



M Manhattan
School of Music
GRADUATE OPERA THEATRE

A
**Midsummer
Night's
Dream**

Music by **BENJAMIN BRITTEN**

NOV 16-19



MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC
GRADUATE OPERA THEATRE

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Music by Benjamin Britten

Libretto by Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears

Based on the play by William Shakespeare

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

John de los Santos, Director

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2023 | 7:30 PM

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2023 | 7:30 PM

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2023 | 7:30 PM

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2023 | 2 PM

NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL



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MSM Opera Theatre productions are made possible in part by the Joseph F. McCrindle Endowment for Opera Productions.

The Wednesday, November 15, 2023 dress rehearsal is presented in memory of Janet Bookspan.

Students in this performance are generously supported by scholarships provided by the Gart Family Foundation, the MSM International Advisory Board, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of New York, and the Arthur and Mae Orvis Foundation.

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George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

John de los Santos, Director

Abbey Wiker, Scenic Designer

Ashley Soliman, Costume Designer and Wig, Hair, and Makeup Designer

Paige Seber, Lighting Designer

Joshua Larrinaga-Yocom, Props Supervisor

Danielle Buccino, Production Stage Manager

Jackson McKinnon, Assistant Conductor

Kristen Kemp, Head of Music in Opera for Vocal Arts and Vocal Coach/Pianist

Travis Bloom, Vocal Coach/Pianist

Jeremy Chan, Vocal Coach/Pianist

Miriam Charney, Vocal Coach/Pianist

Kathryn LaBouff, English Diction Coach

Maddelinde Fields, Assistant Scenic Designer

Sabrina Ehrnstein, Assistant Costume Designer

Max Stroehrer, Assistant Lighting Designer

Cynthia Gray, Assistant Stage Manager

Steven Jude Tietjen, Supertitles Author

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

THE CAST

	NOVEMBER 16 & 18	NOVEMBER 17 & 19
<i>Oberon, King of the Fairies</i>	Haolun Zhang	Haolun Zhang
<i>Tytania, Queen of the Fairies</i>	Sofia Gotch-Caruana	Emily Hanseul Park
<i>Puck</i>	Johannes Linneballe	Johannes Linneballe
<i>Cobweb</i>	Suzuna Ikeda	Suzuna Ikeda
<i>Mustardseed</i>	Margaux Frohlich	Margaux Frohlich
<i>Moth</i>	Nadine Nagyeong Lee	Nadine Nagyeong Lee
<i>Peaseblossom</i>	Zixuan Zhang	Zixuan Zhang
<i>Philomel</i>	Abigail Williams	Abigail Williams
<i>Foxglove</i>	Morena Galán	Morena Galán
<i>Lysander</i>	Isaiah Traylor	Kevin J. Lee
<i>Demetrius</i>	Ross Macatangay	Blake Stevenson
<i>Hermia</i>	Ya Gao	Hannah Jeané Jones
<i>Helena</i>	Madison Marie Fitzpatrick	Annelise Burghardt
<i>Theseus, Duke of Athens</i>	Donghoon Kang	Donghoon Kang
<i>Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons</i>	Xiaowei Fang	Xiaowei Fang
<i>Flute, a bellows-mender (Thisbe)</i>	William Velasco de Jesús	William Velasco de Jesús
<i>Snout, a tinker (Wall)</i>	Xingxiang Liu	Xingxiang Liu
<i>Starveling, a tailor (Moonshine)</i>	Gregory Gropper	Gregory Gropper
<i>Bottom, a weaver (Pyramus)</i>	Benjamin R. Sokol	Brian Linares
<i>Quince, a carpenter (Director)</i>	Liyuan Liu	Liyuan Liu
<i>Snug, a joiner (Lion)</i>	Jon Carr	Jon Carr

Covers

Oberon

Jared Christopher Marshall

*Puck, Moth,
and Peaseblossom*

Morena Galán

Cobweb and Mustardseed

Abigail Williams

Theseus and Snug

Bai Chen

Hippolyta

Qing Liu

Flute

Lei Zhang

Snout

Jacob Keleman

Starveling

Graham (Rui) Guan

Quince

Luke Oldroyd

Role Study

Tytania

Abigail Williams

SYNOPSIS

Act 1

The wood, deepening twilight.

The Fairies are agitated. Tytania, their queen, refuses to cede a changeling (portrayed in this production as Otesánek, a living log drawn from the eponymous Czechoslovakian myth) whom she has in her possession to Oberon, the king. Puck arrives, further distressing the spirits, followed in short order by the king and queen themselves, who reaffirm their disregard. Oberon sends Puck in search of a magic herb with which to enchant Tytania. Two Athenian youths—Hermia and Lysander—plan to steal away from Athens, where Hermia is compelled by law to wed Demetrius, and marry in secret. Demetrius, who has followed the Lovers into the wood, enters, pursued by Helena; Demetrius scorns Helena's advances. Oberon bids Puck sprinkle the herb on the disdainful Demetrius to make him love Helena. The Rustics enter and discuss preparations for a play they hope to perform at the wedding of Duke Theseus and his abducted Amazonian bride Hippolyta. Puck mistakes a slumbering Lysander for Demetrius and squeezes the herb on his eyes. Lysander awakes to the voice of Helena and is enchanted. Hermia awakes to find Lysander absent. The Fairies lull Tytania to sleep; Oberon sprinkles the herb on her eyes.

