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2026
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ARTIST

**Emanuela
Carnevale**

Emanuela Carnevale, aka Brodino Digitale, is a freelance illustrator based in Milan.

She holds a degree in Graphic Design and studied Illustration in Milan. After working in art direction and animation for advertising agencies, she transitioned fully to illustration in 2020, during the pandemic lockdown. She creates poetic, concept-driven illustrations rooted in personal stories, memory and observation, with a strong focus on human connections and everyday life.

She has been selected for international awards such as AI-AP, Communication Arts, World Illustration Awards and Autori di Immagini Annual. Selected clients include *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, Les Echos, Zeit, Samsung and more.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Scott Finlay



PHOTO BY AMANDA TIPTON.

Dear Friends,

Central City Opera has endured because people kept choosing courage over retreat.

That spirit was present in 1932, when a group of artists and civic leaders dared to launch an opera company in a once-grand opera house in a small mountain town at the height of the Great Depression. At a moment when much of the world was pulling back, they chose to build something new.

For more than ninety years, that same spirit has guided this company. When the moment required courage, Central City Opera chose to build.

This summer, we celebrate the 70th anniversary of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*—an opera born here in Central City and now recognized as one of the defining works of the American repertoire. Like the company that premiered it, *Baby Doe* faced uncertainty and challenge along the way. Yet artists, leaders and audiences believed in its promise. They chose boldness over hesitation, and in doing so helped shape the future of American opera.

CCO has never waited for perfect circumstances to pursue extraordinary ideas. It exists today because generations believed something meaningful could be built here—on this stage, in this town and in the lives of the artists and audiences who gather each summer.

That spirit continues today.

Across our festival stage, in classrooms throughout Colorado and in the revitalization of the historic buildings that surround us, Central City Opera is entering a new chapter—one grounded in the same belief that has guided this company from the beginning: that courage, imagination and community can build something that endures.

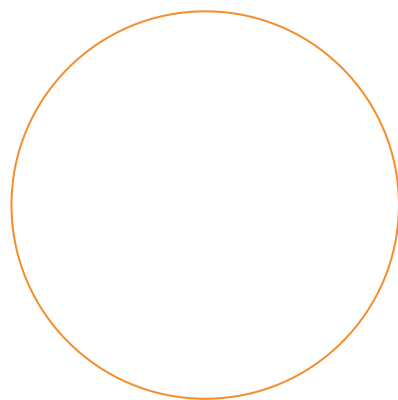
CCO has always moved forward because people believed imagination and courage could create something extraordinary—because they were willing, in John F. Kennedy's words, to "dream of things that never were."

This summer, as audiences gather once again in this remarkable place, we continue that tradition together.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Scott".

Scott Finlay
President & CEO



FROM THE BOARD CO-CHAIRS

Robert “Sonny” Wiegand II & Laura Trask Schneider

WELCOME TO CENTRAL CITY OPERA'S 2026 FESTIVAL!

The Central City Opera Summer Festival is so much more than what meets the eye. It's where community gathers, where performance delights and where stories of the past are kept alive. There's a little something for everyone here. Whether you're visiting for the first time or are a seasoned opera-goer, we believe you'll find YOUR something in Central City.

While the stage might be what gets people here, it's the full ecosystem and experience that keeps them coming back. Today, Central City Opera is proud to offer unforgettable performances, incredible hospitality, cherished spaces, educational programs and experiences all alongside the opera you know and love.

We encourage you to get the most out of your experience. Take a moment to dig beyond the performances and learn more about our school programs, including “Chiaroscuro” and our youth opera collaboration with Opera Colorado. Sign up for a tour of iconic buildings on our grounds—the Teller House is one of our personal favorites. Explore more of our historic preservation work; we are proud to be one of the largest holders of historic properties in the state.

As Colorado celebrates its 150th anniversary, we're reminded that Central City Opera has been part of this state's story since its early days. From funding efforts by the Central City mining community to build the opera house, to its 1932 restoration, which featured an iconic opening performance by actress Lillian Gish, there's no denying the impact this place has had on Colorado's cultural legacy.

Make sure to connect with fellow community members throughout the Festival this year and celebrate how far we've come together. In doing so, you are part of keeping Colorado's vibrant and long-term arts community alive for the next 150 years.

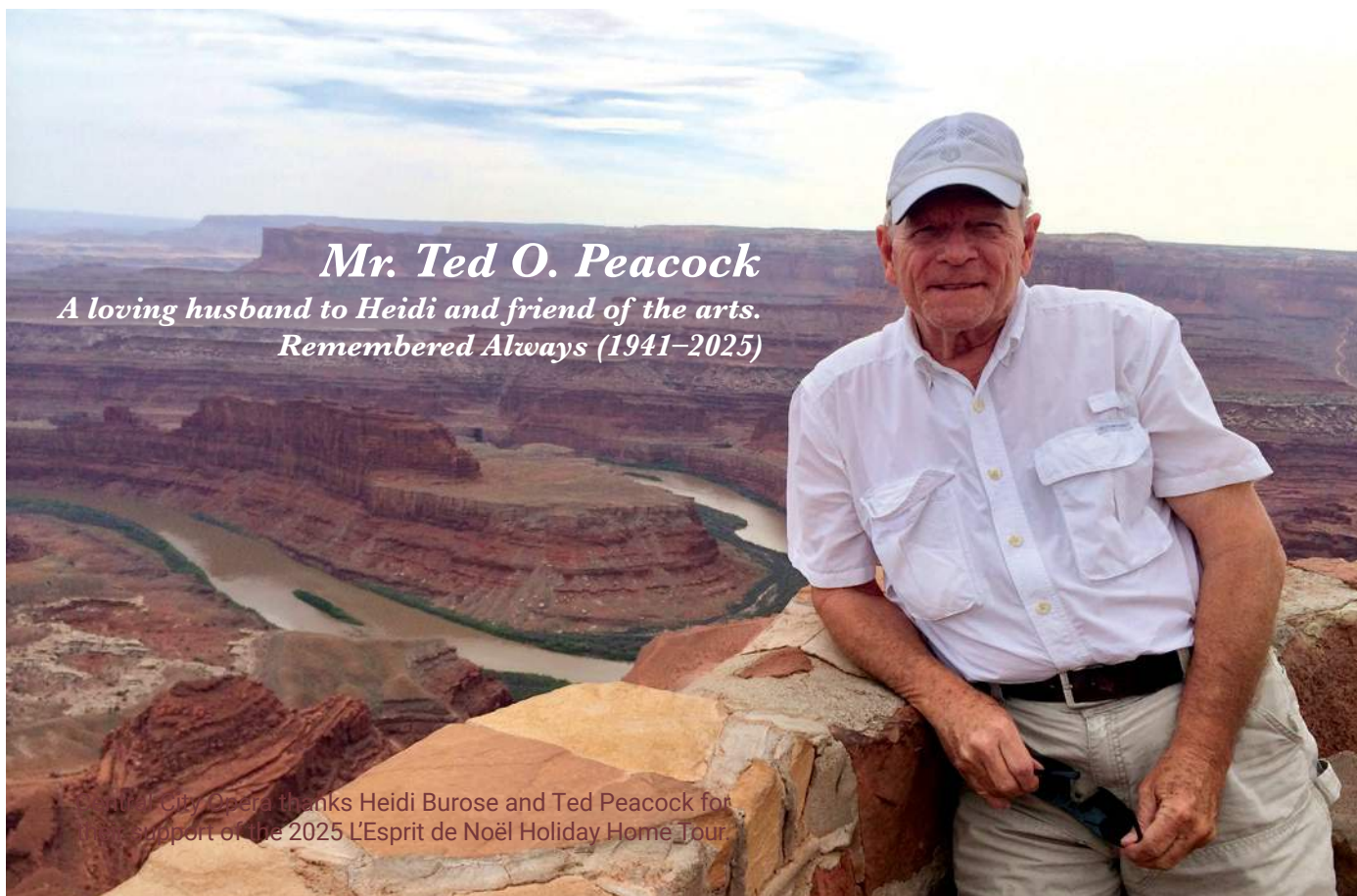
A summer visit to Central City reminds us of what is possible when performance, experience and history come together. It is the community-driven, financial and hands-on support that not only sustains our programs and talented teams but also allows us to grow and expand in ways that the early settlers of Central City could have never imagined.

Thank you for being part of our history and future.



Laura Trask Schneider and Robert “Sonny” Wiegand II
Co-Chairs, Central City Opera Board of Directors

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature is 'Laura Schneider' and the second is 'Robert Wiegand II'.



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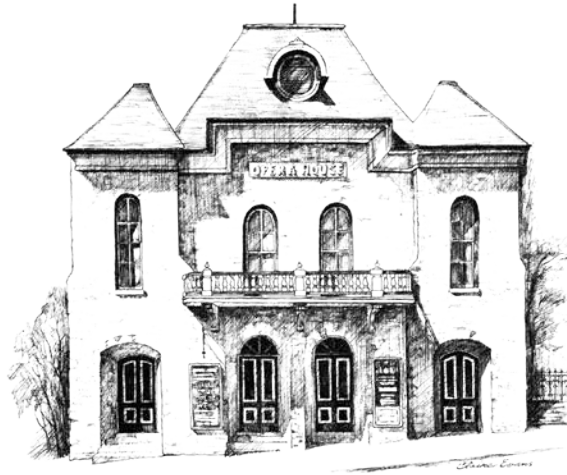


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L to R: Karen Ritz, Cindy Koch, Louise Atkinson, Barbara Ferguson, Sally Scott

“Forming the Guild was the single most important contribution that has been made to Central City Opera since its beginning.”

