

**M**Manhattan  
School of Music

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
GRADUATE OPERA THEATRE

*Der Kaiser von  
Atlantis*

Music by Viktor Ullmann

Libretto by Peter Kien

**Djordje Nestic**, Music Director

**John de los Santos**, Director

TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2024 | 7 & 9 PM

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024 | 7 & 9 PM

ALAN M. AND JOAN TAUB ADES PERFORMANCE SPACE



## Council on the Arts

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MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
GRADUATE OPERA THEATRE

# *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*

Music by Viktor Ullmann

Libretto by Peter Kien

**Djordje Nestic**, Music Director

**John de los Santos**, Director

**Daniel Isengart**, Assistant Director

**Lynx**, Flag Designer

**Holly Thomas**, Production Stage Manager

**Patrick St. John**, Production Coordinator

**David Philyaw**, Lead Technician

*The performance is approximately 55 minutes long. There will be no intermission.*

*Performed in German*

This opera includes disturbing subject matter which includes staging and images that may be upsetting to some audience members. Sirens, low-lighting, a hand gun, and staged physical violence are used in this production.

# THE CAST

	<b>APRIL 9, 7 PM</b> <b>APRIL 10, 9 PM</b>	<b>APRIL 9, 9 PM</b> <b>APRIL 10, 7 PM</b>
<i>Bubikopf, ein Soldat</i>	Samantha Noonan	Sara Stevens
<i>Der Lautsprecher</i>	Brian Linares	Fernando Watts
<i>Der Tod</i>	Donghoon Kang	Benjamin Sokol
<i>Der Trommler</i>	Morena La Vecchia Galán	Qing Liu
<i>Ein Soldat</i>	Scott Rubén La Marca	Kevin Lee
<i>Harlekin</i>	Victoria Magnusson	William Velasco
<i>Kaiser Overall</i>	Gregory Gropper	YeongTaek Yang
<i>The Frammer</i>	Margaux Frohlich	Margaux Frohlich

## Covers

*Harlekin* Margaux Frohlich

## Band

Eric Sedgwick, piano

Anya Gershtein, piano

Tarun Bellur, percussion

Jiyeon Kim and Siwen Chen, musical preparation assistants

# SYNOPSIS

*Prologue.* The Loudspeaker introduces the setting and characters — Kaiser Overall (who has locked himself away in his palace), the Drummer and the Loudspeaker (himself), a Soldier and a maiden (Bubikopf), Death (a retired soldier), and Harlekin (“who beneath tears still manages to laugh”).

*Scene 1.* Harlekin laments the wretched state of life in a world devoid of love and earthly pleasures. Death joins Harlekin, and they sing a mocking song selling their wares: as everything, even human life has been stripped of all value in this dystopian world, the pair attempts to commodify time itself — “Days for sale! Who will buy them?” Harlekin begs Death to end their misery, but Death refuses; he launches into fond remembrances of the wars of yore and expresses his disgust at the “motorized chariots of war” that have since co-opted his position as the “old-fashioned craftsman of dying.” The Drummer arrives with a proclamation from Overall declaring a “great holy war” and bids Death, “our old ally” lead the way. Indignant, Death resigns: “I’m making the future of mankind great. . . and long!”

*Scene 2.* Overall monitors the crusade from his palace. He is informed that a terrorist, who had been hanged at 4:13, has yet to die; it is 5:35. “A strange disease has broken out,” he is informed: “The soldiers cannot die.” Anxious that Death has abandoned him, Overall issues a new proclamation: “We, Overall, give our deserving soldiers the secret to eternal life.” He seethes, triumphant: “Death, where is thy sting?”

*Scene 3.* A male Soldier and a female Soldier (Bubikopf) fight. Unable to kill one another, they find common ground as their thoughts turn to the radiance of untainted nature and of love. The Drummer, fearful of the budding empathy between the pair, attempts to seduce them with thoughts of war, but to no avail. The Soldier and Bubikopf sing: “Only love can unite us all together.”