Act 2

The wood, dark night.

The Rustics rehearse their play, "Pyramus and Thisbe," but when the mischievous Puck transforms Bottom into an ass, the Rustics flee in fright. Tytania, rising from her slumber, sees Bottom and falls in love; she bids her Fairies dote upon him. Oberon is pleased with the unexpected outcome of his spell, but then learns that Puck has mistakenly enchanted not Demetrius but Lysander. He orders Puck to seek out Helena and meanwhile squeezes the herb on the eyes of Demetrius himself. Puck returns with Helena and Lysander; Demetrius' eye falls upon Helena and he professes his love. The two youths vie for Helena's affection, which the lady perceives to be in mockery of her. Hermia having at last found Lysander, the four lovers quarrel. Oberon, in a rage, orders Puck to first envelop the wood in a mist so as to induce the Lovers to slumber and then to reverse the spell that had been placed on Lysander, reversing all confusion.

Act 3

The wood, early next morning.

Oberon, now in possession of Otesánek, lifts the spell from Tytania's eyes. She awakes, horrified by the visions of the previous night, and reconciles with her husband. Distant horns awaken the four lovers, who, in the clarity of day, profess their love—Lysander to Hermia and Demetrius to Helena. Bottom awakes and is relieved to find his transformation was but a dream. He believes it will make good material for a ballad, Bottom's Dream, and resolves to ask Quince to write it for inclusion at the end of the play. The Rustics are saddened by the absence of Bottom, but soon, no longer an ass, he returns for a joyful reunion. Bottom announces that the Duke has chosen to see their play.

Duke Theseus vows to wed Hippolyta in joy so as to make amends for her violent abduction. The four lovers explain themselves to the Duke, who grants them permission to marry. The Rustics perform their play, and the sovereigns and lovers comment on the action. Midnight strikes, and Theseus bids the lovers off to bed. Night having fallen once more, the Fairies, Oberon, Tytania, and Puck appear and bless the three pairs of mortal lovers.

PROGRAM NOTE

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) was not the first composer to try his hand at adapting Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. There was Purcell before him, whose Restoration-era *The Fairy Queen* in 1692 was less opera and more hybrid play-opera. The eighteenth century saw a stand-alone adaptation “in the high stile of Italy” of the Rustics’ play-within-a-play “Pyramus and Thisbe.” And in the nineteenth century, Mendelssohn famously composed his incidental music, featuring the now-notable Wedding March. By the time Britten broached the idea in the mid-twentieth century, England, having experienced the ravages of two world wars, was in dire need of a cultural anchor to restore national heritage and pride. Against this backdrop emerged what Shakespeare scholar W. Moelwyn Merchant would upon seeing the opera proclaim “the richest and most faithful interpretation of Shakespeare’s intentions that the stage has seen in our generation.”

Britten’s work on *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* proceeded at breakneck speed, a fact that spoke both to the urgency of a new season of his Aldeburgh Festival staring him down the barrel (with a newly expanded Jubilee Hall to fête to boot) and to a broader English operatic public hungering for the next *Peter Grimes* or *The Turn of the Screw*. With the 1945 premiere of his opera *Peter Grimes*, which reopened London’s Sadler’s Wells Theatre following the war, Britten had heralded a sort of renaissance of native English opera. Over the ensuing years, as co-founder of the English Opera Group (formally established to address the “impoverishment of English artistic life”), Britten practically single-handedly contributed to the development of new repertoire. As the home of the company’s Aldeburgh Festival, at which new works were presented, Jubilee Hall played a critical role in Britten’s—and, by extension, Britain’s—sustained artistic merit and success.

The thirteenth Festival in 1960 was to see the expansion of the Jubilee’s stage and orchestra pit, along with the addition of new entry points for the audience and dressing rooms for the performers. Britten understood that time was not on his side: he’d have a matter of months to devise the entire libretto and score—a feat that, while manageable in, say, Mozart or Verdi’s time, became all the more challenging now that, as he acknowledged, “the line of musical language [has been] broken.” Raising the pressure yet further was the recognition that plans were already in motion for international productions before Britten had even written a note. (Within its first year, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* would see performances in ten international houses, including Hamburg and Tokyo.) This was compounded still further by the particularly “horrid winter” the composer endured as he navigated the bulk of his compositional work, when everyone

around him seemed “ill, cross or mad.” Nevertheless, adhering, as was his way, to a regimented schedule of daily work, Britten pulled it off: by April 15, 1960, Britten and his co-librettist Pears—who’d taken on the lion’s share of “cooking & cutting” Shakespeare’s text down to a manageable length—had laid before them a marvel of great, homegrown artistic merit.

