



# Esther Myron WILSON

## VOCAL COMPETITION

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**Saturday, August 31 2024**  
**The Paramount Theatre**

**Semi-Final Round: 2PM-4PM**  
**Final Round: 7PM-9:30PM**

WORLD CLASS OPERA. MADE IN IOWA.



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DIRECTOR THADDEUS ENNEN

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ESTHER & MYRON WILSON

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**FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR:**

## WELCOME TO CEDAR RAPIDS OPERA



Dear Friends,

Welcome, esteemed guests, to the *Esther and Myron Wilson Vocal Competition* at Cedar Rapids Opera. It is an absolute pleasure to have you with us for this extraordinary event celebrating the exceptional talents of emerging vocalists from across the nation. This competition holds a special place in our hearts, as it honors the legacy of Esther Wilson, whose passion for the arts and unwavering support for young musicians have left an indelible mark on our community.

Today, we gather to witness the culmination of months of dedication and hard work by these talented performers. Each competitor brings a unique voice and story, offering us a glimpse into the future of opera and vocal performance. We are proud to provide a platform for these artists to showcase their skills and to support their artistic journeys as they strive for excellence in their craft.

As you enjoy the performances, I invite you to reflect on the power of music to inspire, connect, and uplift. It is through events like this that we continue to foster a vibrant cultural landscape and nurture the next generation of artists. Thank you for joining us in this celebration of talent and for your continued support of Cedar Rapids Opera. We are grateful for your presence and hope you enjoy a day of unforgettable music and artistry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thaddeus Ennen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Thaddeus Ennen  
GENERAL DIRECTOR

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# Edward Brennan

**Tenor | New Lenox, IL**

Hailed as a “powerhouse” by the Post and Courier, Edward Brennan is an American Tenor known for his “fierce” dramatic interpretations and “baritone” vocal quality. He is establishing himself in the

world of opera as one of the next generations dramatic singers, making debuts as Canio in *I Pagliacci*, Turridu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and the title role in Wagner’s *Lohengrin* since 2022.

Since his professional debut with The Utah Festival Opera in 2017, Edward has actively performed with companies like Opera MODO, Cedar Rapids Opera, Opera West, and Charleston Opera Theater. Edward has been recognized in competitions across the country including the Gerda Lissner Foundation Competition, the Nicholas Zachary Competition, the Michael Ballam International Opera Competition, as well as the Nicholas Loren Vocal Competition sponsored by the Holland Chorale. He has been a celebrated soloist with orchestras including The Charleston Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia da Camera, Sinfonietta bel Canto, The Danville Symphony Orchestra, and the Blackburn College Orchestra and Chorale.

Edward is a proud graduate of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. While a student, he studied with Metropolitan Opera singers including Jerold Siena and Nathan Gunn. Appearing in most productions over his years there, the most memorable were his portrayals of Danilo in *The Merry Widow* and Rapunzel’s Prince in *Into the Woods*. In 2018, Edward returned to Champaign to perform as a soloist with the Sinfonia de Camera alongside Nathan Gunn and Dawn Harris in a celebrated production of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Pirates of Penzance*.

In 2019, Edward joined The Institute for Young Dramatic Voices. While there, he studied with Mezzo-Soprano Dolora Zajick and music staff from the Deutsche Oper in Berlin and La Scala in Milan. Edward moved to Charleston, South Carolina in 2020. After relocating to South Carolina, he joined the staff of Charleston Opera Theater where he is now the Director of Development and Operations.



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Edward Brennan

### **“Hai ben ragione”**

This aria comes from the one-act opera *Il Tabarro*, by Giacomo Puccini.

In this aria, Luigi, who is a stevedore who works for his lover's husband, laments the mediocrity of his life. In the following scene Georgetta, Luigi's lover, sings that she would like a life on land rather than sea, and return together to their homeland, Belleville.

*Il Tabarro* is the first of the three operas known as Il Trittico. Of the three operas, it has the darkest, most somber subject matter and in that way balances the comic story and characters of *Gianni Schicchi*, the third opera of Il Trittico.

*Premiere: The Metropolitan Opera, New York, NY (1918)*

### **“Siegmond heiß ich”**

From Act 1, Scene 3 of *Die Walküre*, by Richard Wagner.

Siegmond and Sieglinde discover that they are twin brother and sister. In this aria Siegmund identifies himself as Siegmund. He pulls the sword from the tree, one that no one else has been able to dislodge. After this feat, the two passionately embrace and sing of their love for one another and the act concludes.

*Premiere: National Theater Munich (1870)*

### **“Прости небесное создание”**

This aria comes from *The Queen of Spades*, by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

Also known as Herman's aria, the character sings “Forgive me, celestial creature, for interrupting you. Forgive, but do not reject my confession. Have pity. I'm dying.” The opera is based on a short story by Alexander Pushkin.

*Premiere: St. Petersburg, Russia (1890)*



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Edward Brennan

### **“Niun mi tema”**

From Act 4, the final scene of *Otello*, by Giuseppe Verdi.

The Venetian general, Otello, has just murdered his wife, Desdemona, whom he wrongly suspects of having been unfaithful to him. He sings that no one should fear him now, this as he draws another knife and kills himself. *Otello* is Verdi's penultimate opera.

*Premiere: La Scala, Milan, Italy (1887)*

### **“Vesti la giubba”**

From the end of Act 1 of *Pagliacci*, by Ruggero Leoncavallo.

Canio, a clown in a traveling commedia dell'arte theatrical company, has just found out about his wife Nedda's infidelity. In this aria, he puts on his clown costume to get ready for the show. The translation of the title is “put on the costume.” It is an early operatic representation of the tragic clown and of the adage “the show must go on.”

*Premiere: Milan, Italy (1892)*

### **“Who am I”**

From Act 1 of *Les Misérables* by Claude-Michel Schönberg.

The musical is set in France beginning in 1815. A man who looks like Jean Valjean has been arrested and is about to go to trial for breaking parole. The real Jean Valjean realizes that this case of mistaken identity could free him forever, but he is not willing to see an innocent man go to prison in his place. He confesses his identity to the court in this scene.

*Premiere: Paris (1980)*





# Edward Graves

**Tenor | Oxon Hill, MD**

Praised by Opera News as a tenor of “stunningly sweet tone,” Edward Graves is a recent graduate of the Adler Fellowship at San Francisco Opera, where he performed as Stone/Eunuch in Bright

Sheng’s *Dreams of the Red Chamber*, Gastone in *La traviata*, and covered the roles of Alfredo in *La traviata* and Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*. Edward earned critical praise as Anatol in Barber’s *Vanessa* at the Spoleto Festival USA and sang Rodolfo in SFO’s *Bohème Out of the Box*, covered the title role in *Omar*, and sang Ruiz in *Il Trovatore*. In 2024, he makes role and company debuts as the Duke in *Rigoletto* (Opera San Jose), Alfredo in *La traviata* (Opera Tampa), Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* (Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera), Lt. B.F. Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* (Anchorage Opera), and Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Opera in Williamsburg). He proudly makes his Metropolitan Opera debut as 1st Armored Man in *The Magic Flute* and will return in 2025 to cover the roles of 1st Armored Man and 2nd Priest in *Die Zauberflöte*.

