

M Manhattan
School of Music
GRADUATE OPERA THEATRE

LA

CLEMENZA

DI

TITO

**APR 30
- MAY 3**

M Manhattan
School of Music

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

La clemenza di Tito

MUSIC BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
LIBRETTO BY CATERINO MAZZOLÀ, AFTER PIETRO METASTASIO

George Manahan, Conductor
A. Scott Parry, Director

THURSDAY, APRIL 30 | 7:30 PM
FRIDAY, MAY 1 | 7:30 PM
SATURDAY, MAY 2 | 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, MAY 3 | 2 PM
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL

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J. Coe Weir Foundation.*

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A. Scott Parry, Director
Barry Steele, Scenic Designer
Christopher Brusberg, Lighting and Projection Designer
Chloé Lévy, Costume Designer
Loryn Pretorius, Wigs, Hair & Makeup Designer
Joshua Larrinaga-Yocom, Props Supervisor
Itzel Martinez, Production Stage Manager
Jackson McKinnon, Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master
Stephanie Sutherland, Intimacy Director
Kristen Kemp, Head of Music in Opera for Vocal Arts & Vocal Coach-Pianist
Travis Bloom, Vocal Coach-Pianist
Eric Sedgwick (MM '07), Vocal Coach-Pianist
Stefano de Peppo, Italian Diction Coach
Rochele Mac, Associate Projection Designer and Content Creator
Charlotte Shi, Assistant Scenic Designer
Jack Wallace, Assistant Costume Designer
Ryan Randazzo, Assistant Lighting Designer
Blue Herdrich, Assistant Stage Manager
Juan Angel Johnston-Chavez (MM '25), Student Assistant Director

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

Performed in Italian.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

La clemenza di Tito dramatizes a specific historical political crisis in ancient Rome that resonates with our own modern political world by exploring the tension between justice and mercy, the fragility of political legitimacy, and the ethical responsibilities of leadership.

The plot centers on the Emperor Tito, who survives a conspiracy led by Sesto and instigated by Vitellia. Rather than exacting harsh punishment, Tito ultimately chooses forgiveness, pardoning the conspirators in an act that reaffirms his moral authority. This decision is not merely a personal forgiveness; it is a public political act. Tito well-understands that his response will shape both his legitimacy and the stability of the state.

In modern politics, leaders frequently confront comparable dilemmas. When facing political opponents, civil unrest, or even attempted military coups, governments must decide a balance between punitive measures and reconciliation. *Tito* suggests that large-scale political systems can be destabilized not merely by ideology, but also by human weakness.

Today, leaders are aware that their responses to crises are scrutinized by the public across the media landscape. Acts of clemency are often framed not only as legal decisions, but as symbolic gestures meant to project authority. Yet such gestures can also provoke criticism, with opponents questioning if mercy undermines accountability. The opera highlights this ambiguity: Tito's decision strengthens his authority, but also exposes him to vulnerability.

In our own era marked by intense partisan division, the prospect of finding common ground can seem remote. Tito's clemency proposes that magnanimity, rather than retribution, may help cultivate civic unity. However, the opera does not portray forgiveness as naïve; Tito first investigates the conspiracy before issuing judgment. For him, mercy is meaningful precisely because it follows deliberation and an acknowledgment of wrongdoing.

Modern leaders, whether presidents, kings, prime ministers, or any other heads of state, operate under similar pressures as Tito: to maintain order and to secure legitimacy in the eyes of their citizenry. Mozart's opera suggests that clemency, when exercised with wisdom, can transform a moment of crisis into an affirmation of ethical leadership. In this way, a story set in ancient Rome and then reformed and staged in the late Enlightenment helps now to illuminate the moral challenges of our own twenty-first-century governance.

-A. Scott Parry

THE CAST

APRIL 30 & MAY 2

Tito

Vitellia

Sesto

Servilia

Annio

Publio

Justin Hong

Su Hyeon Park

Esther Lee

Xinran Du

Colleen Allard-Smith

Brian Linares

MAY 1 & MAY 3

Moses Sunghyun Park

Baylee Kilgore

Yining Liu

Katelynn Cherry

Taylor Stephens Lockhart

Yunsik Kim

Chorus

Jaydon Beleford

Peiming Cai

Brooklyn Church

Jessica DeGennaro

André Ferguson

Jordan Jones

Hyunwoo Jung

Jihoon Kim

Siqi Liu

Yichun Liu

Sabrina Ontiveros

Qinyi Qi

Alexandra Roges

Haoran Sun

Soojin We

Aaron Wei

Mengxi Yu

Taian Zhou

Role Study

Servilia

Annio

Mengxi Yu

Jordan Jones

SYNOPSIS

Time: February 4, 2033

Place: Rome, Italy

The action takes place in and around the Capitol building over a 24-hour period

CAST

TITO, *newly appointed Prime Minister of Italy*

VITELLIA, *daughter of the previous Prime Minister of the opposition party*

SESTO, *longtime friend of Tito and Minister of the Interior in Tito's new administration*

