

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE

# BRAVO

Spring 2015

AT THE DETROIT OPERA HOUSE



THE  
MERRY  
WIDOW

April 11-19, 2015

FAUST

May 9-17, 2015

THE VERY LAST  
GREEN THING

April 25, 2015

MICHIGAN  
OPERA  
THEATRE

General Motors  
FOUNDATION

The 2015 Spring Opera Season  
is made possible with support from  
the General Motors Foundation.



Welcome to the Detroit Opera House (DOH) and the 2015 Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT) Spring Season — sponsored by the General Motors Foundation. We are delighted to welcome our MOT subscribers and single ticket buyers back to the DOH following an extensive and successful run of our community based Regional Initiative, which resulted in six performances of Robert Xavier Rodriguez' opera *Frida* (co-produced by the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts) and related educational and outreach activities in Macomb, Oakland, Wayne, Washtenaw, and Genessee counties for more than 5,000 attendees, including our devoted subscribers who joined us for these performances in various community settings. We were delighted to partner with the Detroit Institute of Arts for their companion *Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in Detroit* exhibit which continues through July of this year.



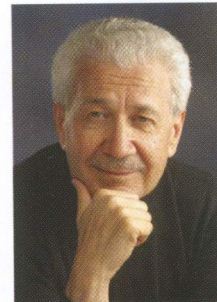
The month of April brings several significant milestones for MOT. First, we salute MOT Founder and Artistic Director David DiChiera on the occasion of his 80th birthday. We are indeed fortunate to continue to benefit from David's seamless record as an extraordinary visionary for Opera and Dance in southeastern Michigan for more than 44 years. April of 2015 also coincides with the 19th Anniversary of the Detroit Opera House — our home for opera and dance performances — as well as the kickoff of the 45th season of Michigan Opera Theatre. And we welcome Metropolitan Opera soprano Deborah Voigt to Detroit for performances of Lehar's *The Merry Widow*.

The 2015-16 season has been announced, and we encourage subscribers to renew and single ticket buyers to subscribe to what *Detroit Free Press Arts Critic* Mark Stryker described as "one of the more adventurous MOT seasons in memory." Subscribers and Donors enjoy the most generous range of benefits, including preferred seating, the largest discounts, and advance notification for purchasing tickets to special events. We invite you to stop by the subscription sign-up tables in the lobby and make your reservation for next season.

The closing months of activities in the DOH will feature Gounod's opera *Faust* and the annual late spring fundraiser that attracts record crowds...*BravoBravo!* We invite you to join us for our many offerings, and encourage you to extend the invite to your family and friends. Please let us know how we can make your experience in our home more enjoyable. Thank you for coming!

Wayne S. Brown  
President & Chief Executive Officer

This spring the glamorous *The Merry Widow* sweeps into the Detroit Opera House for the first time. I have had three dates with the Widow since the founding of Michigan Opera Theatre. In '74 at the Music Hall it was Catherine Christianson, one of that decade's most beautiful sopranos. In '84, again at the Music Hall, it was the incomparable Cleo Laine with the music transposed down to suit her sultry voice, conducted by her famous husband John Dankworth. In '93 at the Fisher Theatre there was Broadway star Judy Kaye. And now this famous Viennese operetta makes its Detroit Opera House debut with one of the opera world's greatest stars Deborah Voigt. I have had the pleasure of knowing "Debbie" since our days in Orange County when, at the beginning of her career, I invited her to sing Leonora in Verdi's *Il Trovatore* at Opera Pacific. Within months she was at the Met singing that same role. She went on to become one of the greatest interpreters of the operas of Richard Strauss and Wagner. In 2010 I reminded Debbie that her debut at MOT was long overdue, and that she could come and sing whatever she wanted. "I have always wanted to sing the Widow" she responded, and my answer was, "Done." We have surrounded her with a wonderful cast of singers, actors, and dancers in a production directed by Kelly Robinson and conducted by Gerald Steichen, both making their debut with MOT. Be prepared to fall in love with the waltz again.



AMEEN HOWRANI

On April 25, our wonderful Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus will present a fully staged production of *The Very Last Green Thing*. This futuristic opera takes place in 2192, when a classroom of students ventures outside for a rare field trip and discover a time capsule containing something they have never seen- a small withering plant. It is a timeless environmental message of warning that we must be vigilant, a must-see for young and old alike.

The season comes to a dramatic close with our production of Gounod's *Faust* which, since its premiere in 1859, has become one of the most frequently staged operas of the entire repertory. This is French grand opera at its best, and I'm excited about our cast. Making his debut as Faust is Russell Thomas, a tenor in demand at many major houses. As Marguerite, our own Caitlin Lynch who is fast garnering a national reputation debuts this role with us. For the Sunday matinee David Miller, famed member of the group Il Divo, returns to MOT in the title role alongside his talented wife Sarah Joy Miller as Marguerite. As the devil Mephistopheles, Canadian bass-baritone Matt Boehler makes his MOT debut, while Jamie Offenbach returns for the Sunday matinee. The Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra will be conducted by Steven Mercurio and the production will be directed by Bernard Uzan. I look forward to sharing these productions with you.

Dr. David DiChiera  
Founder & Artistic Director



Jillian Zylinski, *Editor*  
Kathleen Bennett, *Contributing Editor*

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THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER  
AMERICA



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# General Information

## PHOTOGRAPHY, RECORDING & COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES

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

## IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

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

## RESTROOMS

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

## NO SMOKING

The Detroit Opera House is a smoke-free facility. Ash receptacles are provided at the exterior of all entry doors for those who wish to smoke.

## USHERS

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

## LATE SEATING

Latecomers may be seated only during an appropriate pause in the program. Late seating policies are at the discretion of the production, not Opera House management.

## LOST & FOUND

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

## PARKING

We encourage all our guests to take advantage of the Detroit Opera House Parking Center, located next to the Detroit Opera House. Pre-paid parking is available for all guests and can be purchased with tickets online or through the Detroit Opera House ticket office. This facility is reserved specifically for Detroit Opera House patrons during regularly scheduled performances. Entrances and exits are located on both John R. Street and Grand River Ave. Call (313) 237-7464 for more information.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Accessible seating locations for patrons in wheelchairs are located in all price ranges on the orchestra level. When purchasing tickets, please ask about these locations if you require special accommodations.

Assisted Listening Devices are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please see an usher to request this service, or visit the Guest Services desk located in the Vincent Lobby (Madison Street entrance). Although this is a complimentary service, we will hold a piece of personal identification while you are using the device. Please contact the ticket office at (313) 237-7464 should you desire special consideration.

## CHILDREN

Children are welcome; however, all guests are required to hold a ticket, regardless of age. In all cases, babes in arms are not permitted.

## SERVICES

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

## CONCEALED WEAPONS

Be advised that, for purposes of Michigan Compiled Laws, Section 28.425o(1)(f), this is an entertainment facility which has a seating capacity of more than 2,500 individuals. It is therefore against the law to carry a concealed pistol on the premises.

## RENTAL INFORMATION

The Detroit Opera House is available for rent by your organization. Please call (313) 961-3500, and ask to speak with the Director of Booking & Events Management.

## TICKET INFORMATION

The Detroit Opera House ticket office hours are Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. On performance days hours are 10 a.m. through the first intermission of the performance, except weekends, when the ticket office will open two hours prior to curtain time. Tickets are available online at [www.MichiganOpera.org](http://www.MichiganOpera.org). Tickets for all public events at the Detroit Opera House are also available through all TicketMaster outlets, by phone at (800) 745-3000, or at [www.TicketMaster.com](http://www.TicketMaster.com).

## DETROIT OPERA HOUSE TOURS

Come join the Opera House Ambassadors for a backstage tour of the Detroit Opera House! Learn about the history of the Opera House and its restoration, meet the people behind the scenes, tour the stage and see how it operates. Tours are \$10 per person. For more information, please call (313) 237-3279, or visit [www.MichiganOpera.org](http://www.MichiganOpera.org).

## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

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**Music**  
Franz Lehár

**Libretto**  
Victor Leon and Leo Stein

**World Premiere**  
Vienna, 1905

English lyrics by Sheldon Harnick

**Conductor**  
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Michael Yeargan

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**Lighting Design**  
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Scenery and costumes designed  
originally for Utah Symphony  
and Opera, and constructed  
by Utah Symphony and  
Opera Production Studios.



# THE MERRY WIDOW

April 11-19, 2015

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The 2015 Spring Opera Season is made possible with  
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Deborah Voigt's performances generously  
sponsored by Richard Sonenklar



## Cast

*In order of vocal appearance*

Count Danilo Danilovitch .....	Roger Honeywell
Hanna Glawari .....	Deborah Voigt*
Baron Mirko Zeta .....	Richard Suart*
Valencienne .....	Amanda Squitier
Camille de Rosillon .....	Aaron Blake*
Vicomte Cascada .....	Adrian Rosas†
Raoul St. Brioche .....	David Moan
Njegus .....	Jason Graae*
Kromov .....	Timothy Bruno
Pritchitch .....	Darren DeWitt
Bogdanovitch .....	Zachary Coates†
Olga .....	Clodagh Earls†
Sylviane .....	Claire DiVizio†
Praskovia .....	Diane Schoff
Grisettes .....	Angela Cavazos, Helen Haas Maria Idunate, Ashley Kalchik Mary Malaney, Patty Malaney
Dancers .....	Nicholas Gottron, Samuel H. Horning, Brandon Koepsell

\* *Michigan Opera Theatre debut*

† Barbara Gibson Young Artist Apprentice

## SYNOPSIS

ACT I.

The action takes place in the Pontevédrian embassy, Paris, 1905. Baron Mirko Zeta leads his guests in a toast to the Pontevédrian chief of state in absentia. Meanwhile, Zeta's wife, Valencienne, speaks privately to Camille de Rosillon, a young attaché with whom she has been having a flirtation. Oblivious to this, Zeta is concerned only that Hanna Glawari — widow of the wealthiest man in Pontevédro — not marry a foreigner during her sojourn in Paris, since this would spell financial disaster for the tiny country. Camille protests the seriousness of his love to Valencienne, who reminds him she is a respectable wife. After they leave, Zeta welcomes the temperamental Hanna, who is quite aware of his interest in her money and reassures him that she is still a Pontevédrian at heart. Several men confess they have fallen under her spell; she leads them into the next room for the festivities. Next to arrive is Count Danilo Danilovich, who says that after a hard day's work on behalf of his country he likes nothing better than an evening at Maxim's. Balking at the mention of Hanna, whom he evidently knows, he no sooner makes himself comfortable than Hanna herself walks in. It quickly develops that she and Danilo were once in love but that his uncle forbade the match. Danilo now swears that if saying "I love you" really means to Hanna "I love your money," he will never make such a declaration. Zeta, having seen them together, tells Danilo it is his patriotic duty to marry Hanna: since she is surrounded by suitors, danger to the national exchequer is imminent. Ladies' choice is announced for the next dance, and both Cascada and St. Brioche hope

Hanna will ask them to dance. Hanna is inclined to ask Danilo, who at first says he doesn't know how to dance, then offers to sell his turn to Hanna's partner for 10,000 francs, to be donated to charity. The mention of so much money scares the other men away. Alone with Hanna, Danilo offers to dance with her after all, but she refuses, so he dances by himself.

**ACT II.** The evening of the next day, guests are gathered in the garden of Hanna's mansion, where she has promised a real Pontevedrian party. She interrupts the folksinging and dancing to sing the ballad of Vilja, a forest nymph who fell in love with a mortal. When she tells Zeta she is importing dancing girls to entertain Danilo in the style of Maxim's cabaret, the baron gets his hopes up: Hanna seems interested in Danilo. The latter appears and joins Hanna in verses about a couple going for a romantic ride in a carriage — but the gentleman seems unwilling to get the lady's message of acceptance. Zeta asks his aide, Njegus, and Danilo to meet him in the summerhouse at eight for a conference. With some other men from the party, they reflect happily on how difficult it is to figure out women. Hanna tests Danilo's interest by asking whether she should feel free to marry the man of her choice. They wander off, leaving Valencienne with Camille; having decided to break off with him, she reluctantly means to persuade him to propose to Hanna. Camille asks why the flower of their romance must fade so soon. She replies that one evening remains before they must part, and they will spend it in the summerhouse. When Zeta appears for the conference, Njegus — having seen the lovers enter the summerhouse — rescues Valencienne through the back door. Zeta thinks he saw his wife in there; meanwhile, though, Hanna has taken her place — to the jealous Danilo's annoyance, since he assumes she is having a tryst with Camille. When Camille repeats his protestations of love to keep up the pretense, Valencienne is shocked by his fickleness. Enjoying the joke, Hanna announces her engagement to Camille. At first Danilo pretends nonchalance, saying marriage is a private matter, not subject to diplomatic opinion, but as rage gets the better of him, he recites a warning fable about a princess who ruined herself to spite her lover, then heads for Maxim's to forget his troubles.