Previous engagements include Handel’s *Messiah* (Virginia Symphony), Policeman 2 in Tesori’s *Blue* (Detroit Opera), and the title role in *Judas Maccabaeus* (Berkshire Choral International). His appearance in the Merola Opera Program’s *What The Heart Desires* earned a San Francisco Chronicle rave for his “superbly bright, clarion sound.” Edward has performed Rinuccio in a double bill of Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi* and Ching’s Buoso’s *Ghost* (Detroit Opera), Robbins in *Porgy and Bess* (Seattle Opera), and roles in *Blue*, *Oklahoma!* and *Porgy and Bess* at the Glimmerglass Festival. As a Baumgartner Studio Artist at Florentine Opera, he performed roles in *The Merry Widow*, *Venus and Adonis/Dido and Aeneas*, and *The Magic Flute*.

Graves was a 2022 San Francisco District winner of the Metropolitan Opera’s Laffont Competition. Following his bachelor studies in Voice Performance at Towson University, he received his Performer Diploma and Master of Music in Voice Performance from Indiana University’s Jacobs School of Music.

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## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Edward Graves

### **“Se all’impero amici Dei”**

This aria comes from *La clemenza di Tito*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Set in Ancient Rome, this aria comes from Act 2. Emperor Tito has just signed the death warrant for Sesto who has just been found guilty of burning down the Capitol. Tito ponders the sentence of death and tears up the warrant, concluding that he would rather be remembered for his mercy rather than his revenge.

*Premiere: Estates Theatre, Prague (1791)*

### **“Ah la paterna mano”**

This aria comes from Act 4 of *Macbeth* by Giuseppe Verdi.

This opera is the first time that Verdi set a Shakespearean play. Act 4 is set near the Birnam Wood along the borders of England and Scotland. This aria reveals Macduff’s determination to avenge the death of his wife and children who were murdered by Macbeth.

*Premiere: Teatro della Pergola, Florence (1847)*

### **“Tombe degl’avi miei... Fra poco a me ricovero”**

This aria comes from Act 2 of *Lucia di Lammermoor* by Gaetano Donizetti.

After learning that Lucia is dying, Edgardo is ready to stab himself with Enrico’s sword. Edgardo sings “Tombs of my fathers, last son of an unhappy race, receive me, I implore you. My anger’s brief fire is quenched...I will fall on my foe’s sword.”

*Premiere: Teatro di San Carlo, Naples (1835)*



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Edward Graves

### **“Pourquoi me réveiller”**

This aria comes from *Werther*, by Jules Massenet.

*Werther* is based on the novel “The Sorrows of Young Werther” by Goethe. Charlotte is the object of Werther’s desire. Before this aria she interested him in a book by Ossian, one that he adored and one that he started to translate. The words of the poem fit his growing despair. Ossian’s words are the text for this aria.

*Premiere: Imperial Theater Hofoper, Vienna (1892)*

### **“Outside this house”**

This aria comes from *Vanessa*, by Samuel Barber.

The action takes place at Vanessa’s country house in 1905. Anatol and Vanessa had been lovers twenty years before. Anatol seduces Erica in this aria, promising to show her more of the world than she has ever seen.

*Premiere: The Metropolitan Opera, New York, NY (1958)*

### **“Lonely House”**

This aria comes from Act 1 of *Street Scene*, by Kurt Weill.

*Street Scene* is set in 1946 in a lower East Side tenement on two brutally hot summer days. Sam is 19 years old, having recently graduated from college. He is in love with his neighbor Rose. After all the neighbors have gone to bed, Sam stays on the street and reveals his crippling loneliness.

*Premiere: Philadelphia, PA (1946)*





# Chuanyuan Liu

**Countertenor | Changchun, China**

Praised for his “otherworldly flourish” (The Wall Street Journal) and “intense stage presence” (Classical Voice North America), Chinese countertenor Chuanyuan Liu is proving himself a strong presence amidst

the new generation of countertenors.

Chuanyuan’s recent season highlights include Polinesso in Ariodante and The Priest/The Medium in In A Grove at Pittsburgh Opera, Man Under the Arch/Hotel Clerk in The Hours (concert version) at The Philadelphia Orchestra, Song Liling (cover) in M. Butterfly at Santa Fe Opera, César in Bel Canto at Aspen Opera Theater, and Amore in Orpheus and Erica: a Deaf Opera at Victory Hall Opera. In the 23-24 season, he performed the title role in the world premiere of Monkey at White Snake Projects, participated in Renée Fleming’s SongStudio at Carnegie Hall, and made his San Diego debut with Opera Neo as Aci in the American premiere of Polifemo by Nicola Porpora. In the 24-25 season, Chuanyuan looks forward to debuts with Kansas City Symphony, INseries Opera, Hudson Hall and more.

Chuanyuan is a two-time National Semifinalist in the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, and has won awards from Opera Index, Pasadena Vocal Competition, Camille Coloratura Awards, the Gerda Lissner Foundation, Opera at Florham, amongst others. He holds graduate degrees from University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and Bard College Conservatory of Music.



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Chuanyuan Liu

### **“Dawn, still darkness”**

This aria comes from *Flight*, by Jonathan Dove.

*Flight* takes place in the departure lounge of an unspecified airport where travelers are stranded for one night and the next morning. One of the characters is a Refugee. In this aria, the Refugee tells of his desire to be reunited with his brother. The story was inspired by an Iranian refugee Mehran Karimi who lived for 18 years in Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris.

*Premiere: Glyndebourne Opera, England (1998)*

### **“Se l'inganno”**

This aria is from Act 2 of *Ariodante*, by Georg Frideric Handel.

The opera is set in medieval Scotland. Polinesso, Duke of Albany, is in love with Princess Ginevra who does not share his affection. Dalinda is in love with Polinesso and Polinesso uses her in a plot to thwart his rival Prince Ariodante so that he can capture the hand of Ginevra. The plot involves hidden identities. In this aria, Polinesso expresses his happiness at the way his plan is proceeding.

*Premiere: Covent Garden Theatre, London (1735)*

### **“Nell'attendere il mio bene”**

This aria comes from Act 2, Scene 5 of *Polifemo*, by Nicola Porpora.

*Polifemo* is based on mythological stories involving the cyclops Polyphemus who kills and devours humans. Aci is a mortal who is in love with the goddess Galatea. In this aria, Aci promises to meet Galatea later. He affirms his love for Galatea and overcomes his fears, even though Polyphemus may eat him because he, too, loves Galatea.

*Premiere: King's Theatre, London (1735)*



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Chuanyuan Liu

### **“Ich lade gern mir Gäste ein”**

This aria comes from Act 2 of *Die Fledermaus*, by Johann Strauss II.