ANNIO, *Minister of Equal Opportunities, a non-binary person assigned female at birth*

SERVILIA, *Tito's Chief of Staff and older sibling of Sesto*

PUBLICO, *Minister of Defense and personal counselor to Tito*

CHORUS, *Ministers in Tito's Council, political aides, security agents, military guards*

ACT I

It is the morning of a newly appointed Prime Minister of Italy, Tito Vespasian, an incremental liberal in a conservative era, due to the sudden death of his father, the former moderately-minded Prime Minister. Tito's hasty campaign is rumored to have used dubious methods of technological innovation to win support and push through his ascent. Tito hopes to restore faith in his "big tent" inclusive approach to governance through a partnering with a prominent foreign diplomat, making her his Deputy PM.

Sesto, Tito's friend and member of his new cabinet, is in love with Vitellia, the former opposition party leader's daughter. Vitellia is convinced she is the rightful choice for Prime Minister and aggressively manipulates Sesto to agree to assassinate Tito and lead an insurrection against him.

Annio, Tito's Minister of Equal Opportunities, arrives to bring Sesto to the awaiting Tito. Annio explains that Tito has decided against making the diplomat his second due to negative public reaction. Vitellia tells Sesto to put a hold on the plans to dispatch Tito, hoping she now has a chance to be in Tito's good graces and perhaps become his Deputy.

Annio reminds Sesto of his promise to support Annio's marriage to Sesto's sister Servilia, Tito's Chief of Staff, as it will likely draw political blowback against the administration due to Annio and Servilia being, legally speaking, a same-sex couple, as Annio is non-binary and was born female.

An intimate celebration shows the council's support of Tito immediately after his swearing into office. Sesto inquires of Tito about his political pivot. Tito says he will ask Sesto's sister, his own Chief of Staff, to become his Deputy, motivated in large part by Tito's friendship with Sesto. Tito tells Annio to deliver the news to Servilia, though secretly Annio is heartbroken.

Servilia arrives and lovingly greets Annio, but Annio withdraws and informs Servilia of Tito's intentions. Servilia is shocked but knows that they must give up on their romantic relationship if Servilia is to ascend to higher political office within the current culturally restrictive environment.

Tito returns and congratulates Servilia, but instead of accepting his proposal, she admits her love of Annio and the complications that this would cause. Tito responds by lauding Servilia's honesty and says he himself will bring about a change in the laws and supports the lovers to marry.

Vitellia sees news of Servilia's proposed higher position. She seethes as Sesto sheepishly enters. Vitellia asks why the capitol isn't yet burning and Tito not yet killed. Sesto demurs but is again manipulated by Vitellia. Sesto begrudgingly exits to go and put the seditious plan into motion.

Publio and Annio arrive in a rush to escort Vitellia to Tito, telling her that Tito has instead chosen her as his Deputy. Vitellia is shocked by the news and suddenly regrets having sent Sesto to begin the insurrection. Vitellia rushes about in a panic to the bewilderment of Publio and Annio.

Sesto enters conflicted and decides to forego Tito's murder, but too late, as he sees flames arise within the capitol, set ablaze by his supporters. Sesto leaves to commit the killing himself. Amid screams of horror, Annio, along with Servilia and Publio, bemoan the chaos and violence as Vitellia arrives in search of Sesto. The flames begin to subside as Sesto reappears believing that he has just assassinated Tito. He is about to admit his crime to the others when Vitellia silences him. The flames die down. The chaos calms. All morn the horrific violence that has occurred.

ACT II

Annio confirms to a grieving Sesto that Tito was not hurt in the Capitol riot. Sesto, relieved, admits his betrayal as a confused Annio tries to convince him to tell Tito and repent of his crimes.