ACT III.

Later that night, Njegus has transformed Hanna's parlor into a replica of Maxim's, complete with dancing girls, including Valencienne. When Danilo is brought in, he accepts the illusion and is greeted by the girls. Handed a telegram confirming the imminent ruin of the Pontevodian treasury, Danilo bows to patriotic duty and officially forbids her marriage, then learns with joy that she never meant to marry Camille. Admitting his own love, he waltzes with her. Meanwhile, Zeta figures out (with the help of a telltale fan) that it was really his wife in the summerhouse; announcing he will divorce her, he proposes to Hanna. Under her late husband's will, Hanna cautions, she will lose her fortune if she remarries. Delighted, Danilo wants to marry her, but she adds that she will lose it because it will pass to her new husband. Laughingly, he resigns himself to his fate, saving the fortunes of his country at the same time.<sup>1</sup> Valencienne's standing with her husband is restored by her inscription on the fan — "I am a respectable wife" — and all ends with a recapitulation of the men's ode to the delightful enigma that is woman.

— courtesy of *Opera News*



# Finding Her Feet

(and Making Them Waltz!)

Deborah Voigt Comes Down to Earth in *The Merry Widow*

By Michael Yashinsky

One of the singers who is waltzing and warbling beside world-famous American soprano Deborah Voigt in *The Merry Widow* spoke of his delight in working with her, gushing, “She’s such a human being.” The news seems unsurprising — we are yet to discover any other species that can sing opera. Perhaps it is not so obvious, though, to those in Detroit who have come to know Ms. Voigt from screenings of her soaring across Valhalla as Brünnhilde, daughter of the gods, in the Metropolitan Opera’s new Ring Cycle; or to those who rightly hail her as a top *diva*, which is, after all, from the Italian for “divine.”

But as her just-published autobiography, *Call Me Debbie*, clarifies in its subtitle, this is a “Down-to-Earth Diva.” The same admiring *Widow* cast member, David Moan, said of Ms. Voigt, “She makes dirty jokes along with the rest of us.” She kept it clean when we chatted with her a week into rehearsals, but did reveal to us the richly human sentiment behind that heavenly soprano.

You have had a very eclectic career, from Wagner to *Annie Get Your Gun!*, from your one-woman show *Voigt Lessons*, to now, with us, operetta — and everything in between. What keeps you bouncing between repertoires?

I feel like I have a lot of performance muscles. I’m only now, having given the bulk of my life



PHOTO BY HEIDI GUTMAN



and career to opera, having the opportunity to exercise some of them. When I was a kid, I was first introduced to musicals and gospel. That I became an opera singer was just a result of circumstances. I worked very hard, but I often wonder if my first voice teacher had not been an opera singer, what would have gone differently. Or if I had not become really chubby in my late teens and early 20s, when I convinced myself that being a Broadway star was not going to happen. I think I've been frustrated, to a certain extent, by the confines of opera. In my repertoire, you don't get to be funny that often. A few places here and there, but very rarely.

**You've certainly had some of the most dramatic, tragic roles.**

Which is great. I think that if I'd had the voice of a soubrette [a lighter, sweeter voice, often featured in lighter, sweeter roles], with my personality and temperament, I would have gone crazy. But now I'm at the point where I can say, "Do I really want to do Tosca again? I've done her several times, I've done her well. Take a leap of faith, and maybe leave that time open to do recitals, or *Voigt Lessons*."

**Or Hanna, your role in *The Merry Widow*!**

Or Hanna! Although she's not so simple. She's fun to play, but she's complicated. I'm right now trying to "find the funny." While there are these one-liners and zings, which can be played very snarly, it also has to have this light touch. I'm finding my feet with it. But finding your feet with Hanna Glawari is not going to be as hard as finding them with Brün hilde.

**What brought you to Detroit in the first place?**

I knew David DiChiera when he was running Opera Pacific [a company in Orange County, CA], and I sang a *Trovatore* there. Years later, we were seated together at a luncheon and he asked, "Would you come to Detroit?" I said, "Sure I will." So he asked me what I would like to sing. I said, "Well...what about the Widow?" So many times you have conversations with people and nothing ever comes of it. But bless his heart, he followed through.

**We are lucky that he did. Any surprising part of the process so far, a week into rehearsals?**

The most fun has been the costume fitting! The dresses are a thrill for someone who's been in Wagner-land and Strauss-land. Much more colorful — and feathers! And I have never waltzed onstage! Which will probably be evident when you see it (laughs).

***The Widow* is new for you. Is there a role you have played before with which you really identify?**

I would say Minnie [the saloon-owner heroine of Puccini's *La fanciulla del west*]. She's American, and she reads the Bible, as do I. There's something about her spirit that I find really touching and endearing.

**An audience can sense when a performer is truly connecting to her role on an emotional level.**

It can, and that connection is really hard to teach. I remember doing a master class with a young mezzo who was singing Carmen. And there was nothing wrong, it was beautiful, the French was good, she was



a pretty young woman, 27, 28 years old. But I asked her, "Have you ever been in love? Have you ever been through a really bad breakup? Have you ever tried to flirt?" I told her that the best advice I could give her was to go to Italy and have a really hot torrid affair. The audience was shocked.

But it's true. I went through a bad breakup myself; it was incredibly painful. And I was doing a concert of Beethoven's "Ah, perfido!" [meaning "O, faithless one!"], a short dramatic piece for soprano and orchestra] with the New York Philharmonic. A review came out that said, "Deborah Voigt must have been taking acting lessons." And I thought, "No, she just got her heart broken." When that happens, those emotional memories are in there just as much as muscle memory is. They are interwoven. When you can get them all lined up — vocals, stage experience, and life experience — you've succeeded.



**Music**  
Charles Gounod

**Libretto**  
Jules Barbier and Michel Carré

**World Premiere**  
Paris, March 19, 1859

**Conductor**  
Steven Mercurio

**Director**  
Bernard Uzan

**Assistant Director**  
Kathleen Stakenas

**Chorus Master**  
Suzanne Mallare Acton

**Set Design**  
Paul Steinberg

**Costume Design**  
Malabar, Ltd.

**Lighting Design**  
Donald Thomas

**Wig & Makeup Design**  
Joanne Weaver

**Stage Manager**  
Ken Saltzman

**Supertitles**  
Roberto Mauro

Sung in French with  
English supertitles



# FAUST

May 9-17, 2015

General Motors  
 FOUNDATION

The 2015 Spring Opera Season is made possible with  
support from the General Motors Foundation.

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May 16 Performance Sponsor



## Cast

*In order of vocal appearance*

Faust..... **Russell Thomas** (May 9, 13, 16)\*  
**David Miller** (May 17)

Méphistophélès .. **Matt Bohler** (May 9, 13, 16)\*  
**Jamie Offenbach** (May 17)

Marguerite ..... **Caitlin Lynch** (May 9, 13, 16)  
**Sarah Joy Miller** (May 17)

Valentin ..... **John Viscardi**\*

Siébel ..... **Kimberly Sogioka**

Wagner ..... **Zachary Coates**†

Martha ..... **Susan Nicely**

\* *Michigan Opera Theatre debut*

† *Barbara Gibson Young Artist Apprentice*

## SYNOPSIS

### ACT I

Faust has spent a lifetime in the study of science. Disillusioned with life, he resolves to poison himself. He curses God and calls on the Devil. Méphistophélès obligingly appears and offers Faust riches, power, or glory. Faust, however, only wants to recapture the innocence of youth. Méphistophélès agrees to Faust's request, but there are conditions: on earth Faust will be master, but in the world below their roles will be reversed. When Faust hesitates, Méphistophélès conjures up a vision of Marguerite. Faust signs the contract and returns to his youth.

### ACT II

Valentin and Wagner are going off to war with the other soldiers, and Valentin is concerned about leaving his sister Marguerite unprotected. Wagner starts a song to cheer everyone up, but is interrupted by Méphistophélès. Méphistophélès tells fortunes: Wagner, it seems, will be killed in his first battle. The flowers that Siébel picks will wither, and Valentin will meet his death at the hands of someone close to Méphistophélès. Dissatisfied with the wine on offer, Méphistophélès conjures up a better vintage to toast Marguerite. This angers Valentin and both draw their swords. Valentin strikes out and his blade shatters.

Everyone is convinced they are in the presence of the Devil. Méphistophélès leads Faust to a place where couples are dancing. Faust sees Marguerite and offers her his arm. She refuses, but so charmingly that he is left more entranced than before.

### ACT III

Siébel gathers flowers for Marguerite outside her house. As Méphistophélès predicted, they wither, but holy water seems to restore them. Méphistophélès and Faust have been watching, and Méphistophélès leaves a box of jewels for Marguerite. The atmosphere of innocence surrounding Marguerite's home moves Faust. Marguerite finds the jewels and puts them on. When she looks in the mirror, she sees a different woman and is further confused by the encouragement of her neighbour, Martha. Faust and Méphistophélès return, and Méphistophélès flirts with Martha, giving Faust the opportunity to seduce Marguerite. She begins to give in. Méphistophélès conjures up a garden and makes Martha run off before disappearing himself. Marguerite realizes she loves Faust and they make love.

### ACT IV

Seduced and abandoned, Marguerite is expecting Faust's child. She is still in love with him and prays for him and their unborn child.

The soldiers return with Valentin. Siébel tries to stop him seeing Marguerite but Valentin, suspecting the worst, pushes him aside.

Outside her house, Méphistophélès serenades Marguerite on Faust's behalf. Valentin and Faust fight and, with the intervention of Méphistophélès, Valentin is fatally wounded. Marguerite watches her brother die and hears him curse her with his last breath.

Distraught, Marguerite goes to church to pray for forgiveness. When she hears the voice of Méphistophélès telling her that she is damned, she collapses in terror.

### ACT V

Walpurgis Night. Faust and Méphistophélès are surrounded by a group of demons. Faust is shown a vision of Marguerite: she has been imprisoned for infanticide and gone insane.

With Méphistophélès's help, Faust goes to the prison in an attempt to save Marguerite. She seems to recognize her lover and recalls the night when he first seduced her. Faust is overwhelmed with pity. Marguerite panics at the sight of the Devil and, with a frantic appeal to heaven, she dies. Méphistophélès damns her but angelic voices proclaim she is saved.

—Courtesy of English National Opera



**DEBORAH VOIGT**

Hanna Glawari, *The Merry Widow*

A Chicago native raised in southern California, Deborah Voigt is recognized as one of the world's most versatile singers and one of music's most endearing personalities. Having made her name as a leading dramatic soprano, internationally revered for her performances in the operas of Wagner, Strauss and others, she is also an active recitalist and performer of Broadway standards and popular songs. Voigt has an extensive discography, and her masterclasses are enthusiastically received. She appears regularly – as both performer and host – in the Met's Live in HD series, which is transmitted live to movie theaters around the world. Honored in the media with a CBS *60 Minutes* profile, features in *People* and *Vanity Fair*, spotlights in *More* and *O – the Oprah Magazine*, and appearances on *Good Morning America*, CNN, and the nationwide telecast of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and July 4 fireworks celebration, Voigt has become America's most visible and beloved diva. As WQXR's inaugural Susan W. Rose Artist-in-Residence, she hosts the classical station's new series *The Sopranos with Debbie Voigt*, hosts and performs at the New York Public Radio Gala, and she co-hosts the opening-night broadcast of Carnegie Hall Live, as well as a number of opera events and masterclasses at WQXR's Greene Space. Her memoir, *Call Me Debbie: True Confessions of a Down-to-Earth Diva*, was published by HarperCollins in January 2015.