Prince Orlofsky welcomes everyone to his masquerade ball in this strophic aria. This event is one of the high points of the season. Each of the characters introduced in act 1 is attending the ball, each with his identity concealed in one way or another.

*Premiere: Theater an dem Wien (Vienna), (1874)*

### **“Stille amare”**

This aria comes from Act 3 of *Tolomeo* by George Frideric Handel.

The opera is a fictionalization of parts of the life of Ptolemy IX Lathyros, King of Egypt, and is set in Cyprus, around 108 BC. Tolomeo (Ptolemy) thinks he has been betrayed and has taken what he thinks is a lethal dose of the poison. Before he passes out, he describes the effect that the poison is having. Sometimes this is known as the ‘Poison Aria.’

*Premiere: King’s Theatre, London (1728)*

### **“I’ve got you under my skin”**

The song is by Cole Porter and first appeared in the film *Born to Dance*.

The song was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Original Song in 1936, but it did not win the award. Subsequently hundreds of artists have recorded it, most notably Frank Sinatra. In 1966 it became a Top 10 hit for the Four Seasons.

*Premiere: 1936*





# Amy Maples

**Soprano | Chattanooga, TN**

Soprano Amy Maples, praised for her “impeccable poise and time-stopping expressivity” (Joseph Newsome, Voix des Arts), is based in Golden, CO. Renowned for her crystalline coloratura and

compelling theatricality, Amy has distinguished herself both as a concert soloist and operatic performer. She has collaborated with orchestras such as the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Brevard Symphony Orchestra, Bangor Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestra Kentucky.

A prominent guest artist in Colorado, Amy has performed with Opera Theatre of the Rockies, Opera Colorado, Central City Opera, Loveland Opera Theatre, Boulder Opera, Opera Fort Collins, the Colorado Springs Philharmonic, Colorado Chamber Orchestra, The Larimer Chorale, Art Song Colorado, and Parish House Baroque.

Her operatic roles include Cunegonde in *Candide*, Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Lucy in *The Telephone*, and Frasquita in *Carmen*. She has also portrayed Thérèse in *Les Mamelles de Tiresias*, Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Dorinda in *Orlando*, Le Feu in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, Lucia in *The Rape of Lucretia*, Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas*, Lizzie “Baby Doe” Tabor in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, and the titular roles in *Lakmé*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Manon*.

Amy's meticulous preparation and rhythmic accuracy have led her to be featured in regional premieres of modern works, including Paul Elwood's *Hedy Lamarr: Snow White Under the Knife*, Joseph Schwanter's *Sparrows*, Paul Fowler's *The Pouring of Light* and *Behold the Man* (Silvia), and Stephen Mager's *Illuminations*. This April, she premiered the role of Younger Alyce in *Glory Denied* with Art Song Colorado.

In 2022, Amy launched “Contemplative Concerts.” Her project *Femmeexpressionist* highlights works by women composers and Impressionist artists. Amy earned her MM in Voice Performance from Florida State University with tenor Stanford Olsen and her BM from Lee University in Tennessee.



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Amy Maples

### **“Martern aller Arten”**

This aria comes from Act 2 of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

The Pasha enters, demands Konstanze's love, and threatens to use force, but she resolutely rejects him in this aria: “Tortures of every kind may await me, I scorn agony and pain. Nothing will shake me.”

*Premiere: Burgtheater, Vienna (1782)*

### **“Je suis encore”**

This aria is from Act 1 of *Manon* by Jules Massenet.

The young and fragile Manon is arriving in Amiens in a carriage. She is being met by her cousin Lescaut and other of his friends. This is Manon's first journey alone, and her destination is the convent. Stepping out of the carriage she is somewhat confused, singing “I'm completely dizzy and numb all over. Forgive me.”

*Premiere: Opéra-Comique, Paris (1884)*

### **“Regnava nel silenzio”**

This aria comes from Act 1 of *Lucia di Lammermoor* by Gaetano Donizetti.

Lucia sings “The night, deep and dark, reigned in the silence...” to her maid Alisa. She reveals that she has seen the ghost of a girl who was killed by a jealous rival family, the Ravenswoods. Alisa says that this is a warning that she should give up her love for Edgardo.

*Premiere: Teatro di San Carlo, Naples (1835)*



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Amy Maples

### **“Arriere! Je réchauffe les bons”**

This aria comes from *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (The Child and the Spells), by Maurice Ravel.

In this aria the Fire come out of the chimney and chides the child for his behavior. The Fire threatens to burn naughty children in this aria. “I’m afraid,” sings the child in response to the Fire.

*Premiere: Monte Carlo (1925)*

### **“The Silver Aria”**

This aria comes from *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, by Douglas Moore.

The opera is based on the lives of wealthy mine owner Horace Tabor, his wife Augusta, and “Baby” Doe Tabor, Horace’s second wife. Horace falls in love with Baby Doe, divorces Augusta, and marries Baby Doe. At their wedding she sings the Silver Aria when the conversation turns to the silver standard.

*Premiere: Central City Opera, Colorado (1956)*

### **“If I were a Bell”**

This song comes from the musical *Guys and Dolls*, by Frank Loesser.

Sister Sarah sings this song after Sky Masterson has taken her to Havana for dinner and drinks. They fall in love with one another and Sarah sings this song to describe her happiness.

*Premiere: 46th Street Theatre, now the Richard Rodgers Theatre, (1950)*





# Jana McIntyre

*Soprano | Santa Barbara, CA*

Soprano Jana McIntyre begins the 24/25 season in concert with The Orchestra Now for Strauss' Four Last Songs and Mahler 4. She will return to the Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra for Haydn's

Creation as well as Opera Santa Barbara for Daughter of the Regiment. Jana will debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's Dream performing at Disney Hall, Carnegie Hall, and Teatro Mayor Julio Mario Santa Domingo in Bogotá. She will also debut with Opera Theatre Saint Louis as Tytania in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Additional engagements to be announced in upcoming months.

Recent engagements include Carmina Burana with the Seattle Symphony, New Jersey Symphony and Santa Barbara Symphony as well as Aminta in Bard Summerscape's production of Die Schweigsame Frau by Richard Strauss, Semele with Opera Santa Barbara, Adele in Die Fledermaus with the Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera, and Daphne with the American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. Ms. McIntyre has collaborated with companies such as the San Francisco Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Arizona Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, and others.

Ms. McIntyre is a George and Nora London Foundation Competition top prize winner as well as a finalist in The Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition. Jana also holds awards from the Gerda Lissner Foundation, Giulio Gari Foundation, Jensen Foundation, the Santa Fe Opera, the Shoshana Foundation and the Art Song Preservation Society.



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Jana McIntyre

### **“Dal tuo gentil sembiante”**

This aria comes from the opera *Ascanio in Alba*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

The character Fauno, a shepherd, sings this aria. The opera takes place in mythical times and is set in Alba Longa, near Rome. The story of the opera revolves around Venus and Ascaino, the son she had with Aeneas.

