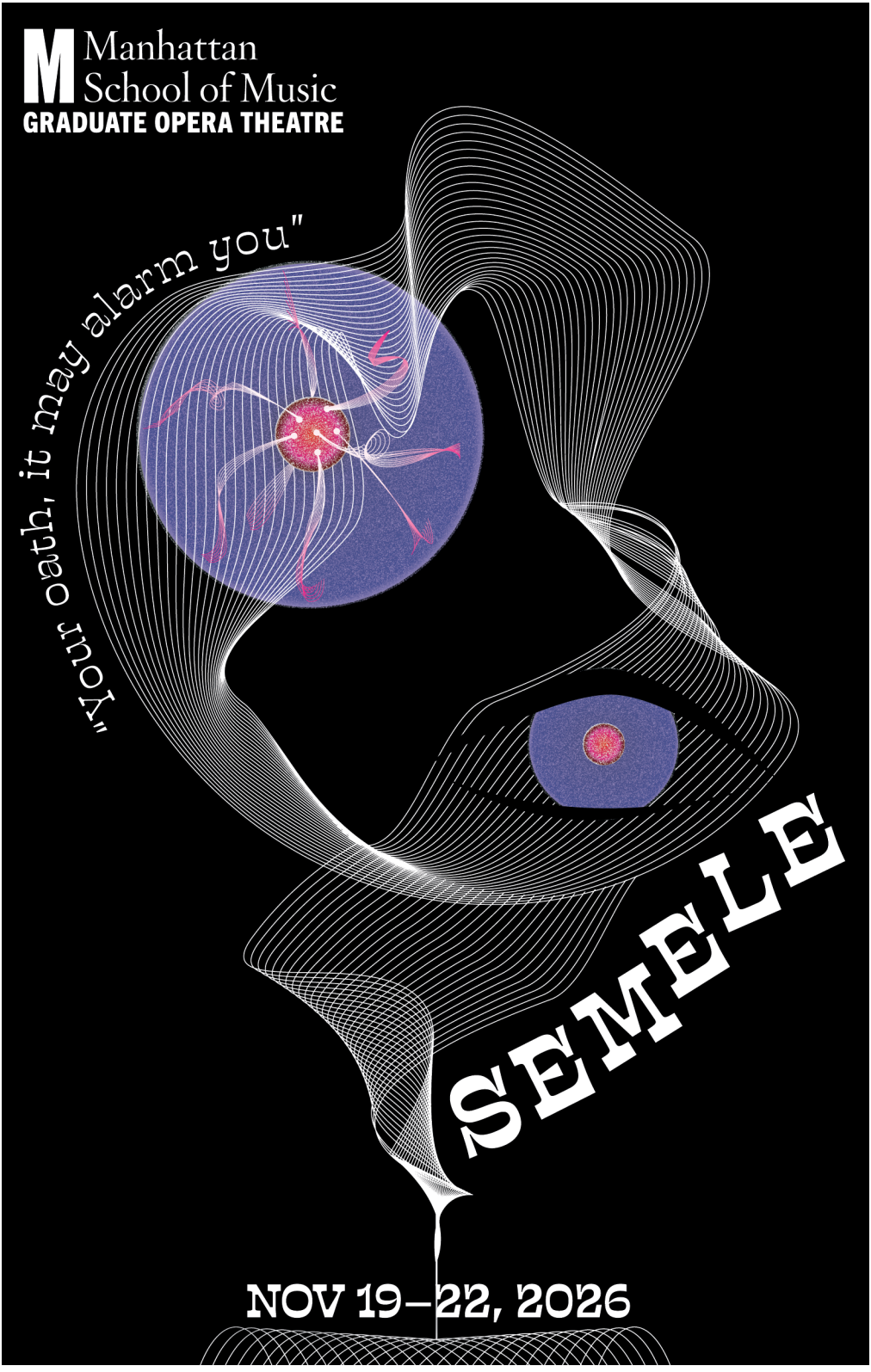
Manhattan School of Music
GRADUATE OPERA THEATRE



Manhattan School of Music

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

Semele

MUSIC BY GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL
LIBRETTO BY WILLIAM CONGREVE

Christopher Allen (BM '08), Conductor
James Blaszko, Director

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2026 | 7:30 PM
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2026 | 7:30 PM
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2026 | 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2026 | 2 PM
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL

Please be advised that this production will contain periodic loud noises and flashes of light, including a brief moment of strobe lighting.

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

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MUSIC BY GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL
LIBRETTO BY WILLIAM CONGREVE

Christopher Allen (**BM '08**), Conductor
James Blaszko, Director
Brittany Vasta, Scenic Designer
Oana Botez, Costume Designer
Paige Seber, Lighting Designer
Holden Meier, Sound Designer
Camilla Tassi, Projection Designer
Amanda Miller, Wigs, Hair & Makeup Designer
Joshua Larrinaga-Yocom, Props Supervisor
Kristen Kemp, Head of Music in Opera for Vocal Arts
Jinhee Park, Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master
Bin Yu Sanford, Vocal Coach-Pianist
Eric Sedgwick, Vocal Coach-Pianist
Stephanie Sutherland, Intimacy Director
Kathryn LaBouff, English Diction Coach
Kat Norton, Production Stage Manager
Zoe Lesser, Assistant Director
Yijun Yang, Associate Scenic Designer
Jasmine Canjura, Assistant Costume Designer
Amara Payton McNeil, Assistant Lighting Designer
Julian Kelley, Assistant Projection Designer
Jane Serenska, Assistant Wig, Hair, and Makeup Designer
Matilde Maini, Assistant Stage Manager
Supertitles provided by Michael Chadwick
There will be one 15-minute intermission.
Performed in English.