*Scene 4.* Overall, continuing to monitor the situation on the ground, is informed of a rebellion at Hospital 34 for the Living Dead. Harlekin reminisces on happy times of youthful mirth and sings a lullaby redolent of an epitaph. Overall calculates the numbers of bombs and cannons deployed and reflects soberly on the life he has lived “behind walls without windows”; he ponders whether he is still a man or “just the adding machine of God.” The figure of Death appears in a mirror and introduces himself as the Gardener Death, “he who frees you from the plague, not the plague itself” — the “final lullaby.” Death makes a bargain with Overall: he will return, but only if the Emperor is the first to sacrifice himself to the new death. Overall agrees and sings his farewell, in which he longs for lands “of snow [...] of softly falling summer rain.” With Death having resumed his post, Bubikopf, Harlekin, the Loudspeaker, and the Drummer sing a final chorus: “Thou shalt not take Death’s name in vain.”

## PROGRAM NOTE

The interwar period (1918–1939) between the Great War and the onset of WWII in Germany was a defining era. The fledgling Weimar Republic, Germany’s post-WWI democratic experiment, had inherited a splintering nation beset by infighting and economic turmoil. Herculean efforts were made by the civilian government to stabilize the economy, which had spiraled into hyper-inflation as deadlines for reparations payments owed to the victorious European Allied powers loomed. But it wasn’t until the United States stepped in with a scheme to salvage the fractured German economy through a series of loans (more accurately, a ploy to furnish the Allies with cash flow from German payments to service debts owed to America) that things started looking up. In urban centers across the Republic from 1924–29, cultural and social life flourished and liberal attitudes thumbed their nose at the conservative rhetoric that remained rampant in the Republic. (As context, *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler’s racist and antisemitic manifesto, was published in 1925.) Yet with the onset of the Great Depression, the money dried up: theater and especially opera companies began to shutter and musicians lost their jobs en masse. As former (mostly educated middle class) audiences grieved the *Konzertkrise* (crisis of musical life), others defended the cuts: “we cannot leave those people who are without a job without bread as well.”

The National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP)—commonly referred to as the Nazi Party—with Hitler as its chairman promised the German people that they could have their bread and eat it too. Following a failed coup attempt in November 1923, Hitler had resolved to pursue political power through democratic means (and subterfuge as needed) and implemented a concerted propaganda campaign to attain this goal. By 1932, the Nazi Party had established new symphony orchestras based in Munich and Berlin, hired formerly unemployed musicians, and began playing concerts not just for the educated middle classes but for the impoverished and unemployed masses. Disguising the party’s true intentions beneath the romantic veil of cultural savior, Hitler and the NSDAP gained supporters. Core to the Nazis’ promotion of the arts was the suppression of left-wing and Jewish representation in musical life: while musicians returned to their jobs playing party-sanctioned music, Jewish musicians remained conspicuously unemployed. The optimistic promise of better times blinded the German people to the potential consequences of the party’s insidious antisemitism.

Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany in January 1933; by August 1934, he had seized dictatorial power, dismantling the Weimar Republic and establishing the Third Reich with himself as Führer. The years leading up to the German invasion of Poland and the beginning of World War II are painful to recount.

On September 15, 1935, the Nazi regime enacted the infamous Nuremberg Laws, comprising the Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor; overnight, Jews were deemed unworthy of German citizenship and stripped of all political rights. Europe had a long history of scapegoating the Jewish people in times of trouble; sobered by the prophetic writing on the wall, many German Jews became refugees, displaced by a nation that had turned its back on them.

By the time Germany annexed the Sudetenland, a picturesque Czech region inhabited by millions of ethnic Germans, in September 1938, Czechoslovakia had already welcomed thousands of German-speaking refugees. Now, Jews emigrating from the Sudetenland joined the growing ranks in the areas of Czechoslovakia that remained, briefly, unoccupied. Hitler established the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in the remainder of Czechoslovakia in March 1939; emigration was possible for only a brief period after this. As in Germany, rights were systematically stripped from Jews in the Protectorate and, by March 16 of that year, all Jewish lawyers were forced to give up their offices. By September, a Jewish curfew was instituted. By 1941, nearly all Jewish businesses were either closed or had become expropriated by the authorities; withdrawals from bank accounts and pensions were severely limited; Jewish children were prohibited from attending school; even the sale of food products, including fruit, nuts, sweets, cheese, wine, poultry, and game (and later onions and other vegetables), to Jews was forbidden. Potatoes were a luxury.