*Premiere: Teatro Regio Ducale, Milan (1771)*

### **“Regnava nel silenzio”**

This aria comes from Act 1 of *Lucia di Lammermoor* by Gaetano Donizetti.

Lucia sings “The night, deep and dark, reigned in the silence...” to her maid Alisa. She reveals that she has seen the ghost of a girl who was killed by a jealous rival family, the Ravenswoods. Alisa says that this is a warning that she should give up her love for Edgardo.

*Premiere: Teatro di San Carlo, Naples (1835)*

### **“Wenn sich die Menschen”**

This aria comes from Act 2 of *Lulu*, by Alban Berg.

In this aria, Lulu, a well-kept Viennese mistress who descends to a London streetwalker during the opera, asks for a divorce: “If men have killed themselves for my sake, that doesn’t lower my value. You know as well why you made me your wife as I knew why I took you for husband.”

*Premiere: Vienna (1935)*



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Jana McIntyre

### **“His Name is Jan”**

This aria is from *Breaking the Waves*, by Missy Mazzoli.

The opera involves Jan, a worker on an oil rig. Jan has an accident that leaves him almost totally paralyzed. He encourages his wife, Bess, to have sex with other men and to tell him of her sexual encounters. She reluctantly does what he asks and with each sexual report she gives him, his health improves. The final resolution is when she is raped and dies, and he is restored to full health.

*Premiere: Philadelphia, PA (2016)*

### **“A vos jeux mes amis... partagez-vous mes fleurs”**

This aria comes from Act 4 of *Hamlet*, by Ambroise Thomas.

Ophelia sings this in a state of emotional turmoil: “To your games, my friends, allow me, please to take part!” She recounts her morning escape from the palace, and further expresses her unwavering love and affection for Hamlet. This is Ophelia’s mad scene where she ends up drowning herself.

*Premiere: Paris Opera (1868)*

### **“A Wonderful Guy”**

This song comes from Act 1 of *South Pacific*, by Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein II.

The action of the musical takes place on an island in the south Pacific during World War II. Emile de Becque, the wealthy plantation farmer from the island, has just proposed marriage to nurse Ensign Nellie Forbush. She expresses her happiness in this song.

*Premiere: Majestic Theatre, New York, NY (1947)*





# Brian James Myer

**Baritone | Las Vegas, NV**

Baritone Brian James Myer, praised for his distinctive voice and compelling portrayals, has an exciting 2023-2024 season ahead. He will portray Rey in *Before Night Falls* with Opera Southwest, return to the role of Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Tri-Cities Opera, and be featured at Opera Las Vegas' 25th Anniversary Gala. This season, he also presents Wolf's *Spanisches Liederbuch* with the Brooklyn Art Song Society and debuts as Biboldo Youssef in *Llantos 1492* (world premiere) with Opera Southwest.

In the 2022-23 season, Myer was Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera Orlando and Norwalk Symphony, Davis Miller in *Approaching Ali* at Opera Las Vegas, and Milcom Negley in *The Last American Hammer* with Opera Grand Rapids. He also debuted as Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Tri-Cities Opera and Syracuse Opera. On the concert stage, he joined Symphony San Jose for *Carmina Burana* and performed English Art Song with the Brooklyn Art Song Society.

Previously, Myer was Alberto in *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* (NYC Opera), covered Marcellus/Player 4 in Brett Dean's *Hamlet* at The Metropolitan Opera, and debuted as Masetto in *Don Giovanni* with Berkshire Opera Festival.

In 2019, Myer made role debuts as Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus* at Opera San José and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* with Syracuse Opera. He also performed with New York City Opera in *Dear Erich* and *Stonewall*. His other credits include appearances with Hawaii Symphony, Henderson Symphony, and American Lyric Theater, among others. Myer's concert repertoire spans Mozart, Milhaud, Bach, Rutter, and Brahms.

Myer holds Bachelor's degrees in Music Education and Romance Languages from the University of Nevada Las Vegas and a Master's in Vocal Performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has received accolades from various competitions and remains active in music education and outreach.



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Brian James Myer

### **“L’orage s’est calmé”**

This aria comes from Act 3 of *The Pearl Fishers* by George Bizet.

The opera is set in ancient Ceylon. Zurga, head fisherman, sings “The storm has quietened down, the winds are already silent. And like them, tempers are cooling down.” He sings this after he has ordered the execution of Leila, his former lover, and Nadir, at the end of the previous act.

*Premiere: Lyric Theatre, Paris (1863)*

### **“Sibillar gli angui d’Aletto”**

This aria comes from Act 1 of *Rinaldo*, by George Frideric Handel.

The opera takes place during the First Crusade in 1099 in Jerusalem. Argante, Saracen king of Jerusalem sings “The hissing of the snakes of Alecto, and the howling of the voracious Scylla, I seem to hear all around me,” as Goffredo is invading Jerusalem holding Argante and his troops in siege.

*Premiere: Queen’s Theatre in Haymarket, London (1711)*

### **“Come un’ape”**

This aria comes from Act 1 of *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella), by Gioachino Rossini.

Dandini, valet to the Prince, sings “Like a bee on April days, it goes flying light and playful. He runs to the lily, then jumps to the rose, sweet a flower to look for itself.” Here he gleefully watches the downfall of Magnifico, Clorinada, and Tisbe.

*Premiere: Teatro Valle, Rome (1817)*



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Brian James Myer

### **“Hai già vinta la causa”**

This aria comes from Act 3 of *Le nozze di Figaro*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

The Count is trying to bed Figaro's fiancé, Suzanna, using the droit de seigneur. He realizes that the Countess, Figaro, and Suzanna are plotting against him, and he sings this: “I’ve fallen into a trap! The traitors! I’ll punish them so! The sentence will be at my pleasure.”

*Premiere: Burgtheater, Vienna (1786)*

### **“Uzhel ta samaja Tatiana”**

This aria comes from Act 3 of *Eugene Onegin* by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

Onegin is at a ball in St. Petersburg where he sees his lost love, Tatiana, now happily married to another man. He sings of his regret at rejecting her love and is surprised at how deep his emotions are for her.

*Premiere: Moscow (1879)*

### **“Where Is The Life That Late I Led”**

This song comes from Act 2 of *Kiss Me, Kate* by Cole Porter.

The musical involves the production of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. The character Fred Graham who is the director and producer, is featured with his ex-wife and leading lady, Lilli Vanessi, and their on-and off-stage conflicts and romance.