The plot of Britten’s opera brings two distinct realms—that of Fairies and of mortals—together. Yet unlike Shakespeare’s play, which commences in the terrestrial sphere (at the Athenian Palace of Duke Theseus and Hippolyta), Britten and Pears’ abridgement opens at twilight in the domain of the wood, where dreams and desires are confronted and mortal and Fairy alike transformed. Here, in this mystical setting (reflected in this production by two towering trees that flank the stage), Oberon, the King of Fairies, and his impish servant Puck employ a magical herb that entangles the lovers Lysander and Demetrius, the rustic Bottom, and the Fairy queen Tytania herself in a complex web of misdirected affections. This web epitomizes the truth that “the course of true love never did run smooth.” Yet the opera’s message transcends mere self-indulgent magical caprice; when Demetrius awakes from his slumber in Act 3 and calls out for “fair Helena,” whom he has found “like a jewel,” his sincerity, echoed in text and in music, illustrates the true effect of the herb: the spell is not a Cupid’s arrow inducing blind love, but an elixir that strips away perceived faults. Demetrius, who’d only wanted Hermia for her status, now sees the innate worth and beauty of Helena. In illuminating the flawed nature not only of the mortals but of the Fairies themselves (most notably Tytania and Oberon, whose spiteful lovers’ quarrel has wide-reaching repercussions), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* upends Puck’s assertion “what fools these mortals be.” The opera culminates in an egalitarian, albeit tumultuous, reunification of chaos and order: as the “iron tongue of midnight [tells] twelve,” Tytania and Oberon are reconciled, the Rustics have produced their play, and as the Duke shepherds the Lovers off “to bed” we know they are destined to dream once more and in dreaming discover their truth.

Music features prominently in Shakespeare’s works. The play *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* itself offers many nods to what the Bard called “the food of love” (“Bottom sings”; “Oberon leads the Fairies in song and dance”). That Britten (among other composers) recognized the inherent musicality of Shakespeare’s works—what Britten referred to as their “verbal music”—is evidenced by a rich outpouring of distinct and novel soundworlds. In developing the music for *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Britten drew inspiration from a myriad of sources. There is the preponderance of musical gestures and timbres from the East

(Britten was heavily inspired by Japanese Noh plays) as we enter the world of the Fairies—an otherworldly effect made all the richer by the composer’s decision to set Oberon as a countertenor to the ethereal counterpoint of the celesta. Baroque influences suffuse the Fairy realm, too, as Tytania’s doting aria “Be kind and courteous” and Oberon’s “I know a bank” are juxtaposed with idioms drawn from later centuries. In the Donizettian pastiche of the Rustics’ opera-within-an-opera “Pyramus and Thisbe” in Act 3, Flutes from Peter Pears (who originated the role) onward vied for best Joan-Sutherland-as-*Lucia-di-Lammermoor* impression (nodding to a performance Covent Garden audiences would not soon forget). And, of course, there is Puck, designated a “boy acrobat, speaking role.” Puck’s declamatory notated speech patterns and reliance on physical gesture—inspired by “some Swedish child acrobats with extraordinary agility and powers of mimicry” Britten had witnessed on a visit to Stockholm—render his mischievous (and libidinous) antics a focal point in the action. The brash drum and trumpet flourishes that signify his presence throughout serve as a marked contrast to Oberon’s celesta—and perhaps underscore the (accidental?) mistakes the king’s servant commits in doing his bidding. Other choices of instrumentation are more comic or obvious— a braying trombone for Bottom, the ass; a flute for Flute, the Rustic; horns to herald the arrival of the Duke in Act 3 (and the Rustics’ entertainment).

On a more macro level, Britten constructs multilayered key associations that—like the Fairies, Rustics, and Lovers themselves—push and pull against one another: G is associated with the mortal Lovers, F-sharp with Tytania and her Fairies, while C-sharp and its enharmonic equivalent represent the restorative power of sleep. Britten’s skillful development of motivic material too pulses the dramatic development forward and lends cohesiveness to the whole: the evocative string texture that breathes the first breath of life into the opera becomes a ritornello that returns throughout the length of Act I, representing the wood and omniscient nature; the passacaglia Sleep music introduced by the four chords at the opening of Act 2—the first chord, strings to represent sleep; then, brass to represent Oberon and Puck; next, woodwind to represent the mortals; and, finally, percussion, harp, and harpsichord to represent the Fairies—is similarly varied and developed as slumber restores chaos to order; and the orchestral prelude of Act 3, as in Act I, becomes a ritornello that carries us from night into the clarity of morning and underscores the theme of reconciliation.

When Britten's first opera, *Paul Bunyan*, fell into decades of neglect following its 1941 premiere at Columbia University, the Manhattan School of Music Preparatory Division was among the first to re-embrace the work in the 1970s (preceded only by revivals organized by the BBC and the English Music Theatre Company, a development of Britten's English Opera Group). MSM Opera Theatre has since presented a myriad of the composer's operas, including *Albert Herring*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, and, of course, Britten's shimmering achievement *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a legacy upon which this production humbly builds.

—Program note and synopsis ©Heather O'Donovan (MM '20),
beatherodonovan.com

CAST

Annelise Burghardt (MM '23)

Helena

PS antic. '24

Syracuse, New York

Student of Ruth Golden

Jon Carr

Snug

MM antic. '25

Fredericksburg, Virginia

Student of Sidney Outlaw

Bai Chen

Theseus and Snug (Cover)

MM antic. '25

Zhanjiang, China

Student of Mark Schnaible

Xiaowei Fang

Hippolyta

MM antic. '25

Jinan, China

Student of Catherine Malfitano

Madison Marie Fitzpatrick (MM '22)

Helena

PPD antic. '24

Hanover, Massachusetts

Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Margaux Frohlich

Mustardseed

MM antic. '24

Bronxville, New York

Student of Ruth Golden

Morena Galán

Foxglove

Puck, Moth, and Peaseblossom (Cover)