**SUZANNE MALLARE ACTON**

Chorus Master, *The Merry Widow*, *Faust*

As long-term Chorus Master of MOT, Suzanne Acton has received wide critical acclaim for her choral direction involving more than 125 productions in seven languages. Conducting credits include *West Side Story*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Music Man*, *Pirates of Penzance*,



*The Mikado*, *Daughter of the Regiment*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* and *Carmina Burana* with *The Medium* for MOT; *My Fair Lady* and *La Traviata* for Dayton Opera; *Merry Widow* and *Madame Butterfly* for Artpark; and *Tosca* for Augusta Opera. As founding Director of the MOT Children's Chorus, Ms. Acton was instrumental in developing the inaugural 2007-08 season. She is also the Artistic and Music Director of Rackham Symphony Choir.

**AARON BLAKE**

Camille de Rosillon, *The Merry Widow*

American tenor Aaron Blake, touted as "A vocal powerhouse" by the Los Angeles Times, for his portrayal of Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* is becoming known as a vibrant interpreter of many of the composer's roles. Mr. Blake debuts the role of Camille with Michigan Opera Theatre's production of Lehar's *The Merry Widow* and debuts the role of Leicester in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* at the Astor Music Festival in June, then debuts as Curley in Floyd's *Of Mice and Men* at the Phoenix Festival in August. In 2014-15 he returned to Carnegie Hall to appear as Uriel in Haydn's *Creation* with the Oratorio Society of New York. He appeared with the Lexington Philharmonic in the *Messiah*. Blake returned to Dallas Opera for Talbot's *Everest*, and made a critically acclaimed highly successful role debut as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, with Utah Opera. The 2013-14 season began with an exciting debut as Don Ottavio in The Cincinnati Opera's production of *Don Giovanni*, opposite soprano Angela Meade. In addition he made company debuts with Virginia Opera as Fenton in *Falstaff*, Opera Grand Rapids as Pedrillo in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, as Tamino in Minnesota Opera's *The Magic Flute*, and a return to Cincinnati Opera in Cavalli's *La Calisto* as Pane.

**MATT BOEHLER**

Méphistophélès, *Faust*

Matt Boehler has received acclaim for both his dramatic skill and his vocal prowess. The 2013-2014 season brought

his return to the Metropolitan Opera for *The Nose*, his debut with Canadian Opera Company as Sir Walter Raleigh in *Roberto Devereux*, and a reprise of his *Messiah* with the Jacksonville Symphony. Additionally, he returned to Theater St. Gallen for his role debut as Daland in *Der fliegende Holländer*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Pfarrer/Dachs in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* and joined the St. Gallen Festspiele as Baldassare in *La favorite*. The 2014-2015 season and beyond includes returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Bertrand in *Iolantha* and Madison Opera as Rocco in *Fidelio* and debuts with Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie as the Erster Schäfer in *Daphne*, and Des Moines Metro Opera as Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Additionally he debuts with Dallas Opera, Toulouse, and Theater Magdeburg, and returns to the Canadian Opera Company. A frequent collaborator within the world of contemporary music Mr. Boehler was seen in two world premieres of John Musto's work: *The Inspector* with Wolf Trap Opera and *Bastianello* and William Bolcom's *Lucrezia*, with New York Festival of Song.

**TIMOTHY J. BRUNO**

Kromov, *The Merry Widow*

Hailed as 'impressive' by *Opera News* and 'sensational' by *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, bass Timothy J. Bruno has quickly become a sought after performer in the United States. This season he performs *Der Wanderer* in Queen City Chamber Opera's *Siegfried*, as well as Osmin in their production of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. He will also make returns to Toledo Opera as Elder Ott in *Susannah* and Opera Columbus as Dr. Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro*. This summer, Bruno will be making a debut with Atlanta Symphony as Abimélech in *Samson and Dalila* next to Stephanie Blythe, and will be participating in Wolf Trap Opera's prestigious Filene Young Artist program, where he will be singing



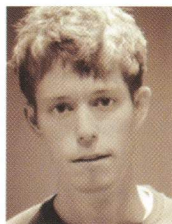


Louis XVI in *The Ghosts of Versailles*. Recent seasons have included such powerhouse roles as Méphistophélès in *Faust*, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, The Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, and Wotan in *Die Walküre* for which he was hailed as having an “outstanding voice, big and opulent...” by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. His training has included Young Artist Programs at Central City Opera, Opera Saratoga, Cincinnati Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, and next season he will join Washington National Opera as a Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist.

#### DARREN DeWITT

Pritchitch, *The Merry Widow*

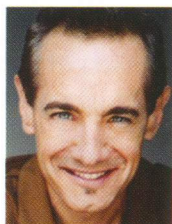
Darren DeWitt, a metro Detroit native, has been a member of the Michigan Opera Theatre Chorus since 2011. After studying at Wayne State University, he moved to Chicago where he's appeared on stage with The Chicago Lyric Opera, as well as da Cornetto Opera and others. Mr. DeWitt also volunteers his time singing with Rackham Choir, under the direction of Suzanne Mallare Acton, where he is active in the group's High School mentorship program.



#### JASON GRAAE

Njegus, *The Merry Widow*

Jason Graae has appeared on Broadway in *A Grand Night For Singing*, *Falsettos*, *Stardust*, *Snoopy!* and of course, *Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?* Off-Broadway, Jason was the original Sparky in the mega-hit *Forever Plaid*, *Hello Muddah, Hello, Fadduh*, (Best Actor Drama Desk Nomination), *All in the Timing*, *Olympus On My Mind*, and many more. He made his Metropolitan Opera House debut as the vocal soloist in Twyla Tharp's *Everlast* with American Ballet Theatre and performed in many shows at Rainbow and Stars. Jason has played Njegus in *The Merry Widow* twice with Los Angeles Opera, as well as with Houston Grand Opera, Dallas, and New Orleans Opera companies. He

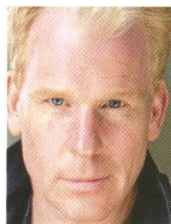


has performed Frosch in *Die Fledermaus* with San Francisco Opera, Washington National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and Manhattan School of Music. Film and TV shows include “Six Feet Under,” “Rude Awakening,” “Friends,” “Frasier,” “Sabrina,” “Dukes of Hazzard in Hollywood,” “Awakening of Spring,” “Home on the Range,” and many more. For 5 1/2 years, he was the voice of Lucky the Leprechaun for Lucky Charms Cereal, a balanced part of your complete breakfast. He can be heard on over 55 recordings, including original cast, concert, studio and 3 solo CDS, most recently as Huck, the Bob Hope role, on Jerome Kern's *Roberta* for New World Records.

#### ROGER HONEYWELL

Count Danilo Danilovitch, *The Merry Widow*

Canadian tenor Roger Honeywell has been acclaimed by Anthony Tommasini as a performer who brings “burnished sound and crisp diction to the sweeping vocal lines, full of leaps and dips.” Highlights of the 2014-2015 season include a return to Santa Fe Opera for the world premiere of Jennifer Higdon's *Cold Mountain*, in the role of Veasey, directed by Leonard Foglia. He will also return to Calgary Opera as Nikolaus Sprink for the Canadian premiere of Kevin Puts' *Silent Night*, and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* with Vancouver Opera.



Mr. Honeywell made a breakthrough last season when *Opera News* considered his Peter Grimes with Des Moines Metro Opera to be a “a career-defining interpretation,” delivering “a prodigious vocal performance impressive for its remarkable skill in dynamic shading, as well as its dramatic power.” Last season also saw Mr. Honeywell as Aegist in Sir David McVicar's production of *Elektra* conducted by Sir Andrew Davis with Lyric Opera of Chicago, and his return to Portland Opera to sing Cavaradossi in *Tosca*. Later in the season, Mr. Honeywell returned to Vancouver Opera to sing Frederic in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*. Mr. Honeywell returned to the

Canadian Opera Company in the 2013-2014 season as Bob Boles opposite Ben Heppner in *Peter Grimes*, and reprised the role of Captain Vere with Theatro Municipal of Rio de Janeiro in Marcelo Lombardero's production of *Billy Budd*, originally staged in Santiago, Chile.

#### CAITLIN LYNCH

Marguerite, *Faust* (May 9, 13, 16)

Declared “luminous” by the *New York Times* and “eloquent” by the *Wall Street Journal*, rising star soprano Caitlin Lynch is astonishing audiences with her inspiring portrayals of canonic roles encompassing a diverse blend of leading ladies from Mozart's favorite heroines, to tragic Verdi divas, to the leading ladies of tomorrow's opera stages with dynamic world premières. Ms. Lynch made her Metropolitan Opera debut performing Biancifiore in Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* and returned last season as Cynthia in Nico Muhly's world-première production of *Two Boys*. This season she sings the world première of Ben Moore's *Enemies, a Love Story* at Palm Beach Opera in the role of Yawwiga, Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serai* with Des Moines Metro Opera, and a return to Milwaukee Symphony as the soprano soloist in *Carmina Burana*. She will also make a return to Seattle Opera in 2016. A native of Detroit, her prior MOT credits include: Donna Anna and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, and Contessa in *Le nozze di Figaro*.



#### SUSAN MEMMOTT-ALLRED

Costume Designer, *The Merry Widow*

Susan Memmott-Allred was the Resident Designer with Utah Opera from 1979-2011, having founded and managed the costume shop from 1979-1995. The Opera Company had just ten costumes in their stock at that time and now has over 40 full operatic productions which are rented throughout North America. Since then, she has continued as a guest designer. She has designed over





150 productions for the Utah Opera, as well as many specialty pieces for the Utah Symphony. She has created designs for *Little foxes*, *Follies* and *1776*, exhibition skiers and trade shows. She designs custom wedding gowns and is a frequent guest speaker for civic and educational groups. Her career began at SUU in Cedar City, Utah where she worked with Fred Adams and the Utah Shakespearean Festival. She was a consultant and designer for the "Mormon Miracle Pageant", which is the largest attended outdoor pageant in the United States. She has taught Opera Design at the Academy of Arts College in San Francisco and has designed dance costumes for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's PBS Christmas Special.

### STEVEN MERCURIO

Conductor, *Faust*

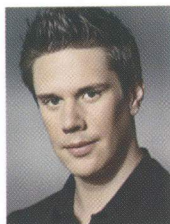
This spring marks American maestro Steven Mercurio's 21<sup>st</sup> production with MOT, after most recently conducting last fall's *Elektra*. An internationally acclaimed conductor and composer whose musical versatility encompasses the symphonic and operatic worlds, he was Music Director of the Spoleto Festival and Principal Conductor of the Opera Company of Philadelphia for five years. Mr. Mercurio is also a sought-after collaborator for many award-winning recordings, arrangements and film projects, most notably "Christmas in Vienna with the Three Tenors." For the stage, he has conducted more than 50 operas in seven different languages in many of the world's best loved opera houses. His most recent symphonic composition, "A Grateful Tail," based on a love of dogs, had its world premiere in Prague and is available on Eros Sound Recordings.



### DAVID MILLER

*Faust, Faust* (May 17)

David Miller is one of today's finest young American tenors. He has appeared with leading opera companies throughout the United States and abroad including Teatro alla Scala, Teatro Giuseppe Verdi in Trieste, Opera de Montreal, Washington National Opera, Los Angeles Opera,



and many more. The repertoire he Des Grieux in *Manon*, the title roles in *Romeo et Juliette* and *Werther*, as well as Alfredo in *La Traviata*, and Tamino in *Die Zauberfloete*. Since December 2003, Mr. Miller has been a member of the internationally acclaimed quartet *Il Divo*, singing concerts worldwide and recording several multi-platinum albums. David Miller first came to attention after his highly acclaimed Washington National Opera debut as Alfredo in *La Traviata*. He has since returned to the company as Tamino and the Duke in *Rigoletto*. His debut performances in Washington led to engagements throughout the United States including his debut for Los Angeles Opera as Tebaldo in Bellini's *I Capuleti ed I Montecchi*, his debut for Michigan Opera Theatre as Des Grieux in *Manon*, where he has also appeared as Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*. He made his debut with Opera de Montreal as Ferrando in *Così fan Tutte* and with Vancouver Opera as Romeo. Among his other international operatic appearances is his debut with the Australian Opera appearing as Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de Perle* as well as his European debut with the Flemish Opera as Cassio in *Otello*. He made his Italian debut as Des Grieux in *Manon* at the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi in Trieste conducted by Daniel Oren, followed by his debut at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan in the role of Tony in a new production of *West Side Story*. His debut at the Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro was as Des Grieux in *Manon*. Following his success in these theaters, David Miller appeared as Rodolfo in the Broadway production of *La Bohème* directed by Baz Luhrmann. As a result of these performances he received a special award from the Tony's committee for excellence in theater.