It was in this troubled context that, on November 24, 1941, 342 young Jewish men arrived at Terezín, a former fortress town built by the Habsburg Emperor Joseph II in the scenic northwestern Czech landscape. Joined in December by a further one thousand young men, these earliest transports to Terezín (renamed Theresienstadt by the Nazi authorities, but hereafter referred to as Terezín) were on construction detail, tasked with preparing the emptied town for the mass accommodation of Jewish detainees. Officially, the former garrison town was to serve as a retirement community or “spa town” for decorated veterans, the elderly, and “prominent persons” from the Jewish community. In reality, Terezín was to be a holding pen, a collection point for Jews whom the Nazis would later transport to extermination camps further east. Those earliest transports of men never did return home; they were the first to be interned in the Jewish ghetto—of 1,342, only 388 survived.

Between 1941 and 1945, approximately 140,000 Jews would be transported to Terezín, including 15,000 children: 33,000 Jews died in the ghetto itself, with 90,000 sent to their death at camps including Auschwitz and Treblinka.

That the summer of 1944 in Terezín seemed, to one woman imprisoned in the ghetto, “an absolute El Dorado in Europe, with no air raids, far from the theater

of war” was the consequence of a propaganda campaign waged by the Nazis as they pursued their “Final Solution to the Jewish Question”: mass genocide. Let us be clear: when Viktor Ullmann arrived at the camp, following unsuccessful emigration attempts from Prague, on September 8, 1942, he arrived not at an El Dorado but a labor camp where malnutrition and disease were rampant. The ghetto’s Jewish *Ältestenrat* (Council of Elders) — nominally responsible for addressing the needs of the interned population, though in reality tasked with assigning such impossible tasks as who among the Jewish detainees would serve as executioner when SS orders came down to murder one of their own — had established the *Freizeitgestaltung*, or Committee of Recreational Activities earlier in 1942. As a composer, conductor, and journalist, Ullmann was tasked with contributing to musical activities in the ghetto and writing concert reviews. Music had been a part of the ghetto since its early days. Among the first transport from November 1941 was pianist and conductor Rafael Schächter (1905–45), who soon began organizing clandestine musical activities using whatever resources he and the others could cobble together (smuggled instruments, an old legless piano they’d discovered in an attic). When the Nazi authorities discovered the secret concerts, they not only sanctioned them but gave them an official title: *Kameradschaftsabende*, or “evenings of fellowship.” Later, as the Nazis faced increasing international scrutiny, they co-opted Terezín’s artistic life as an opportunity to save face. After nearly two years of appealing to the Nazi regime to inspect conditions at Terezín, the International Red Cross finally received an affirmative response in 1944; during their tour of Terezín on June 23, 1944, the Red Cross saw what indeed seemed to be an El Dorado — healthy, happy people, grass and rose bushes, music, even a synagogue! But it was a carefully orchestrated deception, a smokescreen engineered during a grueling period when the Jewish prisoners who remained (sickly-looking ones were seen as a liability and had therefore been sent east) were made to scrub sidewalks with hairbrushes to make Terezín presentable for the visitors. During their visit, the delegates toured the ghetto, listened to music, including part of Hans Krása’s children’s opera *Brundibár*, and attended a soccer game. After they left, the Nazis forced the inmates to cooperate as they made their infamous propaganda film *The Führer Gives the Jews a Town*, in which music featured prominently; by fall 1944, many of the prisoners who had participated in the Red Cross visit and subsequent filming had been sent to their deaths at the extermination camps.