MM antic. '25

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Student of Marlena Malas

Ya Gao

Hermia

MM antic. '24

Shenzhen, China

Student of Cynthia Hoffmann

Sofia Gotch-Caruna (MM '23)

Tytania

PPD antic. '25

Oakland, California

Student of Ruth Golden

Upcoming: Kenneth Merrill's

Collaborative Pianists' and Singers'

Seminar Recital, December 10, 2023

Gregory Gropper

Starveling

MM antic. '24

New York, New York

Student of Mark Schnaible

Graham (Rui) Guan

Starveling (Cover)

MM antic. '25

Qingdao, China

Student of Mark Schnaible

Suzuna Ikeda

Cobweb

MM antic. '24

Nagasaki, Japan

Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Hannah Jeané Jones

Hermia

MM antic. '24

Houston, Texas

Student of Ashley Putnam

Donghoon Kang

Theseus

PPD antic. '25

Seoul, South Korea

Student of Mark Schnaible

Upcoming: *Don Giovanni* (Leporello),

Merola Festival

Jacob Keleman

Snout (Cover)

MM antic. '25

Larchmont, New York

Student of Mark Schnaible

Kevin J. Lee (BM '22)
Lysander
MM antic. '24
Singapore, Singapore
Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Nadine Nagyeong Lee
Moth
MM antic. '24
Daegu, South Korea
Student of Mark Schnaible

Brian Linares
Bottom
MM antic. '24
Sherman, Texas
Student of Mark Schnaible

Johannes Linneballe
Puck
MM antic. '24
Copenhagen, Denmark
Student of Dimitri Pittas
Upcoming: Thomas Muraco's
Collaborative Pianists' and Singers'
Seminar Recital, November 28,
2023; recital with Marissa Carlson,
December 12, 2023

Liyuan Liu
Quince
MM antic. '24
Yanchen, China
Student of Cynthia Hoffmann

Qing Liu
Hippolyta (Cover)
MM antic. '25
Anhui, China
Student of Cynthia Hoffmann

Xingxiang Liu (MM '22)
Snout
PS antic. '24
Shanghai, China
Student of Dimitri Pittas

Ross Macatangay (BM '22)
Demetrius
MM antic. '24
New York, New York
Student of Mark Schnaible

Jared Christopher Marshall
Oberon (Cover)
MM antic. '24
Clinton, Maryland
Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Luke Oldroyd
Quince (Cover)
MM antic. '25
Kansas City, Missouri
Student of James Morris

Emily Hanseul Park (BM '20)
Tyrania
MM antic. '24
Seoul, South Korea
Student of Mark Schnaible

Benjamin R. Sokol (BM '22)
Bottom
MM antic. '24
Westbury, New York
Student of James Morris

Blake Stevenson
Demetrius
MM antic. '25
Orange County, California
Student of Mark Schnaible

Isaiah Traylor
Lysander
MM antic. '24
Tupelo, Missouri
Student of Shirley Close

William Velasco de Jesús
Flute
MM antic. '24
San Juan, Puerto Rico
Student of Dimitri Pittas

Abigail Williams

Philomel

Cobweb and Mustardseed (Cover)

Tytania (Role Study)

MM antic. '24

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Haolun Zhang

Oberon

MM antic. '24

Chengdu, China

Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Lei Zhang

Flute (Cover)

MM antic. '24

Ma'anshan City, China

Student of Dimitri Pittas

Zixuan Zhang

Peaseblossom

MM antic. '24

Heilongjiang, China

Student of Ruth Golden

ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN 1

William Lee,
concertmaster
Hsinchu County, Taiwan

Natsuko Kokjima
Inagi, Japan

Selin Algoz
New York, New York

Carolyn Carr
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

VIOLIN 2

Amelia Bailey,
principal
Round Hill, Virginia

Bangjun Xia
Astoria, New York

Jiachen Xu
Ningbo, China

VIOLA

Anna Huang, principal
Zhubei City, Taiwan

Jack Rittendale
New York, New York

Jeong-Jae Lee
Naju-si, South Korea

CELLO

Hamzah Zaidi,
principal
London, United Kingdom

Aidan Pan
Ithaca, New York

DOUBLE BASS

Antonio Suarez,
principal
Yonkers, New York

Amaree Sanchez
Higland, California

FLUTE

Hyewon Jeong
Seoul, South Korea

Megan McCafferty
McKinney, Texas

OBOE

Melody Shaffer
Virginia Beach, Virginia

CLARINET

Emily Geoffroy
Portland, Oregon

Tingrui Zhang
Taiyuan, China

BASSOON

Chanelle Junio
Honolulu, Hawaii

HORN

Daniel Jansen
Aspen, Colorado

Dana Reckard
Grafton, Wisconsin

TRUMPET

Nathan McKinstry
State College, Pennsylvania

TROMBONE

Malik Hamza
Frisco, Texas

TIMPANI

Zoe Beyler
Portland, Oregon

PERCUSSION

Hwaneek Pak
Columbia, Maryland

Glenn Choe
Cedar Park, Texas

HARP

Esther Chung
New York, New York

Christina Kant
Edmonton, Canada

KEYBOARD

Yeasol Lee
Westbury, New York

CREATIVE TEAM

George Manahan, Conductor

The wide-ranging and versatile George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76) has had an esteemed career embracing everything from opera to the concert stage, the traditional to the contemporary. Additionally, he continues his commitment to working with young musicians as Director of Orchestral Activities at Manhattan School of Music and as guest conductor at the Curtis Institute of Music and the Merola Opera Program.