### SARAH JOY MILLER

Marguerite, *Faust* (May 17)

In the 2012-13 season Ms. Miller's engagements included her return to Palm Beach Opera as Violetta in *La Traviata*. She also performed *Carmina Burana* with the Dallas Symphony and the title role of *Anna Nicole* on tour with Royal Opera House at the Brooklyn Academy of Music to begin the 2013-14 season. Highlights of previous seasons include her debut at Michigan Opera



Theatre in the spring of 2011 singing Gilda in *Rigoletto*, where she returned in the spring of 2012 as Leila in *The Pearl Fishers*, appearances as Musetta in *La Bohème* at New York's Symphony Space, Micaela in *Carmen* with New York Lyric Opera, and Violetta in *La Traviata* with Long Island Opera. She also performed in concert with Marcello Giordani in celebration of the newly created Marcello Giordani Foundation and was selected as a featured soloist with the St. Bart's Music Festival. The year also brought Ms. Miller award recognition from the Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation, the Gerda Lissner Foundation, the New York Lyric Opera Competition, and the Jensen Foundation, and sees the release of an album of arias she recorded with the Pannon Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Maestro Steven Mercurio in Pecs, Hungary.

### DAVID MOAN

Raoul St. Briche, *The Merry Widow*

Baritone David Moan was most recently in Michigan Opera Theatre's premiere of *Frida*, following his comprimario debut with MOT as Mike in the company's 2014 premiere of *A View from the Bridge*. Originally from Pittsburgh, Mr. Moan studied at Manchester University, where he currently serves as adjunct professor of music and frequent guest artist, recently as the baritone soloist in *Carmina Burana*. He has spent the past three seasons singing with the MOT chorus and looks forward to performing in MOT's upcoming production of *Faust*.



### SUSAN NICELY

Martha, *Faust*

Mezzo-Soprano Susan Nicely is known for her rich voice and vivid characterizations. Her highly acclaimed "lively comic presence" in roles such as Dame Martha in *Faust*, Old Lady in *Candide*, Katasha in *The Mikado*, and Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro*, as well as dramatic portrayals in *Cavalleria rusticana* as Mamma Lucia, and *The Ballad of Baby Doe* as Mama McCourt make this character mezzo an "audience darling," says the *Austin American-*





*Statesman*. A house favorite with Dallas Opera, she was most recently seen in a highly-acclaimed performance as Julia Child in Lee Hoiby's one-woman opera, *Bon Appetit!* Proclaimed *D Magazine*: "Mezzo-soprano Susan Nicely...delivered the goods with a gorgeously textured, rich vocal timbre and a perfect touch of slapstick, expanding on and somewhat exaggerating Child's endearing, always-laughed-off clumsiness."

## JAMIE OFFENBACH

Méphistophélès, *Faust* (May 17)

Jamie Offenbach's defining character portrayals and vocal strength in both buffo and dramatic roles earn him rave reviews with journalists, opera companies, and audiences alike. This season, Mr. Offenbach returns to Hawaii Opera Theatre to sing Judge Turpin in *Sweeney Todd*, The Captain in Jonathan Dove's *Swan Song*, and The Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*. In 2016, he will make returns to Hawaii Opera Theatre and Austin Lyric Opera. He appeared as T.J. Rigg in Florentine Opera's production of *Elmer Gantry*, which was recorded by Naxos and won two Grammy Awards in 2012. Recently, Jamie appeared as Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus* and the title role in *The Mikado* with Hawaii Opera Theatre, Capulet in *Roméo et Juliette* with Arizona Opera, Judge Turpin in *Sweeney Todd* with Syracuse Opera, and Méphistophélès in *Faust* with Austin Lyric Opera. Previous MOT appearances include the title role in *The Mikado*.



## JEFF REBUDAL

Choreographer, *The Merry Widow*

Jeff Michael Rebudal is the Artistic Director of New York- and Detroit-based Rebudal Dance and is an original founding member of the critically acclaimed Seán Curran Company. Mr. Rebudal's opera and theatre choreography credits include *L'Etoile* (New York City Opera, Opéra de Montréal, Glimmerglass Opera, Bergen National Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Austin Lyric Opera), *Romeo et Juliette*, *La Traviata*, *La Rondine*, and *A Little Night Music* (Michigan Opera Theatre),



and *Carmen* (Cincinnati Opera) in which the Metropolitan Opera News described the dances as "...delightful choreography.... a bright moment." His past scholarship titled *The Role of Dance and Choreography in Contemporary Opera* was funded with a Wayne State University Research Grant. Jeff recently choreographed *Two Gentlemen of Verona* for The Old Globe. His choreography has also been presented at Joyce SoHo, Danspace Project, Lincoln Center, NYC Downtown Dance Festival, Cunningham Studio, and DUMBO Dance Festival, among other venues such as the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Manila and Anargyrios & Korgialenios Theatre of Helioupolis in Greece. Mr. Rebudal is an Associate Professor and Head of Dance at Wayne State University and has an M.F.A. from the American University and a B.A. from the University of Hawai at Mānoa.

## KELLY ROBINSON

Stage Director, *The Merry Widow*

Kelly Robinson is currently the Director of Creative Development for Toronto's Mirvish Productions, and is a co-founder of the Young Artist Training Program in Fontainebleau, France. He is the former Executive and Artistic Director of Theatre Arts at The Banff Centre in Canada, where he led the Opera Program.

With a career that spans theatre, opera, and film, Kelly Robinson's award-winning work as a director and choreographer has been seen at the opera companies of Vancouver, Portland, Dallas, Arizona, Montreal, Quebec City, Utah, and Minnesota among others. Theatre productions include Canada's National Arts Centre, CanStage, the Stratford, and Shaw Festivals, the Palace Theatre in New York, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Plymouth's Theatre Royal, and London's West End in the United Kingdom. Film and Television credits include choreography for Columbia Pictures, CBC, NBC, and ABC Television. He has given master classes in directing at The Intune Conference in Vancouver, and at Miskinot Sha'nanim in Jerusalem, and has taught at The New School for Drama in NYC, The Universities of Maryland and Michigan, at Ryerson University in Toronto,



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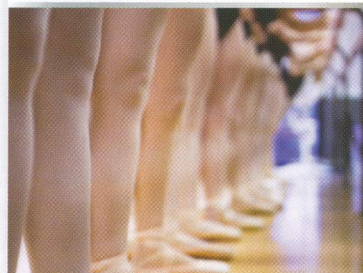
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Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and Trinity Laban in London. He holds a law degree from York University.

## DIANE SCHOFF

Praskovia, *The Merry Widow*

Diane Schoff continues her work with Michigan Opera Theatre in all three productions this spring after performing as 2nd Maid in *Elektra* this past fall. Ms. Schoff holds the honor of being a National Semi Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera Competition and was an apprentice with San Francisco Opera's Merola Program where she performed the roles of Pr. Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* and Zulma in *L'italiana in Algeri*. As a member of Boston Opera Collaborative, Diane performed the roles of Clytemnestre in Gluck's *Iphigenie in Aulide*, The Mother/Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, and the Old Prioress in Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. Regional credits also include roles with Opera for the Young and Milwaukee Opera Theater. A recent transplant to the Detroit Metro area, Ms. Schoff sings at Grosse Pointe Memorial Church, as soloist and section leader.



an exciting artist on opera and concert stages. This season's engagements include Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* and Siebel in *Faust* with Michigan Opera Theatre, Carmen in scenes from *Carmen* with the Metropolitan Opera Guild, and workshops of Bruce Wolosoff's *The Great Good Thing* and Sarah Mattox's *Heart Mountain*. A frequent collaborator with composers on new music projects, Ms. Sogioka created the role of Nurse 3 in the Metropolitan Opera and English National Opera workshop of Michael Torke's *Senna*, was a mezzo soloist in the Metropolitan Opera workshop of Scott Wheeler's *The Sorrow's of Frederick*, collaborated with Clint Borzoni in his operas *Margot Alone in the Light* and *Antinous and Hadrian*, and also with Stephen Andrew Taylor in scenes from his opera *Paradises Lost* with Operamission.

## AMANDA SQUITIERI

Valencienne, *The Merry Widow*

Soprano Amanda Squitieri has been praised for her "warm soprano" voice, "bright, ripe" sound, as well as her captivating stage presence and versatility that makes her "one of the most engaging singers of the younger generation." (*Opera News*) Previously at MOT, Ms. Squitieri sang Adina in *L'elisir d'amore* and Lisette in *La rondine*. She most recently created the role of Beatrice Russo in Daniel Catan's *Il Postino* in the World Premiere performances at Los Angeles Opera. She has subsequently debuted this piece at Theater An der Wien, Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, the Festival Internacional Cervantino in Mexico and Teatro Municipal in Santiago. Both critics and audiences have praised her performance in this role with the *Associated Press* stating, "Soprano Amanda Squitieri sang Beatrice, moving gracefully across the stage and pairing it with a compelling voice in a manner few singers do." In recent seasons, Ms. Squitieri has debuted at Teatro dell'Opera di Roma as Catherine in William Bolcoln's *A View from the Bridge*, Opéra National de Paris debut at the Palais Garnier as Esmeralda in *The Bartered Bride* conducted by Jiri Belohlávek, and Los Angeles Opera as Lisette in *La Rondine* conducted by music director James Conlon. She has also been seen as Anne in Sondheim's *A Little*



*Night Music* at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis in a production directed by famed fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi, at The Metropolitan Opera covering the role of Alice in the new *Le Comte Ory* by Bartlett Sher, and in a triumphant performance as Manon in Noel Coward's *Bitter Sweet* at Bard SummerScape.

## GERALD STEICHEN

Conductor, *The Merry Widow*

With a career that ranges from symphony to opera, Broadway to chamber music, Maestro Gerald Steichen has established himself as one of America's most versatile conductors. He currently holds the positions of Principal Pops Conductor of the Utah Symphony and Music Director of the Ridgefield Symphony (Connecticut), and completed 15 seasons as Principal Pops Conductor of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. Steichen is a frequent guest conductor for the Boston Pops and the New Jersey Symphony, and has appeared with the symphonies of Detroit; Indianapolis; Naples, Florida; Portland, Oregon; the Florida Orchestra in Tampa; Cincinnati; Columbus, Oklahoma City, Hartford and the New York Pops. International appearances include the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo City Symphony, the NDR Philharmonie Hannover at the Braunschweig Festival, and numerous appearances with the Norwegian Radio Symphony. During ten seasons with the New York City Opera, Steichen led performances including *La Bohème*, *L'elisir d'amore*, Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*, Jonathan Miller's production of *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. In 2007, he led the New York City Opera Orchestra and soloists in a live WQXR broadcast of *Wall to Wall Opera* from New York's Symphony Space. A gifted pianist, he performed on stage for the New York City Opera's acclaimed productions of *Porgy and Bess* and *Carmina Burana*. Steichen toured nationally as the associate conductor of *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Secret Garden*, and *Peter Pan* and conducted *Cats* in New York for two years. He has also appeared on Broadway, portraying Manny, the Accompanist in the Tony Award-winning *Master Class*. Pursuing his passion for education, Steichen also



## KENDALL SMITH

Lighting Designer, *The Merry Widow*

Kendall Smith has designed lighting for more than 70 productions with Michigan Opera Theatre, making his debut in 1988 with *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, and most recently designed lighting for the company's spring 2014 production of *A View from the Bridge*. His work has been featured in numerous productions by respected companies, theaters and festivals, including Florida Grand Opera, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Minnesota Opera, and Walnut Street Theatre.



## KIMBERLY SOGIOKA

Siebel, *Faust*

Praised by *Opera (UK)* as "...the most opulent female sound on the stage..." young mezzo-soprano Kimberly Sogioka is drawing much attention as





spent 18 years with the "Meet the Artist" series at Lincoln Center as conductor, clinician and pianist.