There is an oft-cited quote from Viktor Ullmann: “[...] it must be emphasized that Theresienstadt has served to enhance, not to impede, my musical activities, that by no means did we sit weeping on the banks of the waters of Babylon, and that



our endeavor with respect to the arts was commensurate with our will to live.” For artists interned in Terezín, their roles within the *Freizeitgestaltung* mandated certain creative contributions; nevertheless, many were productive far beyond the dictates of their respective roles. Peter Kien, an artist and poet, arrived in Terezín in December 1941 and was appointed to the drafting office; in his free time, he also wrote poetry and plays. Ullmann himself composed prolifically, producing a string quartet, three piano sonatas, numerous song cycles, and incidental music, among other works. Together in Terezín, Ullmann and Kien wrote the music and libretto of our present consideration, the opera *Der Kaiser von Atlantis oder Die Tod-Verweigerung* (“The Emperor of Atlantis or Death Abdicates”), a satirical allegory on the crisis of humanity during the Third Reich.

In the realm of Atlantis, the totalitarian Emperor Overall has issued a proclamation declaring a “great holy war.” Men, women, and children shall all fight in this crusade to root out evil; they are to leave no survivors. When Death, refusing to remain subservient, abdicates, Overall is faced with the stark consequences of his actions: a horrific dominion of the living dead. Fearing his power has been wrested from him, he issues a new proclamation: “We, Overall, give our deserving soldiers the secret to eternal life.” But all throughout Atlantis, the injured and sick are in agony, unable to die. Small acts of rebellion — a shared ration of food, a gesture of kindness, a kiss — return humanity and empathy to the wretched masses, and soon Overall recognizes that the rebellion is close at hand. Death promises to make peace and relieve the suffering masses, but only if Overall is the first to sacrifice himself. The opera ends with the dictator’s death and a cautionary reminder: “Thou shalt not take Death’s name in vain.”

Kien’s incisively crafted libretto entwines historical and literary references with philosophical depth. In this production, the opera’s seven characters — the dictatorial Overall, his enforcer the Drummer, his mouthpiece the Loudspeaker, and the four prisoners, the personified Death and *commedia dell’arte*-derived Harlekin and the two lovers, the male Soldier and “Bubikopf” (The Girl with Bobbed Hair), also a soldier — can be seen as allegorical portrayals of historical and contemporary figures. In this production, Overall is inspired by infamous dictators — from the historical Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini to the modern-day Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un (alongside a certain former U.S. president). The Drummer is inspired by figures such as Heinrich Himmler and Kim Yo Jong, while the Loudspeaker incorporates elements of Joseph Goebbels, Ri Chun-hee, and the American Alex Jones. Death is derived from the Sonderkommando in the concentration camps — Jews who endured the impossible tasks of cleaning out bodies of the deceased and putting corpses into ovens. Harlekin represents

life itself, hamstrung by trauma yet ever striving to connect and to feel. (In the *commedia dell'arte* tradition, the stock character Harlekin is a trickster who thwarts his master and pines after his love interest Columbina.) The Soldier and Bubikopf, who begin the opera as enemies but soon develop a deep sense of love and respect for one another, represent the triumph of the human spirit; tasked with Sisyphean tasks under a system of Dantean punishment, their love is a rebellion against the dehumanization imposed upon them by the regime. The characters exist within an apocalyptic realm inspired, in this production, by the irreverent art of Zdzisław Beksiński, a Polish Jew born in 1929.

Ullmann's instrumentation in the opera suggests — as do his twenty-six surviving reviews of musical life in Terezín — the severely limited resources available. The orchestration calls for expected instruments such as flute, oboe, and clarinet, but also includes banjo, cembalo (doubling piano), and harmonium. In this production, the score is reduced to piano, percussion, and electric keyboard. A device invented by conductor Djordje Nesic, a combination of a bead-chain and a wooden stick, helps realize the sound effect of the banjo. Musically, Ullmann has imbued the score with leitmotifs that lend yet further satire to Kien's penetrating libretto. Czech listeners would have recognized instantly the four-note motif with which the prologue opens, a rising and falling tritone taken from Czech composer Josef Suk's "Asrael" Symphony that returns throughout the opera; the "Asrael" Symphony, written by Suk in memory of his teacher Dvořák, who died in 1904, had become deeply associated with death and was embraced by the Czech people in times of mourning. Closing the first scene is another nationalism-inspired leitmotif sung by the Drummer as she announces Overall's crusade: the German national anthem, *Deutschland über Alles*, distorted through the sinister-sounding Phrygian mode (a decision that no doubt contributed to the Nazi's decision to ban the opera before it could even be performed). Closing the opera is a musical (and textual) satire of the Lutheran chorale *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* (*A Mighty Fortress is Our God*) in which reverence for God is substituted with reverence for Death.