Mr. Manahan is the 2012 winner of the Ditson Conductor's Award, the oldest award honoring conductors for their support of American music. Previous recipients include James Levine, Christopher Keene, Leopold Stokowsky, Leonard Bernstein, Eugene Ormandy, and Alan Gilbert. He was also honored by the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for his "career-long advocacy for American composers and the music of our time."

Mr. Manahan served as Music Director of New York City Opera, Portland Opera, and the American Composers Orchestra. His guest appearances include the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, as well as the symphonies of Atlanta, San Francisco, Hollywood Bowl, and New Jersey, where he served as acting Music Director for four seasons. He is a regular guest with the Music Academy of the West and the Aspen Music Festival and has also appeared with the opera companies of San Francisco, Philadelphia, Seattle, Chicago, Santa Fe, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Opéra National du Paris, Teatro de Comunale de Bologna, the Bergen Festival (Norway), and the Casals Festival (Puerto Rico).

John de los Santos, Director

John de los Santos's productions include *Sweet Potato Kicks the Sun* (World Premiere, Santa Fe Opera), *Ghosts* (World Premiere, San Diego Opera), *Don Giovanni* (Wolf Trap Opera), *Le comte Ory* (Loft Opera), *L'heure Espagnol* (New Camerata Opera), *La fille du régiment* (Minnesota Opera), *Frida* (Opera Southwest), and *Maria de Buenos Aires* (Arizona Opera). In 2015, he choreographed the world premieres of *Great Scott* for the Dallas Opera and *Before Night Falls* for Fort Worth Opera. As a librettist John's first collaboration with composer Clint Borzoni, *When Adonis Calls*, had its premiere under his direction at Asheville Lyric Opera. His second collaboration with Borzoni, *The Copper Queen*, premiered as a feature film in 2021. *The Christmas Spider*, his third libretto with Borzoni, will premiere in December of 2023. *Service Provider*, his commission by Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative, with composer Christopher Weiss,

premiered at the Kennedy Center and has since had over a dozen productions. In 2020, John and Marc Migó were commissioned by UrbanArias to write an operatic film for the Decameron Opera Project. Their piece, *The Roost*, was directed by John and was recently included in the archives of the Library of Congress. He is currently a librettist with Minnesota Opera's New Works Initiative.

johndelossantos.com

Abbey Wiker, Scenic Designer

Abbey Wiker is a freelance designer for theatre, interiors, and window displays. She received her BFA in theatre set design from Penn State University and has recently taken the step from associate to designer. Prior to this Abbey designed *Bye Bye Birdie* and *The Thin Place*, worked as an associate for the Muny's 105th season, and worked as an assistant to David Korins on projects such as *Beetlejuice* (Broadway/National Tour), The Hamilton Exhibition in Chicago, *Big Brunch*, the Emmy Awards set design, and Frida Kahlo and Disney art exhibitions. In addition to theatre, Abbey freelances as a window display designer for Anthropologie and at architecture/interior design firms. While at Penn State University, she was the set designer for *American Idiot* and *Argonautika*.

abbeywiker.com

Ashley Soliman, Costume Designer and Wig, Hair, and Makeup Designer

A costume designer and visual artist based in New York City, Ashley Soliman was selected in 2023 as one of the Broadway Women's Fund's "Women to Watch on Broadway." She is delighted to return to Neidorff-Karpati Hall with this production of Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Upcoming: *Angel Island* (BAM and Prototype Festival), *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Curtis Institute). Recent: *Der Schauspieldirektor* and *I due timidi* (Juilliard), *REDEEMED* and *Your Name Means Dream* (Contemporary American Theater Festival), *Double Helix* (Bay Street Theater), *Idomeneo* (NYU Steinhardt), *Le portrait de Manon* and *Angélique* (Manhattan School of Music), *The Rake's Progress* (Juilliard), *La traviata* (Fort Worth Opera), *Sweet Potato Kicks the Sun* (Santa Fe Opera). She was Assistant Costume Designer for *Coal Country* (The Public Theater, des. Jessica Jahm). Honors include *Fatty Fatty No Friends* ("Best Costumes," NYC Fringe Festival, and New York Innovative Theatre Award nomination) and *Whiskey Pants* ("Best Costumes," Frigid Fest). She received her BFA in fine arts and printmaking at the School of Visual Arts and is a proud member of USA Local 829.

Paige Seber, Lighting Designer

Paige Seber is a New York City based lighting designer for theatre, opera, music, and immersive events. Her off-Broadway lighting design credits include *Titanique* (The Daryl Roth Theatre), which won the 2023 Lortel Award for Outstanding Musical, *Is Anyone Alive Out There?* (Minetta Lane), and *Powerline Road* (ARTNY). Opera credits include *The Consul* (San Francisco Conservatory of Music), *Swann: A Digital Opera Short* (Catapult Opera), and *La liberazione di Ruggiero* (Manhattan School of Music). Internationally, Paige has designed *Ready. Set. Play!* produced by the New York Neo-Futurists for Virgin Voyages. She is a proud member of United Scenic Artists 829.

seberlighting.com.