- CCO Chairman Emeritus Atwill Gilman, son-in-law of Temple Buell,
The Denver Post (1987)

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Bonfils-Stanton Foundation

ARTISTS TRAINING PROGRAM

Alumni Spotlights

Special thanks to the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation, Denver Lyric Opera Guild and Schmidt Vocal Arts for their support of this program.

FOR NEARLY 50 YEARS, Central City Opera's Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program has offered young opera singers a one-of-a-kind experience that blends rigorous training with real stage performance. Over 10 weeks, artists immerse themselves in daily sessions spanning movement arts like stage combat

and yoga, diction, acting, individual coaching and role study, all while performing in main stage and festival productions and building the career management skills they'll carry for life. We caught up with four program alumni to hear about their time as training artists and the lasting impact it had on their careers and lives.

CYNTHIA LAWRENCE-CALKINS & MARK CALKINS

1985 & 1986 Apprentice Artists



LEFT: PHOTO COURTESY OF CYNTHIA & MARK. MIDDLE: MARK & CYNTHIA AT CCO'S NAUGHTY MARIETTA, 1986. RIGHT: PHOTO COURTESY OF CYNTHIA & MARK.

From 1983 to 1986, Cynthia Lawrence-Calkins and Mark Calkins experienced pivotal moments that shaped the trajectory of their lives—finding a home in each other, in opera and on the mountain in Central City.

They met in the summer of 1983 while both earning master's degrees at the University of Colorado Boulder. An immediate spark formed between them. By the spring

of 1984, they were performing together in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. They wed in 1985 in a weekend that was uniquely them: singing Mimí and Rodolfo in *La bohème* on Thursday and Saturday, with a wedding ceremony on Sunday. In those early years, they solidified not only their relationship but their shared love of opera and the Colorado mountains.



MARK & CYNTHIA AT THE CO MUSIC HALL OF FAME CEREMONY. PHOTOS BY AMANDA TIPTON.

“I was downstairs in the opera theater meeting John Reed, the director for our summer show. As I was shaking his hand, all of a sudden, this pretty blonde walks on stage in a wonderful cotton dress. I’ll never forget it—I’m shaking his hand and looking at Cynthia up on the stage.” - Mark on meeting Cynthia for the first time

The summer of 1986 marked their first apprenticeship together at CCO. They recall vivid memories of the Kimball House, voice training, fighting and movement classes and meaningful connections with CCO greats like John Moriarty, Denyce Graves and Bill Lewis. They look back on that time with deep fondness, knowing how fortunate they were to have come up in opera at a moment when opportunity felt abundant.

They returned to Central City often in the years that followed as principal performers and even rooftop singers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even outside of

Colorado, they remained in CCO’s orbit, from Cynthia’s recruitment of Denyce to sing at the FEI World Equestrian Games to Mark’s work with students, some of whom are CCO alumni. As they put it, each time they brush shoulders with CCO connections, they “pick up right where they left off.”

Today, Cynthia and Mark reside in Lexington, Kentucky, where they continue to fill their cups through voice and performance art. Cynthia, a recent inductee of the Colorado Music Hall of Fame, serves as the Endowed Chair of Voice/Opera at the University of Kentucky. Mark is an Associate Professor of Music and Voice at Berea College, where he developed a CCO-inspired program called “The Complete Performer.” Their two daughters reflect their legacy of hard work: one with a Ph.D. in Neuroscience, the other pursuing a career in voice in New York City.

Most importantly, Cynthia and Mark remain each other’s biggest champions, supporting one another’s artistry and embracing whatever comes next.

This summer marks a new milestone for the couple, as Cynthia makes her CCO directorial debut with *The Ballad of Baby Doe* on the 70th anniversary of its world premiere in Central City. For two people who found a lifelong community and thriving career on this mountain, it feels like exactly the right next chapter. ♦

KIRA DILLS-DESURRA

2017-18 Apprentice Artist; 2022 Developing Artist



LEFT: PHOTO COURTESY OF KIRA DILLS-DESURRA. MIDDLE: KIRA IN CCO'S *THE MAGIC FLUTE*, 2018. PHOTO BY AMANDA TIPTON. RIGHT: KIRA IN CCO'S *DIE FLEDERMAUS*, 2022. PHOTO BY AMANDA TIPTON.

Reflecting on her progression from Apprentice Artist in 2017-2018 to a Principal Artist at Central City Opera, Kira Dills-DeSurra describes her casting as Cherubino in this summer's *The Marriage of Figaro*—a role that has become a signature for her—as kismet.

"To be able to look back at a dream, something I put out into the universe and worked really hard to achieve, and have it come true—that is very meaningful to me," she shared.

"One of my favorite things about performing, whether it's opera or any other medium, is that synergy between you and the audience, especially in an acoustic art form. Even small expressions on my face can be more easily read by the audience, and you can have a little bit more detail, which is something that's so beautiful and special about Central City Opera."

— Kira on her love of Central City Opera's jewel box theatre

For young opera singers in the U.S., CCO needs no introduction. Following in the footsteps of friends she met during her undergrad at the University of Southern California, Kira applied, got in and has never looked back. "I have big feelings about this company."

On the mountain, she experienced CCO's legacy firsthand. Through the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation

Artists Training Program, Kira and others took the stage for 14 performances during their summer in Central City, greatly exceeding the typical opera training program.

The 10-12 weeks Kira spent on the mountain were anything but easy, but they certainly were rewarding. She remembers waking up each morning to take part in classes ranging from movement that "wakes up the soul" to fight choreography, before heading into rehearsals for up to six hours a day and classes focused on voice and diction. For her, the technical skills weren't her biggest takeaway; it was the connections made and the unique lessons she couldn't have learned anywhere but Central City.

The program had a huge impact on how Kira approaches her artistry today. It not only empowered her to pursue her artistic dreams but also solidified her passion for the work. "I could not see myself doing anything else," she explains.

Today, as she prepares to return to the pants role of Cherubino in *Figaro*, fittingly the first opera she ever saw, she is also busy launching her new website with the help of a fellow CCO alum, collaborating with composers and librettists on new operas, co-producing interdisciplinary work and reflecting on her recent role in a Beth Morrison production at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

While she is moved by her recent work, bringing opera to unexpected places, she can't wait to take the stage again this summer in Central City, her "home away from home."

Learn more about Kira at kiradillsdesurra.com ♦

ISAIAH FEKEN

2022 Apprentice Artist; 2023-2024 Developing Artist



LEFT: PHOTO COURTESY OF ISAIAH. MIDDLE: ISAIAH IN CCO'S *KISS ME, KATE*, 2023. PHOTO BY AMANDA TIPTON. RIGHT: ISAIAH IN OPERA COLORADO'S *THE BARBER OF SEVILLE*. PHOTO BY JAIME KRAUS.

The path into any industry, career or passion is rarely linear and that's especially true of opera. Isaiah Feken is a testament to that.

In his early career, Isaiah saw the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program as the perfect next step after being an artist-in-residence with Opera Colorado. "Having the opportunity to have a summer where you're both getting role experience and being paid to do the craft is something you're always trying to do as an artist," he explained.

Having auditioned for Central City Opera multiple times, Isaiah didn't let rejection deter him, translating "no's" to "not right nows." Finally, he was accepted into the program as a 2022 Apprentice Artist. It was confirmation that persistence pays off. "I've always had the attitude of, 'I'm going to be the tortoise,'" he shared.

Now a CCO veteran of multiple seasons, Isaiah has immersed himself in both the art and history offered by Central City. "Maybe it's just because I'm a sucker for nostalgia, but I think there's something beautiful and worthwhile about having a deep tradition."

This summer, he returns to perform in *The Ballad of Baby Doe* and *Master Class* with long-time friends and new castmates, most excited to be part of *Baby Doe's* 70th anniversary and to cheer on friend Jen DeDominici as she takes on the role of Maria Callas. He's also sure

"With any kind of dramatic performance, there's a level of vulnerability that you have to engage with. And it's just so much easier when you know the people."

to delight his castmates with his other great talent and CCO tradition: making focaccia.

Isaiah views the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program in a league of its own. "It prepares people to not only be better performers, better conductors and better

directors, but also to continue to carry the torch. You're absorbing this energy, information and leaving the other side of it distinctively different." On the mountain, he's been able to witness what he calls a "tapestry" of artists in different stages of their careers who inspire through their individuality and vulnerability.

He credits learning by osmosis to his own professional growth, taking lessons from CCO into his endeavors as a performer and educator. Isaiah is currently an Assistant Professor at Western Carolina University, where he recently directed the university's first opera world premiere and remains active as a performer and conductor across the U.S.

Learn more about Isaiah at isaiahmfeken.com ♦



Learn more about the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program at centralcityopera.org/artists-training-program.

Education & Community Engagement

Building Belonging and Community Well-being Through Performance



LEFT: PHOTO BY DANIELA GUZMÁN-ÉGUÉZ. MIDDLE: PHOTO BY AMANDA TIPTON. RIGHT: PHOTO BY LAUREN LESTAGE.