*Der Kaiser von Atlantis* never was performed. On October 16, 1944, Ullmann and Kien, along with many of the performers who'd rehearsed the opera, were transported to Auschwitz. Kien died from illness. He was twenty-five years old. Ullmann died in Auschwitz on October 18, murdered in the gas chambers. That we can perform this score today and tell this story, amidst international turmoil and societal discord, is owed to the foresight of Ullmann and Kien to preserve these materials and the risks taken by countless others to ensure their safekeeping. Shortly before his deportation, Ullmann gave a number of his scores and writings to a friend, Czech philosopher and psychologist Emil Utitz, instructing him to

return the materials should he survive and, if not, to give them to Czech-English poet and novelist H. G. Adler. (Adler went on to write extensively about the Holocaust, producing works that shed light on the profound impact of Terezín and other camps on individuals and society.) Kien similarly prepared a suitcase with nearly 500 artworks and numerous letters; he gave the case to Helga King, who hid it in an infirmary ward, where it would be safeguarded from the Nazis.

*Der Kaiser von Atlantis* offers this vital reminder: history is not a tale of isolated incidents; it is a caution to remain vigilant against humanity's baser instincts and yet a reminder of its potential for good.

—Program note and synopsis ©Heather O'Donovan (MM '20),  
[beatherodonovan.com](http://beatherodonovan.com)

## STUDENT NOTE

In 1943, while their world was falling apart, Viktor Ullmann and his librettist, Petr Kien, created the one act opera *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* while imprisoned in the Nazi concentration camp Theresienstadt (Terezín). The opera was developed but did not premiere because it was banned by the Nazis—likely because of the character Emperor Overall’s close resemblance to Adolf Hitler.

However, before Ullmann and Kien were sent to Auschwitz, where they were murdered in the gas chambers, Ullmann entrusted his manuscripts to a fellow prisoner, Dr. Emil Utitz, a former professor of philosophy at the German University in Prague. After the Holocaust, Utitz passed all of Ullmann’s manuscripts to Ullmann’s friend Dr. Hans Gunther Adler, who survived the camps.

Ullmann and Kien were imprisoned at Terezín with many notable musicians and artists. Pavel Haas, Gideon Klein, and Kurt Geron are some of the artists in Terezín who also perished in Auschwitz. A few others survived like Karel Berman who originated the role of “der Tod,” pianist Alice Herz Sommer, and violinist in *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, Paul Kling.

The opera illustrates the dichotomy between good and evil, respect and bigotry, and love and hate. In this production there are two sides—the side of the prisoners and the side of Der Kaiser. *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* did not receive a public premiere until the historian, musician and arranger, Kerry Woodward, brought the work to the Dutch National Opera who premiered it on December 16, 1975.

*—Margaux Frohlich (MM '24) and Benjamin Sokol (BM '22, MM '24) are vocal performance majors who, during the course of their independent study project this semester, discovered stories about the many musicians, actors, and artists who were interred at Terezín. You can watch their March 20th presentation at <https://www.msmnyc.edu/livestream/der-kaiser-von-atlantis-presentation-2024-03-20/>*

# CAST

## **Margaux Frohlich**

Harlekin (cover)  
MM antic. '24  
*Bronxville, New York*  
Student of Ruth Golden  
Upcoming: Viardot's  
*Cendrillon* (La Fée),  
Guest artist with  
Fabbrica, Teatro  
dell'Opera di Roma,  
May 2024

## **Gregry Gropper**

Kaiser Overall  
MM antic. '24  
*New York, New York*  
Student of  
Mark Schnaible  
Upcoming: *Gianni*  
*Schicchi* (Gianni  
Schicchi), Berlin Opera  
Academy, Summer 2024