*Premiere: New Century Theatre, New York, NY (1948)*





# Gemma Nha

**Soprano | Sydney, Australia**

Korean-Australian soprano Gemma Nha, hailed as a “rising star” by Dong-A Ilbo, is a first-year artist at the Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Ryan Opera Center. This season, she debuts as the Page in *Rigoletto*, reprises Barbarina, and performs in Missy Mazzoli’s *The Listeners*. In the 23/24 season, she made notable role debuts at Juilliard Opera as Ruth Baldwin in *Later the Same Evening* and Florida in *Erismena*. Gemma also debuted with the Albany Symphony at Troy Savings Bank Music Hall and performed at Carnegie Hall, winning the Gerda Lissner Foundation Lieders/Song Competition. Recently, she became the first female to win First Prize in the Voice cycle of the 18th Seoul International Music Competition and was a Nationalist Semifinalist in the 2024 Laffont Metropolitan Opera Competition.

Previously, she was an Apprentice Singer at Santa Fe Opera and debuted as Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Volksoper Wien. Her other credits include La Conversa in *Suor Angelica* (Juilliard Opera), covering Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* (Juilliard Opera), Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* (Schlosstheater Schönbrunn), and Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel* (PlusOpera). In concert, she has performed Händel’s *Dixit Dominus*, *Messiah*, and Bach’s *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben*.

In musical theatre, Gemma debuted as Tuptim in *The King and I* at Seefestspiele Mörbisch and played roles like Trix in *The Drowsy Chaperone* and Meg in *7 Little Australians*. She also performed with Patti Lupone on her 2018 *Don’t Monkey with Broadway* tour at Sydney Opera House. Gemma has excelled in competitions, including the Gerda Lissner Foundation and the Joan Sutherland & Richard Bonyngé Foundation awards, and was a 2020 finalist in the Lotte Lenya Competition.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Gesang from the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna and a Master of Music from the Juilliard School, where she was a Toulmin Scholar and Kovner Fellow.



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Gemma Nha

### **“A vos jeux mes amis... partagez-vous mes fleurs”**

This aria comes from Act 4 of *Hamlet*, by Ambroise Thomas.

Ophelia sings this in a state of emotional turmoil: “To your games, my friends, allow me, please to take part!” She recounts her morning escape from the palace, and further expresses her unwavering love and affection for Hamlet. This is Ophelia’s mad scene where she ends up drowning herself.

*Premiere: Paris Opera (1868)*

### **“Caro nome”**

This aria comes from Act 1 of *Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi.

Rigoletto’s young and virginal daughter, Gilda, sings of the man she has fallen in love with. It is the Duke disguising himself as Gualtier Maldè, a student, whom she has met; he plans on molesting her. In her innocence she sings “Sweet name, you who made my heart throb for the first time...”

*Premiere: La Fenice, Venice (1851)*

### **“Ich bin Euer Liebden sehr verbunden”**

This aria comes from Act 2 of *Der Rosenkavalier*, by Richard Strauss.

The young Octavian presents a silver rose to Sophie and immediately they become entranced with one another even though Sophie is pledged to marry Faninal, and Octavian is lovers with the Marschallin. Sophie sings, “It is as sweet as a greeting from Heaven itself,” as she smells the rose.

*Premiere: Dresden (1911)*



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Gemma Nha

### **“Regnava nel silenzio”**

This aria comes from Act 1 of *Lucia di Lammermoor* by Gaetano Donizetti.

Lucia sings “The night, deep and dark, reigned in the silence...” to her maid Alisa. She reveals that she has seen the ghost of a girl who was killed by a jealous rival family, the Ravenswoods. Alisa says that this is a warning that she should give up her love for Edgardo.

*Premiere: Teatro di San Carlo, Naples (1835)*

### **“Non monsieur mon mari”**

This aria is from Act 1 of *Les mamellese de Tirésias* by Francis Poulenc.

Theresa sings “No, sir my husband, you cannot make me do what you want. I am a feminist, and I do not recognize the authority of the man. From now on I will do as I please, it’s been long enough that men have been doing what they please.” She sings this as she becomes a man as her breasts become balloons and float away.

*Premiere: Opera-Comique, Paris (1947)*

### **“The Glamorous Life”**

This song is from Act 1 of *A Little Night Music* by Stephen Sondheim.

The setting is 1900, Sweden. Desiree Armfeld is an aging actress with a daughter, Fredricka, who wants to spend more time with her mother. But Desiree would rather continue her somewhat has-been career and have her daughter live with her own mother, Madam Armfeld, hereby allowing her to have a more glamorous life.

*Premiere: The Schubert Theater, New York, NY (1973)*





# Jeremiah Sanders

**Baritone | Marion, IN**

Described by the Herald Times as “a hulk ... with robust voice and a flair for comedy,” baritone Jeremiah Sanders is quickly rising as one of the most engaging artists in the field. Sanders grew up singing in church

choir with his madea and went on to study voice at Manchester University, Butler University, and Indiana University.

Now, Sanders consistently finds success on the competition circuit, in recital, and on the operatic stage. Sanders has performed with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Lima Symphony Orchestra, Lakes Area Music Festival, Opera Saratoga, Des Moines Metro Opera, Minnesota Opera, and Union Avenue Opera. Previously, Sanders won the Kurt Weill Award in the Lotte Lenya Competition, secured district wins with the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition in Kansas City and Indianapolis, won 1st place in the Opera Ebony Voice Competition, and 1st place in the Friends of the Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Competition.

Sanders’ operatic sensibilities range from bel canto to contemporary repertoire, recently performing Marcello in *La bohème* with Minnesota Opera, Papa Jay in Minnesota Opera’s New Works Initiative, and makes a role debut as Leporello in *Don Giovanni* with Madison Opera. An avid recitalist, Sanders enjoys interpreting the works of Romantic, 20th century, and contemporary composers.



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Jeremiah Sanders

### **“A dream wasted”**

This aria comes from *Highway 1, USA*, by William Grant Still.

The main character Bob sings this aria; he owns a gas station and works very hard to support his younger brother Nate's quest to get an education. After graduation, Bob's wife Mary bristles at having to continue to support Nate who has turned out to be a freeloader.

*Premiere: Coral Gables High School, Florida (1963)*

### **“Cruda funesta smania”**

This aria comes from Act 1 of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, by Gaetano Donizetti.

Enrico sings “A cruel, deadly frenzy, you have roused in my heart! Too, too horrible.” Here he re-affirms his family's long-standing hatred of the Ravenswood family. His sister, Lucia, is in love with Edgardo of Ravenswood, and Enrico attempts to put a stop to their assignments.

*Premiere: Teatro di San Carlo, Naples (1835)*

### **“È sogno o realtà”**

This aria comes from Act 2 of Giuseppe Verdi's last opera, *Falstaff*.

Ford is convinced that his wife is soon to cuckhold him after he learns that Falstaff has arranged to secretly meet Alice, Ford's wife. He sings “Is it a dream or reality? Am I growing two horns on my head?”

*Premiere: La Scala, Milan (1893)*



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Jeremiah Sanders

### **“Si può”**

This aria comes from the prologue of *Pagliacci*, by Ruggero Leoncavallo.

Tonio who is dressed as his commedia dell'arte character Taddeo sings this out-of-character prologue. He appears in front of the main curtain --at the footlights-- and communicates directly to the audience. He sings that performers are human, too, with real emotions, feelings, and true to life situations. After this, the opera begins.