CENTRAL CITY OPERA'S Education and Community Engagement Programming (EdCEP) plays a unique and meaningful role in and outside of Central City. Each year, we serve approximately 30,000 audience members of all ages, creating opportunities for them to learn about themselves, explore art and connect with communities across Colorado through education, immersive experiences and performance.

Over the past year, we have reached several exciting milestones, including a new partnership with the Department of Psychology at the University of Denver (DU), while continuing to expand our existing programs. This progress would not be possible without our talented and dedicated EdCEP team and our family of generous donors. Together, we work to address the needs and opportunities within our communities while ensuring that opera remains relevant today, both in its message and in its practice.

OUR PROGRAMS

We strive to offer programs with both breadth and depth, providing a wide range of experiences that engage diverse audiences year-round, not just during the summer season. By meeting people where they are, we highlight the significant role our community plays in the arts. EdCEP's current programs include:

Opera Storytime: An immersive musical experience that blends storytelling, classical singing and interactive movement to entertain, engage and inspire students.

Musical Menagerie: Stories of the animal kingdom told through life-size puppets brought to life with art song, opera and Zarzuela, a traditional form of Spanish operetta blending song, dialogue and drama.

Hold Fast to Dreams: A vibrant performance of opera arias and art songs by Black American composers honors the incredible journey and legacy of Colorado pioneer Clara Brown.

¡Fiesta! A colorful all-Spanish program of opera, art song and Zarzuela featuring solo and duet repertoire from Spain and Latin America.

Earth to Kenzie (a co-production with Opera Colorado): A one-hour youth opera about a fifth grader who escapes the fear and uncertainty of homelessness through the power of her imagination—blasting off on space adventures that help her discover home was never really a place at all.

Chiaroscuro: Introduces socio-emotional learning, mental health support resources and a curated post-performance Q&A session through a reframing of traditional opera scenes.

Music! Words! Opera!: A 6-10 week in-school residency where students produce their own show from scratch.

Opera on the Go: A performance of opera and musical theater's greatest hits, sung by CCO touring artists, featuring repertoire from various eras and languages.

EXPANDING OUR MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

Last year, Central City Opera's EdCEP team was praised at the National Opera Association Conference for our work on Chiaroscuro [key-ah-roh-skoo-roh], a youth mental health awareness and suicide prevention program. We continue to celebrate this recognition and look for new ways to meaningfully address this important topic.

Colorado has historically struggled with high youth suicide rates. Our work with young people puts us in a unique position to respond, using opera and the arts as a vehicle to build belonging. With each program and interaction, our mission remains clear: use opera to remind people that they matter.

Thanks to a generous grant from Think360 Arts for Learning to expand our work with Chiaroscuro, we will be hosting a 10-week residency at Englewood Middle School, where students can create their own

show from scratch around the topic of mental health awareness. Led by CCO's EdCEP team and a group of talented teaching artists, the experience will empower students to develop their own script, write songs, plan choreography, create set and costume designs, and promote their show through marketing materials. This program is designed not only to showcase how students would address this sensitive topic but also to help them explore potential career paths in the performing arts.

We are actively working with partners, including mental health organizations such as the Department of Psychology at the University of Denver (DU), to continually improve and assess the program's impact.



To learn more about Central City Opera's EdCEP and its role in schools, watch our recent 9NEWS Interview.

"The work we do in schools would not be possible without the partnership of Central City Opera and other community partners that understand the situation and work with us to make it happen...It's about planting seeds, and you never know where they're going to grow. Giving all these experiences to kids, that's why we do what we do, it's to expand their world." - Sue Edwards, Executive Director, Community Resources, Inc.

Our partnership with DU has also led to the expansion of our already successful Opera Storytime, an in-classroom program in which CCO staff read books that address topics such as perseverance, overcoming your fears, finding strength within, and channeling emotions in a positive way. Each story includes several sung operatic excerpts. These excerpts introduce young audiences to amazing pieces from the world of opera. With the assistance of the DU Department of Psychology's WeREAD Program, we are incorporating new stories that address challenges and milestones in early age.

This new portion of the program is directed to children as young as two years old and their parents, expanding our program beyond the traditional elementary school learning environment.

By combining early childhood education with artistic engagement, Opera Storytime helps break down barriers to both opera and arts access, especially for schools and providers. If you'd like to follow and support Chiaroscuro or Opera Storytime as they grow, visit centralcityopera.org/education. ♦

Special thanks to Larrk Foundation, Xcel Energy Foundation and Laura & Thomas Schneider for their support of these programs.



LEFT AND MIDDLE: PHOTOS BY JIM EVANS. RIGHT: PHOTO BY AMANDA TIPTON.



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Nathan Jensen, Bass
Erin Kemner, Soprano*
Cody Laun, Tenor
Mackenzie Laun, Soprano
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Preserving the Past

Beyond the Stage: Upcoming Renovations at Williams' Stables

By Anne McGonagle
President, CCO Properties

This project is paid for in part by a History Colorado State Historical Fund grant, a Gates Family Foundation Capital grant, a grant from the National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund, and a generous gift from the Honnen Family.



LEFT: PHOTO COURTESY OF CENTRAL CITY OPERA ARCHIVES. RIGHT: PHOTO BY AMANDA TIPTON.

"We not only facilitate the performances you enjoy, but we keep the spirit of the past and the legacy of opera alive here in Central City."

CENTRAL CITY DURING THE SUMMER FESTIVAL IS A MAGICAL PLACE, filled with operatic performances and a dedicated community coming together from far and wide. With the excitement of the season, it's easy to forget the hard work that happens behind the scenes all year round—from the performers honing their craft to the staff who work tirelessly to maintain the spaces where performances come alive and memories are made.

Our organization, the Central City Opera House Association, is named very intentionally. Preserving the opera house and other physical spaces throughout town that make this experience possible is core to our mission. And this work extends far beyond the stage. We not only facilitate the performances you enjoy, but we keep the spirit of the past and the legacy of opera alive here in Central City.

As Colorado's largest owner of historic properties, we have 28 buildings to our name. These aren't just structures; they are cottages for guests, training facilities for emerging talent and gathering places for everyone who shares in this experience. They anchor the on-stage artistry in the stories and traditions of the past, and none of it would be possible without the generosity of our donors and supporters, whose contributions sustain this work year after year.

PARDON OUR DUST!

This festival season, you may notice that the Williams' Stables building is closed for renovations. We hope that you'll pardon our dust. It is one of several projects underway that will elevate the Festival and enhance our ability to bring art and community together throughout the year.

“It is one of several projects underway that will elevate the Festival and enhance our ability to bring art and community together throughout the year.”

Originally built to house horses and carriages, Williams’ Stables has more recently served as a supportive hub for the Opera, hosting pre- and post-show performances, rehearsals and apprentice artist training. Our renovations will expand on those offerings in a meaningful way. Future plans include converting the space into a black box theater complete with a lighting booth, ticket area, bar and dressing rooms, alongside entertainment and event spaces, all while preserving the building’s historic character and ensuring accessibility for every visitor.



PHOTO BY AMANDA TIPTON.

Because this work is being done in phases, structural repairs will take priority and the space will not be available to audiences this summer. But we can assure you that the future of the Williams’ Stables building is well worth the wait. If you would like to follow along as this project takes shape and learn how you can be part of it, please visit centralcityopera.org. ♦



ABOVE: PHOTO COURTESY OF CENTRAL CITY OPERA ARCHIVES.
LOWER: PHOTO BY AMANDA TIPTON.

Preserving the Past

More Than a Patron: Julie Penrose's Legacy in Central City

To Julie, these weren't just places. They were the landmarks, performances and traditions that made Central City a second home to so many.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS X-6069

WHEN SURROUNDED BY THE BEAUTY, ART AND HISTORY in Central City, the desire to preserve it becomes second nature—at least it did for Julie Penrose.

That feeling was especially true of the Gold Nugget, “a good old Western mining town bar,” as Julie fondly remembered it. In its heyday, the watering hole came alive, buzzing with patrons and performers who spilled in after shows during Central City Opera’s festival season. When that spirit began to fade in the late 1950s, Julie was quick to share her disappointment. In a letter to F. H. Ricketson, Jr. of Central City Opera, she explained that nowhere in the world could you experience a first-class opera and then sing with the performers in a bar afterward.

To Julie, these weren't just places. They were the landmarks, performances and traditions that made Central City a second home to so many. It was an atmosphere unlike any other, one that was well worth protecting.



COURTESY OF EL POMAR FOUNDATION

EARLY YEARS

Julie grew up in Detroit, Michigan, in a family that valued the arts and recognized their importance in society. This understanding shaped her sensibility from a young age. It wasn't until she toured Europe as a teenager, however, that she experienced live opera for the first time. Little did she know that this art form would later consume much of her time and attention.

Shortly after 1900, at a time when many were migrating to the American West in search of a dry climate and sunshine due to tuberculosis, Julie moved to Colorado and settled in Colorado Springs with her husband and two children. Tragically, both her son and husband passed away soon after they arrived.

It didn't take long for Julie to leave her mark on the Colorado Springs community, especially in her effort to honor and expand access to art, particularly for women. Motivated by her belief that art was an essential, not a luxury, Julie left a lasting legacy in Colorado. From

founding the Broadmoor Art Academy, known today as the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College, to offering financial support to women through personal gifts and scholarships, she found her stride as a philanthropic supporter of women, her community and the arts.