## **Donghoon Kang**

Der Tod  
PPD antic. '25  
*Seoul, South Korea*  
Student of  
Mark Schnaible  
Upcoming: *Don Giovanni*  
(Leporello), Merola, San  
Francisco, Summer 2024

## **Morena La Vecchia Galán**

Der Trommler  
MM antic. '25  
*Buenos Aires, Argentina*  
Student of Edith Bers

## **Kevin Lee**

Ein Soldat  
MM antic. '24  
*Singapore, Singapore*  
Student of  
Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

## **Brian Linares**

Der Lautsprecher  
MM antic. '24  
*Sherman, Texas*  
Student of Mark  
Schnaible

## **Qing Liu**

Der Trommler  
MM antic. '25  
*Anhui, China*  
Student of Cynthia  
Hoffman  
Upcoming: *Dead Man*  
*Walking* (Mrs. Patrick  
de Rocher), Miami  
Music Festival. *The*  
*Consul* (Vera Boronelin),  
Chicago Summer  
Opera.

## **Victoria Magnusson**

Harlekin  
MM antic. '24  
*Virginia Beach, Virginia*  
Student of Catherine  
Malfitano

## **Samantha Noonan**

Bubikopf, ein Soldat  
MM antic. '24  
*Lincoln, Nebraska*  
Student of  
Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

## **Scott Rubén La Marca**

Ein Soldat  
MM antic. '24  
*New Hyde Park, New York*  
Student of  
Mark Schnaible

## **Benjamin Sokol**

Der Tod  
MM antic. '24  
*Westbury, New York*  
*Student of James Morris*  
Upcoming: *Don Giovanni*  
(II Commendatore),  
Merola Opera Program,  
Summer 2024

## **Sara Stevens**

Bubikopf, ein Soldat  
BM '23, MM antic. '25  
*Kennesaw, Georgia*  
Student of  
Cynthia Hoffmann  
Upcoming: CLA  
Berkshires

## **William Velasco**

Harlekin  
MM antic. '24  
*San Juan, Puerto Rico*  
Student of Dimitri Pittas

## **Fernando Watts**

Der Lautsprecher  
BM '22, MM antic. '24  
*Bridgetown, Barbados*  
Student of Sidney Outlaw

## **YeongTaek Yang**

Kaiser Overall  
MM antic. '24  
*Pobang, South Korea*  
Student of James Morris  
Upcoming: *La traviata*  
(Giorgio Germont,  
cover), *Don Giovanni*  
(Don Giovanni, cover),  
Santa Fe, New Mexico,  
Summer 2024

# CREATIVE TEAM

## Djordje Nestic, Conductor and Coach

Djordje Stevan Nestic's performances have been described as artful, assertive, sensitive, and quietly virtuosic, in a career highlighted by recital, concerto, chamber, and collaborative performances. He strives to promote music addressing contemporary issues of social justice and human rights. Recent engagements include conducting Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* at Manhattan School of Music and Ana Sokolović's *Svadba* at the Peabody Conservatory, as well as leading *Svadba* at MSM, a premiere of *She Who Dared* by Barnes and Mouton with ALT, recitals in Belgrade, Serbia, the Berkshire Opera Festival, the Prototype Festival in NYC, the KotorArt Festival in Montenegro, and performances at Carnegie Hall in NYC, Kolarac Hall in Belgrade, the Serbian Cultural Center in Paris, and the Caixa Cultural in Brasilia. Recordings include Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock*, Ricky Ian Gordon's *Ellen West*, and Opera America Songbook. Other venues include Lincoln Center, the United Nations General Assembly Hall, the Mann Performing Arts Center in Philadelphia, FUJI TV in Japan, the Aspen Music Festival, Tanglewood Festival, Glimmerglass Opera, and Houston Grand Opera. He is a citizen of both the U.S.A. and Serbia and currently teaches at Manhattan School of Music and SUNY Purchase Music Conservatory. [djordjenestic.com/about](http://djordjenestic.com/about)

