

M Manhattan
School of Music
GRADUATE OPERA THEATRE



NOV 20-23



MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC
GRADUATE OPERA THEATRE
DIVISION OF VOCAL ARTS & COLLABORATIVE PIANO
CARLEEN GRAHAM, DEAN

L'elisir d'amore

MUSIC BY GAETANO DONIZETTI
LIBRETTO BY FELICE ROMANI

Michael Sakir, Conductor
Katherine M. Carter, Director

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2025 | 7:30 PM
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2025 | 7:30 PM
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2025 | 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2025 | 2 PM
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL

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



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MUSIC BY GAETANO DONIZETTI
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Michael Sakir, Conductor
Katherine M. Carter, Director
James Rotondo, Scenic Designer
Caitlin Cisek, Costume Designer
Marika Kent, Lighting Designer
Loryn Pretorius, Wigs, Hair & Makeup Designer
Joshua Larrinaga-Yocom, Props Supervisor
Lauren Linsey, Production Stage Manager
Colter Shoenfish, Assistant Director
Jackson McKinnon, Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master
Kristen Kemp, Head of Music in Opera for Vocal Arts and Vocal Coach-Pianist
Travis Bloom, Vocal Coach-Pianist
Eric Sedgwick (MM '07), Vocal Coach-Pianist
Stefano de Peppo, Italian Diction Coach
AJ Sargent, Assistant Costume Designer
Matt Lazarus, Assistant Lighting Designer
Brian R. Donoghue, Assistant Stage Manager

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

Performed in Italian.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Before leaving for school each morning, I'd give my toys one final, stern reminder: "Be good, and don't make a mess." Upon returning, I would triple-check that everything was where I'd left it, convinced they were living full, dramatic lives while I was away. Children build sprawling universes for their toys—stories of love, rivalry, magic, and unrequited passion. Time warps in these worlds; a single blink can mean an hour has passed, and a nap can fast-forward the story to the next day. The rules are few, but the stakes are always high, and the problem (usually love) is urgent. The high drama thrilled me; my toys married, threw parties, fought, and adventured, generating drama fueled by secret crushes, a magic potion, and the underdog's triumph.

It is this childhood sense of urgent, high-stakes play that guides our approach to *L'elisir*. We meet our characters—our toys—immediately after they've been set down by their owner, still fully absorbed in their disarray and drama. They play with a child's wholehearted sincerity: a "yes, and" belief that everything they are experiencing is completely real. As these toy characters, we embrace the comic melodrama at the heart of Donizetti's opera.

Donizetti's memorable melodies evoke a longing for performances rooted in pure delight—an evening filled with vibrant designs, outstanding vocal performances, playful staging, and expertly performed music. Something fun. Yes, we could have done a traditional *L'elisir*, or something contemporary, perhaps leaned into the darker undertones—but haven't we had a hard enough year? This is plain fun.

Toys are extensions of ourselves; they act out our greatest fears and desires, yet they are considered instruments of youth to be discarded after a certain age. Why not use them to act out this story? For the students, this meant a freedom of physicality and play as we built the staging. Many of the funniest moments are products of their choices. Without the constraints of humans, our cast dove into the depths of imagination. My hope is that they walk away having learned a little about their own capabilities—taught by the toys they play.

Enjoy the performance, and if you see a Labubu, let me know. Mine seems to have gone missing.

—Katherine M. Carter

THE CAST

	NOVEMBER 20 & 22	NOVEMBER 21 & 23
<i>Adina</i>	Seunghyun Lim	Grace Christensen
<i>Nemorino</i>	Wonjin Choi	Carter Bonyeop Gu
<i>Dulcamara</i>	Yunsik Kim	Anthony Blatter
<i>Belcore</i>	Brendon Rapushaj	Shengyang Lin
<i>Gianetta</i>	Irene Hyun Young Shin	Miryoung Song

