice with extraordinary range, depth, color combined with a commanding stage presence. "A mountain of a voice, with resonance from the Escorial of Philip II, the throne of Boris Godunov, and the majestic court of Sarastro. Thompson delivered all the goods..." (San Francisco Classical Voice). Kevin began the 2014-2015 season singing the role of Ahmed Sumani in the world premiere of Qadar at the Kennedy Center; a return engagement with Opera Santa Barbara as Sparafucile in Rigoletto; Beethoven's Missa Solemnis, also at the Kennedy

Center and with the Washington Chorus, and his debut as Osmin in Die Entfuhrung as dem Serail and the role of Mephistopheles in Faust with West Bay Opera. This current season he debuted Opera Carolina as Zemfira's father in Aleko, joined Opera Santa Barbara as Commendatore in Don Giovanni, performed Verdi's Requiem with the National Chorale at Avery Fisher Hall, Wagner's Rienzi at the Kennedy Center, joined the National Philharmonic for Handel's Messiah. This summer he performed Osmin in Die Entfuhrung as dem Serail at the Walnut Creek Festival, and the role of Captain in Daniel Catan's Florencia en el Amazonas with the New York City Opera. Future engagements include the Mozart Requiem with Maestro David Robertson and the St. Louis Symphony, Verdi's Requiem with Tallahassee Symphony, and Basilio in the Barber of Seville with Opera Hong Kong. As a permanent part of the Smithsonian Institute's Hirschorn Gallery in Washington, D.C., Mr. Thompson is featured singing "Old Man River" in occurring audio walk artwork exhibit entitled "Words Drawn in Water" by artist Janet Cardiff. He is a graduate of Juilliard, AIMS Graz (American Institute of Musical Studies) and Aspen Music Festival. He has studied with Dolora Zajick (Institute for Dramatic Young Voices), Catherine Malfitano (Act-Sing), and is currently with studying Bill Schuman in New York. Mr. Thompson is the recipient of numerous awards including those from the National Symphony Competition, the Don Giovanni International Competition, the Meistersinger Competition, Marian Anderson Scholar, the Paul Robeson Competition, and the Rosa Ponselle Competition.



Andrew René Andrew René, baritone, has participated in vocal competitions and professional engagements, including performances with the Virginia Opera Association, the Bay View Association, Opera Raw, Piedmont Opera, the A. J. Fletcher Opera Institute, the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, and the Princeton Festival. During the summer of 2018 he performed the role of Don Magnifico in La Cenerentola with the Brevard Music Center. He recently won first place in the Heafner-Williams Vocal Competition, the Opera Guild of Charlotte Competition, and the Rosen-Schaffel Young Artist Competition. In 2018, he played the

Celebrant in Bernstein's Mass and in 2019 played Albert in *Werther* and Garibaldo in *Rodelinda*, all produced by the A. J. Fletcher Opera Institute, and the role of Marcello in *La bohème* with Opera Wilmington. Mr. René received his undergraduate degree from Capital University where he studied with Elise DesChamps and Brian Banion, and, recently, his Master of Music degree from the A. J. Fletcher Institute of Opera of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts where he studied with Dr. Marilyn Taylor and Robert Overman.



Chris Mosz Chris Mosz is a Tenor from Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA. Chris was living in the United Kingdom before the pandemic hit. He is taking courses from the Royal College of Music in London, and is currently a Circolo Award Holder, and supported by the Joan Weller and Jesse Sumner Scholarship. More recently he has been seen on stage as the Young Collector at Tulsa Opera in Previn's A Streetcar Named Desire and for the past two summers has been working with Central City Opera where he played the role of Damon in Handel's Acis and Galatea and covered both Novice and Squeak in Britten's Billy

Bud. He feels honored to be a Filstrup Resident Artist during such a trying time and hopes he can spread joy through his performance.