NEW CHAPTERS

In 1906, Julie married Spencer Penrose, an entrepreneur who made his fortune in mining and helped develop the Broadmoor area and Pikes Peak region, creating many iconic institutions in Colorado Springs. While Julie and Spencer shared a deep commitment to the community, Julie distinguished herself by actively cultivating her own interests—most notably her passion for opera. Even after Spencer's death, she continued to spend time traveling to and from Central City, a significant trip in those days.

Julie's love for art and commitment to preservation extended beyond the practice itself; in fact, her relationship with the Central City Opera House Association began when she became one of the initial contributors to the opera house's 1932 renovation.

In 1937, Julie and Spencer established El Pomar Foundation, which continues to serve Colorado today, reflecting their shared commitment to the place they both came to call home. The Foundation provided Julie with a formal means to contribute to Central City Opera, shifting her previous personal donations into institutional grant-making. This solidified her deep personal connection to both the art and the destination.

Julie didn't just visit Central City; she owned several properties there. During the summer festival seasons, she would spend weeks at the Parrish House. Even when she couldn't attend the events herself, she would open her home to others and make sure they had tickets to the performances.

When the curtains close, the show is not over. Julie's spirit remains very much present in Central City.

JULIE'S FINAL ACTS

In her final years, Julie served as chair of the Central City Opera board. And, in 1955, she was given the ultimate honor: being invited to select the productions for the 1956 festival season. Among her favorite choices were *The Ballad of Baby Doe* and *Tosca*, but she unfortunately passed away before having the chance to see them come to life on stage.

If we can learn anything from Julie, it's this: When the curtains close, the show is not over. Julie's spirit remains very much present in Central City.

KEEPING JULIE'S LEGACY ALIVE

Today, El Pomar Foundation carries forward Julie's greatest passions through grantmaking and nonprofit capacity building. As a longtime Central City Opera Festival sponsor, the Foundation is a proud presenting sponsor of this year's production of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*.

El Pomar Foundation's commitment extends to both the art and its home, just as Julie intended—funding productions and programming that keep the company thriving, while supporting historic preservation of the opera house and Central City Opera's 28 additional properties. During your visit, we hope you'll join us in celebrating Julie's legacy and the living, breathing community she worked so hard to preserve. ♦



LEFT: PHOTO COURTESY OF CENTRAL CITY OPERA. MIDDLE: PHOTO COURTESY OF EL POMAR FOUNDATION. RIGHT: PHOTO COURTESY OF DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS.



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THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

*Noblemen scheme. Servants plot.
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MUSIC

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

LIBRETTO

LORENZO DA PONTE

BASED ON THE PLAY *LA FOLLE JOURNÉE, OU LE MARIAGE DE FIGARO*

BY PIERRE-AUGUSTIN CARON DE BEAUMARCHAIS

DIRECTOR

DAVID RADAMÉS TORO

CONDUCTOR

MARCELLO CORMIO

DIRECTOR OF CHORUSES/
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TYLER TUCKER

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MATT HERNDON

REVIVAL SCENIC DESIGNER

NORA MARLOW SMITH

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COSTUME DESIGNER

GLENN AVERY BREED

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WARDROBE SUPERVISOR

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MCKENNA EBERT

STAGE MANAGER

KENDRA GREEN

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ALLISON ANN BAILEY & OLIVIA DARLING

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ARTYOM PAK

SUPERTITLES

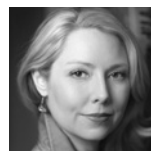
LILY WITEMEYER

Sung in Italian with English supertitles.

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO **Cast**



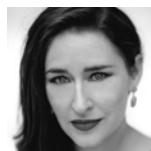
WILKOWSKE



MCKAY



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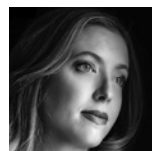
DILLS-DESURRA



SUTLIFF



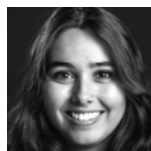
MANSOORI



PETROCELLI



HUNTER



CAIOZZI

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

FIGARO	ANDREW WILKOWSKE
SUSANNA	MAUREEN MCKAY
DR. BARTOLO	ASHRAF SEWAILAM
MARCELLINA	HILARY GINTHER
CHERUBINO	KIRA DILLS-DESURRA
COUNT ALMAVIVA	LUKE SUTLIFF
DON BASILIO	ALEX MANSOORI
COUNTESS ALMAVIVA	ERICA PETROCELLI
ANTONIO	TRES HUNTER
BARBARINA	NISHA PATEL CAIOZZI
DON CURZIO	ALEX MANSOORI

The conductor's podium is endowed in perpetuity by the Eleanore Mullen Weckbaugh Foundation.

Costumes for The Marriage of Figaro provided by Wardrobe Witchery.

Lighting equipment for the 2026 Festival generously donated by Denver Center for the Performing Arts.

Singers, directors, stage managers and dance staff employed in this production are members of the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA).

Members of the 2026 Festival stage crew are represented by the International Alliance of Theatre Stage Employees (IATSE) Local #7.

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THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO Synopsis

BY AUSTIN R.D. BURNS, MA, SHAKESPEARE INSTITUTE

Patron Services Associate at Central City Opera

ACT I

Figaro and Susanna, servants to the respective Count and Countess Almaviva, excitedly plan their upcoming nuptials. Unfortunately, there is apprehension on Susanna's part. Though the count has ended the *droit du seigneur*, the feudal right of a lord to sleep with a servant on her wedding night, he seems intent on making an exception for Susanna. Upon hearing this, Figaro devises a plan to ensure this doesn't happen.

Meanwhile, Dr. Bartolo schemes his revenge against Figaro for bringing the count and countess together (see the events of this opera's prequel, *The Barber of Seville*). Dr. Bartolo enlists Marcellina, from whom Figaro has taken a loan on the terms that, should he be unable to repay her, he would have to marry her.

Cherubino, the count's page, seeks the aid of Susanna; the count found him with Barbarina, the daughter of Antonio, the gardener, and wants Cherubino punished. Figaro then enters with all the estate's servants to put pressure on Count Almaviva to perform his and Susanna's wedding today. Count Almaviva stalls by sending Cherubino away on a military commission.

ACT II

Countess Almaviva laments to Susanna about her husband's lack of affection and recruits Cherubino in exacting her revenge. When the count arrives, the countess hides Cherubino in her closet. When the count hears a noise, he doesn't believe the countess when she tells him that it is Susanna trying on her wedding dress. He leaves with the countess to get tools to break down the door. While they're gone, Susanna takes Cherubino's place in the closet and he escapes out of the window. When the count and countess return, Susanna is found in the closet just as Countess Almaviva said, much to the embarrassment of Count Almaviva.

Marcellina, Bartolo, and Basilio arrive and announce the lawsuit against Figaro, demanding he marry Marcellina.

ACT III

The count steels his resolve to prevent the union of Figaro and Susanna by forcing Figaro to marry Marcellina. Figaro overhears this and claims that he cannot get married without his parents' permission. However, Figaro does not know who his parents are. It comes to light that Figaro is actually Raffello, the long-lost lovechild of Marcellina and Bartolo. Unable to stall any longer, the count officiates the double wedding between Marcellina and Bartolo, and Figaro and Susanna. During the celebrations Susanna delivers a note to the count, sealed with a pin from Barbarina, suggesting they meet in the garden that evening.

ACT IV

Later that night, Figaro becomes blinded with jealousy after recognizing that the pin Barbarina has misplaced was in a love letter from Susanna to the count. Figaro enlists the aid of Bartolo and Basilio to enact his revenge. When the ladies arrive in the garden to carry out their own scheme, Marcellina reveals Figaro's plans to Susanna.

Later that night, the plan ensues; Susanna and Countess Almaviva have switched outfits, Figaro waits in hiding to catch Susanna's infidelity, and the count enters to seduce "Susanna." The count, ecstatic to find her waiting for him, offers her a ring. "Susanna" insists they carry on their romance elsewhere, and she takes the opportunity to escape him. Meanwhile, "the countess" enters. Figaro, upon seeing her, confides all. After a moment, Figaro recognizes that "Countess Almaviva" is really Susanna and decides to tease her. While declaring his love for "the countess," Count Almaviva overhears and calls his men to arms and all disguised characters are revealed. Upon seeing "Susanna" wearing the countess's wedding ring, the count realizes he has been tricked and begs for her forgiveness. Countess Almaviva graciously accepts his apology and all live happily ever after. ♦

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO **Director's Note**

BY DAVID RADAMÉS TORO



“Mozart did more than just write three hours of jokes; he used his music to reveal a deep humanity within the characters.”

IN THE OPERATIC REPERTORY, I argue that there are two perfect comedies—*Falstaff* by Giuseppe Verdi and Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro*. Along with their perfect musical comedic timing, both understand that even in the zaniest of scenarios, characters must be earnest and sincere. In his play *Le mariage de Figaro*, Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais wove commentary on the corruption and incompetencies of the ruling nobility into a cast of archetypes and sharp-witted clowns. Compared to Lorenzo Da Ponte’s adaptation, Beaumarchais was much bolder in proclaiming his political leanings. In Beaumarchais’ play, Marcellina appears before a court proclaiming her rights as a woman and defending her taste for worldly things. And in the final act, Figaro gives a fiery speech against the nobility, one so controversial that King Louis XVI openly objected to it, and which would result in a ban on the play’s performance in the Holy Roman Empire.