## PAUL STEINBERG

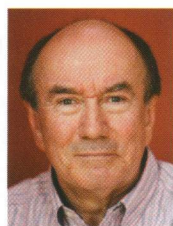
Set Designer, *Faust*

Paul Steinberg has designed sets and costumes for theaters and opera companies in the U.S. and abroad including The Metropolitan Opera, The Royal Opera Covent Garden, English National Opera (ENO), Paris Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Berlin State Opera, The Netherlands National Opera, Norwegian National Opera, Royal Danish Opera, Opera Nomori Tokyo, New Israeli Opera, San Francisco Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Playwrights Horizons, American Repertory Theater, NY Theater Workshop, Goodman Theater, and D.C. Shakespeare Theater, among many others. Recent productions include *Falstaff* (The Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden & La Scala), *Un Ballo in Maschiera* (The Metropolitan Opera), *La Perichole* (New York City Opera), *The Love For Three Oranges* (Deutsche Oper Berlin), *Billy Budd* (ENO), *Deidamia* (Amsterdam), *Peter Grimes* (ENO & Deutsche Oper Berlin), and *Kin* (Playwrights Horizons, NYC). Coming Productions include the world premier of *CO2* (La Scala) and *Die Meistersinger* (ENO) in 2015. Mr. Steinberg is an Arts Professor in the graduate theater design program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

## RICHARD SUART

Baron Mirko Zeta, *The Merry Widow*

Richard Suart was born in Lancashire, and studied at St John's College, Cambridge, and the Royal Academy of Music, where he was elected a Fellow in 2004. Recent and future



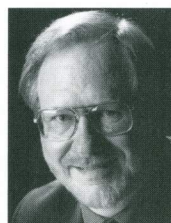
engagements include *Punch in Punch and Judy* (Berlin), *Major-General Stanley* in *The Pirates of Penzance* (Scottish Opera, and with RTE Concert Orchestra), *Judge Turpin Sweeney Todd* (Reisopera), *Jack Point* in *The Yeomen of the Guard* and *Major-General* (RTE), *Pangloss Candide* (LA Philharmonic, Hollywood Bowl), *Mr Walter* in *Afterlife* (Melbourne Festival, Holland Festival, Lyon and Barbican), *Ko-Ko* in *The Mikado* (ENO and Scottish Opera), *Lord Chancellor* in *Iolanthe* (San Francisco Symphony), *The Soldiers' Tale* and *Façade* (Psappha). Further roles include *Frank* in *Die Fledermaus*, *Baron*

*Zeta* *The Merry Widow*, *Lesbo Agrippina* and *Benoit/Alcindoro* in *La Bohème* (ENO); *Jack Point* (WNO and ROH), French Ambassador *Of thee I Sing*, *Snookfield Let 'Em Eat Cake* and *Barabashkin Paradise Moscow* (Opera North and Bregenz), *Don Jerome* in *The Duenna* (ETO), *Edgar* in *The Tell-Tale Heart* (ROH2), *Stan Stock* in the premiere of *Benedict Mason's Playing Away* (ON, Bregenz and St Pölten), *Magnifico* in *La Cenerentola*, *Antonio* in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Garsington), *Lord Chancellor*, *Don Inigo Gomez* in *L'Heure Espagnole* (Grange Park), the British premiere of *Shostakovich's Cheryomushki* (Pimlico Opera) and *King Arthur Gwyneth and the Green Knight* (Premiere, Music Theatre Wales).

## DONALD EDMUND THOMAS

Lighting Designer, *Faust*

Donald Thomas returns to the company having designed *The Flying Dutchman* last season and *I Pagliacci*, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Il trovatore*, *Salome* and *Roméo et Juliette* in previous seasons. He also designed the world premiere of *David DiChiera's Cyrano* for MOT, and subsequent productions for Opera Company of Philadelphia and Florida Grand Opera. Recent designs include *Don Giovanni* for Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center, and *Così fan tutte* and *The Pearl Fishers* for Florida Grand Opera. For Seattle Opera he designed *La Fanciulla del West*, *Manon Lescaut* and *I Pagliacci*. Elsewhere he designed *Rigoletto* for Opera Colorado in Denver and *Madama Butterfly* for Lyric Opera Baltimore. Upcoming projects include productions of *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Barber of Seville* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Mr. Thomas is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.



## RUSSELL THOMAS

*Faust*, *Faust* (May 9, 13, 16)

Tenor Russell Thomas is quickly establishing himself as one of the most exciting vocal and dramatic talents on the international opera and concert scene, and is making his debut with the company. Mr. Thomas is an Artist in Residence with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for the 2014-15 season. His season also features



performances in the English National Opera's Peter Sellars production of *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*, and several new roles: *Pollione* in *Norma* with San Francisco Opera and the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia, Spain, and *Manrico* in *Il Trovatore* with the Cincinnati Opera.

Mr. Thomas' 2013-14 began with concert performances of *Adams' Gospel According to the Other Mary* at the Ravinia Festival and of *Verdi's I Masnadieri* with Washington Concert Opera, followed by the tenor's Deutsche Oper Berlin debut in the title role of *Verdi's Don Carlo*, *Andres* in *Wozzeck* with the Metropolitan Opera, the title role in *The Tales of Hoffmann* with the Seattle Opera and the *Prince* in *Rusalka* with Opera North Carolina. Future engagements include returns to the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Oper Frankfurt, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Canadian Opera Company and a debut at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

## BERNARD UZAN

Stage Director, *Faust*

Bernard Uzan has enjoyed a longstanding relationship with Michigan Opera Theatre, directing over 25 productions, including the world-premiere of *David DiChiera's Cyrano*, for which he wrote the libretto. Uzan's extensive background in the Performing Arts includes great achievement as a General Director, Artistic Director, Stage Director, Artist Manager, Set Designer, Librettist, Educator, Actor, and most recently, published Novelist and Internet Journalist. As a stage director and producer, his 400 productions have appeared on the stages of more than 100 opera companies throughout the world. In the last few seasons alone, he has created and directed critically acclaimed new productions of a modern day take on *Faust*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Les pêcheurs de perles*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Nabucco*, *Carmen* (which won Theatre Erfurt's Audience Favorite award for "Best Production of the Year"). This season, he returns to Opera Carolina for *Nabucco*; Michigan Opera Theatre for *Madama Butterfly* and *Faust*; Florida Grand Opera for *Così fan tutte*; Theater Erfurt in Germany for *Rigoletto*; and directs a new joint production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Opera Carolina and Toledo Opera.





## JOHN VISCARDI

Valentin, *Faust*

John Viscardi's singing has been praised as "powerful, nuanced, and absolutely riveting." In the 2013-14 season, John joined Opera Philadelphia as Torero in *Ainadamar* and made his debuts with the Shreveport Symphony and Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestras. He was a featured soloist in *Eve and Friends* with Maestro Eve Queler at Alice Tully Hall and an Apprentice with Santa Fe Opera. Mr. Viscardi is a 2013 recipient of Santa Fe Opera's Anna Case McKay Memorial Award. In 2014, John was awarded 4th place in the Giulio Gari Foundation Vocal Competition and Audience Favorite in Annapolis Opera's Vocal Competition. In 2012 he was awarded the Liederkrantz Foundation Competition's Bertha Koempel Award and a George London Foundation encouragement award. With a recent transition to Lyric Baritone, John has bolstered his repertoire to include Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Harlequin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Billy Budd in *Billy Budd*, Valentin in *Faust*, Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliet*, Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and Yeletsky in *Pique Dame*. Mr. Viscardi is a 2013 graduate of the prestigious Academy of Vocal Arts (AVA) in Philadelphia.



## JOANNE WEAVER

Wig and Makeup Designer, *The Merry Widow*, *Faust*

Born in England, Joanne Weaver came over to the United States in the late 1980s. She began apprenticing with what was then Washington Opera, now Washington National Opera. Ms. Weaver has since designed at many Opera companies throughout the United States, including Glimmerglass Opera, Central City Opera, Sarasota Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Des Moines Metro Opera. Her notable MOT credits include *Frida*, *Margaret Garner*, *Cyrano*, and *The Pearl Fishers*. Ms. Weaver was one of the designers invited to be a part of the opening of The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, which was designed by Moshe Safedi, Kansas City, 2011.



## MICHAEL YEARGAN

Set Designer, *The Merry Widow*

Michael Yeargan designed his first opera production in 1970—*La Bohème* at the Nevada Opera Company. Since that time his opera sets have been seen at the Metropolitan Opera, the Seattle Opera, the LA Opera, the San Francisco Opera, the Houston Opera, Glimmerglass and the New York City Opera, as well as the Royal Opera at Covent Garden in London, the Welsh National Opera, the Scottish Opera, the Théâtre musical de Paris, the Frankfurt Opera, and Opera Australia. Mr. Yeargan's Broadway credits include *Seascape*, *the Light in the Piazza*, *South Pacific*, *Awake and Sing*, *Ah, Wilderness*, and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, as well as numerous productions Off-Broadway and in regional theatres throughout the United States. His set designs have won the 2005 Tony Award for *Light in the Piazza* and a Tony nomination and Drama Desk Award for *Awake and Sing*. He is the resident set designer at the Yale Repertory Theatre and is a long-time Professor of Stage Design at Yale School of Drama.



## Barbara Gibson Young Artist Apprentice Program

### ZACHARY COATES

DeRoy Testamentary Foundation Young Artist

Bogdanovitch, *The Merry Widow*  
Wagner, *Faust*

Baritone Zachary Coates made his debut with Michigan Opera Theatre in the fall's *Elektra* and *Madame Butterfly*. Mr. Coates recently completed his graduate studies at Indiana University, where he performed in the roles of Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Aye in *Akhmaten*, Don Giovanni in *Don Giovanni*, Sid in *Albert Herring*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Wagner in *Faust*, and the Gallery Director in *Vincent*. Roles elsewhere include John Brooke in *Little Women* with Opera North, Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande* with Westminster Opera Theater, and the Father in *Hansel and Gretel* with Opera MODO. Off the opera stage,



Zachary is a passionate advocate of art song and is seen frequently in recital.

## CLAIRE DiVIZIO

Sylviane, *The Merry Widow*

Praised by the *Ann Arbor News* for her "marvelous voice," Detroit native Claire DiVizio recently made her professional debut in MOT's *Frida*. In the last three years, she has been seen in Louisville, KY as Blanche de la Force in Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, in San Francisco as Giorgetta in Puccini's *Il Tabarrò*, and in Bytom, Poland as Donna Anna in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. She has twice been named the winner of the Michigan District of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and in the fall of 2014 was awarded an Encouragement Award from the National Council on the stage of the Detroit Opera House. One of Ms. DiVizio's greatest passions is working with living composers. Claire has created seven opera roles and premiered nearly twenty concert works for voice, including song literature, chamber music, and choral solos. She is also the founder and Executive Director of Thompson Street Opera Company, a Louisville-based organization which performs exclusively contemporary works. Now preparing for its third season, the company is recognized as a leading presenter of contemporary works in the region.



## CLODAGH EARLS

Olga, *The Merry Widow*

Recognized for her vocal warmth, charming stage presence, and vibrant personality, Canadian soprano Clodagh Earls is a young artist to watch as she bursts onto the North American operatic and concert scene. Ms. Earls recently made her MOT debut in *Frida*, and has performed in various musical theatre and opera productions throughout United States, Canada and in Europe. In 2014, she debuted in the coveted role of Königin der Nacht, in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, under the baton of Maestro Grzegorz Nowak, at the prestigious Miami Summer Music Festival, in Florida. Ms. Earls joined the 2014 Michigan Opera Theatre





Chorus for the incredible production of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, under the baton of Maestro Stephen Lord. Ms. Earls is thrilled to be an apprentice artist at Michigan Opera Theatre for spring 2015, performing in the company premiere of Robert Xavier Rodriguez's *Frida*, Lehar's *The Merry Widow*, and Gounod's *Faust*. Ms. Earls holds a Master of Music: Voice Performance from the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, and a Bachelor of Music: Honours Voice Performance from the University of Western Ontario. She is currently mentored by Canadian soprano Frédérique Vézina and Dr. Cynthia Hoffmann of The Juilliard School. Ms. Earls resides in Birmingham, Michigan.