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NOTES FROM THE DEAN AND DIRECTOR

On Her Own Terms

When George Frideric Handel's *Semele* premiered at Covent Garden in 1744, its story already carried centuries of reinvention. Handel adapted a 1706 libretto by William Congreve, who drew upon the story of Semele in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, written around 8 CE but rooted in much older Greek mythology. Handel presented the work in the context of the English oratorio tradition, but its subject, dramatic structure, and vivid characterization have made *Semele* equally at home on the operatic stage. Its first performance took place at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, on February 10, 1744.

For this MSM production, nearly one third of Handel's score has been cut in the interest of brevity. In doing so, it joins a long history of artists reshaping the story for different audiences, periods, and cultural concerns. Our production considers *Semele* through a question that remains remarkably contemporary: *what does it mean for a person to claim autonomy in a world in which the terms of their life have been determined by others?*

The opera begins in ancient Boeotia, a world governed by ritual, patriarchal authority, and dynastic marriage. Semele is expected to marry Prince Athamas of Boeotia, a union approved by her father, Cadmus, King of Thebes, to preserve political and social order. Within that world, Semele has little control over the decision that will define her future. Her first appeal to Jove (the Roman Jupiter), therefore, is more than just calling out to a god – but a first attempt to claim autonomy.

That struggle inspires the recurring notion of the contract in this production. When Semele leaves the mortal world with Jupiter, she tears apart the marriage agreement made without her consent. Later, experiencing a taste of a god-like world, she demands a contract of her own, compelling Jupiter to honor his promise to grant whatever she asks.

This reversal is crucial. Semele evolves from the subject of an agreement made by others to becoming the author of her own demands. What follows is tragic, but her transformation remains significant: she has claimed the right to speak for herself. Across centuries, that struggle continues to resonate with anyone who has sought the freedom to define their own identity, desires, and future.

–Dr. Carleen Graham, Dean
Division of Vocal Arts & Collaborative Piano

Nature to each allots his proper sphere,

But that forsaken we like meteors err.

Toss'd through the void, by some rude shock we're broke,

And all our boasted fire is lost in smoke.

...so moralize the chorus of priests after learning of Semele's evisceration at the hands of almighty Jupiter. Whether meant as observation or warning, their sentiments are almost immediately upended by the revelation that Bacchus, that divine enabler of guiltless pleasure, is born out of the audacious woman's ashes to liberate us all from fear. This famously bizarre dichotomy at the end of *Semele* inspired the tone of our eccentric production, where ancient institutions of masculinity collide with the American 1960s–1970s and the cultural revolutions of that era.

Though not attempting to replicate any one period literally, we invoke a moment when supposedly natural divisions of authority were being challenged with new urgency. The sexual revolution and women's liberation movement promised ways of living beyond one's allotted "proper sphere," while those guarding that sphere responded with moral panic and political backlash.

A most ironic reflection of this exists in our staging: Jupiter and his aides revolutionize Semele's pursuit of pleasure and self-determination, as Juno and her aides actively work to destroy it. Condemning Juno for her manipulation of Semele, however, hardly feels fair; she, like the rest of the women in our opera, struggles to pursue power and pleasure in a world where male appetite is treated as inevitable and female appetite as catastrophic.

—James Blaszko
Director, Semele

THE CAST

	NOVEMBER 19 & 21	NOVEMBER 20 & 22
Semele	Hayoung Lee	Anastasia Maritsas
Jupiter	Ziwei Ren	Travis Guillory
Ino	Yining Liu	Jillian Tam
Cadmus	Anthony Blatter	Daniel Illig
Juno	Yushan Guo	Yilin Wang
Iris	Brooklyn Church	Myeongyun Mandy Lee
Somnus	Brendon Rapushaj	Peiming Cai
Athamas	Cécile Baratta	Cécile Baratta
Apollo	Mai Guo	Mai Guo
Priest	Daniel Illig	Anthony Blatter
Bacchus	Alex Kondratov	Alex Kondratov
Pheme	Jiyeon Moon	Jiyeon Moon
Harmonia	Fengrong Cheng	Fengrong Cheng
Pasithea	Ana Maria Griffin Morimoto	Ana Maria Griffin Morimoto
Morpheus	Jordan Woods	Jordan Woods
Phantasos	Theo Bazin	Theo Bazin
Dragons	Jin-Hee Lee Yeonkyung Cho	Jin-Hee Lee Yeonkyung Cho

Chorus

SOPRANO

Fengrong Cheng
Yeonkyung Cho
Ana Maria Griffin Morimoto
Jiyeon Moon
Izzy Koehler
Jin-Hee Lee
Yoonseo Lee
Onjoo Yang

ALTO

Klara Kofod Lauridsen
Echo Wang
Ruochen Yang
Xinye Zheng

TENOR

Jared Garcia Lopez
Mai Guo
Ronald Romero
Yihua Yang
Xinkang Zhou

BARITONE/BASS

Theo Bazin
Andrew Cox
Tianrui Huang
Jordan Woods
Shuo Zhang

Covers

Semele	Onjoo Yang
Iris	Ana Maria Griffin Morimoto
Athamas	Ruochen Yang
Apollo	Ronald Romero