Vitellia discovers Sesto about to go to Tito and instructs him instead to run away, wanting especially to hide the secret of her own culpability in the plot. Publio enters, disarming Sesto, remanding him into custody, and escorting him to the Senate for an immediate trial.

Vigils for the fallen are held all over Italy and the citizenry laud the fact that Tito is unscathed. Publio suggests that Tito addresses the public, but Tito is too worried over Sesto's fate and sends Publio to oversee the Senate's verdict. Publio warns Tito to prepare for the worst.

Sesto's confession arrives accompanying a death sentence from the Senate that now requires only Tito's signature. Ruminating on the fallible nature of his own trust and deep love for Sesto, Tito calls out for the traitor to be brought before him in person.

Tito implores Sesto to confide in him as a devoted friend. Sesto admits his guilt and takes full responsibility but does not divulge the reason for his treason. Tito commands Sesto be taken to prison, but before leaving, Sesto pleads for forgiveness even as he accepts his eventual fate. Tito announces he will address the Senate in an emergency session: Sesto's fate has been decided.

Annio and Servilia beg Vitellia to intercede with Tito in her position as the newly appointed Deputy Prime Minister in order to save Sesto's life. Vitellia is shocked to hear that she has not been exposed by Sesto. Servilia admonishes her to take action immediately in order to spare her brother and leaves with Annio to attend the Senate's ad hoc convocation.

Alone, Vitellia confronts her own guilt. She imagines Sesto's death and her own life as a torture to endure. Finding an inner unknown strength, she determines to publicly admit her wrongs in hopes of preventing Sesto's death.

Tito is lauded by the Senate as he enters the emergency session. Sesto is brought in with Publio, Annio, and Servilia in tow. Tito begins to publicly address Sesto's treason when Vitellia abruptly arrives, admitting everything. Tito rails against the subterfuge within his ranks, but unexpectedly frees Sesto and pardons all involved in the seditious plot. Sesto renounces his treachery and all assembled sing Tito's praises as an enlightened leader in hopes of a more unified future.

-A. Scott Parry

PROGRAM NOTES

The History of Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*

Composed in the final year of his life, *La clemenza di Tito* (1791) stands as one of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's most historically rooted and politically resonant works. Premiered in Prague during a moment of dynastic celebration and Enlightenment tension, the opera reflects both the waning traditions of opera seria and the evolving aesthetic and moral sensibilities of late eighteenth-century Europe. Though historically overshadowed by Mozart's more ubiquitous operas (*Die Zauberflöte*, *Don Giovanni*, *Le nozze di Figaro*), *La clemenza di Tito* has undergone significant critical reevaluation since the second World War. Today it is understood not so much as a staid traditional relic, but as a sophisticated meditation on power, mercy, and moral responsibility.

Context and Commission

La clemenza di Tito was commissioned for the coronation festivities of Leopold II as King of Bohemia. The premiere took place on September 6, 1791, at the Estates Theatre in Prague. The libretto, adapted by Caterino Mazzolà from an extant text by Pietro Metastasio, recounts the story of the Roman emperor Titus who responds to betrayal not with vengeance, but with clemency. The commission arrived at a moment of political fragility. The Enlightenment had reshaped philosophical ideologies throughout Europe, and the French Revolution had unsettled its monarchical structures. An opera celebrating imperial mercy thus carried pointed political weight. The narrative of a ruler who forgives conspirators could be read as a model of enlightened absolutism, suggesting that true authority rests not in fear, but in magnanimity.

Mozart purportedly composed the orchestral score in a mere 18 days, with the secco recitatives filled in by his own student due to the compressed timeframe and Mozart's compositional attention being taken up by *Die Zauberflöte* during this same period. Despite the tight deadline, the opera demonstrates remarkable psychological nuance. While it retains some of the formal structures of opera seria, Mozart's music infuses these conventions with an emotional depth and dramatic immediacy, while his librettist refashioned Metastasio's libretto into a "true opera" (according to Mozart), removing almost a third of the text and rewriting many of the narrative recitativo sections into more modern vocal ensembles.