Joshua Larrinaga-Yocom, Props Supervisor

Joshua Larrinaga-Yocom is excited to be working at MSM. Some of his memorable New York premieres include *The Humans* (Roundabout and Broadway), *The Sound Inside* (Studio 54), *Hangmen* (Atlantic Theater Co. and the Golden), *The Bedwetter*, *Days of Wine and Roses*, *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven*, *Secret Life of Bees*, *Between Riverside and Crazy*, *Guards at the Taj*, *Marie and Rosetta* (Atlantic Theater Co.), *Letters for Max* (Signature Theatre), *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*, *Corsicana*, *Tambo and Bones* (Playwrights Horizons), *Evanston* (The New Group), *Collective Rage* (MCC), *Do You Feel Anger?* (Vineyard Theatre), *Lazarus* (New York Theatre Workshop), *Mary Paige Marlow* (Second Stage), *For All the Women Who Thought They Were Mad* (SoHo Rep), *Epiphany* (Lincoln Center Theater), and Sarah Ruhl's *Passion Play* (Epic). He is eternally grateful for the continued love and support of his husband Roberto.

Danielle Buccino, Production Stage Manager

Danielle Buccino is thrilled to be working with Manhattan School of Music. Previous credits include *Dear Evan Hansen* on Broadway; *Dear Evan Hansen* and *The Substance of Fire* (Second Stage Theater Company); *The Select* (The Sun Also Rises) and *Things of Dry Hours* (New York Theatre Workshop); *Headstrong* and *Photograph 51* (Ensemble Studio Theater); *The Inexplicable Redemption of Agent G*, *Flipzoids*, and *Soul Samurai* (Ma-Yi Theater Company). She is a graduate of Wagner College. She thanks her friends and family for their continued love and support.

Kristen Kemp, Head of Music in Opera for Vocal Arts

Vocal coach and pianist Kristen Kemp, a Florida native, has worked with numerous opera companies throughout the United States, including Cincinnati Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, Sarasota Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Martina Arroyo's Prelude to Performance Program, and Opera North, as well as the Opera Theatre of Lucca, Italy, in association with the University of Cincinnati Conservatory. Kristen served on the music staff of Sarasota Opera from 2003 to 2015, where she was also the Studio Artist Director for five seasons. As a member of the coaching staff for Sherrill Milnes's VOICE Experience, Kristen has worked with the programs in New York, Florida, and Savannah since 2010. Since moving to New York City in 2013, she has been a frequent performer and collaborator in numerous concerts of choral works with piano and orchestra at Carnegie Hall and David Geffen Hall. Kristen Kemp joined Manhattan School of Music as an Opera Theatre coach in 2018 and was named Head of Music in Opera for Vocal Arts in 2021. She received her Master of Music degree in collaborative piano and her Artist Diploma in opera coaching from the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, where she studied with Kenneth Griffiths and Donna Loewy.

Jackson McKinnon, Assistant Conductor

Jackson McKinnon is a conductor, pianist, and educator based in New York City. Mr. McKinnon serves as Music Director for Manhattan School of Music's Undergraduate Opera Theatre's Riverside productions and is a member of the Graduate Opera Theatre's music staff as Chorus Master and Assistant Conductor. Mr. McKinnon has worked with ensembles all over the world, including the International Contemporary Ensemble, Grafenegg Academy Orchestra in Austria, the Orchestra Now (TÖN), Palaver Strings, Vienna State Opera Chorus, Linz Landestheater Opera Choruses, Bard Festival Chorale, American Symphony Orchestra, and Face the Music. Mr. McKinnon has served as Music Director for City Lyric Opera and Opera Maine's Studio Artists for multiple seasons. He has spent four seasons as a part of the creative team for the Bard Summerscape and Music Festival as cover conductor, assistant chorus master, and musicological consultant. Other projects include Ana Sokolović's *Svadba* at the request of Dawn Upshaw and the New York premiere of Lori Laitman's new opera, *Uncovered*.

Travis Bloom, Vocal Coach/Pianist

Travis Bloom is a sought-after vocal coach and collaborative pianist. He has served as a member of Manhattan School of Music’s artistic staff since 2017 and most recently joined the NYU Steinhardt School’s artistic staff as a vocal coach/collaborative pianist. Travis served as the principal coach/pianist for the 2023 Berkshire Opera Festival’s production of *La Bohème* and was featured in their summer concert series. In the summer of 2022 Travis joined the music staff of Opera Saratoga, serving as the principal coach/pianist for their production of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. From 2020 to 2022 he served on the music staff for Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage’s *Intimate Apparel* at Lincoln Center. From 2019 to 2021 he worked as a faculty coach with the Chautauqua Institute Voice Program under the direction of Marlena Malas. Since 2018, he has worked with the Metropolitan Opera Guild as a pianist for their master class series.

Jeremy Chan, Vocal Coach/Pianist

Jeremy Chan is a freelance Australian pianist and vocal coach based in New York City. His “superb” playing has been praised for “summoning about as much color as can possibly be coaxed out” (*New York Classical Review*). Jeremy is on staff at Juilliard and Manhattan School of Music and serves as Director of Music at Advent Lutheran Church. His recent engagements include *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Lakes Area Music Festival, residencies at Yellow Barn, and performances at Wigmore Hall, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall. Jeremy’s first studio release as a member of the Vertex Duo with mezzo-soprano Kristin Gornstein, *still*, is available on all streaming platforms. The duo is currently working on a second album of all-contemporary music. Jeremy is on the roster of the Brooklyn Art Song Society. Outside of music, he enjoys yoga, tea, and food adventures.