Ensemble

<i>Rainbow Bright</i>	Colleen Allard-Smith
<i>American Girl—Samantha</i>	Brooklyn Church
<i>Princess Diana Beanie Baby</i>	Zhiqi Cynthia Dai
<i>Cupcake Doll—Vanilla</i>	Larissa Gaulke
<i>Sorry Piece—Red</i>	Mai Guo
<i>Sky Dancer</i>	Charlotte Jakobs
<i>G.I. Joe—Navy</i>	Tommy Johnston
<i>Stretch Armstrong</i>	Hyunwoo Jung
<i>Sorry Piece—Yellow</i>	Jihoon Kim
<i>Sorry Piece—Green</i>	Hayoung Lee
<i>Ribbon Dancer Barbie</i>	Esther Lee
<i>Sorry Piece—Blue</i>	Zihan Ning
<i>Troll Doll</i>	Nicole Paravicini
<i>Clown Doll</i>	Samantha Paredes
<i>Doodle Bear</i>	Boosung Park
<i>Mr. Potato Head</i>	Huxley Robb
<i>Where's Waldo</i>	Haoran Sun
<i>Care Bear—Cheer Bear</i>	Jillian Tam
<i>G.I. Joe—Shark Attack</i>	Ziyang Zeng
<i>G.I. Joe—NASA</i>	Taian Zhou

Covers

<i>Adina</i>	Hayoung Lee
<i>Nemorino</i>	Hyunwoo Jung
<i>Belcore</i>	Zuhao Chen

Role Study

<i>Chorus</i>	Layla Chen
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SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Our toys are exhausted after a long day of play. With their child away, they gather to relax. The raggedy Nemorino is hopelessly in love with the untouchable Adina. He listens as she reads to the other toys the story of Tristan and Isolde, whose love was sparked by drinking a magic potion.

The dashing Belcore arrives with his buddies. Immediately he begins to flirt with Adina. To the surprise of all, Belcore asks Adina for her hand in marriage! She does not say yes, but she does not say no either. Nemorino takes his shot and declares his love for Adina. She kindly, but firmly, turns him down. Adina asks Nemorino to turn his attention elsewhere.

A new toy arrives! The colorful Doctor, of the Dulcamara toy company. He offers a miracle cure for every ill. Toys joyfully trade their possessions for Dulcamara's wares. As the group clears, Nemorino approaches the doctor and asks for Isolde's love potion. Dulcamara pulls out a special "elixir of love" from his bag. Nemorino drinks the entire thing and grows cheerful and more confident. When he sees Adina speaking to some of her friends, he ignores her. Adina, frustrated by the lack of attention, tells Belcore that she will marry him at the end of the week.

Just then, an officer arrives with orders that Belcore must return to active duty in the morning. The only solution? Hold the wedding tonight! Nemorino, horrified that his potion won't work in time, pleads with Adina to not go through with it. The toys celebrate the upcoming wedding while Nemorino is on the sidelines, rejected.

ACT II

The wedding festivities are in full swing! Dulcamara and Adina sing a duet to the entertainment of all, except Nemorino, who is missing. Belcore summons the lawyer to sign the wedding contract. To Belcore's disappointment, Adina delays signing.

Nemorino asks Dulcamara for another love potion. Dulcamara will happily make a trade, but does Nemorino have anything to offer? Nemorino has nothing, leaving him with no means to get another love potion. Belcore seizes the opportunity, offering Nemorino a bonus to enlist. Nemorino signs the contract.

Unbeknownst to him, Nemorino has just inherited a fortune due to the death of his relative (yes, toys have relatives too—that's how accessories get handed down). Gianetta has heard the news first and spreads the gossip among the toys. Nemorino is, initially, confused by all this attention but he gives the credit to his Elixir of Love. Even Dulcamara starts to believe in the power of the juice box. Adina is shocked. How did Nemorino become the most eligible toy in town?

Seeing other toys flirt with Nemorino unlocks Adina's true feelings for him, and she decides to win him back. Dulcamara, seeing an opportunity, offers his elixir of love to Adina. She sharply turns him down, reminding him that she already possesses everything she needs.

Nemorino, finally alone, hopes his dream love may come true. Adina appears and confesses her feelings. To prove her love, Adina has bought Nemorino's recruitment contract. He is free to do as he pleases. The rest of the toys celebrate the new couple. Belcore, sadly, is out a bride—but Dulcamara has earned the respect of the toys with his powerful elixir of love.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Colleen Allard-Smith

Chorus (Rainbow Bright)