Style and Innovation

Although *La clemenza di Tito* adheres generally to eighteenth-century conventions, Mozart's treatment of character and orchestration shows a more modern sensibility. The opera's emotional core lies not only with Tito but also with Sesto, whose internal conflict between his friend (Tito) and his lover (Vitellia) drives the drama. In each of the two Act's penultimate numbers ("Parto, parto" [Sesto] and "Non più di fiori" [Vitellia]), Mozart employs virtuosic clarinet obbligato passages that mirror both characters' agitation and moral turmoil over their duplicitous behavior. The obbligato writing, influenced by Mozart's collaboration with clarinet virtuoso Anton Stadler, adds an additional timbral color that shows a clear reflection between the events enacted on the stage and those occurring in the orchestra pit.

Similarly, the accompanied recitatives intensify dramatic tension beyond the standard secco recitative style more common in earlier seria works. The added orchestral colors underscore the characters' internal psychological states rather than simply advancing the plot. It's the ensembles however, most particularly the Act I finale sequence depicting the Capitol's conflagration, which reveal the mature Mozart's creative mastery of large-scale dramatic construction. At this point, a collective chaos builds, starting with Sesto's famous aria ("Parto, parto") followed by an agitated trio then directly into a dramatic scena accompagnata and finally finding its way to a turbulent multi-sectional, full-company finale which brings the curtain down not with a climactic exclamation, but with a bewildered and shell-shocked hush.

Enlightenment and Politics

The opera's central theme—clemency as supreme virtue—aligns closely with the Enlightenment's ideals of rational governance and moral leadership. Titus represents a forward-thinking monarch who tempers law with a humanistic impulse rather than reinforcing divine-right muscular authoritarianism.

In this respect, *La clemenza di Tito* can be read alongside its own contemporary philosophical currents, including ideas associated with thinkers such as Montesquieu and Rousseau, who debated the foundations of political authority. While the opera does not advocate a revolution, it subtly suggests that legitimacy arises from moral integrity rather than the force of power alone. For its original audience in Prague, the message may have functioned as both praise of and gentle instruction for Leopold II. Mercy here becomes not weakness but the ultimate expression of true sovereign strength.

Reception and Reassessment

Initial reception of *Tito* was mixed. Some critics viewed the work as stylistically outdated, especially when compared to Mozart's more innovative comedic operas. The rise of Romantic aesthetics in the nineteenth century further marginalized *La clemenza di Tito*, which appeared to the time overly formal and ceremonially restrained. However, late twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship has reassessed the opera's structural and emotional sophistication. Directors and performers have increasingly emphasized the psychological depths of Sesto and Vitellia, transforming what was once considered rigid formalism into something more decidedly conflicted and human. Modern stagings also often highlight Tito's political ambiguity, questioning whether his clemency is entirely altruistic or rather somewhat strategic.

This shift reflects broader changes in opera production overall, which today generally favors interpretive complexity over historical literalism. As audiences confront contemporary debates about justice, authority, and reconciliation, the opera's themes resonate with surprising relevancy. This resonance lies in its central question: What does it mean to rule justly? In dramatizing forgiveness not as naïveté but as moral courage, *Tito* is a work that continues to both challenge and inspire audiences more than two centuries after its premiere.

-A. Scott Parry

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Colleen Allard-Smith

Annio

MM antic. '27

Marietta, Georgia

Student of Mary Dunleavy

Upcoming: *Rinaldo* (Rinaldo), Chicago
Summer Opera

Jaydon Beleford (BM '23)

Chorus

MM antic. '26

Renton, Washington

Student of Catherine Malfitano

Upcoming: *L'Enfant Prodigue* (Azaël),
Chautauqua Opera Conservatory

Peiming Cai

Chorus

MM antic. '27

Zhanjiang, China

Student of Cynthia Hoffmann

Katelynn Cherry

Servilia

MM antic. '26

Trappe, Maryland

Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Upcoming: Kenneth Merrill's
Collaborative Pianist and Singer
Seminar Recital, MSM

Brooklyn Church

Chorus

MM antic. '27

Marion, Ohio

Student of Cyndia Sieden

Jessica DeGennaro

Chorus

MM antic. '26

Queens, New York

Student of Christòpheren Nomura

Xinran Du (BM '24)

Servilia

MM antic. '26

Beijing, China

Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Upcoming: *Bound* (Diane), *Romeo et
Juliette* (Juliette role study), Opera
Maine