IG: @jeremychanpiano

jeremychanpiano.com

Miriam Charney, Vocal Coach/Pianist

Miriam Charney enjoys a varied career as opera coach, music director, recital collaborator, and teacher. She has been assistant conductor/pianist at many of the major festivals and regional opera companies in the U.S., including Glimmerglass, Chautauqua, Opera Philadelphia, Florida Grand, and New Orleans, as well as the Banff Festival in Canada. Other credits include assistant conductor to Gerard Schwarz and Leopold Hager for the Mostly Mozart Festival and recital performances with Lauren Flanigan, Elizabeth Bishop, and Paul Groves, among others. A lifelong champion of contemporary opera,

she has prepared premieres by such diverse composers as Lee Hoiby, Ricky Ian Gordon, and Tobias Picker, as well as performing many new works for American Opera Projects, including preparing a recent collaboration with the NYU–Tisch Opera Lab. She toured India with the Wooster Group, developed music-theatre pieces with Elizabeth LeCompte and Spalding Gray, and music directed for Elizabeth Swados and NYU’s Experimental Theatre Wing. The recipient of a National Opera Institute grant, Ms. Charney has served on the faculties of Juilliard, the Hartt School, and the University of Connecticut. She is currently Artist Faculty at Vassar, co-directing the Opera Workshop, teaching collaborative piano, and advising in music theatre. She has been a member of the Manhattan School of Music faculty since 1996, where she developed and directs the MSM Contemporary Opera Ensemble, teaches in the Vocal Arts and Piano departments, and has also served as Chorus Master for MSM Opera Theatre.

Kathryn LaBouff, English Diction Coach

Internationally acclaimed diction coach Kathryn LaBouff has prepared the U.S. premieres of Picker’s *An American Tragedy*, Harbison’s *The Great Gatsby*, Dean’s *Hamlet*, and Putt’s *The Hours* for the Metropolitan Opera; Maw’s *Sophie’s Choice* at Washington National Opera; Adamo’s *Little Women* and *Lysistrata*, Floyd’s *Cold Sassy Tree*, and Previn’s *Brief Encounter* for Houston Grand Opera; Tesori’s *Blue* and Geter’s *Holy Ground* for Glimmerglass; and Jonathan Dove’s *Flight* for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Recent productions include *Sweeney Todd*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *The Ghosts of Versailles*, *Silent Night*, and *Taking Up Serpents* for the Glimmerglass Festival; *Die Fledermaus*, *Candide*, *Doctor Atomic*, and *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Santa Fe; and *Hamlet*, *The Magic Flute*, *Cinderella*, and *The Hours* for the Metropolitan Opera. She is on staff at the Metropolitan Opera and teaches at Manhattan School of Music and the Juilliard School. Her book, *Singing and Communicating in English*, published by Oxford University Press in 2007, is used by conservatories internationally. She was the English Diction contributor to the G. Schirmer Opera Anthology (Hal Leonard, 2008). This season, she will debut with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Barbara Hannigan, conductor, and serve as a master teacher for the McGill–University of Montreal Vocal Accompanying Residency.

Sabrina Ehrnstein, Assistant Costume Designer

Sabrina Ehrnstein (they/them) is a NYC-based costume designer and technician with a passion for creative storytelling, whose portfolio includes work at the Public Theater and Santa Fe Opera. Upcoming: *Scene Partners* (Vineyard Theatre, Wardrobe). Recent: *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* (Broadway tour, Draper), *The Tempest* (The Public Theater; Public Works, Stitcher). Design credits include *Twelfth Night*, *Cyrano*, and *We Are Proud to Present* (Purchase Repertory Theatre, Designer) and scenes from *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Suor Angelica* (Santa Fe Opera, Designer). It has been an enriching experience working alongside Ashley Soliman as Assistant Costume Designer for this production and Sabrina is so grateful for the opportunity. They hold a dual BFA in costume design and construction from SUNY Purchase, Conservatory of Theatre Arts.

Max Stroehrer, Assistant Lighting Designer

Max Stroehrer is a lighting designer for theatre based in New York City. His credits include *Head Over Heels* and *Good News* at the Theresa Lang Theatre; *A Sleepless Play* and *Houston, We Have a Problem* at The Tank; and *Seven Days to the End of the World* at Dixon Place. He would like to thank Paige for bringing him onto this project and his partner for her support.

maxstroehrer.com

Cynthia Gray, Assistant Stage Manager

Cynthia Gray (ze/hir) is an award-winning actor and writer. Hir writing has been published in *Burnt Pine Magazine*, *The Wire Dream Magazine*, and the *Strand Zine*, and hir films have been screened at festivals around the world. Hir short stage play *The Postman's Letter* was produced as part of the Midtown International Theatre Festival. Previous stage work includes *Peter Pan*, *Avenue Q*, and *Les Misérables*. Gray has also appeared in various films, TV shows, and commercials. Previous stage management credits include *Dido and Aeneas* at Manhattan School of Music and Goldberg's *Kaddish* in the New York Theatre Festival.

ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL FOR A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

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Lorena Peralta, Associate Production Manager

Max Breslow, Technical Director

Junior Diaz, Production Supervisor

Patrick St. John, Production Coordinator

Paul Birtwistle, **Bianca Harrison**, **Simon Knox**,

Baker Overstreet, **Jessie Tidball**, Props Artisans

Pamela Pangaro, Production Electrician

Lutin Tanner, Assistant Production Electrician

Deeana Antoine, Moving Light Programmer

Lee Lord, Wardrobe/Costume Shop Supervisor

Rayneese Primrose, Wardrobe Supervisor

AddieRose Brown, **Stephanie Mae Fisher**,

Emily Keebler, **John Polles**, Dressers

Nina Carelli, Makeup Artist

Saba Gray, **Haydyn Lazarus**, Makeup Assistants

Colin Jeffrey, Wig Stylist

Costume builds by **Kyle Pearson Theatrical**,

Sharone Malka, **Daniel Hewson**

Costume crafts by **Ashley Trujillo**, **Kyle O'Connor**, **Hali Liles**

Kevin Krumenauer, Supertitles Operator

Run Crew

Lamont Concepcion, **AJ Taysom**, **Patrick St. John**, Deck Crew

Patrick St. John, Flyman

Deeana Antoine, Board Operator

Andres Ayola, **Amanda Langhaus**, Followspot Operators

Ashley Soliman (Costume Designer and Wig, Hair, and Makeup Designer) would like to dedicate the costume, wig, hair and makeup designs in loving memory of Jeff Fender.

OPERA AT MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Manhattan School of Music opera productions have been praised as a significant contribution to operatic life in New York City, and numerous performances have been released as commercial recordings. Opera is a significant feature of the vocal performance experience at MSM. All voice students participate in ensembles, and opera experience is available through a rich variety of opera related programs and courses.

Graduate students develop their artistry under the guidance of eminent artist teachers, while gaining exposure before New York City audiences through the many performance opportunities MSM offers. Productions each year include two full operas with orchestra on the Neidorff-Karpati stage; a new fall opera scenes series; a new fall chamber opera-level production; a fall Opera Workshop to hone audition and professional skills; a new spring Opera in Concert collaboration with the MSM Symphony Orchestra; a workshop of a new work or a workshop performance of a one-act opera; and a Musical Theatre Lab.

Juniors and seniors participate in a fall opera scenes program that explores a wide variety of styles and languages while developing important artistic and collaborative skills. In the spring, they audition to appear in a fully staged production with chamber orchestra, or in a one-act opera or cabaret-style performance with piano.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

MSM OPERA THEATRE

Undergraduate Opera Scenes: Mozart by the Dozen

A. Scott Parry, Director

NOV 30 & DEC 1 | THURS & FRI

7:30 PM

Ades Performance Space

Free, tickets required

MSM OPERA THEATRE

La finta giardiniera

BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Djordje Nestic, Conductor and Vocal Coach/Pianist

Jennifer Williams, Director

DEC 11–14 | MON–THURS

7:30 PM

Ades Performance Space

\$15 adults, \$10 non-MSM students and seniors

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PRESENT

Opera in Concert

Danielle Jagelski (MM '22), Conductor

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

FEB 21 & 22 | WED & THURS

7:30 PM

Neidorff-Karpati Hall

Free, tickets required

MSM UNDERGRADUATE OPERA THEATRE

Cendrillon

MUSIC AND LIBRETTO BY PAULINE VIARDOT

Chun-Wei Kang, Music Director

A. Scott Parry, Director

APR 3 & 4 | WED & THURS

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Greenfield Hall

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For more information, visit [MSMNYC.EDU/PERFORMANCES](https://msmny.edu/performances)

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Founded as a community music school by Janet Daniels Schenck in 1918, today MSM is recognized for its more than 1,000 superbly talented undergraduate and graduate students who come from more than 50 countries and nearly all 50 states; its innovative curricula and world-renowned artist-teacher faculty that includes musicians from the New York Philharmonic, the Met Orchestra, and the top ranks of the jazz and Broadway communities; and a distinguished community of accomplished, award-winning alumni working at the highest levels of the musical, educational, cultural, and professional worlds.

The School is dedicated to the personal, artistic, and intellectual development of aspiring musicians, from its Precollege students through those pursuing doctoral studies. Offering classical, jazz, and musical theatre training, MSM grants a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees. True to MSM's origins as a music school for children, the Precollege Division is a professionally oriented Saturday music program dedicated to the musical and personal growth of talented young musicians ages 5 to 18. The School also serves some 2,000 New York City schoolchildren through its Arts-in-Education Program, and another 2,000 students through its critically acclaimed Distance Learning Program.

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To enable Manhattan School of Music to continue educating and inspiring generations of talented students and audiences alike, please consider making a charitable contribution today.

Contact the Advancement Office at 917-493-4434 or visit giving.msmnyc.edu

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We want to acknowledge that we gather as Manhattan School of Music on the traditional land of the Lenape and Wappinger past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well.



MSMNYC.EDU



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Bequests are one of the easiest ways to create a living legacy and to help MSM meet important priorities, including increasing our scholarship endowment and supporting our world-class faculty.

For further information and to join our Galaxy Society, which honors those who have committed to making a planned gift to the School, please contact Susan Madden, Vice President for Advancement, at 917-493-4115, or visit: msmnyc.edu/galaxy-society.

Help a young artist reach for the stars!