SYNOPSIS

Character and Scene Descriptions

The Mortals

Cadmus, *King of Thebes*

Harmonia, *Queen of Thebes*

Semele, *daughter of Cadmus, contracted to marry Athamas*

Ino, *Semele's sister*

Athamas, *Prince of Boeotia, contracted to marry Semele*

Chorus of Priests

The Divine

Jupiter, *King of the Gods and Supreme Deity*

Juno, *Queen of the Gods, Jupiter's consort and sister*

Apollo, *son of Jupiter*

Bacchus, *son of Jupiter*

Iris, *servant of Juno*

Pasithea and Pheme, *assistants to Iris*

Somnus, *God of Sleep and Hypnotism*

Morpheus and Phantasos, *sons of Somnus*

Chorus of Spirits

Part One

Scene 1: The Temple of Juno in Ancient Boeotia

The chorus of priests prepare sacred nuptial rites as Semele laments her arranged marriage to Athamas. After several signs of dissent, including those of her sister Ino, Semele publicly rejects Athamas and is rushed out of the temple. Ino then approaches Athamas herself, only to be interrupted by her father's account of Semele's divine abduction.

Scene 2: Semele's journey to the Divine Realm

Semele destroys her marriage contract and, with Apollo and a chorus of spirits guiding her to meet Jupiter, celebrates her newfound power and joy.

Scene 3: Juno's Office

Iris informs Juno that Semele has been sequestered by Jupiter in a far-off palace, and encourages Juno to let go of her jealousy and accept 'free love.' Juno fires Iris, then rehires her after her assistants prove unfit for the position.

Scene 4: Semele's Palace

Semele laments the limitations of her status among the divine, despite Jupiter's efforts to please her. Jupiter encourages Semele to harness her mortal power, but evades Semele's request for equality by fetching her sister Ino for companionship. When Ino arrives, she and Semele revel in the beauty of the universe.

Part Two

Scene 1: The cave of Somnus and his sons

Juno arrives with Iris and her remaining assistant, Pasithea. Juno sacrifices Pasithea to Somnus in exchange for his labor. Somnus and his sons agree to invade the dreams of Jupiter with fear, disarm the dragons that guard Semele's palace, and transform Juno into the likeness of Semele's sister Ino.

Scene 2: Semele's Palace

Juno, disguised as Ino, manipulates Semele with a divine mirror. Enraptured by her own beauty, Semele agrees to Juno/Ino's suggestion to force a contract upon Jupiter so she can see him in his godlike form—making her his equal. Jupiter warns that his true form will harm Semele, but she persists. Jupiter agrees to Semele's terms and mourns her inevitable death. When he finally reveals himself to her in his true form, she dies.

Scene 3: The Temple of Juno in Ancient Boeotia

Everyone mourns Semele's death, including Juno. Just as Ino seizes the opportunity to wed Athamas, Apollo appears and announces the birth of Bacchus out of Semele's ashes. The chorus of priests celebrates the new god of wine and ecstasy, more mighty than love.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Cécile Baratta
Athamas
MM antic. '28
Altaussee, Austria
Student of Cynthia Hoffmann
Upcoming: Song Recitals in Paris & Vienna, July 2027

Theo Bazin
Phantasos, Chorus
MM antic. '28
Warwick, Rhode Island
Student of James Morris

Anthony Blatter
Cadmus, Priest
MM antic. '27
St. Louis, Missouri
Student of Sidney Outlaw

Peiming Cai
Somnus
MM antic. '27
Zhanjiang, China
Student of Cynthia Hoffmann

Fengrong Cheng
Harmonia, Chorus
MM antic. '27
Shenzhen, China
Student of Susan Quittmeyer

Yeonkyung Cho
Dragon, Chorus
MM antic. '27
Seoul, South Korea
Student of Susan Quittmeyer

Brooklyn Church
Iris
MM antic. '27
Marion, Ohio
Student of Sidney Outlaw

Andrew Cox
Chorus
MM antic. '28
Des Moines, Iowa
Student of Mark Schnaible

Jared Garcia Lopez
Chorus
MM antic. '28
Laredo, Texas
Student of Mark Schnaible

Travis Guillory
Jupiter
MM antic. '27
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Student of Jack LiVigni

Mai Guo
Apollo, Chorus
MM antic. '27
Chengdu, China
Student of Jack Li Vigni

Yushan Guo (BM '26)
Juno
MM antic. '28
Dalian, China
Student of Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

Ana Maria Griffin Morimoto
Pasithea, Chorus, Cover Iris
MM antic. '27
New York, New York
Student of Dimitri Pittas

Tianrui Huang
Chorus
MM antic. '27
Shenzhen, China
Student of Mark Schnaible

Daniel Illig (MM '26)
Cadmus, Priest
PPD antic. '28
San Francisco, California
Student of Christòpheren Nomura
Upcoming: Federation of the Art Song Competition Semifinalist (Fall 2026)

Izzy Koehler
Chorus
MM antic. '27
Columbus, Ohio
Student of Susan Quittmeyer

Alex Kondratov
Bacchus
MM antic. '28
Cleveland, Ohio
Student of Jack Li Vigni

Klara Kofod Lauridsen
Chorus
Special Graduate
Copenhagen, Denmark
Student of Harolyn Blackwell and Ruth Golden
Upcoming: *L'enfant et les Sortilèges* (Maman), The Royal Danish Academy of Music (January 2027)

Hayoung Lee
Semele
MM antic. '27
Seoul, South Korea
Student of Mary Dunleavy

Jin-Hee Lee
Dragon, Chorus
MM antic. '28
Santa Clara, California
Student of Ruth Golden

Myeongyun Mandy Lee
Iris
PPD antic. '27
Busan, South Korea
Student of Mary Dunleavy