MM antic. '27

Marietta, Georgia

Student of Mary Dunleavy

Upcoming: *La clemenza di Tito* (Annio),

MSM

Anthony Blatter

Dulcamara

MM antic. '27

St. Louis, Missouri

Student of Sidney Outlaw

Layla Chen

Chorus Role Study

MM antic. '27

Yiwu, China

Student of Christopheren Nomura

Zuhao Chen

Cover Belcore

MM antic. '27

Manshan, China

Student of Mark Schnaible

Wonjin Choi

Nemorino

PPD antic. '26

Seoul, South Korea

Student of Mark Schnaible

Grace Christensen

Adina

MM antic. '26

Peterborough, New Hampshire

Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Upcoming: *Dark Sisters* (Eliza), MSM

Brooklyn Church

Chorus (American Girl–Samantha)

MM antic. '27

Marion, Ohio

Student of Cyndia Sieden

Zhiqi Cynthia Dai

Chorus (Princess Diana Beanie Baby)

MM antic. '27

Guangzhou, China

Student of Christopheren Nomura

Larissa Gaulke

Chorus (Cupcake Doll–Vanilla)

MM antic. '26

Spanaway, Washington

Student of Mary Dunleavy

Upcoming: *Dark Sisters* (Zina), MSM

Carter Bonyeop Gu

Nemorino

MM antic. '27

Seoul, South Korea

Student of Cynthia Hoffmann

Mai Guo

Chorus (Sorry Piece–Red)

MM antic. '27

Chengdu, China

Student of Jack Li Vigni

Charlotte Jakobs (BM '24)

Chorus (Sky Dancer)

MM antic. '26

Saint Vith, Belgium

Student of Mark Schnaible

Tommy Johnston

Chorus (G.I. Joe–Navy)

MM antic. '27

Charlotte, North Carolina

Student of Dimitri Pittas

Hyunwoo Jung

Chorus (Stretch Armstrong), cover

Nemorino

MM antic. '27

Seoul, South Korea

Student of Sidney Outlaw

Jihoon Kim

Chorus (Sorry Piece–Yellow)
MM antic. '27
Seoul, South Korea
Student of Sidney Outlaw

Yunsik Kim

Dulcamara
MM antic. '27
Busan, South Korea
Student of Mark Schnable

Esther Lee (BM '25)

Chorus (Ribbon Dancer Barbie)
MM antic. '27
New York, New York
Student of Susan Quittmeyer

Hayoung Lee

Chorus (Sorry Piece–Green), cover Adina
MM antic. '27
Seoul, South Korea
Student of Mary Dunleavy

Seunghyun Lim (MM '25)

Adina
PPD antic. '27
Seoul, South Korea
Student of Edith Bers

Shengyang Lin

Belcore
MM antic. '26
Wenzhou, China
Student of James Morris

Zihan Ning

Chorus (Sorry Piece–Blue)
MM antic. '26
Xinjiang, China
Student of Mary Dunleavy

Nicole Paravicini

Chorus (Troll Doll)
MM antic. '26
Fort Bragg, California
Student of Ruth Golden
Upcoming: *Dark Sisters* (Almera), MSM

Samantha Paredes

Chorus (Clown Doll)
MM antic. '26
Salt Lake City, Utah
Student of Dimitri Pittas

Boosung Park (BM '24)

Chorus (Doodle Bear)
MM antic. '26
Busan, South Korea
Student of Dimitri Pittas

Brendon Rapushaj (BM '25)

Belcore
MM antic. '27
Bronx, New York
Student of Dimitri Pittas

Huxley Robb

Chorus (Mr. Potato Head)
MM antic. '27
New York, New York
Student of Christopheren Nomura

Irene Hyun Young Shin (BM '22, MM '25)

Gianetta
PS antic. '26
Seoul, South Korea
Student of Susan Quittmeyer

Miryoung Song

Gianetta
MM antic. '26
Seoul, South Korea
Student of Susan Quittmeyer

Haoran Sun

Chorus (Where's Waldo)
MM antic. '27
Shandong, China
Student of Mark Schnable

Jillian Tam

Chorus (Care Bear–Cheer Bear)

MM antic. '27

Vancouver, Canada

Student of Cynthia Hoffmann

Upcoming: *Carmen* (Mercédès), MSM

Ziyang Zeng

Chorus (G.I. Joe–Shark Attack)

MM antic. '27

Shenzhen, China

Student of Cyndia Sieden

Taian Zhou

Chorus (G.I. Joe–NASA)