Elliott Wulff A native of San Diego, California, Elliott Wulff holds a Masters of Music in Opera Performance from Arizona State University and is a current student of Peter Strummer. He holds two Bachelor of Music Degrees in Vocal Performance and Keyboard Collaborative Arts from Chapman University, where he graduated summa cum laude. He moved to Tulsa in June of 2018, and is currently singing with the Tulsa Opera Chorus and Tulsa Chorale. Additionally, he teaches voice lessons at Tulsa Community College where he holds an adjunct faculty position. His roles have included Speaker in Die

Zauberflöte, Polyphemus in Acis and Galatea, Kecal in Bartered Bride, Dulcamara in L'elisir d'Amore, Captain Corcoran in HMS Pinafore, Figaro in Le nozze di Figaro, and the title role in Gianni Schicchi. Elliott has also appeared with Heartland Opera Theater in Puccini's La Boheme in the roles of Benoît and Alcindoro.



Julia Laird Delaware native Julia Swan Laird recently graduated from Arizona State University (ASU) with a Master of Music degree in Opera Performance. While at ASU's Music Theatre and Opera program. Julia performed such roles as Romilda in Serse, Titania in The Fairy Queen, and the title role in Les Mamelles de Tirésias. She is an alumna of the Accademia della Lirica Italiana in Bari, Italy, and the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival Opera Studio. Equally at home in the concert hall. Julia was a featured soloist for the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria and performed excerpts from

Der Rosenkavalier and Rigoletto with the AIMS Festival Orchestra. Winterthur Museum featured Julia's recital, "The Female Perspective: A Libby Larsen Recital," as the opening event for its 2020 Women's Suffrage Centennial Celebration. Julia was a Resident Artist with the Mount Desert Summer Chorale in Bar Harbor, Maine, where she performed at their 50th Anniversary Gala and was a soloist for Mendelssohn's Elijah. Julia has been a soprano soloist with the St. Joseph on the Brandywine Choir and Chamber Ensemble in Delaware and the Choral Society of Durham and Pro Cantores Orchestra in North Carolina. Julia placed fourth in the 2019 AlmS Meistersinger Competition and placed third in the 2019 American International Czech and Slovak Competition in Green Bay, Wisconsin. She has been a finalist with the Saltworks Opera Competition and the first-place winner at Arizona NATS, Cal-Western Regional NATS, and North Carolina NATS.



Tulsa Opera has placed vocal music education back into schools that had their programs cut due to state budget cuts.



Steven White, Conductor:

Praised by Opera News as a conductor who "squeezes every drop of excitement and pathos from the score," Steven White is one of North America's premiere operatic and symphonic conductors. He made his acclaimed Metropolitan Opera debut in 2010, conducting performances of La traviata starring Angela Gheorghiu. Since then he has conducted a number of Metropolitan Opera performances of La traviata, with such stars as Natalie Dessay, Hei-Kyung Hong, Plácido Domingo, Thomas Hampson, Dmitri

Hvorostovksy and Matthew Polenzani. In the past several seasons he has returned to the Met to participate in critically fêted productions of Don Carlo, Billy Budd, The Rake's Progress and Elektra. With a vibrant repertoire of over sixty-five titles, Maestro White's extensive operatic engagements have included performances with New York City Opera, L'Opera de Montréal, Vancouver Opera, Opera Colorado, Pittsburgh Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, Baltimore Opera, New Orleans Opera, and many others. In recent seasons he has conducted Rigoletto with San Diego Opera, Otello with Austin Opera, La traviata with Utah Opera, and a world premiere staged production of a brand-new Bärenreiter edition of Gounod's Faust with Opera Omaha. In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the cancellation of his eleventh production at Arizona Opera, Ariadne auf Naxos, as well as the company premiere of André Previn's A Streetcar Named Desire at Opera Roanoke. Music critics are effusive in their praise of conductor Steven White's ability to elicit inspired music-making from orchestras. Of his 2016 performances with the Omaha Symphony, the Omaha World-Herald asserts that, "it would be hard to imagine a more complete performance of the Symphonie Fantastique. Highly nuanced, tightly controlled, and crisp, Steven White asked everything from orchestra members, and they were flawless. He led them out of serene beauty into disturbing dissonance and even to the terrifying point of musical madness without ever losing control. It was insanely good." Opera News declares, "White is amazing: he consistently demands and gets the absolute best playing from the orchestra. Among the many orchestras Maestro White has conducted are the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the Moscow Philharmonic, the Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal, the Mozarteum und Salzburg Kulturvereinigung Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the New World Symphony Orchestra, the Spoleto Festival Orchestra, the Colorado Symphony, the Nashville Symphony Orchestra, the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, the Charleston Symphony, the Florida Philharmonic, the Fort Worth Symphony and London's Philharmonia Orchestra for a CHANDOS recording of arias featuring his wife, soprano Elizabeth Futral. In 2019 he made debuts with the San Diego Symphony, the Utah Symphony Orchestra and the Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra. Maestro White is a passionate and dedicated educator. He has served multiple artistic residencies and led productions at such institutions as the Peabody Conservatory of Music, Indiana University, the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati, the University of Miami Frost School of Music Program in Salzburg, Kennesaw State University and Virginia Tech University. In the summer of 2019, he served as an artist in residence at the Shanghai Conservatory in China and in 2020 he led a critically acclaimed production of La clemenza di Tito for the North Carolina School of the Arts Fletcher Opera Institute. He is in constant demand as an adjudicator of the most prestigious music and vocal competitions, including numerous auditions for the Metropolitan Opera National Council and the Jensen Foundation. Steven White proudly makes his home in Virginia, where he serves as Artistic Director of Opera Roanoke, a company with which he has been associated for two decades. Maestro White has conducted dozens of productions in Roanoke, including performances of Das Lied von der Erde, Der fliegende Holländer, Fidelio, Falstaff, Otello, Macbeth, Aida, Hänsel und Gretel and many others. In recognition of his contributions to the civic, cultural and artistic life of Southwest Virginia, Roanoke College conferred on Maestro White an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts in May 2013.