Yoonseo Lee
Chorus
MM antic. '27
Seoul, South Korea
Student of Mark Schnaible

Yining Liu (MM '25)
Ino
PPD antic. '27
Dalian, China
Student of Cynthia Hoffmann

Anastasia Maritsas
Semele
MM antic. '27
Kingston, New York
Student of Sidney Outlaw

Jiyeon Moon
Pheme, Chorus
MM antic. '27
Jeju, South Korea
Student of Catherine Malfitano

Brendon Rapushaj (BM '25)
Somnus
MM antic. '27
Bronx, New York
Student of Dimitri Pittas

Ziwei Ren
Jupiter
MM antic. '27
Sydney, Australia
Student of Jack Li Vigni

Ronald Romero
Chorus, Cover Apollo
MM antic. '28
Savage, Minnesota
Student of Jack Li Vigni

Jilliam Tam
Ino
MM antic. '27
Vancouver, Canada
Student of Cynthia Hoffmann

Echo Wang (BM '26)
Chorus
MM antic. '28
Sichuan, China
Student of Mary Dunleavy

Yilin Wang (MM '26)
Juno
PPD antic. '28
Beijing, China
Student of Mark Schnaible

Jordan Woods
Morpheus, Chorus
MM antic. '28
New York, New York
Student of Sidney Outlaw

Onjoo Yang
Chorus, Cover Semele
MM antic. '27
Seoul, South Korea
Student of Cyndia Sieden

Ruochen Yang (BM '26)
Chorus, Cover Athamus
MM antic. '28
Guangzhou, China
Student of Susan Quittmeyer

Yihua Yang
Chorus
MM antic. '28
Guizhou, China
Student of Dimitri Pittas

Shuo Zhang
Chorus
MM antic. '27
Anhui, China
Student of Christòpheren Nomura

Xinye Zheng
Chorus
MM antic. '28
Fuzhou, China
Student of Susan Quittmeyer

Xinkang Zhou
Chorus
MM antic. '28
Nanjing, China
Student of Mark Schnaible

ORCHESTRA

Christopher Allen (BM '08), Conductor
JT Kane, Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance

VIOLIN 1

Peixuan Wu, concertmaster
Houston, Texas

Yunji Kim
Seoul, South Korea

Jayson Rodriguez Ospina
Bayamón, Puerto Rico

Te-Hsuan Bu
Keelung, Taiwan

Adrian Walker
Salt Lake City, Utah

Vivian Kao
Hong Kong, Hong Kong

VIOLIN 2

Allison Lee, principal
New York, New York

Julia Li
Baltimore, Maryland

Meihe Wang
Shenyang, China

Tinatin Narimanidze
Valley Stream, New York

Madison Lee
New York, New York

VIOLA

Anna Huang, principal
Zhubei City, Taiwan

Woori Bae
Seoul, South Korea

Junjie Ma
Changchun, China

Alexandra Hansen
Ridgefield, Connecticut

CELLO

Arol Rzayev, principal
Baku, Azerbaijan

Emily Ai
Suzhou, China

Isabella Liu
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Hyunji Cho
Seoul, South Korea

BASS

Brendan Wiebe, principal
Sparks, Nevada

Peter Wiseman
Torrance, California

OBOE

Katherine Christensen, principal
Billings, Montana

Finnan White West
Lafayette, Indiana

BASSOON

Jaclyn Yee, principal
Toronto, Canada

Chanelle Junio
Honolulu, Hawaii

HORN

Daniel Halstead, principal
Montgomery, Ohio

Hannah Eide
Wayzata, Montana

TRUMPET

Cameron Knox, principal
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Nicholas Del Rosso
Emerson, New Jersey

TIMPANI

Jason Chin
Vancouver, Canada

HARPSICHORD

Bin Yu Sanford
New York, New York

CREATIVE TEAM

Christopher Allen (BM '08), Conductor

Recipient of The Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award, Christopher Allen is featured in Opera News as "one of the fastest-rising podium stars in North America." He has led acclaimed operatic and symphonic performances with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Utah Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Virginia Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo, Orquesta Clásica Santa Cecilia, George Enescu Philharmonic, Tucson Symphony, Omaha Symphony, Atlanta Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Opera Omaha, Opéra de Montréal, English National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Washington National Opera, Detroit Opera, North Carolina Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Daegu Opera House in South Korea, Korean Symphony Orchestra, and China National Opera Orchestra and Chorus.

Upcoming highlights in the 2026-2027 season include re-engagements with Lyric Opera of Kansas City for *La Bohème*, *Carmen* with Atlanta Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, and concerts with Omaha Symphony, Tucson Symphony and George Enescu Philharmonic. In the fall, Allen conducts Manhattan School of Music's *Semele*. At the piano, Allen collaborates with Tenor Ben Bliss in a series of concerts at Vocal Arts DC, Park Avenue Armory, Musco Center at Chapman University, and Cal Performances at the University of California, Berkeley. As Artistic Director of Fourth Wall Ensemble, Allen leads a series of performances in New York City.

Allen demonstrates his commitment to education through his work with young artists at Los Angeles Opera, Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Aspen Music Festival, Manhattan School of Music, Northwestern University, New England Conservatory, Mannes School of Music, A.J. Fletcher Institute at University of North Carolina School of the Arts, and University of Missouri-Kansas City. He has been heard on NPR speaking about the importance of the arts in American society. As an award-winning pianist, he has performed at Carnegie Hall, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, on film in *La voix humaine*, starring Patricia Racette and directed by James Darrah, and in *Emily*, a production he created for Opéra de Montréal and performed at Wolf Trap.