André Ferguson

Chorus

MM antic. '26

Pensacola, Florida

Student of Sidney Outlaw

Justin Hong

Tito

MM antic. '26

Leonia, New Jersey

Student of Dimitri Pittas

Jordan Jones

Chorus, Annio Role Study

MM antic. '26

St. Louis, Missouri

Student of Mark Schnaible

Upcoming: *Lalovavi* (Ivavi cover),
Cincinnati Opera

Hyunwoo Jung

Chorus

MM antic. '27

Seoul, South Korea

Student of Sidney Outlaw

Baylee Kilgore

Vitellia

MM antic. '26

Houston, Texas

Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Jihoon Kim

Chorus

MM antic. '27

Seoul, South Korea

Student of Sidney Outlaw

Yunsik Kim

Publio

MM antic. '27

Busan, South Korea

Student of Mark Schnaible

Upcoming: Resident Artist, Teatro

Nuovo 2026 Summer Season

Esther Lee (BM '25)

Sesto

MM antic. '27

New York, New York

Student of Susan Quittmeyer

Upcoming: *Le Nozze de Figaro*

(Cherubino), Berlin Opera Academy

Brian Linares (MM '24)

Publio

PPD antic. '26

Sberman, Texas

Student of Mark Schnaible

Upcoming: Young Artist, Chautauqua

Opera Company

Siqi Liu

Chorus

MM antic. '27

Tianjin, China

Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Yichun Liu

Chorus

MM antic. '26

Jilin, China

Student of Edith Bers

Yining Liu (MM '23)

Sesto

PPD antic. '27

Dalian, China

Student of Cynthia Hoffmann

Taylor Stephens Lockhart

Annio

MM antic. '26

New York, New York

Student of Edith Bers

Sabrina Ontiveros

Chorus

MM antic. '26

Redlands, California

Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Moses Sunghyun Park (MM '24)