## ADRIAN ROSAS

Vicomte Cascada, *The Merry Widow*

Hailed by *Opera News* as a "mellifluous bass-baritone [with] theatrical flair", Adrian Rosas is an emerging young artist with "impressive experience and talent"

(*The Boston Globe*). Mr. Rosas has made operatic debuts with world-renowned companies such as Seattle Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Houston's Opera in the Heights, and most recently with Michigan Opera Theatre. As a champion of new and modern music, he has had the opportunity to work on a variety



of newly written works including, Peter Ash's *The Golden Ticket*, Robert Xavier Rodriguez's *Frida*, Petr Kotik's *Master-Pieces*, Matt Aucoin's *Whitman*, multiple new operas with the American Lyric Theater, in New York, and with the Ostrava Center for New Music, in the Czech Republic. Equally versed in concert and oratorio work, he has had the opportunity to perform in such venues as Carnegie Hall (Stern Auditorium, Weill Recital Hall, and Zankel Hall), Merkin Concert Hall, and Alice Tully Hall. Mr. Rosas holds a Bachelor's Degree from Western Michigan University, and a Master of Music Degree from The Juilliard School.

## Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra

### VIOLIN I

Laura Roelofs,  
Concertmaster<sup>^+</sup>  
Andrew Wu, Assistant  
Concertmaster<sup>^+</sup>  
Velda Kelly<sup>^+</sup>  
Bryan Johnston<sup>^+</sup>  
Charlotte Merkerson<sup>^+</sup>  
Beth Kaufman<sup>^+</sup>  
Molly Hughes<sup>^+</sup>  
Tracy Dunlop<sup>+</sup>  
Emily Barkakati<sup>^+</sup>

### VIOLIN II

Victoria Haltom<sup>^+</sup>  
Daniel Stachyra<sup>^+</sup>  
Anna Bittar-Weller<sup>^</sup>  
Henrik Karapetyan<sup>+</sup>  
Jenny Wan<sup>+</sup>  
Janet Sullins<sup>^+</sup>  
Tracy Dunlop<sup>^</sup>  
Judith Teasdale<sup>^+</sup>  
Bethany Moses<sup>+</sup>

### VIOLA

John Madison<sup>^+</sup>  
Scott Stefanko<sup>^+</sup>  
Kathleen Grimes<sup>^+</sup>  
James Greer<sup>^+</sup>  
Catherine Franklin<sup>+</sup>

### CELLO

Nadine Deleury<sup>^+</sup>  
Stefan Koch<sup>^+</sup>  
Daniel Thomas<sup>^+</sup>  
Diane Bredesen<sup>^</sup>  
Andrew McIntosh<sup>+</sup>  
Andrea Yun<sup>+</sup>

### BASS

Derek Weller<sup>^+</sup>  
Clark Suttle<sup>^+</sup>  
Greg Sheldon<sup>+</sup>

### FLUTE

Amanda Sparfield<sup>^+</sup>  
Laura Larson<sup>^+</sup>

### OBOE

Nermis Miseses<sup>^+</sup>  
Sally Heffelfinger-Pituch<sup>^+</sup>

### CLARINET

Brian Bowman<sup>^+</sup>  
J. William King<sup>^+</sup>

### BASSOON

Pawel Wnuk<sup>^+</sup>  
Roger Maki-Schramm<sup>^+</sup>  
Jim Westhoff<sup>^</sup>

### HORN

Andrew Pelletier<sup>^+</sup>  
Carrie Banfield<sup>+</sup>  
David Denniston<sup>^+</sup>  
Susan Mutter<sup>^</sup>  
Tamara Kosinski<sup>^+</sup>

### TRUMPET

David Ammer<sup>^+</sup>  
Gordon Simmons<sup>^+</sup>

### TROMBONE

Gary Hellick<sup>^+</sup>  
David Jackson<sup>^+</sup>  
Greg Near<sup>+</sup>  
Michael Robinson, Jr.<sup>^</sup>  
Bryan Pokorney<sup>^</sup>

### BASS TROMBONE

Bryan Pokorney<sup>+</sup>

### TIMPANI

Alison Chang<sup>^+</sup>

### PERCUSSION

John Dorsey<sup>^+</sup>  
Dan Maskanka<sup>^+</sup>

### HARP

Patricia Terry-Ross<sup>^+</sup>

### ORGAN

Jean Schneider<sup>+</sup>

\*Principal

<sup>^</sup> *The Merry Widow*  
<sup>+</sup> *Faust*

Detroit Federation of  
Musicians Local #5 American  
Federation of Musicians

## Michigan Opera Theatre Chorus

Carol Ambrogio Wood  
Gregory Ashe  
Blake Bard  
Monique Bates  
Alaina Brown  
Fred Buchalter  
Alexandria Clark  
Zachary Coates<sup>\*</sup>  
Kate Connolly  
Darren DeWitt  
Claire DiVizio<sup>\*</sup>  
Clodagh Earls<sup>\*</sup>

Joseph Edmonds  
Michael Fowler  
Kurt Frank  
Yvonne Friday  
Julia Hoffert  
Mark Istratie,  
Richard Jackson  
Crystalyn Jass Kirkpatrick  
Miriam Lanseur  
Jerrold Lee  
Adrian Leskiw  
Bradley Lieto

Aynsley Martindale  
David Moan  
Pette Moore  
Anna Nadasky  
Ashly Neumann  
Sasha Noori  
Paolo Pacheco  
Jessica Pistor  
Bradley Schick  
Diane Schoff  
Carrick Secorski  
Morris Thomas

David Twigg  
Tiffanie Waldron  
Justin Watson  
Norm Weber  
Tamara Whitty  
Jeffrey Wilkinson  
Heidi Zook

\*Barbara Gibson Young  
Artist Apprentices



**Conductor**  
Dianna Hochella

**Director**  
Kelsey Ross

**Set Design**  
Monika Essen

**Lighting Design**  
Alex Gay

**Costume Design**  
Suzanne Hanna

**Hair/Makeup Design**  
Elizabeth Geck

**Stage Manager**  
Nan Luchini

Joseph Jackson, *Piano*  
Nadine Deleury, *Cello*  
David Taylor, *Percussion*

MOTCC would like to thank the wigs, hair & make up volunteers from the L'esprit Academy Livonia, Kristine Clifton, Aesthetics Instructor.

### *Go Green!*

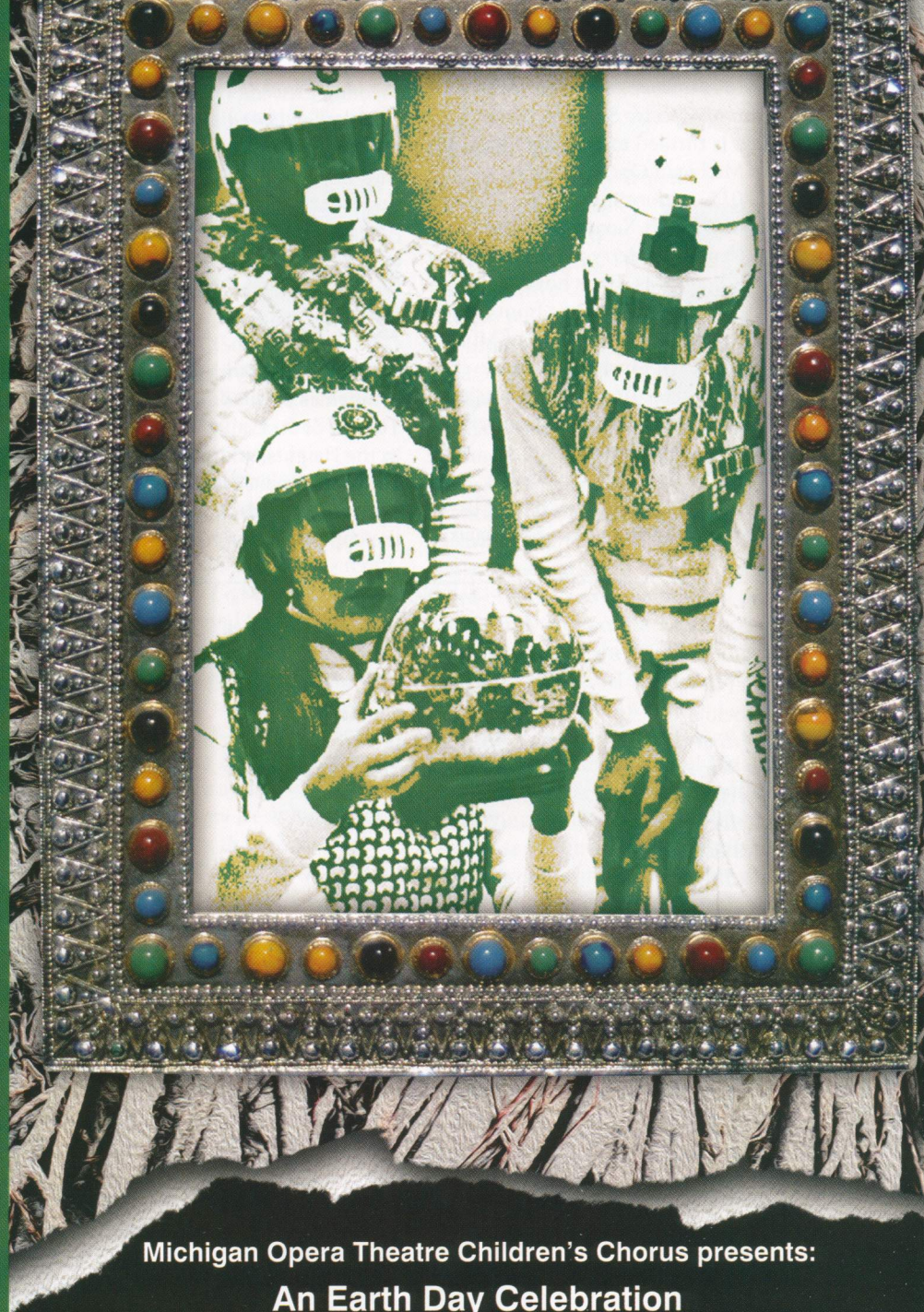
David Moan, Presenter

The Michigan Science Center presents an interactive show dedicated to teaching students ways to "green up" their world! Learn water saving measures, a recipe for composting, recycling paper, glass, cans, and plastic, the anatomy of a landfill, and more. "Going Green" starts with you; together we can make a difference!

Join us for An Earth Day Celebration in the lobby of the Detroit Opera House with demonstrations and interactive displays by:

Michigan Science Center  
Greening of Detroit  
Arts and Scraps  
Belle Isle  
Detroit Water Works  
Disabled American Veterans  
Earthworks  
Green Living Science  
Sierra Club  
Tim Burke, Artist

An Earth Day Celebration  
begins at 1:30 p.m.



Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus presents:

## **An Earth Day Celebration**

Michigan Opera Theatre Preparatory Chorus

Every Day is Earth Day by Diane S. Baltazar • Annie Klark, Conductor

Michigan Science Center

## **Go Green!**

David Moan, Presenter

# **THE VERY LAST GREEN THING**

by Cary John Franklin

Sponsors:

Sally Mead Hands Foundation

Worthington Family Foundation



KinderMorgan Foundation



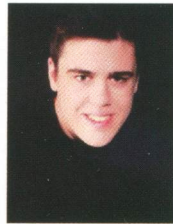
## Cast

*In order of appearance. Understudies listed in parentheses.*

Android .....Ryan Hurley\* (Miles Eichenhorn\*)  
 Amy .....Ryan Blankenburg (Marielle Hill)  
 Bobby.....Noah Trudeau (Kristen Dubicki)  
 Zelda.....Melody Balos (Magdelynn Miller)  
 Leona.....Emma McDonald (Danielle Phillips)  
 Asia.....Lauren Ward (Kristen Dubicki)  
 Kathryn ..Rachel Miltimore (Magdelynn Miller)  
 Ellie ..... Katherine Fuller (Danielle Phillips)  
 Rosa ..... Xaneveya Davidson (Zayda Schneider)  
 Abby ..... Marielle Hill (Zayda Schneider)

\* MOTCC Alumni

**Ryan Hurley (Android)**, a native of Huntington Woods, Michigan, is a junior at Berkley High School. Ryan has performed in numerous productions with The MOTCC including *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *I Pagliacci*, and *Carmina Burana*, and has also been in many shows at the Baldwin Theatre, including *My Fair Lady* and *Bye Bye Birdie*. For nearly two years, Ryan has been an intern with the Rackham Symphony Choir, as well as having been a member of the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus, for four years (2009-2012). Ryan is very happy to be back for another performance! Most recently, Ryan was selected as a 2015 Finalist Winner by the National YoungArts Foundation in Classical Voice, where he was able to participate in YoungArts week in Miami, Florida.