MM antic. '27

Zhangjiajie, China

Student of Dimitri Pittas

ORCHESTRA

Michael Sakir, Conductor

JT Kane, Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance

VIOLIN 1

Koshiro Takeuchi,
concertmaster
Setagaya, Japan

Allison Lee
Seoul, South Korea

Yeonsoo Jung
Seoul, South Korea

Leonie Asamoah
Hamburg, Germany

Erin Han
Irvine, California

Susie Shin
Seoul, South Korea

VIOLIN 2

Jiabao Wei, principal
Chengdu, China

Caroline Jorden
Concord, Massachusetts

Gyung Min Myung
Anyang, South Korea

Yiru Zhang
Shandong, China

Jayson Rodriguez
Ospina
Bayamon, Puerto Rico

VIOLA

Kyuwon Yoo, principal
Paju, South Korea

Harris Panner
Bethesda, Maryland

Cayden Stathakos
Houston, Texas

Yat Lee
Hong Kong, Hong Kong

CELLO

Hannah Sohn, principal
Albany, New York

Han Zhao
Hangzhou, China

Andrew So
Queens, New York

Eunkyeong Chun
Cheonan, South Korea

BASS

Juri Chae, principal
Budang, South Korea

Kwasi Micah
New York, New York

FLUTE

Isabella Carucci, principal
New York, New York

Jaeyeong Park
Ulsan, South Korea

OBOE

Kamil Tarnawczyk,
principal
Pullman, Washington

Junzhe Huang
Shanghai, China

CLARINET

Shani Wang, principal
Hsinchu, Taiwan

Ivan Morozov
New York, New York

BASSOON

Adam Kraynak, principal
Harleysville, Pennsylvania

Matthew So
Toronto, Canada

HORN

Luis Montesdeoca,
principal
Duran, Ecuador

Cameron Pollard
Winston Salem, North Carolina

TRUMPET

Ryan Colarusso, principal
Sussex, New Jersey

Jiseop Shin
Seoul, South Korea

TROMBONE

Malik Hamza, principal
Frisco, Texas

Jonathan Lee
Edison, New Jersey

BASS TROMBONE
Ryan Parichuk
Budd Lake, New Jersey

TIMPANI

Emma Stewart
Orange, Virginia

PERCUSSION

Glenn Choe
Cedar Park, Texas

HARP

James Ho
Taipa, Macao

KEYBOARD

Sakurako Jayne Abe
Markham, Canada

CREATIVE TEAM

Michael Sakir, Conductor

Conductor Michael Sakir has been praised for his “artistic authority,” “fluidity of expression,” and “great delicacy of feeling.” He serves as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of Opera Montana where the innovative programming, community partnerships, and robust education programs under his leadership have led to record-breaking ticket sales and company growth. Sakir previously served as Music Director of Opera Memphis, with whom, in addition to conducting nearly two dozen productions, he was deeply involved in the company’s groundbreaking civic practice programs and commissioning projects. In the 2025-2026 season, Sakir makes guest conducting debuts with the Manhattan School of Music in Donizetti’s *L’elisir d’amore*, as well as in the world premiere of Laura Kaminsky’s *Time to Act* with Pittsburgh Opera. Other recent guest conducting engagements include Seattle Opera, Arizona Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Opera Baltimore, Opera Idaho, Brevard Music Center, Opera Orlando, Shreveport Opera, Eugene Opera, Northwestern University, American Opera Projects. Sakir has held music staff positions with Santa Fe Opera, Washington National Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Sarasota Opera, among others. He holds degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and The Boston Conservatory.

Katherine M. Carter, Director

Katherine M. Carter is a director of theatre & opera. Previously for MSM, she directed *La rondine* and *Roméo et Juliette*. This season, Katherine directs a new English production of *The Merry Widow* for Sarasota Opera, a new production of *Hansel and Gretel* for Annapolis Opera, and a new production of Disney’s *Frozen* for The Rose Theater. Last season, Katherine created a new staging of *Nabucco* for the Canadian Opera Company, a new production of *Dialogues des Carmélites* for Wolf Trap Opera, a concert staging of *La bohème* for the Aspen Music Festival, as well as making her San Francisco Opera debut with a revival staging of *La bohème*.

Frequently in demand for her work with young artists and students, she has been a guest at some of opera’s leading training programs including The Ryan Opera Center at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, and Wolf Trap Opera. Katherine has also led productions and workshops at the Juilliard School, Mannes Opera, New York University, Carnegie Mellon University, Rice University, the New School for Drama, and Bard College.