## 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), *Before Night Falls* (Opera Southwest), *L'heure Espagnol* (New Camerata Opera), *La Fille du Régiment* (Minnesota Opera), *Frida* (Opera Orlando), and *Maria de Buenos Aires* (Arizona 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. Their third work, *The Christmas Spider*, premiered under his direction at Opera Louisiane. *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. His other MSM productions include *Angélique* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. [johndelosantos.com](http://johndelosantos.com)

## **Nils Neubert, German Diction**

Tenor Nils Neubert was born and raised in Hamburg, Germany and is active as a performer, language and interpretation coach, educator, scholar, and administrator in the United States and abroad. He teaches at Manhattan School of Music and the Juilliard School and has served frequently as diction coach at the Music Academy of the West since 2016. He joined the Glimmerglass Festival and the Wolf Trap Opera Company in that same capacity during 2020 and 2022 respectively, and the music staff at the Metropolitan Opera in 2022, where he also began teaching for the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program in 2023. Other recent and upcoming language preparation includes projects with the Aspen Music Festival and School, Musica Sacra and the New York Philharmonic, and the Oratorio Society of New York. Nils Neubert holds degrees from the Juilliard School; Teachers College, Columbia University; and the CUNY Graduate Center. He previously taught at the Mannes School of Music, William Paterson University, Kaufman Music Center, and the Music Conservatory of Westchester, and is the current president (2022–24) of NATS-NYC. He is a student of Dr. Robert C. White, Jr., and lives in New York City with his wife, pianist Yuri Kim.

## **Eric Sedgwick (MM '07), Vocal Coach/Pianist**

Eric Sedgwick has performed with many of music's top talents, including Leona Mitchell, Sanford Sylvan, Marni Nixon, Will Liverman, Nicholas Phan, Laquita Mitchell, Justin Austin, Briana Hunter, Broadway leading ladies Sarah Rice, Carole Demas and Debra Monk, and English hornist Thomas Stacy of the New York Philharmonic. He has recorded for WQXR in New York and for the Irreverence Music and Bridge labels, and has performed on the NPR series "Selected Shorts." He is a répétiteur at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and works on faculty for the vocal program at the Tanglewood Music Center. As pianist for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, he has played under the batons of Andris Nelsons, John Williams, Thomas Ades, Bramwell Tovey, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Sir Andrew Davis. He has been a regular pianist for events with the Metropolitan Opera Guild and an artistic contributor to the Met's Lindemann Young Artist program. He has also been an artistic contributor to Bard Summerscape, Beth Morrison Projects, Opera Omaha, LA Opera, Carnegie Hall's Music Education Workshops with Joyce DiDonato, the International Vocal Arts Institutes in NYC and Montreal, Opera Williamsburg, and OperaWorks. A member of the coaching staff at Manhattan School of Music since 2009, he holds a Master's degree in piano performance from MSM and a Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Brown University, *summa cum laude*.

## **Holly Thomas**, Production Stage Manager

Holly (she/her) has been working as a stage manager in New York City for seven years. Select stage management credits include: *Flesh & Stone* (New Camerata Opera), *Occupation: Housewife* (New York Theater Festival), The Chita Rivera Awards 2023, *The Medium* (Rutgers University), *Cav+Pag* (New Camerata Opera), *The Magic Flute* (Prelude Opera). Holly graduated with a Bachelor's degree from The King's College in 2019.

## **Tori Moss** (BM '23), Assistant Stage Manager

Tori is a recent graduate from Manhattan School of Music where she received a BM in musical theatre. Her past stage management work at MSM includes *The Hills Are Alive!*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *The Secret Life of the American Musical*, *Freshman Pops*, *She Loves Me*, *On the Brink of a Lovely Song. . .*, and *Paperboy* (staged reading). Tori spent this past summer at the Mac-Haydn Theatre as the Production Stage Manager of their six-show season. Most recently, she made her off-Broadway debut as the Production Stage Manager of *Brighter Than The Sun* at the Chain Theatre. [torimoss.com](http://torimoss.com)



# 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 PRODUCTIONS

MSM GRADUATE OPERA THEATRE

## *New American Songbook Cabaret*

Shane Schag, Music Director

Amy Justman, Director

**APR 19 | FRI | 7:30 PM**

Miller Recital Hall.