**Melody Balos (Zelda)** is fourteen years old. She is in eighth grade at Pierce Middle School in Grosse Pointe Park. This is Melody's second year in MOTCC. She is excited to perform the role of Zelda in *The Very Last Green Thing*. Melody's theatrical experience includes the role of Aninku in *Brundibar*, Annie in *Annie Jr.*, Glinda in *The Wizard of Oz*, and lead roles in three original children's plays: *The Land of Futures Passed*, *The Fairly Good Mother* and *The Supersonic Imaginatronic*. She also appeared in the chorus of *Turandot*. She has been featured as a vocal soloist in Pierce Middle School choir and the Grosse Pointe Summer Select Choir concerts.



**Ryan Blankenburg (Amy)** is 14 years old. She is an eighth grade student at The Roeper Middle School in Birmingham. She enjoys music composition and dance. This is Ryan's third year with MOTCC. She performed in MOTCC chorus of *Brundibar* and *The*

*Happy Prince*. Outside of MOTCC Ryan dances with The Rochester School of Dance where she studies tap, pointe, ballet, and jazz. Ryan has performed with the Eisenhower Dance Ensemble's *The Show* as The Little Girl, a child in *The Key*, and in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Whistle Down the Wind* at the Fisher Theatre.



**Xaneveya Porttisse Aveonna Davidson (Rosa)** is in her second year with MOTCC. She lives in Marysville, where she is in the ninth grade at Marysville High School. She has taken part in *Aladdin Jr.* in Macomb County, *Turandot* at the Detroit Opera House, and various talent shows. She is a member of Varsity Singers, a competitive vocal ensemble, where she has participated as a soloist and ensemble member. Xaneveya has played the piano for eight years. She has consistently placed in the top three of several competitions including the American Guild of Music Federation, Music Achievers Conservatory Open, and Piano Guild of Music annually. She enjoys drawing, being creative, and collecting anything panda related. She aspires to have a career in art education and continue to perform in voice and piano.



**Katherine Fuller (Ellie)** is 12 years old and in the 7th grade at Wilson Middle School in Wyandotte. This is her second year with MOTCC. Katherine had the great honor and privilege in being chosen to sing the national anthem recently at a Red Wings Alumni Charity Hockey game and then filled in as a substitute for Karen Newman at an official Red Wings game. She is currently working on "Oh Canada" as they have asked her back for future games.



**Marielle Hill (Abby, Amy-understudy)** is 16 years old. She is homeschooled. This is Marielle's third year in MOTCC. She was the Milkmaid and understudy for Aninku in last season's production of *Brundibar*. She was the understudy for the Matchgirl in *The Happy Prince*. Marielle has been in seven shows at the Marquis Theatre in Northville, including: *Snow White* (Ziggy the Dwarf), *Hansel and Gretel* (Gretel), *Rapunzel* (Rapunzel), *Beauty and The Beast* (Fairly Queen) and *Alice In Wonderland* (Alice). She is dancing for the eleventh year with Deborah Chase School of Dance in Livonia. She has attended Stratford's Shakespeare School in Stratford, Ontario. Marielle has also acted in six independent films.



**Emma McDonald (Leona)** is 10 years old and a sixth grade student at Ecole Monseigneur Jean Noel in Windsor, Ontario. She is thrilled to perform the role of Leona in *The Very Last Green Thing*, the highlight of her first year with MOTCC. Emma has been cast in 15 musical theatre productions to date, and has made her debuts in audio theatre and television. Her favorite role so far was as Young Cosette in *Les Misérables*. She also enjoys her piano studies and various dance disciplines. Emma has competed in the Kiwanis Music Festival for the past six years and currently holds the awards for 'Excellence in Music Theatre' and 'Top Junior Vocalist.'





Rachel Miltimore (Kathryn) is 14 years old and attends Keystone Online School in Bloomfield Hills. This is her 5th year with MOTCC. Her performances include *La Boheme*, *Maker of Illusions*, *Carmina Burana*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *I Pagliacci*, *The Happy Prince*, *Brundibár*, and *Turandot*. She was a credited extra in the feature film "A Horse called Bear" in 2014 and a featured soloist at Comerica Park singing "The Star Spangled Banner" and "God Bless America" at Detroit Tigers ballgames in 2014 as well. She dances ballet, jazz, and ballroom/swing and she also holds a blue belt in Tae Kwon Do. She plays the piano and the guitar. She also loves skiing, swimming, reading, and traveling with her family.



Noah Trudeau (Bobby) is 12 years old. He is a seventh grade honor student and

member of the Student Council at Boyd W. Arthurs Middle School in Trenton. Noah is in his second year with the MOTCC. He has performed in the Detroit Tree Lighting Ceremony, sung the National Anthem at a Detroit Tigers game and been in the children's chorus for *The Nutcracker* and *Turandot*. He has also participated in a number of outreach appearances in the metro Detroit area with his fellow Principal Chorus members. Outside of the MOTCC, Noah has competed at the State Honors Choir competition in Grand Rapids, participated in a theater workshop with the Downriver Youth Performing Arts Center (DYPAC), and has been taking piano and vocal lessons for the last six years. This July, Noah will be spending two weeks at the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp as a scholarship award recipient by the Michigan School



Vocal Musical Association (MSVMA). He will be majoring in Vocal Choir and enjoying a Minor in Musical Theater.

Lauren Ward (Asia) is 16 years old. She is a tenth grade student at Waterford Mott High School. This is her third year in MOTCC. She played the role of a private school student in *The Happy Prince*, and The Cat in *Brundibár*. Outside of MOTCC, she has portrayed Mabel in *Pirates of Penzance*, Madame de la Grande Bouche in *Beauty and the Beast*, Detective Marie Grant in *Squad Room Blues*, Asaka in *Once On This Island*, and many more. She ranked superior 8th grade and 9th grade at MSVMA Solo & Ensemble, and is currently writing music and recording with a \$7,500 scholarship she won from Launch in Chicago in November. Her EP will be sold under her stage name, Tempest.



## SYNOPSIS:

### Prologue

As the opera begins, we see the Children from the Past carefully placing items in a time capsule to be found by a future generation. The last item that is placed in the capsule is the "Green Thing."

### Scene 1

The action moves to a boarding school of the future. The students march into class to await the arrival of their teacher, the Android. Once the Android arrives, he quickly scans the class to take attendance, noticing that a few students are late. Once every student has arrived, The Android reveals the day's lesson: "People who have Influenced our Lives." Once the lesson concludes, the Android announces to the students that he is going to take them on a very rare field trip to the outside world. The students express concern about leaving the classroom's controlled environment, but the Android assures them that by using special equipment they will remain quite safe.

### Scene 2

With their protective gear on, the students leave the classroom. As they embark on their journey, they observe various buildings and statues of historical importance. They continue until they discover the time capsule. The Android identifies it as being from the late twentieth century. As the Children from the Present begin to remove objects for inspection, the Children from the Past assist with the action of the scene. The first item to be removed from the capsule is a pair of running shoes. Leona puts them on and immediately begins to move, learning to dance with The Children from the Past. The Children from the Present quickly follow Leona's example and learn to dance with her. As each object is removed from the capsule, the object comes alive for the child handling it. When it appears the capsule is empty, Amy remarks that there is still something left. The children are intrigued and mystified as she removes a watering can, garden trowel, and a small, withered plant. As the children try to figure out what it is, the Android insists that they leave it behind. As the children leave triumphantly carrying the objects they discovered, Amy runs back to retrieve the plant and carries it back in her arms.

### Scene 3

This scene takes place in Amy's bed chamber. She places the plant on her bed and then hides it as the Android makes sure she brushes her teeth and washes her face. As she undertakes her evening ritual, a group of children begin singing. Amy retrieves the plant from under her bed and begins to question its existence. It is unlike anything she has ever known...

### Scene 4

The Children from the Present are back in their classroom looking over the objects from the time capsule. The Android notices that Amy has brought the plant inside and begins to reprimand her. During his interrogation, the students begin questioning him and wonder why he is so angry about the plant. During this sequence, the Android begins to break down, or short-circuit. The Children from the Past and the Children from the Present unite to sing of the plant's importance.



**Kelsey Ross** (Director) is an up and coming stage director based in Detroit, Michigan. Ms. Ross recently completed a year as the Associate Stage Director in Residence for Boston Opera Collaborative where she worked on *Albert Herring*, *Sumeida's Song*, and *La Cenerentola*. Ms. Ross holds a Masters degree from The Boston Conservatory. With the Conservatory, she directed *Mooch the Messy*, and assistant directed numerous projects including *La Boheme*, *L'heure espagnole/ l'enfant et les sortilèges*, and *Transformations*. Elsewhere, Ms. Ross has assistant directed for Wolf Trap Opera, Boston University Opera Institute, and Guerilla Opera. This spring Ms. Ross will direct Massenet's *Cendrillon* for Opera Modo.

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

**Annie Klark** (Preparatory Chorus Conductor) Ms. Klark brings to the MOTCC a diverse background as singer/actress, vocal and piano music instructor, and music director. For Michigan Opera Theatre, Ms. Klark has performed in over 20 operas. She is a frequent performer in the Detroit metro area, including productions at the JET Theatre, Ford Performing Arts Center, Toledo Opera, Trenton Village Theatre, Downriver Performing Arts Center, and Marquis Theatre, as well as performing regularly with the touring educational theatre group Brainstormers and as a lead vocalist and actor with the Dodworth Saxhorn Band. Ms. Klark has conducted theatre classes and vocal workshops with the Toledo Opera Education and Outreach Program, Wild Swan Theatre, Michigan Music Center, Michigan Academy of Dance, and at various elementary and middle schools throughout Michigan. She received both her Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Michigan. In 2011 she

became Co-Founder and Artistic Director of 4th Wall Theatre Company, a program that teaches musical theatre to children with special needs. She also serves as Children's Music Director at Grosse Pointe Memorial Church and as a Director of Children's Theatre Programs at the Marquis Theatre in Northville.

**Monika Essen** (Set and Props Designer) is an award winning, nationally recognized artist and designer, and the recipient of the prestigious Detroit Free Press Lawrence DeVine Award for Outstanding Contribution to Theatre. She studied interior architecture and environmental design at Parsons School of Design NYC, and received her MFA in sceneography from the renowned Hilberry Repertory Co., attending on a full fellowship. She has designed sets, costumes and props for countless productions in theatre, opera and film. Currently she is the Resident Designer at the Michigan Opera Theatre having just designed sets, costumes, props and projections for the *Carmina Burana*, *The Medium*, and *Frida*. Additionally, she creates interiors and full sensory, multi-media environments for residential and commercial clients, including the Detroit Zoo. She also designs and creates a custom furniture line called "Mococo" with her husband Kurt Kastner at her company Epoque Design. You can see Monika's design work at [www.studioepoque.com](http://www.studioepoque.com).

**Alex Gay** (Lighting Designer) In addition to his role as the Assistant Technical Director/Assistant Lighting Designer for Michigan Opera Theatre, Alex freelances within the Michigan professional and educational theatre community. He most recently designed lights for *Yellowman* at Performance Network Theatre. Other recent design credits include lighting *Vanya and Sonia* and *Masha and Spike* at Tipping Point Theatre, *The Big Bang* at Williamston Theatre, *Mosaic Youth Theatre* of Detroit's *Hastings Street* (2013), and *Evil Dead: The Musical* at The City Theatre. Alex is a graduate of Eastern Michigan University and resides in Hazel Park, MI.