Tito

PPD antic. '26

Seoul, South Korea

Student of Mark Schnaible

Su Hyeon Park

Vitellia

PPD antic. '26

Jeonju, South Korea

Student of Mark Schnaible

Upcoming: Ravinia Steans Music

Institute, Summer 2026

Qinyi Qi

Chorus

MM antic. '27

Baotou, China

Student of Susan Quittmeyer

Alexandra Roges

Chorus

MM antic. '26

Trabuco Canyon, California

Student of Ruth Golden

Haoran Sun

Chorus

MM antic. '27

Sbandong, China

Student of Mark Schnaible

Soojin We

Chorus

MM antic. '26

Seoul, South Korea

Student of Christòpheren Nomura

Upcoming: *Le nozze di Figaro* (Count),

Berlin Opera Academy

Aaron Wei

Chorus

MM antic. '26

Fuzhou, China

Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Mengxi Yu

Chorus, Servilia Role study

MM antic. '26

Beijing, China

Student of Dimitri Pittas

Taian Zhou

Chorus

MM antic. '27

Zhangjiajie, China

Student of Dimitri Pittas

ORCHESTRA

George Manahan, Conductor

JT Kane, Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance

VIOLIN 1

Mingnan Yue

Beijing, China

Naoko Owaki

Tokyo, Japan

Caroline Jorden

Concord, Massachusetts

Samuel Marquis

Cocoa Beach, Florida

Jialin Ding

Beijing, China

VIOLIN 2

Subin Valerie Choi

Vaughan, Canada

Chih-ting Yang

Melbourne, Australia

Nicole Razhanskiy

Stamford, Connecticut

Mina Kim

New York, New York

Yunji Kim

Seoul, South Korea

VIOLA

Anna Huang

Zhubei City, Taiwan

Yiyun Cao

Shanghai, China

Nicholas Lopez

San Juan, Texas

Ruihe Yao

Winona, Minnesota

CELLO

Frida Rahmani

Maplewood, New Jersey

Xinyi Jiao

Beijing, China

Han Zhao

Hangzhou, China

Chaehwan Lee

Seoul, South Korea

BASS

Brendan Wiebe

Sparks, Nevada

Kwasi Micah

New York, New York

FLUTE

Sydney Weiler

New York, New York

Isabella Carucci

New York, New York

OBOE

Junzhe Huang

Shanghai, China

Michael Yu

Suzhou, China

CLARINET

Shani Wang

Hsinchu, Taiwan

Ivan Morozov

New York, New York

BASSOON

Matthew So

Toronto, Canada

Lillian Gleason

St. Paul, Minnesota

HORN

Itzel Uranga-Caamano

Queens, New York

Ben Hommowun

St Charles, Illinois

TRUMPET

Xiaoyang Wan

Beijing, China

Christian Morales

San Antonio, Texas

TIMPANI

Aaron Levine

Tenafly, New Jersey

CREATIVE TEAM

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

George Manahan is in his 14th season as Director of Orchestral Activities at Manhattan School of Music, as well as Music Director Emeritus of the American Composers Orchestra. He served as Music Director of the New York City Opera for 14 seasons and was hailed for his leadership of the orchestra. He was also Music Director of the Richmond Symphony (VA) for 12 seasons. Recipient of Columbia University's Ditson Conductor's Award, Mr. Manahan 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." His Carnegie Hall performance of Samuel Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* was hailed by audiences and critics alike. "The fervent and sensitive performance that Mr. Manahan presided over made the best case for this opera that I have ever encountered," said the *New York Times*.

Mr. Manahan's guest appearances include the Orchestra of St. Luke's 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 has been a regular guest with the Curtis Institute and the Aspen Music Festival and has appeared with the opera companies of Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chicago, Santa Fe, Paris, Sydney, Bologna, St. Louis, the Bergen Festival (Norway), and the Casals Festival (Puerto Rico). His many appearances on television include productions of *La bohème*, *Lizzie Borden*, and *Tosca* on PBS. The *Live from Lincoln Center* telecast of New York City Opera's production of *Madama Butterfly*, under his direction, won a 2007 Emmy Award.

George Manahan's wide-ranging recording activities include the premiere recording of Steve Reich's *Tebillim* for ECM; recordings of Edward Thomas's *Desire Under the Elms*, which was nominated for a Grammy; Joe Jackson's *Will Power*; and Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*. He has conducted numerous world premieres, including Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, David Lang's *Modern Painters*, Hans Werner Henze's *The English Cat*, Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*, and Terence Blanchard's *Champion*.

He received his formal musical training at Manhattan School of Music, studying conducting with Anton Coppola and George Schick, and was appointed to the faculty of the school upon his graduation, at which time the Juilliard School awarded him a fellowship as Assistant Conductor with the American Opera Center. Mr. Manahan was chosen as the Exxon Arts Endowment Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony the same year he made his opera debut with the Santa Fe Opera, conducting the American premiere of Arnold Schoenberg's *Von Heute auf Morgen*.

A. Scott Parry, Director

With over 125 productions encompassing an expansive range of repertoire, from *Così fan tutte* to *West Side Story*, A. Scott Parry's direction has been hailed by *Opera News* as "marvelous," "lively," "imaginative," and "spot-on," working with such companies as New York City Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, and Dallas Opera to name only a few. He designed and directed the world premières of *I lavori d'amore persi* (Monteverdi) for the Bloomington Early Music Festival, and the absurdist opera *The Pig, the Farmer, and the Artist* (David Chesky) for the NY Fringe Festival at La Mama, Off-Broadway. Mr. Parry spent a decade on the directing staff of New York City Opera at Lincoln Center, served on the opera faculty of Indiana University in Bloomington, and was a professor of practice at the New England Conservatory, Peabody Conservatory, and Amherst College, in addition to spending ten years as Producing Artistic Director of The Ohio State Opera & Lyric Theatre in Columbus. He currently serves on the faculties of MSM and NYU and is the Stage Director and Acting Coach for Dolora Zajick's Institute for Young Dramatic Voices and the American Wagner Project. www.ascottparry.com

Barry Steele, Scenic Designer

For four decades Barry Steele has created designs for opera, dance, and theatre in 56 countries. Notable engagements include San Francisco Opera Center, Lucinda Childs Dance Company, Ballet Stars of Moscow, Nantes Opera, and Carnegie Hall. New operas such as *Vincent*, and *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* as well as rarities like *The Fall of the House of Usher*, and *La Voix Humaine* complement his considerable list of standard opera repertory gained from designing over one hundred productions as Resident Lighting Designer for Sarasota Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, and New Jersey Opera. Since 1989, Mr. Steele has lit dance in all styles for a diverse range of dance groups including ODC Dance Company, Anna Sokolow's Players' Project, Paco Peña's Flamenco Theater, and Battery Dance Company. Recent theatrical engagements span Mophato Dance's *Pula! Botswana* on Broadway, American Stage's *Hair*, and Capital Rep's *Ring of Fire* and *The Full Monty*.