In their adaptation, Mozart and Da Ponte would reduce Marcellina’s monologue to a recitativo in the opera’s final act and change Figaro’s speech against the nobility into a warning about the fickleness of women. Concessions were made to gain approval to adapt the play, but none of its

biting commentary was lost. The opera presented a commentary on class differences under the disguise of a marital comedy. But Mozart did more than just write three hours of jokes; he used his music to reveal a deep humanity within the characters. Under the playful tune of “Se vuol ballare,” we hear the heartbreak of a man who just learned his best friend—now his master—is trying to steal his girl. “Porgi amor” introduces us to the Countess’s central conflict and wound—her husband no longer desires her and she doesn’t know how to correct it. “Deh vieni” starts as a playful prank by a bride to her doubtful husband

and evolves into her proclaiming her anticipation for their wedding night. Even Cherubino’s songs hide the awkwardness of a fourteen-year-old boy who is powerless to puberty.

This brings me back to my comparison to *Falstaff*. Mozart and Da Ponte create a world that is very much Shakespearean, where crass humor is hidden amongst high language, clowns reveal universal truths, and the women, through strength and cunning, right the wrongs of men. Like Shakespeare’s plays, *The Marriage of Figaro* remains popular to modern audiences because of its heartfelt use of language and characters to express the human condition. The opera premiered over a century before theatrical realism and yet still translates very well to a 21st-century sensibility for quotidian realism. The human connections, both musical and dramatic, are so earnest and tight that you will see a bit of yourself in every character on stage. When you watch and listen, where do you see yourselves? ♦

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO **Behind the Scenes**

“This year’s production of *The Marriage of Figaro* brings one of our most exciting challenges yet. Stored in watertight trucks for the past 13 years, a set originally envisioned by legendary designer Madeleine Boyd is entering its next chapter.”

THE ART OF STAGEHAND DANCE

BY DAVE MAZZENO, SUPERVISING STAGEHAND



SINCE I SAW *Singing in the Rain* at age 16 at the Mechanic Theatre in Baltimore, theater has been a significant part of my life. The lighting and technical elements in the first 30 seconds made me think I could do this for a living. But it wasn’t until I took a theater class in college that I truly witnessed the

magic behind a set, when I was asked to fill in with lighting support due to an absent electrician. Following my college graduation, I took a role with the Denver Center Theatre Company and haven’t looked back since.

From rigging and carpentry to set transitions and safety protocols, my work as a Supervising Stagehand is similar to that of a dancer’s choreography, where every move is deliberate and every step is interconnected. Whether working on productions like *Master Class* that call for dynamic scenes or transforming a stage with static sets that come to life in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, it’s an honor to tell these stories and support Central City Opera’s world-class productions through physical scenery and lighting.

This year’s production of *The Marriage of Figaro* brings one of our most exciting challenges yet. Stored in watertight trucks for the past 13 years, a set originally envisioned by legendary designer Madeleine Boyd is entering its next chapter. Our intricate dance begins with observation and assessment, studying original production photos and drawings to understand the world we’ll be recreating on stage, before moving into inventory, repairs and improvements. All of this work needs to be completed before we can begin lighting, blocking or choreography—the larger dance of the festival relies on the steps of our stagehands.

The realistic qualities of *The Marriage of Figaro* set put our talent on full display. My philosophy is simple: we have the opportunity to set the standard, not follow it. This year’s scenery is our proof. If you’d like to see our stagehand dance firsthand, join us for *Backstage Magic* to witness our team transition the stage from one production to the next with narration and interactive Q&A. ♦



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DAVE MAZZENO.



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Pictured clockwise:
Verona Quartet,
Edgar Meyer,
Will Liverman



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THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO **Behind the Scenes**



"I always like to say that attending a production of *Figaro* is like watching a sitcom you never get tired of."

EMBRACING DUALITY

BY ASHRAF SEWAILAM, PRINCIPAL GUEST ARTIST
PLAYING THE ROLE OF DR. BARTOLO

WHEN I THINK ABOUT CENTRAL CITY, I think about a pressure cooker of creativity. I also think about drinking coffee on a swing in the mountain air. A striking contrast, but for me, straddling different worlds is something I'm quite used to.

I grew up in Egypt. My formative years included studying architecture at Cairo University's Faculty of Engineering and attending *Aida* at the pyramids, where I got tickets to dress rehearsals, and later attended most of the performances. There, I fell in love with the process of putting things together. While I had always appreciated music, it was in those rehearsals that I found my calling.

What wasn't clear was whether I had a voice for opera. In search of a teacher, I connected with Raouf Zaidan in 1988 by pure accident. He was willing to teach me the craft and eventually influenced me to move to Boulder to study at the University of Colorado, where my diversity would be embraced as I adjusted to American life while still carrying a piece of the old world with me.

My career between the two countries has been fulfilling. I've had the privilege of directing music for Arabic language dubbing of classic Disney films like "Pinocchio" and "Cinderella," voicing Mickey Mouse, teaching at the American University in Cairo, and performing as a principal at the Cairo Opera House. Upon my return to the US, I had the privilege of joining the community at Central City Opera.

My first involvement with CCO was as a touring artist in education and community engagement programming while pursuing my doctorate at CU Boulder. I made it to the main stage in 2018 and have performed and directed several times since.

This summer, I'm playing two roles near and dear to my heart: Dr. Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro*—my very first role at the Cairo Opera House in 1991, sung in Arabic—and William Jennings Bryan in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, a role I've wanted since stage managing the production over 30 years ago at CU Boulder's College of Music.

I always like to say that attending a production of *Figaro* is like watching a sitcom you never get tired of; each time you return, you discover something new that you hadn't noticed before. And that's also true of Central City. There's always something new to discover as you reconnect with colleagues, old friends and mentors like Patrick Mason, who has been my voice teacher since 1995. When artists scatter across the world, CCO has a way of bringing us back together. ♦



ASHRAF IN *THE BARBER OF SEVILLE*, 2025.
PHOTO BY AMANDA TIPTON.



ILLUSTRATION BY EWMANUELA CARNEVALE

THE BALLAD OF BABY DOE

*Fortunes rise and fall. True love endures.
Baby Doe returns home.*



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CYNTHIA LAWRENCE
AARON BREID
TYLER TUCKER

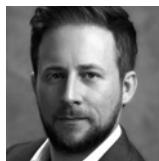
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FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER
SCENIC DESIGNER
LIGHTING DESIGNER
COSTUME DESIGNER
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PROPERTIES SUPERVISOR
WARDROBE SUPERVISOR
ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER
STAGE MANAGER
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS
SUPERTITLES
PIANIST

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MATT HERNDON
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LAUREL MCINTYRE
LUCY GUILLEMETTE & LORNA STEPHENS
BARBIE NOYES
ALAINA DE BELLEVUE

Sung in English with English supertitles.

The Ballad of Baby Doe is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals
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THE BALLAD OF BABY DOE **Cast**



SKOOG



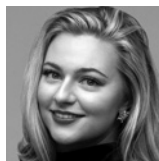
HURT



FEKEN



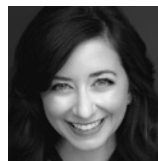
PULLEY



MIMS



GORNSTEIN



MANSOORI



SEWAILAM

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

OLD SILVER MINER	BRIAN SKOOG	CHESTER A. ARTHUR	BRIAN SKOOG
HORACE TABOR	WESTON HURT	ALBERT, A BELLBOY	ISAIAH FEKEN
BOUNCER	ISAIAH FEKEN	SAMANTHA	LAURA MANSOORI
AUGUSTA TABOR	EMILY PULLEY	A FOOTMAN	ISAIAH FEKEN
ELIZABETH "BABY DOE" TABOR	VIRGINIA MIMS	STAGE DOORMAN	BRIAN SKOOG
MAMA MCCOURT	KRISTIN GORNSTEIN	SILVER DOLLAR, GROWN	LAURA MANSOORI
MEG	LAURA MANSOORI	SOLO DANCERS	LAURA MANSOORI
WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN	ASHRAF SEWAILAM		SETH WALLEY

ADDITIONAL CHARACTERS

FATHER CHAPELLE/HOTEL CLERK/ MAYOR OF LEADVILLE	JEREMY LUIS LOPEZ
A DENVER POLITICIAN	NICHOLAS FAHRENKRUG
FOUR FRIENDS OF AUGUSTA	TORI TEDESCHI ADAMS, HALLIE SCHMIDT, MADELIN MORALES, CINDY DAJEONG SONG
FOUR CRONIES OF TABOR	RYAN NASH, RUSSELL SPENCE, JJ ROBINSON, DEREK HALE

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Onstage jewelry box commissioned for this production by Cynthia Lawrence and crafted by Mike Lawrence.

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THE BALLAD OF BABY DOE **Synopsis**

BY AUSTIN R.D. BURNS, MA, SHAKESPEARE INSTITUTE
Patron Services Associate at Central City Opera

ACT I

Elizabeth “Baby Doe” arrives in Leadville, Colorado, recently divorced and ready for a fresh start. She is directed to the Clarendon hotel by Horace Tabor who is enjoying intermission outside his namesake, the Tabor Opera House. The two are instantly smitten but are separated when his wife, Augusta Tabor, calls him in for Act II. After the show, Augusta retires, but Horace stays up to meet Baby Doe and their infamous affair begins.