Katherine is a certified Intimacy Director for theatre and opera, trained by IDC Professionals. She serves as an Intimacy Director for The Metropolitan Opera.

James Rotondo, Scenic Designer

James Rotondo (he/him) is a set designer for opera and theatre based in Boston, Massachusetts. Previous MSM productions include *Into the Woods*, *The Pajama Game*, *Romeo et Juliette*, and *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Other recent productions include *Rigoletto* (Vancouver Opera), *The Little Prince* (Pacific Opera Victoria), *Pagliacci* (Glimmerglass Festival), *Man of La Mancha* (Opera North), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Argyle Theatre), *Freaky Friday* and *Legally Blonde* (Prescott Park Arts Festival). Upcoming productions include *Orpheus and Eurydice* at Pacific Opera Victoria and *Così* at the Glimmerglass Festival.

Caitlin Cisek, Costume Designer

Caitlin Cisek is a costume designer, visual artist, and educator. Favorite credits include *Saturday Night Live* (Season 44), *Romeo and Juliet* at Opera San Jose, and *Pete Rex* at 59E59 and *Dialogue of the Carmelites* at Wolftrap Opera. Cait was recently awarded the Research Incentive Award from the College of the Arts at the University of Florida to present research from *The Huddled Masses Project*; an editorial on American identity and immigration. The project was also exhibited as part of the New York City Opera Thrift Shop World Event in 2024. Upcoming productions include *Turandot* with Pacific Symphony, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* at LMU in Los Angeles. She earned my BA in Theatre from the State University of New York at Albany and MFA from the University of California, Irvine. Caitlin is a proud member of United Scenic Artists Local 829.

@caitccisek. www.caitlincisek.com www.huddledmassesproject.com

Marika Kent, Lighting Designer

Also with MSM: *Roméo et Juliette*, *La Rondine*, *Albert Herring*, *The Snow Maiden*. Select recent/upcoming productions: *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Wolf Trap Opera), *Ulysses; Seagull* (Elevator Repair Service), *The Great Privation* (SOHO REP); *The Suffragette's Murder* (Denver Center for the Performing Arts), *Sweeney Todd; Clyde's; Choir Boy; Gem of the Ocean; School Girls, or the African Mean Girls Play* (Portland Center Stage), *Fences* (Trinity Rep), *POTUS* (Arena Stage), *Catch as Catch Can* (Playwrights Horizons). Marika teaches design at NYU's Playwrights Horizons Theater School and is a proud member of USA Local 829.

www.marikakent.com

Loryn Pretorius, Wigs, Hair & Makeup Designer

Elixir of Love marks Loryn's 11th production as Wig, Hair and Makeup Designer for Manhattan School of Music. Past shows include *Rusalka*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *La rondine*, *Nine the Musical*, *Bye, Bye Birdie*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Paper Boy*:

A New Musical, She Loves Me, Sunday in the Park with George, and Sweeney Todd. She most recently designed *Cosi fan tutte* (Director, Renee Fleming) and *La bohème* (Director, Katherine Carter) for the Aspen Music Festival, and *Finding Neverland* for OFC Creations in Rochester, NY. When she's not designing, she is department heading Broadway shows (*Sunset BLVD, Mary Jane, The Collaboration*; upcoming: *BUG*), and touring with the B52's. Many thanks to the MSM production staff our FANTASTIC Creative Team, and my wonderful Build and Run Crew! @loryn_pretorius

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 18 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 Rubl's Passion Play* (Epic). He is eternally grateful for the continued love and support of his husband Roberto.

Lauren Linsey, Production Stage Manager

Lauren Linsey is a director, dramaturg, and stage manager based in New York City with roots in Houston, Texas and Norman, Oklahoma. She is a co-producer with Co.llective Arts Productions, an Oklahoma-based theater company creating work for and by young artists. She's just happy to be here! Stage Management: *{in} tangible* (Theatre Row); *Nine, Forget Me Not, The Secret Life of the American Musical* (Manhattan School of Music); *An Autopsy of a Night at a Bar* (The Tank), *A New Brain* (University of Oklahoma). Alum, The 24 Hour Plays: Nationals.