Christopher Brusberg, Lighting and Projection Designer

Christopher Brusberg is a New York City-based lighting designer whose work centers on storytelling through style and collaboration, shaping space and emotion to illuminate the heart of the narrative. Christopher has worked with the following companies: EMERGE125 (Company Lighting Designer - NYC), Annapolis Opera (Resident Lighting Designer), Opera Lafayette (DC), BANDPoteir Dance (DC/ NYC), Lyric Stage Company of Boston, Company One (Boston), Arrow Rock Lyceum, The Cherry Arts Space (Ithaca), Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Tulsa Opera, Opera McGill, NYU Steinhardt, SUNY Purchase Voice and Opera, Boston Conservatory. Christopher is a proud member of USA829. For upcoming design work, check out his website: www.ctblighting.com (he/him)

Chloé Lévy, Costume Designer

Chloé Lévy is a New York-based costume designer. She received a BFA in Costume Design and Technology from DePaul University and is a graduate of the Juilliard Professional Apprentice Program. Select design and assistant design credits include *My True Love* (Player's Theatre), *Carmen* (Wolf Trap Opera), *Tammy Faye* (Broadway), *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Berlin Opera Academy), *Atalanta* (The Juilliard School), and *Armida* (Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Scenes). She is a proud member of Manhattan School of Music's production staff.

Loryn Pretorius, Wigs, Hair & Makeup Designer

La Clemenza di Tito marks Loryn's 13th production as Wig, Hair and Makeup Designer for Manhattan School of Music. Past shows include: *A Little Night Music*, *Elixir of Love*, *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 *Così fan tutte* (Director, Renee Fleming) and *La bobème* (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 (BUG, Sunset BLVD, Mary Jane, The Collaboration), 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 Ruhl's *Passion Play* (Epic). He is eternally grateful for the continued love and support of his husband Roberto.

Itzel Martinez, Production Stage Manager

Itzel Paola Martinez is a freelance stage manager based in NYC. She received her BFA in Technical Theatre with a concentration in Stage Management from The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) in 2020. Credits include being a stage management apprentice at The Juilliard School during 2023–24. After Juilliard, she was chosen to be the Stage Management Fellow at The Metropolitan Opera for their 2024–25 season. Recent engagements include Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* with The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Puccini's *La Boheme* at El Paso Opera, Korngold's *The Silent Serenade* at Mannes Opera and at the 2025 Glimmerglass Opera Festival, the world premiere of Derek Bermel's opera, *The House on Mango Street* (based on Sandra Cisneros' novel), and Puccini's *Tosca*.

Jackson McKinnon, Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master

American conductor Jackson McKinnon maintains an active domestic and international career as conductor, chorus master, pianist, and educator. Equally at home on the podium with repertoire both old and new, Mr. McKinnon has discovered and premiered works from as early as the 16th Century to premiering and workshopping the new works of today. He is the recipient of Taiwan's Grammy equivalent, the 2025 Golden Melody Award, where he conducted for the recording of the "Best Art Music Album", *Blossom*, by composer Apple Change. He has also worked with such composers as Pauline Oliveros, Lori Laitman, Ricky Ian Gordon, Philip Glass, Tobias Picker, Joan Tower, and many others. An avid opera conductor, Mr. McKinnon was Resident Music Director with City Lyric Opera in NYC as well as Opera Maine's Studio Artist Program leading both companies through several productions. Mr. McKinnon has worked with ensembles across the globe including the International Contemporary Ensemble, American Symphony Orchestra, Portland Symphony Orchestra, Grafenegg Academy Orchestra, The Orchestra Now, Vienna State Opera, Linz

Landestheater Opera, and Palaver Strings. Mr. McKinnon currently serves as Music Director for Manhattan School of Music's mainstage productions as well as Chorus Master and Assistant Conductor for MSM's Graduate Opera Theatre.

Stephanie Sutherland, Intimacy Director

Stephanie Sutherland (she/her) is a certified Intimacy Director through IDC Professionals, working in the worlds of theater, opera, dance, and music videos as an Intimacy Professional and Consultant. In addition to her work as an ID, Stephanie is also a movement director, assistant director, choreographer, dancer, and actress, working nationally/internationally in dance, theater, film, commercials, and music. As an ID/IC, she is a regular artist and guest lecturer at Fordham University and Manhattan School of Music, and serves as a consultant for numerous directors, production companies, and leading theater departments throughout NYC. Her collaborations have been seen at venues such as The Shed, A.R.T./NYC, The Gene Frankel Theater, Bard College, Fordham University, MSM, Marymount Manhattan, and her music video collaborations have included work with artists NyOh and Neon Gru. She is a graduate of Fordham University, where she earned her BFA in dance through the Alvin Ailey/Fordham program. For more information about her or her work, you can find her at www.stephaniesutherland.com.