Sometime later, Augusta discovers a gift from Horace meant for Baby Doe, confirming her suspicion of their attachment. Meanwhile, Baby Doe pens a letter to her mother explaining her divorce, her new ill-fated love who is married to another, and her intentions to return home. Augusta appears in the hotel lobby to confront Baby Doe and, despite all that Augusta imparts, Baby Doe decides to stay, discarding the letter. Horace arrives after Augusta’s departure, and he and Baby Doe embrace each other, resolving to pursue their love no matter what.

A few years later, we find ourselves at Baby Doe and Horace’s wedding reception where whispers of scandal and disapproval haunt the couple, foreshadowing their downfall.

ACT II

Ten years later, rumors and judgment have only grown more vicious toward Baby Doe. At the governor’s ball in honor of Horace, Augusta and Baby Doe come to an understanding. However, Augusta pleads with Baby Doe to convince Horace to sell the Matchless Mine; Horace’s finances are dire since the decline of silver. Overhearing their conversation, Horace furiously turns Augusta away and makes Baby Doe promise that she will always hold on to the Matchless Mine. Horace remains politically steadfast in his support of silver, and Baby Doe remains equally unwavering in her support of Horace.

Years later, poverty has ravaged the Tabor family, though they stubbornly cling to their pride. In the final moments of his life, hallucinating and inconsolable, Horace stumbles on to the Tabor Opera House stage. Baby Doe rushes to him, and he dies in her arms. Heartbroken and determined to keep her promise, she returns to the Matchless Mine where she spends her final moments before succumbing to the cold. ♦



THE BALLAD OF BABY DOE **Director's Note**

BY CYNTHIA LAWRENCE



WHAT DOES THE OPERA, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, mean to me? It quite literally changed my life.

I grew up in Boulder, Colorado. I sang constantly, played the piano and showed horses. In 1976 my mother and I went to Central City to see *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. This was perhaps the second opera I had seen in my life and, perhaps much like Augusta, my mother was attempting to add some culture and refinement to my life. What I remember was that I was enthralled by the performance, and during act two, I was struck with the realization that this was what I would do with the rest of my life!

I've been called a romantic, and I've learned through the years the power of storytelling through music. What we as performers and directors do is take operagoers someplace they have never been, forgotten about or didn't realize they needed—much as Horace himself longs for in his aria "Warm as the Autumn Light."

I care deeply about this opera. Why? Is it because it's a true story about real people who were at the forefront of adventure and the settling of Colorado?

Is it because it tells the story of a classic love triangle—or is it because the music is beautiful and we have three strong characters who tell the tale of courage, grit, the pioneer spirit, love, loss, rise and fall? The story itself is compelling, but the music takes it to an entirely different level.

Having sung this role myself, including performing the final scene with Beverly Sills in the house, I have lived inside Baby Doe's journey. I've dug deep to understand why the story of the Tabors endures. Baby Doe is courageous, beautiful and true. And she has, arguably, six arias! All three

principal roles require tremendous voices and storytelling from the actor/singers. Baby Doe's arias also require a voice that matures to a full, powerful, lyric soprano by the end of the opera. This is no small feat in casting—or for the soprano performing the role.

When these characters were alive, Colorado was the new frontier: it was exciting, dangerous, grand and romantic—wide open to possibilities. Douglas Moore and John LaTouche took that energy and created an opera with a truly American sound. My hope is that this anniversary production will take you back there. Whether you identify with Baby Doe, Horace, or Augusta, this is a tale of adventure, of strength and weakness, but most of all a story of love. These characters are flawed people who show real human characteristics. Historians and writers have long written about the story of the Tabors, and I know the music, singers, orchestra and entire company will take us on a journey. Come back to the Wild West with us as we live this story for you. ♦

"When these characters were alive, Colorado was the new frontier: it was exciting, dangerous, grand and romantic—wide open to possibilities."

THE BALLAD OF BABY DOE **Behind the Scenes**

“When you witness the set for
The Ballad of Baby Doe this year,
humanity will take center stage.
And that’s by design.”

DESIGNING THE AUDIENCE JOURNEY

BY LAWRENCE E. MOTEN III, SCENIC DESIGNER



WHEN YOU WITNESS the set for *The Ballad of Baby Doe* this year, humanity will take center stage. And that’s by design.

Growing up in San Antonio, Texas, I realized that my interests and military background would lead me to call many places home. As a child, life was less about the sports that put my hometown on the map

and more about the tangible or imagined worlds I could create and explore with LEGOs and books. Eventually, I pursued a degree in set design with a secondary focus on costume design, continuing to explore the concept of building worlds through performance, scenery and storytelling.

When you experience a performance set, especially one that is hyperrealistic, it’s nearly impossible to separate yourself from the world on stage. Design has a unique ability to do that. It takes audiences on a journey, moving them and making them feel like part of the

story. This is why my work today focuses on humanity as a pedagogy and central theme. It’s important for audiences not just to witness, but to truly experience the sets I create, igniting thoughts and memories and sometimes even influencing their heart rates.

After many years in my career as a set designer—including five years working in opera and two years designing sets in Central City—I hope this year’s production of *Baby Doe* leaves you, our audience, deeply moved. This unique opera features 11 different scenes, more than most productions. Designing the scenery for a show like this in a place as rich in inspiration and history as Central City is truly an honor.

With our director’s in-depth knowledge of the story and our team’s craftsmanship, we strive to strike a beautiful balance between storytelling and historical integrity. Bringing world-class performances and sets to life in a theater with such a small footprint is both a challenge and a privilege. Every scene is an invitation to step inside the story. I hope you will. ♦

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THE BALLAD OF BABY DOE **Behind the Scenes**

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

BY EMILY PULLEY, PRINCIPAL GUEST ARTIST, PLAYING THE ROLE OF AUGUSTA TABOR



THIS IS MY 11TH SUMMER ON THE MOUNTAIN, and it still feels like home. My opera career began here, and 34 years later, I am grateful that CCO continues to be an important part of my life.

I have always loved to sing, but opera was definitely not on my radar while I was growing up in Texas. When I decided to major in music, I was convinced

I was going to be a brassy Broadway belter. But my voice teacher had other ideas, and once I discovered that I could sing opera, I fell in love with the art form.

I was exceedingly fortunate to have friends and mentors who continually pointed me in the right direction, including the head of the opera program at my grad school, who was a long-time friend of John Moriarty. It was he who suggested that I apply to CCO's Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program, and I was

thrilled to be accepted as a Studio Artist that summer. Mr. Moriarty's advice was invaluable to me, and after he coached me on "Depuis le jour," he told me that I should always use that aria for auditions. I entered the Met competition on a lark the next year, started with "Depuis le jour" for each round, and was selected as one of the 1993 National Winners. I made my Met debut the following season.

Every summer at CCO has helped me to grow as an artist, and this year, I am honored to portray the formidable Augusta Tabor in *The Ballad of Baby Doe* and join the distinguished lineage of colleagues who have taken on this historic role. I love that Augusta's first lines express her desire to provide some beauty amidst the relentless pursuit of wealth, and the very existence of this opera house is proof that we've always needed music and storytelling to offer a respite from our everyday lives, or, as C.S. Lewis put it, to allow us to "steal past watchful dragons." It's a privilege to be a part of that legacy, and I am delighted to have the opportunity to encourage and support the talented young singers who are beginning their own careers here. I sincerely hope that opera brings them as much joy as it has given me. ♦

"The very existence of this opera house is proof that we've always needed music and storytelling to offer a respite from our everyday lives."





MASTER CLASS

TERRENCE MCNALLY

Lessons from opera's most beloved diva.

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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

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LIGHTING DESIGNER

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COSTUME DESIGNER

WIG & MAKEUP DESIGNER

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STAGE MANAGER

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS

KEN CAZAN

GABRIELLE GIACOMO

LAWRENCE E. MOTEN III

ABIGAIL HOKE-BRADY

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ELENA FLORES

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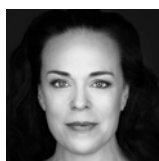
LUCY GUILLEMETTE & LORNA STEPHENS

A play in English.

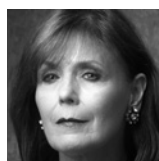
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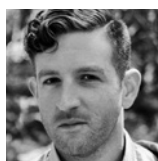
MASTER CLASS **Cast**



DEDOMINICI



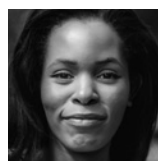
RAGONETTI



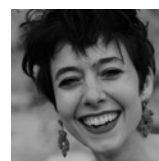
BOSARGE



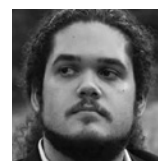
FEKEN



ISAAC



BALSAMO



ADKINS

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

MARIA CALLAS	JENNIFER DEDOMINICI
MARIA CALLAS (<i>July 31, 7:30 pm</i>)	MARCIA RAGONETTI
EMMANUEL "MANNY" WEINSTOCK	ARTHUR BOSARGE
STAGEHAND	ISAIAH FEKEN
SHARON GRAHAM	DENIQUE ISAAC
SOPHIE DE PALMA	SABINA BALSAMO
ANTHONY "TONY" CANDOLINO	LEVI ADKINS

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MASTER CLASS **Synopsis**

BY AUSTIN R.D. BURNS, MA, SHAKESPEARE INSTITUTE
Patron Services Associate at Central City Opera

ACT I

Maria Callas, once a world-renowned bel canto soprano, now the legend who lost her voice, arrives to give a master class to aspiring opera singers. She commands the room, filling it with her presence as she makes demands of the theater staff and accompanist.