Colter Schoenfish, Assistant Director

Colter Schoenfish (they/them) is a Brooklyn based director of theatre and opera. Select directing credits include: *Cendrillon* and *The Tender Land* with Chicago Summer Opera, *SCENEWORKS* with Mannes Opera, *Mozart and Salieri* with Opera Saratoga, *Orpheus and Euridice* with Arbor Opera Theatre, and two world-premiere productions for the University of Michigan – *Higher Ground* and

Enchantress. As a sought-after freelance artist, Colter has frequented companies across the country like Santa Fe Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Detroit Opera, Utah Opera, Opera Theatre of St Louis, Des Moines Metro Opera, Tulsa Opera and Opera Theatre of St. Louis. With a passion for artistic training, they have guest-taught and directed students at universities and young artist programs such as Utah Opera, Mannes Opera, University of Houston, and Chicago Summer Opera. Colter is a proud alumnus of the theatre directing program at the University of Michigan.

Jackson McKinnon, Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master

Jackson McKinnon serves as Music Director for the Undergraduate Opera Theatre Program's mainstage productions and as Chorus Master and Assistant Conductor for the Graduate Opera Theatre at Manhattan School of Music. Mr. McKinnon has worked with orchestras and companies across the globe including the International Contemporary Ensemble, Vienna State Opera, Linz Landestheater Opera, American Symphony Orchestra, Grafenegg Academy Orchestra, The Orchestra Now, and Palaver Strings. Mr. McKinnon has spent four seasons as Music Director for Opera Maine's Studio Artist Program and Cover Conductor for Opera Maine's mainstage productions. Mr. McKinnon was the Resident Music director with City Lyric Opera in New York for multiple seasons and has spent five seasons as conductor/musicological consultant with Bard Summerscape and Music Festival.

An adamant proponent for new music, Mr. McKinnon has collaborated, performed, and premiered numerous works by composers such as Philip Glass, Ricky Ian Gordon, Lori Laitman, Pauline Oliveros, Natalie Joachim, Ana Sokolovic, and Laura Kaminsky among many others.

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

Vocal coach and pianist Kristen Kemp serves as Head of Music Staff in Opera for Vocal Arts at the Manhattan School of Music, where she brings a wealth of experience as a collaborative artist and educator.

Throughout her distinguished career, Kristen has performed and worked with leading opera companies across the United States, including Cincinnati Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Sarasota Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Opera Pacific, Opera North, and the Opera Theatre of Lucca, Italy, among others.

A longtime collaborator with Sherrill Milnes' VOICEExperience Foundation,

Kristen has been an integral part of its programs in New York, Florida, and Savannah since 2010. She also served as Studio Artist Director at Sarasota Opera from 2010–2015, following several seasons on the company's coaching staff beginning in 2003.

In 2025, Kristen was the English Diction Coach for Opera Theatre of St. Louis, contributing to productions of Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's *This House*. She also served as Music Director for Shared Voices, a collaborative initiative of the Denyce Graves Foundation. A native of Florida, Kristen earned both her Master of Music in Collaborative Piano and Artist Diploma in Opera Coaching from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM).

Travis Bloom, Vocal Coach-Pianist

Travis Bloom is a sought-after vocal coach and collaborative pianist in New York City. He has served as an artistic staff member at the Manhattan School of Music since 2017. Most recently, Travis served as the principal coach/pianist for the Berkshire Opera Festival's production of *La Traviata* under the artistic direction of Brian Garman and Jonathon Loy. Prior to working with BOF, Travis was a guest pianist/coach for the JAM on the Marsh composers' residency in the UK with guest clinician, Jonathan Dove. In 2020-22 he served on the music staff for the anticipated return of Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage's *Intimate Apparel* at Lincoln Center. From 2019-2021 he worked as a faculty coach with the Chautauqua Institute Voice Program under the direction of Marlena Malas. During his time at Chautauqua, he worked closely with composers Ricky Ian Gordon and Ben Moore, performing recitals of their music. Since 2018, he has worked with the Metropolitan Opera Guild as a pianist for their master class series. He has accompanied master classes with Renée Fleming, Susan Graham, Craig Rutenberg, Thomas Hampson, Isabel Leonard, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Harolyn Blackwell, and Piotr Beczała. Since moving to NYC in 2016, Mr. Bloom was a staff pianist/coach for the International Vocal Arts Institute under the direction of Joan Dornemann and Paul Nadler. Upcoming engagements include a masterclass series with the opera students at Stetson University.