Allen's career was launched by the Bruno Walter Conducting Award and Memorial Career Grant and has been fostered by Plácido Domingo and James Conlon, who brought him to Los Angeles Opera as Associate Conductor. At LA Opera, Allen led the musical preparation for the acclaimed *The Ghosts of Versailles*, which won

a Grammy Award for Best Opera. Recognized as a Musical America Artist of the Month and one of their "25 Stars Still Rising," Allen is also an International Opera Awards nominee, and recent recipient of the Young Alumni Award from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

Allen's artistic pursuits extend beyond his role as conductor. He is the Creative and Artistic Director of Fourth Wall Ensemble, an innovative vocal ensemble, which he founded in 2023. Under the Artistic leadership of Christopher Allen, Fourth Wall Ensemble redefines vocal performance, blending tradition with bold new artistic explorations. The ensemble's recent highlights include performances at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, Death of Classical, Power Station at Berklee, The Cell Theatre, Avaloch Farm Music Institute, National Sawdust, in collaboration with Beth Morrison Projects in Paola Prestini's world premiere opera, *Sensorium Ex,* and at the Exploratorium in San Francisco. In the 2025-2026 season, the ensemble embarked on a West Coast Tour, and released a recording of Kaija Saariaho's *Nuits, Adieux* at National Sawdust+. Fourth Wall Ensemble can be heard on two recordings: Awake, and Ad Manus, the group's debut album created in partnership with GRAMMY® Award-winning trio Time for Three and five-time EMMY® Award-winning composer Jeff Beal (*House of Cards*).

Allen is a Recording Academy voting member, and serves on the Board of The Solti Foundation US.

James Blaszko, Director

James Blaszko is a first-generation American director and creative producer who returns to the Manhattan School of Music after staging Francesca Caccini's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* in 2022 and *Houses of Women* in 2021. Blaszko staged Handel's *Xerxes* under the baton of Dame Jane Glover in 2023 at Detroit Opera and will direct Philip Glass' *Satyagraha* there in April 2027. Internationally, he staged Puccini's *Il Trittico* for the Daegu International Opera Festival (South Korea) and devised/co-wrote *We Count*, the opening ceremony of the Harare International Festival of the Arts (Zimbabwe), in response to President Mugabe's removal in a military coup. Blaszko has directed two Independence Day concerts for Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts: Tamar-kali's *Freedom is a Constant Struggle* highlighting the African-American struggle to reap the benefits of liberty and justice as part of the American citizenry, and Lara Downes' *Declaration Project* in commemoration of America250. Lincoln Center also commissioned Blaszko to direct and co-write the opening of their 2024 Summer for the City Festival: *SOUNDCAKE* starring the classically trained queens of MTV's *RuPaul's Drag Race*. He is a graduate of the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts and Emerson College, and has lived in Central Harlem for the past 15 years.

Brittany Vasta, Scenic Designer

Brittany Vasta is a Brooklyn-based scenic designer for live performance. Recent work includes the world premiere of Sharyn Rothstein's *Best for Baby* (Chautauqua Theatre); Julia May Jonas's *A Woman Among Women* (Bushwick Starr/LCT3); *Execution of Justice*, written & directed by Emily Mann (Chautauqua Theatre); the NY Off Broadway premiere of Kate Hamill's play *The Light and the Dark* (Primary Stages). Previous collaborations include work at Signature Theatre, WP Theatre, Mint Theatre, The Bushwick Starr, JACK, Theatre Row, The Duke, The Juilliard School, Berkeley Rep, Syracuse Stage, Portland Center Stage, Kansas City Rep, New York City Center, among others. Drama Desk Nomination for world premiere of Dave Malloy's *Octet* (Signature Theatre/Berkeley Rep). MFA, NYU. USA 829 member. **brittanyvasta.com**

Oana Botez, Costume Designer

Oana Botez is an Obie Award Winner, Henry Hewes Design Award Honoree, Princess Grace Recipient, NEA/TCG Career Development Program Recipient and NEA/TCG Round of Global Connections Program. Nominated for The Lucille Lortel Award, The Theatre Bay Area Awards, The Henry Hewes Design Awards, The Barrymore and Drammy Award. Oana also walked away recipient of The Barrymore and Drammy Award. Her New York credits include BAM Next Wave, The Public Theater, The Atlantic Theater, The Signature Theater, Bard SummerScape / Richard B. Fisher Center, Playwrights Horizons, Baryshnikov Arts Center, David H. Koch Theater, Lincoln Center's LCT3, Big Apple Circus, and Classic Stage Company. Her regional work has included *Ain't Misbehavin* (Barrington Stage Company), *Macbeth* (Old Globe), *Angels in America* (Arena Stage & The Wilma Theater), and *Man in a Case* (Hartford). Opera productions have included Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (Detroit Opera), *Comet/Poppea* (The Industry/LA), Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Wolf Trap), Derrick Skye's *Song of the Ambassadors* (Alice Tully Hall); Bizet's *Carmen* (Minneapolis Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Portland Opera), *In a Grove* (Pittsburgh Opera & Prototype Festival/NY), and *A House in Bali* (BAM). Internationally she has worked with Bucharest National Theatre, Château de Versailles, Théâtre National de Chaillot, Les Subsistances, The Old Vic, Budapest National Theatre, Cluj Hungarian National Theatre, Le Quartz (Brest, France), La Filature (Mulhouse, France), Exit Festival / Maison des arts de Créteil, Tanz im August Festival Hebbel am Ufer–HAU1 (Berlin, Germany), Edinburgh International Festival, and Singapore Arts Festival. She teaches at Yale's David Geffen School of Drama.