*Premiere: Teatro Dal Verme, Milan (1892)*

### **“Scintille Diamant”**

This aria comes from the 2nd Act of *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, by Jacques Offenbach.

The plot tells the story of the poet Hoffmann telling of three of his amorous adventures. The aria 'Scintille diamant' is sung in the 2nd act by Dapertutto, a magician, one embodiment of Hoffmann's enemy. Dapertutto sings of his diamond ring with which he controls Giulietta. He hopes that he can use the ring and Giulietta to capture Hoffmann.

*Premiere: Opéra-Comique, Paris (1881)*

### **“O Tixo, Tixo, Help Me!”**

This aria comes from Act 2 of *Lost in the Stars*, by Kurt Weill.

Rev. Stephen Kumalo, a black Anglican priest, has not heard from his son Absalom since he left to look for work in Johannesburg a year earlier. In a robbery attempt, Absalom kills Stephen's patron. In this aria, Stephen prays to God (Tixo).

*Premiere: Music Box Theater, New York, NY (1949)*





# Emily Secor

**Soprano | Westfield, WI**

Praised for her “spicy and rich lyric soprano,” (Vocal Arts Chicago) Wisconsin native Emily Secor enjoys performing on and off the operatic stage. Upcoming engagements include a recital program

entitled “Of Loss & Love” with pianist Connor Buckley, to be performed throughout the Midwest and East Coast, and Mozart *Requiem* with Luther College in April 2025.

Performance engagements of the 2023/24 season have included touring Grétry and Borths’ *Beauty and the Beast* with Des Moines Metro Opera’s educational outreach program, OPERA Iowa, winning the Iowa Region Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, and appearing as the soprano soloist in Mahler *Symphony No. 4* with the Madison Symphony Orchestra. Emily has been a frequent artist in Madison Opera productions, having spent two seasons with the company as a Studio Artist (2018-20), and appearing as guest artist during their digital 2020-21 season.

Recent performance engagements with Madison Opera include covering “Susanna” in *Le nozze di Figaro*, the “Trio Soprano” in Bernstein’s *Trouble in Tahiti*, and performing the role of “Diana” in *Orpheus in the Underworld*. Emily has also held young artist residencies with Des Moines Metro Opera, Haymarket Summer Opera, and Harrower Summer Opera.

As an active teaching artist, Emily maintains a private voice studio and regularly adjudicates for the Wisconsin State Music Association’s regional and state festivals. Emily is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa where she received a Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance, and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Vocal Performance from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

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## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Emily Secor

### **“Air de Lia”**

This aria comes from the scène lyrique *L'enfant prodigue*, by Claude Debussy.

At sunrise Lia laments the absence of Azaël, her prodigal son, an outcast for leaving his home to pursue the world's pleasures. Siméon is weary of her constant thinking of Azaël. Azaël enters and is joyfully reunited with his mother. She urges Siméon to forgive and welcome him home.

*Premiere: Paris (1884)*

### **“Deh vieni, non tardar”**

This aria comes from Act 4 of *Le nozze di Figaro*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Susanna, the Countess' maid teases Figaro, the valet to the Count, by singing a love song to her beloved (Figaro) within Figaro's hearing. Figaro is hiding behind a bush and, thinking the song is for the Count, becomes increasingly jealous. She sings “Come, do not delay my handsome lover...”

*Premiere: Burgtheater, Vienna (1786)*

### **“Mein Herr Marquis”**

This aria comes from Act 2 of *Die Fledermaus*, by Johann Strauss.

Adele, a chambermaid who has borrowed one of her mistress's gowns without permission, has gone to a party without permission and gets recognized there by her mistress's husband. She attempts to convince him that he is wrong by laughing at the idea that she, a glamorous woman, could possibly be a lowly chambermaid.

*Premiere: Berlin (1851)*



## REPERTOIRE GUIDE

# Emily Secor

### **“Quando me’n vo”**

This aria comes from Act 2 of *La bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini.

Musetta is at the Café Momus with her bohemian friends. In this aria which is also known as ‘Musetta’s Waltz,’ she tries to get the attention of her sometimes lover, Marcello. She sings “When I walk alone on the street stop and stare at my beauty from head to toe.”

*Premiere: Teatro Regio, Turin, Italy (1896)*

### **“It’s My Wedding”**

This aria comes from *The Enchanted Pig*, by Jonathan Dove.

The three daughters of King Hildebrand are to be married, two to princes, and one to a pig who is in disguise and who is really a king. The witch who has enchanted the pig, works to get her daughter, Adelaide, to marry the pig-king.

*Premiere: Vic Young Theater, London (2006)*

### **“Vanilla Ice Cream”**

This song comes from the musical *She Loves Me*, by Jerry Bock.

This musical is about Georg and Amelia, two people who work in a Budapest parfumerie, and who, unknowingly, are pen pals with one another. Amelia is home sick when Georg comes to visit her. He brings her vanilla ice cream.

*Premiere: Eugene O’Neill Theatre, New York, NY (1963)*





**JUDGE**

# Julia Faulkner

***Director of Vocal Studies***

***Ryan Opera Center***

Julia Faulkner is an esteemed American soprano and vocal coach, renowned for her interpretive and technically accomplished singing. Her successful international career on major stages now informs her role as director of vocal studies at the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center. She also teaches at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and prestigious programs such as The Santa Fe Opera and the Aldeburgh Festival. Her residency in London involved the Jette Parker (Royal Opera House) and Harewood (English National Opera) Young Artist programs. Faulkner's students frequently become finalists in major vocal competitions, and she mentors stars from leading opera houses worldwide.

A self-proclaimed "Wisconsin girl," Faulkner grew up with supportive parents—her mother was a singer, and her father founded the theater arts department at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Her early exposure to performing arts led her to classical music, which she pursued at Indiana University under the mentorship of renowned Wagner soprano Margaret Harshaw.

Faulkner discovered her teaching talent early in her career. After two semesters at Northern Arizona University, she took a tenure-track position at Iowa State but decided to audition for the Met Auditions. Winning the 1985 competition launched her singing career, leading to her European debut in Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera* in Lyon. She joined the Bavarian State Opera ensemble in Munich, where she mastered roles in challenging operas by Richard Strauss. Her triumphs in Strauss's *Capriccio*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Arabella*, and *Der Rosenkavalier* in Munich and Vienna marked her as a leading soprano in Strauss and Mozart operas. Faulkner's career came full circle in 1994 when she returned to the Metropolitan Opera to debut as *Arabella*.

During her 15-year European career, Faulkner continued teaching. Family circumstances brought her back to Wisconsin, where she joined the University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty and later became a tenured professor. She also taught private students,

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*Julia Faulkner, continued*

# Julia Faulkner

***Director of Vocal Studies***

***Ryan Opera Center***

including Emily Pogorelc, who joined the Ryan Opera Center in 2018. Under Faulkner's mentorship, Pogorelc won the "Most Promising Talent" award at the 2019 Glyndebourne Opera Cup and debuted at Washington National Opera as Cunegonde in Bernstein's *Candide*.