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

Kristen Kemp is a vocal coach and pianist who serves as Head of Music Staff in Opera for Vocal Arts at the Manhattan School of Music. A seasoned collaborator across the United States and abroad, she has worked with companies including Cincinnati Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Sarasota Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Utah Festival Opera, and Opera North, among others.

A longtime partner of Sherrill Milnes' VOICEperience, Kristen has contributed to programs in New York, Florida, and Savannah since 2010. She was Studio Artist Director at Sarasota Opera from 2010–2015 and a member of its coaching staff beginning in 2003. In 2025 she served as diction coach at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis for Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's *This House*. She will return this summer for a second year with the Denyce Graves Foundation to work with the Shared Voices artists.

Kristen holds a Master of Music in Collaborative Piano and an Artist Diploma in Opera Coaching from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

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 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 the 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 Beczala. 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 The Shared Voices Residency sponsored by the Denyce Graves Foundation.

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 Peppo, Italian Diction Coach

Stefano de Peppo 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. In 2025 he was the Italian Coach of *L’Elisir d’amore* at Manhattan School of Music and at Indiana University in *Le nozze di Figaro* and *La Bobeme*. He will be the Italian Coach this coming summer at Wolf Trap Opera and in the fall again at Indiana University.

Rochele Mac, Associate Projection Designer and Content Creator

Rochele is a NYC-based freelance designer. She earned her MFA from the University of Maryland and received her BA in theatre from the University of Northern Colorado. Over the past four years, she’d had the privilege of working as an associate/assistant to Derek McLane on various projects, including *Here There Are Blueberries* at New York Theatre Workshop, *Juan Planchard* at Miami New Drama, *Nine* at the Kennedy Center, *Three Summers of Lincoln* at La Jolla Playhouse as well as the Met Gala and many others. In addition to theatrical design work, she creates renderings for events and commercials. She is dedicated to exploring the depth that scenic design adds to performance and contributing to this vibrant city’s rich tapestry of theater.

Charlotte Shi, Assistant Scenic Designer

Charlotte Shi (she/her) is a set and production designer based in New York. With the background of Architecture, she is using space, structure and materials as powerful tools for storytelling on stage. Very excited to join the MSM community! Selected credits: *Hypochondriac*, *Yerma* (NYU Grad Acting), *Road Kills* (Good Apples Collective), *Far Away* (Stairwell Theater), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (NJIT), *The Mountaintop* (CamdenRep). M.F.A. NYU Tisch, Design for Stage and Film. Junranshi.com

Jack Wallace, Assistant Costume Designer

Jack has loved supporting his dear friend Chloé in mounting her costume design for this production of *La Clemenza di Tito*. He is endlessly proud of her and her work on this project. He wishes well to the cast and crew during their run.

Ryan Randazzo, Assistant Lighting Designer

Ryan Randazzo is an up-and-coming Lighting Designer based in New York and Northern New Jersey. Shows he has designed include, but are not limited to, *Macbeth* by Candlelight (The Curtain), *Richard III* (The Curtain), *Lost and Found* (Off-Broadway), and Montclair State University's *Anna in The Tropics*. He hopes you thoroughly enjoy the show!

Blue Herdrich, Assistant Stage Manager

Sarah Herdrich (Blue, they/them) is a NYC-based stage manager working primarily on new works across opera and theater. Select recent projects include *Hildegard* (LA Opera & Beth Morrison Projects), *Silent Serenade* (Mannes), *Counterfeit Opera* (Little Island), *Eat the Document* (Prototype), *As One* (Kentucky Opera), *Lysistrata* (Mannes), and *Adoration* (Beth Morrison Projects & Prototype). This is their first project with MSM, thank you all!

Juan Angel Johnston-Chavez (MM '25), Student Assistant Director

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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.

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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 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.

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 Philanthropy Office at 917-493-4434
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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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What Will Your Legacy Be?

Through a bequest or other planned gift, you can help to ensure that Manhattan School of Music will provide a music education of the highest quality to exceptionally talented young artists for generations to come while also strengthening the School's long-term financial health.

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

Help a young artist reach for the stars!