**Suzanne Hanna** (Costume Designer) Suzanne M. Hanna has been designing costumes for opera and theatre professionally for over 25 years, as well as having the pleasure of managing costume shops and building costume for theatre, opera and films. Her award winning designs have been presented on stage for Michigan Opera Theatre, Motor City Lyric Opera, Jewish Ensemble Theatre, Oakland

University and many others. Some of her favorite design projects are *The Barber Of Seville* (MOT), *HMS Pinafore* (MOTCC), *Angels in America* (New Studio Theatre), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (MCLO) to name a few. Ms. Hanna is a native Detroiter who has been the costume director for Michigan Opera Theatre for over a decade.

**Elizabeth Geck** (Hair and Makeup Designer) Elizabeth Geck has been coordinating the Michigan Opera Theatre wig and make-up crew for the last ten years, as well as assisting the Wig and Make-up designer for main stage opera productions. She has assisted with new productions of *Aida*, *Cyrano*, *Carmina Burana/The Medium*, *Margaret Garner*, and *Pearl Fishers*. She has also designed for the Michigan Opera Theatre's Children's Chorus productions of *The Very Last Green Thing*, *Brundibar*, and *The Maker of Illusions*. She recently completed work on the travelling production of *Frida*.

**Cary John Franklin** (Composer) Cary John Franklin, a composer and conductor, was educated in Minnesota at Macalester College and the University of Minnesota. He has studied with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Dominick Argento and Dale Warland. Other mentors include Philip Brunelle and William McGlaughlin. Franklin is a nationally recognized composer with commissions and performances from many of the leading ensembles in the United States. His work ranges from chamber music to orchestral, from choral writing to opera. Franklin has received commissions from the Dale Warland Singers, VocalEssence, Kansas City Symphony, Chanticleer, Washington National Opera, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, which commissioned his *The Very Last Green Thing* in 1992. Franklin is Music Director of the Civic Orchestra of Minneapolis and among his guest conducting invitations are the Minnesota Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, and Washington National Opera. Mr. Franklin has served four terms on the Board of the American Composers Forum, of which he is a past Chair, and has served as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts.

#### Call for Auditions

Auditions for the 2015-2016 season will take place on May 30, June 1 and June 6. For more information and schedule an audition, visit [www.motcc.org](http://www.motcc.org) or contact MOTCC Chorus Administrator, Twannette Nash at [tnash@motopera.org](mailto:tnash@motopera.org)



# Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus

## Children of the Present:

Melody Balos  
Shiloh Beaton  
Ryan Blankenburg  
Xaneveya Davidson  
Kristen Dubicki  
Eddie Eichenhorn  
Jaeden Footitt  
Jehnya Footitt  
Katherine Fuller  
Owen Grice  
Marielle Hill  
Emma McDonald  
Magdelynn Miller  
Rachel Miltimore  
Danielle Phillips  
Isabelle Ross  
Zayda Schneider  
Noah Trudeau  
Lauren Ward

## Children from the Past:

Maurice Barroso  
Alex Beaty  
Sienna Blazeveski  
Lacey Cooper  
Ingrid Crant  
Isabel Crant  
Portteia Davidson  
Cameron Frank  
Jayla Granger  
Emily MacKinnon  
Katherine Moses  
Aditya Nambiar  
Kristina Nash  
Amber Ohlsson  
Kevyn Roessler  
Laura Rosales  
SteFannie Savoy  
Gale Shrewsbury  
Caitlin Simonds  
Ava Swieczkowski  
Marcela Valdivieso  
Benjamin Ward

## Preparatory Chorus and Children of the Past:

Stephanie Barroso  
Alexandra Beck  
Emily Cooper  
Nina Georgeff  
Memphis Griffin  
Aspen Jacobsen  
Molly Levin  
Kathryn Migrin  
Natalie Nannoshi  
Nya Newsome  
Matteo Papadopoulos  
Clara Schwyn  
Mackenzie Taylor  
Trinity Vallejo  
Arsh Wasnik  
Natalie Watson  
Violet Whitmore  
Natalie Wilson  
Brigitte Zook



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

## MOTCC Staff

Suzanne Mallare Acton, Director  
Dianna Hochella, Assistant Director, Principal Chorus Conductor  
Annie Klark, Preparatory Chorus Conductor  
Twannette Nash, Chorus Administrator  
Joseph Jackson, Principal Chorus Accompanist  
John Pavik, Preparatory Chorus Accompanist



## EDUCATION

Michigan Opera Theatre Department of Community Programs offers a variety of educational programs for students and young professionals. To learn more about any of these programs go to [www.MichiganOpera.org](http://www.MichiganOpera.org) and click on Learning.

## Community Programs

### OPERETTA WORKSHOP

Director: Amy Malaney; Music Director: Joseph Jackson  
Operetta: *H.M.S. Pinafore* by Gilbert & Sullivan

Operetta Workshop is a three-week day camp for young people from ages 10 to 18 who are directed in acting, singing and dancing, as well as healthy voice care. The final performance of *H.M.S. Pinafore* will take place on the Detroit Opera House main stage. *Scholarships available*

For information on scholarships, please contact Pette Moore at (313) 237-3419 or [pmoore@motopera.org](mailto:pmoore@motopera.org).

Prerequisites: No previous experience necessary. No audition required. Ages 10-18

Meets: Monday – Friday, July 6-24, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. each day

Performance: Friday, July 24 at 6:30 p.m. (Main Stage)

Fee: \$475, *enrollment subject to availability.*

### CREATE AND PERFORM

June 22 - July 3, 2015

You will be amazed by what youngsters can “create and perform” in just two weeks!

Instructor: Karen V. DiChiera, Director of Community Programs; Educator and Composer

A two-week program in which students ages 8-18 use improvisation to create their own stories, music compositions and dances, culminating in a final performance in our Black Box Theater.

*Prerequisites: No previous experience necessary*

Ages 8-18

Meets June 22 - July 3, 2015, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.,

Monday - Friday

Fee: \$225, *enrollment subject to availability.*

### LENS ON THE CITY

July 20, 21, 22, and 24 (no class July 23)

Lens on the City is a three-day inter-generational learning experience. Adults and children (8 years to 108 years!), will partake in exclusive photo tours of various downtown Detroit locations.

Photographers, young and older, will also receive instruction on photography basics from a professional photographer. All photographers must bring their own cameras. Students must be accompanied by an adult. The \$75 fee covers workshop costs for one adult and up to three students ages 8 through 18.

*Prerequisites: Camera*

Age: 8 to adult

Meets: July 20, 21, 22, 24 (no class July 23), 9:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Fee: \$75 for three sessions, (The \$75 fee covers workshop costs for one adult and up to three students ages 8 through 18.)

For further information contact [pmoore@motopera.org](mailto:pmoore@motopera.org) or [mvondrak@motopera.org](mailto:mvondrak@motopera.org).



## Dance Education

### Detroit Opera House Dance Intensive with Eisenhower Dance

August 3-8, 2015, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Dancers 14 and older

Hosted at the Detroit Opera House

Contemporary Ballet- Jazz- Modern

Informal performance at the Detroit Opera House on August 8, 2015

Registration: \$350 (\$300 if registered on or before June 1)

Visit [www.eisenhowerdancecenter.org](http://www.eisenhowerdancecenter.org)

### Get Involved! Michigan Opera Theatre Volunteer Association Dance Council

Do you love dance and have a desire to support the arts by volunteering? Become a member of the MOTVA Dance Council. This is a group dedicated to sharing dance and building audiences at the Detroit Opera House. The Dance Council is in need of highly motivated dance lovers with new ideas willing to host gatherings, come up with new fundraising ideas and most of all enjoy dance in Detroit. For more information please contact Cheryl McIlhonn at [mcilhonn@comcast.net](mailto:mcilhonn@comcast.net).

### Enjoy Dance Film, Refreshments, and Discussion

Dance lovers from all over Detroit come together for dance films, popcorn, drink, and discussion on Tuesday evenings. All dance films take place at the Detroit Opera House in the Ford Center for Arts and Learning. A \$10 donation is payable at the door, and this includes the film presentation, refreshments and beverages. No reservations are required. For more information, call 313.237.3251.

### DANCE FILMS

Apr. 14, 2015 — Balanchine in Montreal (Historic performances by NYCB from the 1950s and 60s.)

May 19, 2015 — The Winter's Tale (Christopher Wheeldon translates Shakespeare into dance.)

Choreography: Christopher Wheeldon,  
Music: Joby Talbot, The Royal Ballet



# Volunteers

Dear Friends of Michigan Opera Theatre,

Greetings from the MOT Volunteer Association (MOTVA) as we begin our 2015 Spring Season!

Opera as an art form and Michigan Opera Theatre are very important to me, and I know to all of you. We can be extremely proud of our world-class productions which showcase some of the most diverse opera and dance series in the country. These performances require the collaboration of many, especially those who help out behind the scenes. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our company.

If you are not yet a volunteer, please consider joining us! Volunteering is a great way to meet other interesting and involved people. Our key volunteer groups do everything from ushering and guiding tours, to hosting events and planning sold-out fundraisers.

Your tax-deductible MOTVA membership entitles you to participate in our individual volunteer groups. For membership information please view the MOTVA webpage at [www.michiganopera.org/support-us/volunteering/join-motva](http://www.michiganopera.org/support-us/volunteering/join-motva), or call Christina Wagner at (313) 237-3236. Christina would be very happy to discuss volunteer opportunities with you, and connect your interests with the appropriate volunteer group.

To those of you who currently support us through generous gifts of time and resources, I offer my sincere thanks.

I hope you enjoy the 2014-2015 season. We look forward to working with you and thank you for your interest and involvement in the Michigan Opera Theatre Volunteer Association.

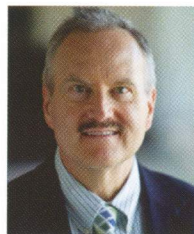
Terry Shea, President, MOTVA

## MOTVA Executive Committee

Terry Shea, President  
Cheryl McIlhon, Vice President  
Nancy Moore, Secretary  
Steven Marlette, Past President  
Dodie David, Past President  
Betty Brooks, Past President  
Gloria Clark, Past President  
Gwen Bowlby, Treasurer

## MOTVA Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

Dominic Arellano,  
*Young OperaHouse Council*  
Helen Arnoldi-Rowe, *Divas/Divos*  
Kathie Booth, *Ushers*  
Gloria Clark, *Opera League*  
Dodie David, *Opera League*  
Leo Dovel, *Boutique*  
Robert Hammond, *Membership*  
Don Jensen, *Special Events and Soirees*  
Amy Jidov, *Special Events*  
Annette Marchesi, *Publicity*  
Myrna Mazure, *Operations & Ambassadors*  
Cheryl McIlhon, *Dance Council*  
Curtis Posuniak, *Board Member*



## BravoBravo! 2014 Co-Chairs

Megan Davis  
Olga Gamburg  
Will Robinson

## 2014 OPERAtors

Helen Arnoldi-Rowe  
Lee Barthel  
Harriet Berg  
Gwen Bowlby  
Gloria Clark  
Dodie David  
Rex Dotson  
Marianne Endicott  
Sisinio Ferandos  
Barbara Frankel  
Alan Israel  
Amy Jidov  
Delphine Kerney  
Max Lepler  
Steven Marlette  
John Novak

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Music with**

**Dave Wagner  
and  
Chris Felcyn**

**Weekdays  
6 am - 7 pm**

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# Michigan Opera Theatre Donor Honor Roll

Michigan Opera Theatre gratefully acknowledges the generous donors who made major general operating support and restricted gifts of \$25,000 and above between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014. Their support plays an integral part in the company's financial stability which is necessary for producing quality grand opera, dance and award-winning educational activities.

## \$200,000 and above Ford Motor Company Fund

**\$100,000 and above**  
Mandell and Madeleine Berman Foundation  
Stuart & Maxine Frankel  
General Motors Foundation  
Masco Corporation Foundation  
The Kresge Foundation  
Karen & R. Jamison Williams

**\$50,000 and above**  
Chrysler Corporation  
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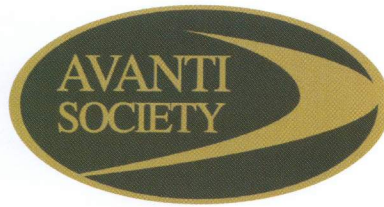
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