Paige Seber, Lighting Designer

Paige Seber is a New York City-based lighting designer for live performance. Credits include *Titanique* (Broadway, West End, Off-Broadway, International), Starstruck (Bucks County Playhouse), *Come From Away* & *Jersey Boys* (Paper Mill Playhouse), *Crazy For You* & *All Shook Up* (Goodspeed), *Dilaria* (DR2), *Fowl Play* (AMT Theater), *Is Anyone Alive Out There?* (Minetta Lane), *Blackbirding* (WP Theater), *Ready. Set. Play!* (Virgin Voyages), *Meet Me In St. Louis* & *Newsies* & *Evita* (The Muny), *benevolent* & *Road Kills* (Good Apples Collective), *Soon* (OOTB). She is a proud member of USA-829 and a Corps member of the Good Apples Collective. You can also watch Paige and her wife Izzy compete on *The Amazing Race* season 38 on Paramount+. **seberlighting.com**.

Camilla Tassi, Projection Designer

Camilla Tassi is a NYC-based projection designer from Florence, Italy. Design credits include *Falling Out of Time* (Carnegie Hall), *Adoration* (BMP & LA Opera), *Requiem Reimagined* (Lincoln Center), *Mansfield Park* & *Eugene Onegin* (Indiana University Opera), *Dear Evan Hansen* (Bay Street Theater), *Seachange* (Miami City Ballet), *Lady M* (Heartbeat Opera), *Something Rotten!* (The Muny), Carmen (Merola, SFO), *Sandra* (TheaterWorks Hartford), *La Bohème* (Music Academy of the West), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Act Of CT), *Ariodante* (Boston Baroque), and *Malhaar* (Walt Disney Concert Hall). Broadway: *Illinoise*, Associate. She has sung in the NY Phil chorus and with the Yale Schola. Tassi holds degrees in computer science, music, and projection design. Connecticut Critics Circle, Burry Fredrik design, and Robert L. Tobin Director-Designer opera prize. Yale, MFA.
IG: camtassi **camillatassi.com**

Amanda Miller, Wigs, Hair & Makeup Designer

Amanda Miller is a wig, hair, and makeup designer with studios in NYC and London offering custom wigs, hairpieces, facial hair and hair extensions on commission as well as full concept design in wigs, hair and makeup for theater, television, film productions, red carpet events and independent artists. Awarded New York Women in Film and Television Designing Women Award for hair design in 2012. Credits include: the artist Cindy Sherman, Isaac Julien Studio, vinyl cover art for Chappell Roan's *The Subway*, Broadway, NYCC Encores!, Little Island, Park Avenue Armory, Metropolitan Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Brooklyn Academy of Music, *Saturday Night Live*, CBS, Netflix, Showtime, AppleTV, HBOmax, Neon, A24, Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros.

Holden Meier (MM '27), Sound Designer

Holden Meier is a Chicago-born composer and sound designer working and studying in NYC under the tutelage of Susan Botti. He has previously produced work for *Macbeth*, *The History of America: Abridged*, and *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*.

Joshua Larrinaga-Yocom, Props Supervisor

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

Kristen Kemp, Head of Music in Opera for Vocal Arts

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' VOICExperience 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 Saint 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).

Jinhee Park, Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master

Jinhee Park is a pianist and conductor whose work spans vocal, instrumental, and orchestral repertoire. Her artistry as a collaborative pianist is grounded in sensitivity, versatility, and insight. With soprano Meredith Wohlgemuth, she won first prize at the 2023 Schubert International LiedDuo Competition in Dortmund and the 2022 Concours International Musical de Montréal Art Song Division, receiving each competition's Best Pianist Award. Their debut album was released in 2025. Years of collaboration in rehearsal rooms and on recital stages have shaped Jinhee's approach to conducting. She made her conducting debut with Ravel's *L'enfant et les Sortilèges* at Chautauqua in 2023 and has worked with orchestras and ensembles including the Vienna Opera Festival Orchestra, Lüneburg Symphoniker, Saratoga Orchestra of Whidbey Island, OAcademy Festival Orchestra and Ensemble, NOI Festival Orchestra and Ensemble, and Camerata Notturna.

Bin Yu Sanford, Vocal Coach-Pianist

Korean-born pianist Bin Yu Sanford is a member of the Collaborative Piano Faculty at Manhattan School of Music. She regularly works with San Francisco Opera and Los Angeles Opera, and her previous engagements include Houston Grand Opera, Atlanta Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Her performance appearances include Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera, the Salzburg Festival Society Gala, Opera America Salutes, and Houston Grand Opera's Giving Voice concert series. Sanford has collaborated with conductors including James Conlon, Dame Jane Glover, Domingo Hindoyan, Eun Sun Kim, and Patrick Summers. A graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program and Houston Grand Opera's Sarah and Ernest Butler Studio, Sanford holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in Piano Performance and an Artist Diploma in Opera Coaching from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She earned her previous degrees in Piano Performance from Seoul National University and West Chester University of Pennsylvania

Eric Sedgwick, Vocal Coach-Pianist

Pianist and vocal coach Eric Sedgwick has appeared onstage with Sanford Sylvan, Marni Nixon, Will Liverman, Nicholas Phan, Laquita Mitchell, Justin Austin, Patrick Carfizzi, Brittany Renee, English hornist Thomas Stacy, and Broadway leading ladies Sarah Rice and Carole Demas. He has recorded for WQXR in New York and has performed on the NPR series *Selected Shorts* and the BBC *Arts in Motion* series with Benjamin Bernheim. He is on the music staff at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and the vocal faculty at the Tanglewood Music Center since

2015, as well as the Mannes voice department faculty. 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 Gaffigan and Sir Andrew Davis. He holds a Master's Degree in Piano Performance from MSM and a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature from Brown University.