She summons her “first victim,” a soprano named Sophie De Palma. Sophie barely gets a single note out before Maria stops her in her tracks. A string of criticisms and vague direction follow, confusing and overwhelming the young soprano. When Maria finally lets Sophie sing, Maria is transported back to a time in her life wracked with abuse and vulnerability. When the song ends and Maria returns to her senses, she calls for a break.

ACT II

Maria returns from the interval as if nothing has happened. She calls in her next victim, another soprano named Sharon Graham. After some jabs at Sharon and her evening gown, Maria insists that she begin her piece by making an entrance. Sharon exits the stage and does not return. Quick to move on, Maria calls in the next student, a tenor by the name of Anthony “Tony” Candolino. She is noticeably gentler on him until he begins to sing. Reprimanding him for “just singing” and not embodying the character or setting of the piece, she dismisses him. In rebellion, he sings on anyway and Maria resigns herself to coaching him

through it. Maria is moved, transported emotionally to another time. She wishes Tony well in his career and is at a loss for words. Sharon abruptly returns, having gathered her nerve and pleads that she is ready now. Maria allows it, though she is quickly returned to the world of her memory once again. She returns when the song is finished, complimenting Sharon on her voice and spirit before quickly undercutting her praise with an insult. Sharon has had enough and denounces Maria as a has-been who wants to bring everyone down with her. Maria makes one last attempt to defend herself, dismisses the accompanist, collects her things, and exits. ♦



MASTER CLASS **Director's Note**

BY KEN CAZAN



IT IS SUCH AN EXCITING EXPERIENCE to tackle a subject as iconic and larger-than-life as Maria Callas. I am a huge fan of the great American playwright (and opera buff) Terrence McNally and have loved directing several operas for which he created or was the source for the libretto including Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* and *Three Decembers*, both for Central City Opera.

McNally's ability to make someone as intimidating as Callas real, relatable and even sympathetic, is extraordinary. Through McNally's research, we learn that she genuinely struggled as a child, that her mother was a monstrous person who berated and used her daughter as a meal ticket. Who knew that Callas was born in Brooklyn and her mother left her father and moved Maria to Greece when she was a child? I find it amazing that the glamorous Callas walked to school and to voice lessons in her bare feet. As with many artists, her voice teacher, Mme. de Hidalgo, was more a mother than a mentor.

I also find the imagined conversations between Maria and Aristotle Onassis and her first husband, Giovanni Meneghini (not that we hear much from Meneghini) fascinating and disturbing. With Meneghini, she is primarily ego and ambition. He is much older and she is insecure from being overweight but

determined to take the opera business by storm. He gets her to a certain highly accomplished level but can take her no further, either personally or professionally. Conversely, with Onassis she has already become the great Callas, superstar.

She is a walking wound, made vulnerable by years of her every move being observed and exposed by the press. With her voice waning, she now wants to be married to Onassis and to have a child. Onassis, however, views her as a possession, a thing. He sees them both as freaks to be observed and extolled and feared. As so often happens with

people who achieve that extreme level of fame, when they are home and alone and the doors are locked, the silence can be deadly. I also had to constantly remind myself that this was years before cell phones and the internet.

I have known several people who have achieved that extreme level of fame. The biggest surprise for me with all of them is that they are, fundamentally, humane. They all have parents, siblings, partners or spouses; many have children. Most have wonderful senses of humor. Their careers, while fulfilling, can't hold them in times of joy or crisis. This, I believe, is the crux of Maria's dilemma, her tragic flaw. Her voice gone, her love life non-existent, she is moving from master class to master class, looking for a good hair rinse and blow dry. She, however, is alone, dreaming of a comeback that will never happen. ♦

"Their careers, while fulfilling, can't hold them in times of joy or crisis. This, I believe, is the crux of Maria's dilemma, her tragic flaw.

REPRESENTATION THROUGH COSTUME DESIGN

BY ELENA FLORES, COSTUME DESIGNER



WHEN MY EXPERIENCE IN OPERA BEGAN, little did I know the impact this field would have on my career and life. As a college student at a small school in Northern Wisconsin, I got my start in their conservatory program as a singer.

While the beauty of performance on stage is still something I relish, it was a work-study opportunity that brought me behind the scenes, where I found my place backstage in the costume shop.

Working with textiles wasn't entirely new. My mom tried to teach me to sew as a kid, and it didn't stick. My younger self would be proud to see how far I've come as a self-taught sewer. Today I work full-time as a freelance costume designer, supporting everything from film and television to opera and theater. While based in Southern California, this work takes me places I never expected to go.

The best part of this work is its overlap with cultural anthropology. I am given a character, real or fictional, with cultural, geographic and other nuances that deserve authentic representation, and I have to bring that to life through costume. Coming from outside the fashion world, I have a unique ability to create something out of nothing, too. Depending on the director, production and budget, that means sourcing or building garments, then altering, embellishing and hand selecting each

"I am given a character, real or fictional, with cultural, geographic and other nuances that deserve authentic representation, and I have to bring that to life through costume."

piece to tell a cohesive yet engaging story. Every stitch, fabric choice and silhouette is deliberate.

For *Master Class*, I am particularly excited to depict a character as iconic as Maria Callas. Given the audience's familiarity with her story, the challenge is representing her in a way that feels true to form yet fresh. Set against 1970s student life at Juilliard, this production offers rich opportunities to explore juxtaposition and contrast. The characters' archetypes range widely, each with their own nuances. My personal favorite is a showstopping outfit change, moving from overdressed elegance to a sleek, commanding silhouette—akin to a Black Panther's uniform.

If you have the opportunity to see *Master Class*, I hope the characters, their wardrobes and the themes of newfound hope remind you of what behind-the-scenes work can bring to a centuries-old art form. ♦



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MASTER CLASS **Behind the Scenes**



THE FIRST TIME I EVER HEARD AN OPERA was, funnily enough, when I was cast in one. Singing wasn't even something my family knew could be a career. I discovered my talent by chance: because a fine arts credit requirement landed me in the right class with the right teacher. That was the beginning of the end.

I'd consider myself a "latecomer" to music in every sense. My first voice lessons happened in college, after a stint in Navy ROTC at the College of the Holy Cross led me to transfer to my state school in Maine and finally pursue music education. I auditioned for the opera chorus at the local professional company and the rest is history.

As a "crossover" artist, Central City Opera has had a huge impact on my career, supporting and inspiring pivots from musical theater to opera and back again. I first came to the mountain in 2001 through the education and outreach program, perhaps foreshadowing my current work as a teacher. There, I learned how to leverage my strengths to bring opera to people and places who don't typically have access to it. I was introduced to so many things, including my future husband: a last-minute

"My crossover artistry lends itself to specializing in having no specialty, so I feel challenged and honored taking on this daunting, but meaningful role."

A MASTER CLASS IN CROSSOVER ARTISTRY

BY JENNIFER DEDOMINICI, MARIA CALLAS

casting replacement as my love interest when I finally reached the main stage in 2018.

This summer, I'm honored to play Maria Callas, a famous operatic soprano admired for her storytelling as much as her singing, in *Master Class*. It's an iconic role in a beloved play. My crossover artistry lends itself to specializing in having no specialty, so I feel challenged and honored taking on this daunting, but meaningful role.

In many ways, the role feels like a culmination of my experiences. I'm not only given the opportunity to reflect on this work through the legendary eyes of Callas as she looks at her own career and life, but I'm also able to draw parallels between her trajectory and my own: both singers and teachers pursuing mastery in our craft.

In addition to my own performance work, I now have the privilege of doing for others what was once done for me, teaching crossover at CU Boulder. Between my students, Central City and Maria Callas, I am reminded every day why I chose this life or, rather, why it chose me. ♦



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JUSTIN RAMM-DAMRON
PATRICK STARKE

SOPRANO
TENOR
BARITONE
MEZZO-SOPRANO*
MEZZO-SOPRANO*
SOPRANO
MEZZO-SOPRANO*
BASS
SOPRANO
SOPRANO
SOPRANO
TENOR
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MEZZO-SOPRANO
BASS-BARITONE
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AND

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** Principal Artists*

CCO IN CONCERT **Music Note**

BY JEREMY REGER, HEAD OF MUSIC



I KNEW I WAS LATE to the Advanced Placement History study session and my teenage anxiety was kicking in. I had a classroom full of Western New York's nerdiest and finest to impress. As my 1994 gray Ford Taurus sailed into the parking lot, I slid "Classical Thunder I" into the CD player, cranked down my window, and let Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries* announce my arrival, *Apocalypse Now* spirit fully intact. With the swirl of strings and the ring of brass, I descended upon my classmates with the full-throated orchestra blasting from my car speakers.