Eric Sedgwick (MM '07), Vocal Coach-Pianist

Eric Sedgwick has appeared onstage with many of the music industry's top talents including Sanford Sylvan, Marni Nixon, Will Liverman, Nicholas Phan, Laquita Mitchell, Justin Austin, Patrick Carfizzi, and Brittany Renee. He has recorded for WQXR in New York, for the *Irreverence* Music and Bridge labels, and performed

on the NPR series *Selected Shorts* and the upcoming BBC *Arts in Motion* series. He is currently a repetiteur at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and has been on the faculty for the vocal program at the Tanglewood Music Center since 2015. As a pianist for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, he has played under the batons of Andris Nelsons, John Williams, Thomas Ades, Bramwell Tovey, Michael Tilson Thomas, James Gaoigan, and Sir Andrew Davis. On the coaching staff at MSM since 2009, he holds a Master's Degree in Piano Performance from MSM and a Bachelor's Degree in English from Brown University.

Stefano de Peppe, Italian Diction Coach

Stefano de Peppe was born in Italy, graduated from Civica Scuola di Musica Claudio Abbado in Milan. He has performed in many theaters throughout USA, Europe, North and South America, Israel and Japan, always acclaimed for his powerful bass-baritone, his crisp diction and his skills as an actor in the Italian and French Comedic Repertory mostly of late 18th, 19th and early 20th century. He has many years of experience also as an Italian Diction and Repertory Coach for Singers, often invited to hold private lessons and/or Masterclasses in Music Schools and Programs for Young Artists. He has held Masterclasses for the Young Artist Program of Arizona Opera, Colorado Opera, Sarasota Opera, Atlanta Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Naples Opera in the U.S., Opera de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, Opera de Costa Rica, Memphis Universities, Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, among other places. He holds the position of Italian Coach at Lamont School of Music of the University of Denver, Colorado. He has recently taken part as an Italian Coach to the online various Programs for Singers "Vincerò", "Dandelion Institute", "Atelier d'Excellence", "CSMusic", "Teatro Grattacielo of New York" and "Camerata de'Bardi". In 2023 and 2024 he was the Italian Coach for the productions of Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* and Puccini's *La rondine* at Manhattan School of Music, where he also held the position of Professor of Italian Recits during the winter season of 2024.

AJ Sargent, Assistant Costume Designer

AJ Sargent (they/them) has been making theatre and surrounded by music all their life and has recently made the move to New York from the West Coast. Previous costume and wardrobe work includes Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* at Willamette University and the College Light Opera Company's 53rd season, working on their traditional nine musicals in twelve weeks throughout and as Head of Wardrobe for: *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *The Danger Year*. They are excited and grateful for this opportunity to work with Manhattan School of Music.

Matt Lazarus, Assistant Lighting Designer

Matt Lazarus (he/they) is a designer based in New York City. His work has been seen throughout New York City and regionally. He's especially proud of *Heaux Church* (Ars Nova), *I'm Gonna Marry You Tobe Maguire* (Watermark Productions, the cell), *Tracks* (59e59), and *SCOUTS* (The Players Theater). He is a founding member of Glad You're Not Dead; a jingle production house whose only client is a now defunct Floridian burger restaurant. See more at MattLazarusDesign.com or @LazMattarus

Brian R. Donoghue, Assistant Stage Manager

Brian R. Donoghue is a New York-based stage manager. Off-Broadway: *White Girl in Danger*. Selected Stage Management: *Urinetown*, *Into the Woods*, *The Pajama Game*, *Footloose*, *Nine*, *Forget Me Not*, *A Taste of Shakespeare*, *Sister Act*, and *Grounded*. Design and Wardrobe: *Into the Woods*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Xanadu*, *Elf the Musical*, *Antigone*, and *Talking With*. Education: Adelphi University. For more information: www.briandonoghue.com

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The Centennial Project was an ambitious program of improvements to the School's architecturally distinguished campus coinciding with MSM's 100th anniversary. The centerpiece of the Project was the renovation of Neidorff-Karpati Hall, which has been transformed into a state-of-the-art venue to showcase our talented students. The Project also included a dramatic and welcoming new campus entrance on Claremont Avenue, new practice rooms, and an expansion of the main entryway and lobby.

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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 8 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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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 Philanthropy**, at 917-493-4115, or visit: msmnyc.edu/galaxy-society.

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