MSM GRADUATE OPERA THEATRE

## *La rondine*

MUSIC BY GIACOMO PUCCINI

LIBRETTO BY GIUSEPPE ADAMI

Marcello Cormio, Conductor

Katherine M. Carter, Director

**APR 25–27 | THURS–SAT | 7:30 PM**

**APR 28 | SUN | 2 PM**

Neidorff-Karpati Hall

\$30 adults, \$15 non-MSM students and seniors

MSM Opera Theatre is made possible in part by

the Joseph F. McCrindle Endowment for Opera Productions.

MSM UNDERGRADUATE OPERA THEATRE

## *The Fairy Queen*

MUSIC BY HENRY PURCELL

Based on A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare

Jackson McKinnon, Conductor

Felicity Stiverson, Director and Choreographer

**MAY 2 & 3 | THURS & FRI**

**7:30 PM**

The Riverside Theatre

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

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

# MSM PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTION OPERATIONS

Madeline Lucas Tolliver, Dean of Performance and Production Operations

## Performance Operations

Edward Gavitt, Assistant Dean  
for Artistic Operations

Matthew Ward, Co-Chair and Co-Artistic  
Advisor of Contemporary Performance  
and Manager of Percussion

Hunter Lorelli, Large Ensembles Manager  
Jacob Poulos, Performance and Production  
Operations Department Manager

Logan Reid, Instrumental Ensembles Associate  
Raiah Rofsky, Instrumental Ensembles Associate

## Theatrical and Concert Production

Christina Teichroew, Assistant Dean  
for Theatrical Production

Matthew J. Stewart, Assistant Dean  
for Concert Production

Kathryn Miller, Associate Director  
of Theatrical Operations

Stefano Brancato, Associate Director  
of Theatrical Design

Matthew Leabo, Supervisor of  
Theatrical Operations

Chanel Byas, Production Manager

Mariel Sanchez, Production Manager

Josi Petersen Brown, Theatrical  
Production Ensembles Manager

Lee Lord, Costume and Wardrobe Supervisor

Joshua Larrinaga-Yocom, Props Supervisor

Andres Diaz Jr., Production Supervisor

Tyler Donahue, Assistant Production Supervisor

Pamela Pangaro, Electrics Supervisor

& Production Coordinator

David Philyaw, Lead Technician

Dash Lea, Production Coordinator

Patrick St. John, Production Coordinator

Eric Miller, Production Coordinator

Joshua Groth, Associate Production Manager

Lorena Peralta, Associate Production Manager

Chloe Levy, Assistant to Wardrobes/Costumes

Baker Overstreet, Associate Props Coordinator

Justin Perkins, Associate Props Coordinator

## Performance Library

Dr. Manly Romero, Performance Librarian

Clara Cho, Assistant Manager and  
Precollege Librarian

Qianru Elaine He, Performance  
Library Doctoral Assistant

Serena Hsu, Performance Library Doctoral Assistant

Maxwell Zhang, Performance  
Library Doctoral Assistant

## Piano Technical Services

Israel Schossev, Director

Richard Short, Assistant Director

Victor Madorsky, Performance Tuner/Technician

Hide Onishi, Chief Concert Technician

## Scheduling and Patron Services

Ramon Tenefrancia, Assistant Director for Scheduling and Patron Services

Clayton Matthews, Scheduling and Recitals Associate

Gileann Tan, Scheduling and Rentals Associate

Veronica Mak, Patron Services Associate

## The Orto Center for Distance Learning and Recording Arts

Chris Shade, Assistant Dean for The Orto Center  
for Distance Learning and Recording Arts

David Marsh, Assistant Director for The Orto

Center for Distance Learning and Recording Arts

Ryan Yacos, Administrative Manager

Dan Rorke, Chief Recording Engineer

Kevin Bourassa, Recording Engineer

Johnathan Smith, Recording Engineer

Mohit Diskalkar, Network Systems Engineer

# ABOUT MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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.

## Your gift helps a young artist reach for the stars!

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](https://giving.msmnyc.edu)

## Land Acknowledgment

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.



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