Julia Faulkner is deeply committed to nurturing young talent, with many of her students performing on prestigious stages worldwide. Her teaching philosophy emphasizes both technical mastery and emotionally resonant performances. Drawing from her own experience as a performer, she provides students with valuable insights into professional singing. Faulkner remains active in the opera community through masterclasses and mentorship, cementing her reputation as a vital figure in opera.





**JUDGE**

# Peter Randsman

***Agent and Founder***

***Randsman Artist Management***

In 1973 Peter began his first semester as a drama major at Nassau Community College where, immediately after a performance of *Babe in Arms*, the head of Hofstra University's Drama Department arrived backstage and offered him a Drama Scholarship. He quickly recognized the tremendous honor of being included in the company of so many famous alumni at Hofstra—James Caan, Francis Ford Coppola, Madeline Kahn and Lanie Kazan to name a few—and gratefully accepted. A highlight was to be the role of Clifford Bradshaw in *Cabaret*, when a producer from the newly formed Coral House Dinner Theater offered him a contract for (as it would turn out) several seasons. Among many, three of Peter's favorites are the roles of Charley in *Charley's Aunt*, Dick in *Dames at Sea* and Gabey in *On The Town*.

For the next few years, he continued performing with various companies in the New York area—Signal 2 Company performing *Jacques Brel* and *An Evening with Cole Porter* at the Malibu Beach Club and Eisenhower Park. In 1976, Peter made a fateful decision to move to New York City. Within two months he was chosen as the “Burger King boy” in a series of commercials, which would air on national television for several years, and was featured as Minolta’s “Camera Boy” in dozens of national magazines. Peter spent several days filming *Brighton Beach*, with Ruth Gordon and Lee Strassburg, and enjoyed the pleasure of their company as they shared nostalgic reminiscences, about “the good old days” in Long Beach during the 1930’s.

For most of the following decade, Peter participated in several national tours performing both operetta and Gilbert & Sullivan, and enjoyed a special pleasure singing the song, “He’s in love” while touring *Kismet* with the Metropolitan Opera star, John Reardon. Appearing on Broadway, Peter both sang and danced “LizaLiza” with film legend, Ruby Keeler at a tribute to the Ziegfeld Follies. In the mid-1980’s, Peter joined the New York City Opera chorus, and for the next three years appeared in many Lincoln Center productions and several national tours. He sang in a *Live From Lincoln Center* telecast in scenes from *Mefistofele*

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*Peter Randsman, continued*

# Peter Randsman

*Agent and Founder*

*Randsman Artist Management*

with Samuel Ramey, conducted by Julius Rudel, and the great Triumphant Scene from Verdi's *Aida* under the direction of Anton Guadagno.

After nearly fifteen years as a professional singer/actor, Peter has fulfilled 2 life-long dreams by working 1 season as artistic director of an opera company (National Grand Opera) and by starting his own company, "Randsman Artists Management". Presently he is happy to be responsible for the careers of over 60 internationally active opera singers. Peter also enjoys a side career of providing artists with Career Consultations, Role Preparation sessions and Teaching Masterclasses for various young artist programs and workshops throughout the United States.

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**JUDGE**

# Steven White

**Conductor**

***The Metropolitan Opera***

Steven White is a celebrated conductor recognized for his dynamic and emotive performances. Starting in 2024, he takes on the role of Principal Guest Conductor at Opera Omaha. White's Metropolitan Opera debut in 2010 featured him conducting *La Traviata* with Angela Gheorghiu, earning critical acclaim. Since then, he has returned to the Met for several high-profile productions, including *Don Carlo*, *Billy Budd*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Tosca*, and *Elektra*.

With a repertoire of over eighty operatic titles, White's extensive engagements include performances with prominent companies such as New York City Opera, L'Opera de Montréal, and Vancouver Opera. Recent highlights include conducting *Rigoletto* at San Diego Opera, *Otello* with Austin Opera, and a world premiere production of Gounod's *Faust* with Opera Omaha. In the 2023-2024 season, White is set to conduct *Anna Bolena* at the Academy of Vocal Arts, *La Traviata* at Opera Omaha, and make his debut with Massenet's *Thaïs* at Utah Opera.

White's debut at the Wexford Festival featured Félicien David's *Lalla-Roukh*. He also conducted *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the Met and joined Arizona Opera for *Ariadne auf Naxos*. At Knoxville Opera, he conducted Tom Cipullo's *Glory Denied*, and at Opera Roanoke, he led performances of Britten's *War Requiem*.

In the 2021-2022 season, White returned to the Met for *Tosca* and conducted *Eugene Onegin* with Opera Omaha. During the COVID-impacted 2020-2021 season, he led a reimagined *Rigoletto* with Tulsa Opera. Critics consistently praise White's ability to elicit exceptional performances from orchestras, with accolades highlighting his nuanced and controlled direction.

White's orchestral work includes conducting the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Moscow Philharmonic, and London's Philharmonia Orchestra, among others. In 2019, he debuted with the San Diego Symphony and Utah Symphony Orchestra. As an educator, White has held residencies and led productions at institutions such as Peabody Conservatory and Indiana University. He also served as an artist in residence at the Shanghai

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*Steven White, continued*

# Steven White

***Conductor***

***The Metropolitan Opera***

Conservatory in 2019 and led a production of *La Clemenza di Tito* for the North Carolina School of the Arts in 2020.

Residing in Virginia, White is the Artistic Director of Opera Roanoke, where he has conducted numerous productions over two decades. In recognition of his contributions, Roanoke College awarded him an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts in 2013.





**PIANIST**

# Allen Perriello

***Director of Artistic Administration***

***Des Moines Metro Opera***

Allen Perriello is a highly regarded pianist, vocal coach, administrator, and educator.

In 2022, Allen became the Director of Artistic Administration at Des Moines Metro Opera, having previously worked on the company's music staff from 2011 to 2016. From 2017 to 2022, Allen was the Head of Music at Minnesota Opera, overseeing the musical preparation of productions, execution of musical activities, and the Resident Artist Program. Simultaneously, Allen was the Director of the Young Artists Program at The Glimmerglass Festival, overseeing the auditioning, hiring, casting, and mentoring of young artists each season.

Previously, Allen was the Head of Music and Director of the Marion Roose Pullin Opera Studio at Arizona Opera for five seasons. A graduate of the Merola Opera Program and Adler Fellowship at San Francisco Opera, Allen has been a member of the music staff at Pittsburgh Opera, Seattle Opera, and Boston Lyric Opera.

Allen has appeared in recital with a wide variety of singers including Justin Austin, Joëlle Harvey, Rhoslyn Jones, Daveda Karanas, Daniela Mack, John Moore, Efraín Solís, David Portillo, Alek Shrader, Heidi Stober, and Laura Strickling, for organizations including Carnegie Hall as part of the Great Singers: Evenings of Song series, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago, Cincinnati Song Initiative, Tucson Desert Song Festival, and San Francisco Opera's Schwabacher Debut Recital series.