Stephanie Sutherland, Intimacy Director

As an Intimacy Director certified through IDC, Stephanie (she/her) works across theater, opera, film, dance, and music videos. Along with her work as lead Intimacy Director with Manhattan School of Music's Opera and Musical Theatre departments, she is also head Intimacy Director/Consultant for Fordham University, where she personally developed the theatrical intimacy standards now in use. In addition to her work as an ID, Stephanie is also a movement director, choreographer, director, access coordinator, dancer, and actress, working nationally and internationally in dance, theater, film, commercials, and music. She currently works on the production team for the international dance theatre company YSDT, touring regularly throughout the EU, UK, Africa, and US. She is currently assisting with access coordination for the Jaou Festival in Tunis, Tunisia, and will join the festival later this month with YSDT. She is a proud Fordham University/Alvin Ailey BFA graduate.

Kathryn LaBouff, Diction Coach

Dr. Kathryn LaBouff teaches English Diction at the Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music and is on the diction staff at the Metropolitan Opera. She has prepared the U.S. premieres of Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy*; John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*, and Kevin Puts' *The Hours* for the Metropolitan Opera; Nicholas Maw's *Sophie's Choice* and Scott Wheeler's *Democracy* for Washington National Opera; Andre Previn's *Brief Encounter* for Houston Grand Opera and New York City Opera; *Central Park* for Glimmerglass Opera; Jonathan Dove's *Flight* for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; Lowell Liebermann's *Miss Lonely Hearts* for the Juilliard Centennial Celebration; Thomas Pasatieri's *The Hotel Casa Blanca* at the Merola Program; and Jeanne Tesori's *Blue* for the Glimmerglass Festival. As a diction coach for the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Washington National Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and the Glimmerglass Festival she has coached and prepared more than 300 opera productions in English. Her book, *Singing and Communicating in English* (2007), is used in music schools worldwide. Most recently, she prepared the diction/accent work for Massoli's *Breaking the Waves* recording released this fall by HGO .

Kat Norton, Production Stage Manager

Kat Norton is a New York-based Production Stage Manager with more than ten years of professional experience in theatre, immersive productions, and national and international touring. Her work has taken her from intimate plays and musicals to large-scale, technically complex immersive productions, including Fever and Netflix's *Stranger Things: The Experience*, *Money Heist: The Experience*, and Emursive's *Life & Trust*. She has worked across the United States, Europe, Australia, and the Middle East, collaborating with artists and production teams in a wide variety of venues and working environments. Kat is passionate about creating organized, collaborative rehearsal and performance spaces where artists can do their best work and grow. She especially loves supporting new work and mentoring early-career artists and stage managers. She has just finished working on the MSM's Bright Star and enjoyed helping the students gain practical experience, develop confidence, and discover the many skills that go into bringing a production from rehearsal to performance. A graduate of Syracuse University with a BFA in Stage Management, Kat is thrilled to be continuing her work with MSM as part of Semele and is grateful for the opportunity to work alongside and learn from this talented group of students and artists.

Zoe Lesser, Assistant Director

Zoe Lesser is a producer and director working across opera, theater, and immersive experiences. She holds production credits with the LA Philharmonic at Walt Disney Concert Hall, Aspen Music Festival, Atlantic Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, The Old Globe, Denver Center Theatre Company, and Steppenwolf Theatre Company, among others. She has developed new work with the cell, the Mercury Store, Musical Theatre West, and Keshet Center for the Arts. Zoe has served on the dance faculties of The Colburn School and The National Dance Institute, and co-founded the Exodus Ensemble in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Yijun Yang, Associate Scenic Designer

Yijun Yang is a set designer and production designer based in New York City, originally from China. She has an MFA in Scenic Design from Carnegie Mellon University, School of Drama, and Geroge Kimberly Award for Set Design. Her selected set design credits: *Becoming Hamlet* (Five Angels Theater); *Dorothy's Dictionary* (Project Y); *Little Shop of Horrors* (Calhoun School); *Reunion*, West End Musical Star Concert (World Premiere, China Tour); *Yoga with Jillian* (Project Y, World Premiere, Edinburgh Fringe) etc. Her film credits: *Flower Boy, Show Trial*; *These Women* (CYIFF, VAEFF); *Venus* (NSIF); *Silent; The Long Journey* (SIFF), etc. She also worked as associate set designer for West End Musical *Titanic* and *The Last Five Years* Asia Tour.

Jasmine Canjura, Assistant Costume Designer

Jasmine Canjura (she/her) is a Latina artist and costume designer based in New York who works in theater, opera, and film. She graduated from New York University with a BFA in Costume & Scenic Design. Recent credits include Assistant Costume Manager at The Public Theater, Assistant Costume Designer for *Hamlet* at Free Shakespeare in the Park (The Public), Costume Design Assistant for *Tina - The Tina Turner Musical* US Tour, Assistant Costume Designer for *Angelique* (Manhattan School of Music), Associate Costume Designer for *Amahl & the Night Visitors* (Onsite Opera), and Assistant Costume Design for *The Passion of Mary Cardwell Dawson* (Glimmerglass).