James Robinson, Director:

American stage director James
Robinson is Artistic Director at the Opera
Theatre of St. Louis where he has
mounted productions including
Blitzstein's Regina, the world premieres
of Jack Perla's Shalimar the Clown,
Blanchard's Champion and Fire Shut Up
in My Bones, Adams' The Death of
Klinghoffer and Gordon's The Grapes of
Wrath. Elsewhere, Robinson has
directed new productions for the Santa
Fe Opera (Vanessa, Dr Sun Yat Sen,
Cosi fan tutte, Capriccio, The Rake's
Progress), Houston Grand Opera (Lucia
di Lammermoor, Nixon in China,

Abduction from the Seraglio), San Francisco Opera (Dolores Clairborne, Il trittico, L'elisir d'amore, Norma), New York City Opera (La bohème, Hansel and Gretel and Il viaggio a Reims), the Wexford Festival (The Ghosts of Versailles) and Seattle Opera (Carmen). His work has also been seen at Opera Australia, Royal Swedish Opera, Washington National Opera and many others. He directed Bernstein's Mass for the London Symphony Orchestra with Marin Alsop and Shaffer's Amadeus with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. In the 2020-21 season he directs Rigoletto for Tulsa Opera and Pagliacci, La bohème and Die Zauberflöte for Palm Beach Opera. Other recent engagements include a new production of Porgy and Bess (English National Opera, Dutch National Opera, Metropolitan Opera) and new productions for Houston Grand Opera (Giulio Cesare and The House Without A Christmas Tree) and the Canadian Opera Company (Norma, Elektra and Nixon in China). Robinson directed the critically acclaimed world première of Champion by jazz and film composer Terence Blanchard for the Opera Theatre of St. Louis: "Stage director James Robinson keeps it relentlessly interesting to watch throughout." (Denver Post)



Lyndon Meyer, Principal Pianist:

Lyndon has served as chorusmaster, assistant conductor, principal pianist, and vocal coach for the Tulsa Opera since 2014. As a vocal coach, he has held positions at the University of Oklahoma, Michigan State University, and the Eastern School of Music, as well as at the Florida Grand Opera. In February 2019, he made his professional conducting debut for Heartland Opera's production of *La bohème*. In the world of music theatre, he has directed numerous productions around the country, and serves as staff accompanist for the annual Lotte

Lenya competition. Mr. Meyer also appears as a recitalist and chamber musician throughout the region. In Tulsa, Mr. Meyer holds the post of Director of Music at the Church of Saint Mary (Tulsa) and appears as a guest choral conductor and clinician, in addition to maintaining an active coaching studio. He is a graduate of the University of Arkansas (BM) and the Eastman School (MM).



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Jeff Cowen, Principal

Lyndon Meyer

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*Indicates Tulsa Opera debut

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