As a guest coach and clinician, Allen has led workshops and performance classes at Arizona State University, Baylor University, Carnegie Mellon University, Drake University, The Hartt School, Lee University, Michigan State University, New England Conservatory, Peabody Conservatory, Pensacola Opera, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Temple University, Texas State University, The University of Arizona, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of North Texas, University of Northern Iowa, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, The University of Texas at Austin, and William Jewell College. He regularly serves

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*Steven White, continued*

# **Allen Perriello**

***Director of Artistic Administration***

***Des Moines Metro Opera***

as a judge for The Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition.

The Gibsonia, PA native holds a master's degree in collaborative piano from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and a bachelor's degree in piano performance and music education from Ithaca College.



# Esther & Myron WILSON

## A LEGACY OF SHARING

The Wilsons have been an important part of Cedar Rapids Opera since the early days of the company. *The Esther and Myron Wilson Vocal Competition* is just the most recent example of how the Wilsons appreciate and support Cedar Rapids' non-profit organizations.

Last July, Tad Ennen and I had lunch with Mike (Myron) Wilson. We proposed a competition which would both support aspiring singers while honoring Esther, who passed away in July of 2022. His trust in CRO and his belief in the idea led him to immediately embrace the Competition.

Both Mike and Esther have volunteered their time and energy for CRO. When CRO produced *Rigoletto* in 2001, Esther was in the dressing rooms at TCR where we produced the opera, sewing costumes up until the last minute. Both Mike and Esther helped clean up the props rooms that CRO rents from the Cherry Building. Mike has also served on the opera's Finance Committee and Board of Directors. Together, they are among the most generous and dedicated contributors to CRO.

As an Artistic Director, I'm so pleased that with this Competition, CRO is able to diversify our season's offerings to the community. It's a new and ambitious project, one that reflects positively on our community and one that will make a difference in the lives of the nine finalists competing today. The financial prizes are among the largest in the U.S. this year.

Hearing the singers compete live at the Paramount will be very exciting. I'm hopeful that our community will be intrigued with the notion that singers in competition can mirror athletic competition. We're hoping to draw in our opera-loving community as well as new audience members. One goal is to entice Iowa's sport-and-competition lovers to the event. There will be an Audience Favorite Prize. The audience will be able to vote on their favorite singer for this particular prize.

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### *A Legacy of Sharing, continued*

Assembling the pieces of the puzzle has been different from putting together an opera. Hiring the judges for the online submission rounds and for the in-person Competition gave us an opportunity to invite some new people into the CRO family. Abigail Rethwisch, Tad Ennen, Katharine Goeldner, Jane Dutton, Martin Katz, Steven White, Julia Faulkner, Peter Randsman, and I are all part of the slate of adjudicators.

I salute Mike Wilson for making all of this possible. Esther was the inspiration for his gift, and we remember her for all of the good that she's done for CRO and for our Cedar Rapids community.

*Daniel Kleinknecht*

*Maestro Daniel Kleinknecht*

## **A GALACTIC IMPACT**

Throughout CRO's 26th season, many may have wondered about the significance of the galaxy theme. From the launch of the Season 26 website to this very program, a sea of stars has been a common sight for CRO patrons over the last year. The theme is in fact a tribute to Esther Wilson.

The name Esther is derived from the Persian word “setareh,” which means “star.” This connection is thought to have arisen during the time when a Jewish queen in the Persian Empire named Esther became a central figure in the biblical story of Purim. Her bravery and influence are likened to a guiding star, providing hope and light in a time of darkness. This celestial association has made the name Esther symbolic of illumination and guidance, reflecting the qualities of a star that shines brightly amidst the night.

A name meaning “star” is fitting for Esther Wilson, a woman who shone so brightly in the lives of others. Just as the stars illuminate the night sky, Esther brought light to those around her.

Esther's charitable spirit radiated outward, resulting in this very competition—and creating a ripple effect of goodwill that will continue to be felt for years to come.

In honoring Esther, we remember her as a beacon of light and love. Her legacy is one of compassion, generosity, and dedication to community.



*Myron and Esther Wilson at CRO's 20th anniversary celebration.*

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# SEASON 26 DONORS

*We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous supporters whose contributions fuel the passion and creativity of our performances in our 26th season!*

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# ONCE UPON A TIME



## **THE LITTLEST MERMAID**

by Joshua Borths

**October 12, 2024 - 10am**

Whipple Auditorium at the Cedar Rapids Public Library

**October 13, 2024 - 11:30am**

Iowa Children's Museum

## **JERRY OWEN'S 80TH BIRTHDAY CONCERT**

**October 27, 2024 - 2:30pm**

Daehler-Kitchin Auditorium

Coe College

## **RUSALKA**

by Antonin Dvořák

**October 30, 2024 - 7pm**

**November 3, 2024 - 7pm**

Nation Czech and Slovak Museum and Library

## **MOONLIT CABARET**

**November 23, 2024 - 7:30pm**

Ideal Theatre & Bar

## **BOOK CLUB WITH ANNA BARKER**

**January 13, 2025 - 7pm**

Virtual

## **CINDERELLA**

by Jules Massenet

**January 17, 2025 - 7:30pm**

**January 19, 2025 - 2pm**

Paramount Theatre

## **SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALE**

by Lisa Despain

**March 22, 2025 - 7:30pm**

Ballantyne Auditorium at Kirkwood Community College

**March 23, 2025 - 2pm**

Coralville Center for the Performing Arts

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# THE LITTLEST MERMAID

**BY JOSHUA BORTHS**

October 12, 2024 | 10am

Whipple Auditorium at CRPL

October 13, 2024 | 11:30am

Iowa Children's Museum

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40  
60 50  
70  
JERRY OWEN'S 80<sup>TH</sup>  
BIRTHDAY CONCERT

October 27, 2024 | 3:00pm  
Daehler-Kitchin Auditorium at Coe College

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# RUSALKA

**BY ANTONIN DVOŘÁK**

October 30, 2024 | 7:00pm

November 3, 2024 | 7:00pm

National Czech and Slovak Museum & Library

NATIONAL  
CZECH &  
SLOVAK  
MUSEUM &  
LIBRARY

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# MOONLIT CABARET

**November 23, 2024 | 7:30pm**

**Ideal Theatre & Bar**

*Tickets on sale 10/23/2024*



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# INDERELLA

*Cendrillon* by Jules Massenet

**January 17, 7:30 pm & January 19, 2 pm, 2025**  
*Performer in English with English Supertitles*

**BUY TICKETS**



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**BUY TICKETS**



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# All aboard!

Make sure your information is up-to-date to receive CROpera emails and mailings and join the **Inner Circle**.

**JOIN THE  
INNER CIRCLE**



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