Julian Kelley, Assistant Projection Designer

Julian Kelley is a projection designer, animator, and video artist currently based in the Washington, D.C. area. Projection and Video Design credits include: *Dear Evan Hansen, Pretty Woman, Rock of Ages* (Suncoast Broadway Dinner Theatre), *The Rocky Horror Show, American Psycho* (Monumental), The Tender Land (Park City Opera), *Ghost Limb* (Avant Bard Theatre), *A Strange Loop* (Visionaries of the Creative Arts & Deaf Austin Theatre), *Woman on Fire* (Creative Cauldron) *Helen Hayes Award Nomination for Outstanding Media/Projection Design - Helen*, *Communion* (Nancy Manocherian's the cell theatre). MFA: Carnegie Mellon.

Jane Serenska, Assistant Wigs, Hair, and Makeup Designer

Jane Serenska is a hair stylist and makeup artist in New York City. Her work can be found in publications such as *Office* Magazine, *Elle* Magazine, and *InStyle*. Recently, she served as hair and makeup artist for the 2026 film, Caity, which premiered at Tribeca, and as designer for The New School's MFA Drama Capstone Festival. In addition, Jane interviews other hair stylists for *Submission* Magazine and also makes her own zines about hair and makeup artistry. More of her work can be found on her website: janeserenska.com

Amara Payton McNeil, Assistant Lighting Designer

Amara Payton McNeil is a New York-based theatrical lighting designer. As a visual storyteller, she aims to create an immersive experience for the audience, using vibrant colors and dynamic angles to bring texture to the stage. Amara is Co-founder of @houseandworks, and instagram account aimed at highlighting the work of women, trans, and non-binary folks in the lighting industry. Credits include Broadway: *Romeo & Juliet* (DMC), *Stereophonic* (Asst. LD), *Parade* (LD Intern); Regional/Off-Broadway: *Freak the Mighty* (Assoc. LD @ Cleveland

Playhouse), *Galas* (Assoc. LD @ Little Island), *Goddess* (Asst. LD @ The Public), *King James* (LD @ George Street Playhouse), *Icons Gala* (LD @ PAC NYC), *Teeth* (Assoc. LD @ New World Stages), *Come From Away* 2nd Nat Tour (Asst. LD).

Matilde Maini, Assistant Stage Manager

Matilde (Mati) Maini is an Italian stage manager based in NYC. Her recent U.S. credits include: *Into the Woods* (ASM, Manhattan School of Music, NYC); *Little Mermaid Jr, Puffs, Frozen Jr.* (PSM, Children Acting Academy, NYC); *Thomas & Me* (Ellenson Integration Enterprises, Inc., NYC). Her international credits include: Seasons 24/25 - 25/26, Teatro alla Scala di Milano (ASM for the Opera and Ballet Productions of the Opera House); *Le Trouvére, Deidamia, The Magic Fountain* (Deputy SM, Wexford Festival Opera 25, Ireland); *Le convenienze ed Inconvenienze Teatrali* (ASM, Wexford Festival Opera 24, Ireland). IG @mati_maini

SEMELE PERSONNEL

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Joshua Groth, Associate Production Manager

Junior Diaz, Production Supervisor

Pam Pangaro, Lighting Supervisor

Omri Schwartz, Programmer

Tyler Donahue, Technical Director

Ava Cintron, Assistant Technical Director

Elena Martin, AV Lead

Emmaline Naud and **Andres Poch**, Projections Programmers

Lani Boschulte, **Saida Joshua-Smith**, **Holden Newton**, and **Ying-Ying Zhang**, Audio Technicians

Philip Manzi, Assistant Production Electrician

Lee Lord, Costume and Wardrobe Supervisor

Chloé Lévy, Assistant Costume and Wardrobe Supervisor

Meg Glasso, Wardrobe Supervisor

Talla Dia and **Christopher Schramm**, Costume Fabrication

Gautami Hazra and **AJ Sargent**, Dressers

AddieRose Brown, **Jino Dority**, **Stephanie Fisher**, and **John Polles**, Stitchers

Eric Miller, Production Coordinator

Sadie Margolis, Supertitles Operator

Run Crew

Patrick St. John, Lead Deck Hand

Timothy Abrahms and **Saida Joshua-Smith**, Run Crew

Holden Newton, Board Operator

Amanda Langhaus and **Rook Shaw**, Followspot Operators

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DEC 8 & 9 | TUES & WED
MSM OPERA THEATRE

Monkey and Francine in the City of Tigers

MUSIC BY KAMALA SANKARAM
LIBRETTO BY DAVID JOHNSTON

Djordje Nesic, Conductor and Vocal Coach
John de los Santos, Director
7:30 PM Ades Performance Space
$15 adults, $10 non-MSM students and seniors

DEC 11 | FRI

MSM CHORALE

Deborah Simpkin King, Conductor
7:30 PM Neidorff-Karpati Hall

FEB 23 & 24 | TUES & WED
MSM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND MSM OPERA THEATRE
present

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Kelly Kuo (MM '98), Conductor
Felicity Stiverson, Director

BANSAL *Flash, Shimmer, Glow, Spark*
SIBELIUS Symphony No. 1
STRAVINSKY *The Rake's Progress*

7:30 PM Neidorff-Karpati Hall
Free, tickets required

APR 15–18
MSM OPERA THEATRE

Così fan tutte

MUSIC BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
LIBRETTO BY LORENZO DA PONTE

A. Scott Parry, Director
APR 15–17 | THURS–SAT | 7:30
APR 18 | SUN | 2 PM
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Katherine Lerner Lee
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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.

Dr. Carleen Graham, Dean of Vocal Arts
Kristen Kemp, Head of Music in Opera for Vocal Arts

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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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