Choosing music to showcase the power of the Central City Opera Orchestra is electrifying. With more than 40 people on stage, the audience is witness to decades full of human flourishing: countless hours practicing, miles driven carting instruments, and years of devotion to creating something larger than themselves. An orchestra unleashed can capture the restless and haunting character of Wagner's *Flying Dutchman*, the supernatural groans and aches of an evil witch in *Hansel and Gretel* or the ethereal disguise of Nanetta as the fairy queen in *Falstaff*. The orchestra can create the lilting atmosphere of

Viennese charm in Lehár's *Merry Widow* and contrast that with Verdi's swirling and incessant sonic landscape depicting fate in his cursed opera, *La forza del destino*. The orchestra—this orchestra—creates worlds.

"Choosing music to showcase the power of the Central City Opera Orchestra is electrifying. With more than 40 people on stage, the audience is witness to decades full of human flourishing..."

Since 1932, we have celebrated not only the orchestra, but also the human body as an instrument. In *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Mozart's buffoons teach us to ignore conventional wisdom and drink heartily. Similarly, we can feast on the rich and hearty forces of Germanic music and the lyricism and sentiment of Italian opera. Central City Opera has been the mountain home of this magical combination of orchestra and voice for almost a century.

Puccini showcases this best in *La rondine*, taking a listener from a simple melody to as grandiose a moment as this historic stage can handle. Athletic singing is on display with the clash of crowns between Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart as voices hurl insults and the orchestra punctuates the moment in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*. An organ takes us to church in Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* where Santuzza's lament soars over the power of the chorus and orchestra. Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* weaves nostalgia and new love into a decadent and magnetic banquet for our ears. Shaping this feast are Conductor Brandon Eldredge and Stage Director Gabrielle Giacomo, who bring both the music and the stage to life. With Wagner's triumphant "Pilgrim's Chorus," our combined talents will shake these century-and-a-half old bricks, while Verdi reminds us to look for humor in everything. If these bricks could talk, they would sing, play and laugh in agreement. ♦

CCO IN CONCERT Program

The Flying Dutchman
"Overture"

The Central City Opera Orchestra

Richard Wagner

The Abduction from the Seraglio
"Vivat Bacchus!"

Patrick Starke, Justin Ramm-Damron

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Hansel and Gretel
"Witch's Aria"

Quinn Middleman

Engelbert Humperdinck

La rondine
"Bevo al tuo fresco sorriso"

Denique Isaac, Francesca Herrera, Patrick Starke, Levi Adkins,
Members of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program

Giacomo Puccini

Maria Stuarda
"Confrontation Scene"

Hilary Ginther, Jennifer DeDominici, Madelin Morales,
Patrick Starke, Matthew Cossack, Justin Ramm-Damron,
Members of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program

Gaetano Donizetti

Intermission

La forza del destino
"Overture"

The Central City Opera Orchestra

Giuseppe Verdi

The Merry Widow
"Lippen schweigen"

Denique Isaac, Matthew Cossack

Franz Lehár

Falstaff
"Sul fil d'un soffio etesio"

Tori Tedeschi Adams,
Members of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program

Giuseppe Verdi

Der Rosenkavalier
"Hab' mir's gelobt"

Jamila Drecker-Waxman, Tess Levine, Kira Dills-DeSurra

Richard Strauss

"Ist ein Traum"

Tess Levine, Kira Dills-DeSurra

Cavalleria rusticana
"Inneggiamo"

Hilary Ginther,
Members of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program

Pietro Mascagni

Tannhäuser
"Pilgrim's Chorus"

Members of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program

Richard Wagner

Falstaff
"Tutto nel mondo è burla"

Jamila Drecker-Waxman, Tori Tedeschi Adams,
Quinn Middleman, Patrick Starke, Matthew Cossack, Justin Ramm-Damron,
Madelin Morales, Jeremy Luis Lopez, Levi Adkins, Derek Hale
Members of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program

Giuseppe Verdi

A man and a woman are shown in profile, laughing and celebrating. The man is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and the woman is wearing a dark top. They are standing in front of a slot machine, with the woman's hand on the machine's lever. The background is a warm, out-of-focus casino interior with other slot machines and lights.

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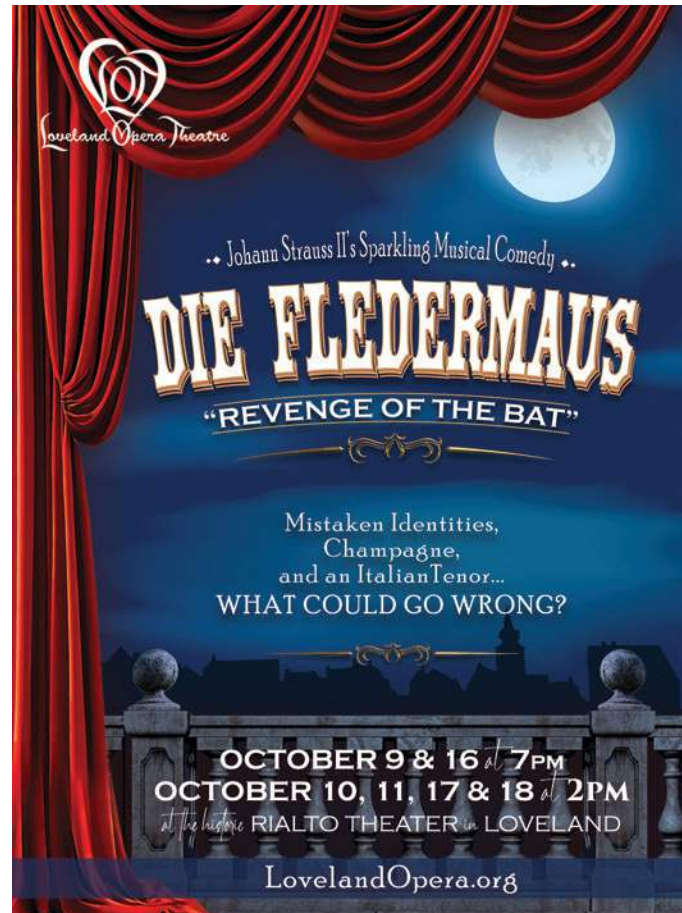
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Company Profiles



Allison Ann Bailey*

Stage Manager, *Master Class*; Assistant Stage Manager, *The Marriage of Figaro*

Recently: Assistant Stage Manager, *I & You: The Musical*, Olney Theatre Center; *The Crucible*, Washington National Opera; *Little Miss Perfect*, Olney Theatre Center



Alaina de Bellevue

Pianist, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

Previously at CCO: Pianist, *The Knock* (2025)

Recently: Pianist, Colorado Ballet; *The Medium/Gianni Schicchi*, Anchorage Opera; Chorus Director, *Dead Man Walking*, University of Colorado Eklund Opera



Arthur Bosarge

Emmanuel "Manny" Weinstock, *Master Class*

Previously at CCO: Director of Chorus, *The Barber of Seville* (2025), *The Knock* (2025), *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025); Assistant Conductor, *The Pirates of Penzance* (2024), *Street Scene* (2024)

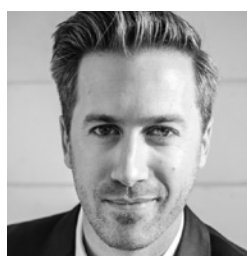
Recently: Artistic Administrator, Sarasota Opera; Director of Chorus and Director of the Apprentice Artists Program, Sarasota Opera; Music Staff, *Matilde* (American Premiere), Opera Southwest; *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, Utah Festival Opera



Glenn Avery Breed*

Costume Designer, *The Marriage of Figaro*

Recently: Costume Designer, *Oklahoma!*, Pensacola Opera; *La traviata*, Pensacola Opera; *Fiesta of Five Flags*, Janiec Opera at Brevard Music Center; *Il trovatore*, North Carolina Opera; Department Chair and Professor of Costume Design, Costume Construction, Millinery, Corsetry and Basic Tailoring, University of West Florida



Aaron Breid

Conductor, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

Previously at CCO: Associate Conductor, Associate Conductor/Chorus Master, *The Magic Flute* (2018), *Il trovatore* (2018), *Carmen* (2017), *Così fan tutte* (2017), *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (2016)

Recently: Conductor, *The Marriage of Figaro*, North Carolina Opera; *Rusalka*, Chapman University; Cover Conductor, *Madama Butterfly*, Lyric Opera of Chicago; *The Monkey King* (World Premiere), San Francisco Opera



Ken Cazan

Director, *Master Class*

Previously at CCO: Director, *Kiss Me, Kate* (2023), *The Light in the Piazza* (2022), *Carousel* (2021), *Billy Budd* (2019), *Acis and Galatea* (2018), *The Face on the Barroom Floor* (2018)

Recently: Director, *The Turn of the Screw*, USC Thornton School of Music; *Carmen*, Music Academy of the West; *Apprentice Scenes*, Santa Fe Opera; Professor of Opera/Resident Stage Director, USC Thornton School of Music



Marcello Cormio*

Conductor, *The Marriage of Figaro*

Recently: Conductor, *The Barber of Seville*, Sarasota Opera; *La rondine*, Manhattan School of Music; *I Am a Dreamer Who No Longer Dreams*, Syracuse Opera/Tri-Cities Opera; *Don Giovanni*, Sarasota Opera; *The Pearl Fishers*, Sarasota Opera; *La traviata*, La Musica Lirica Opera Festival, Italy; Music Director, Lexington Chamber Orchestra

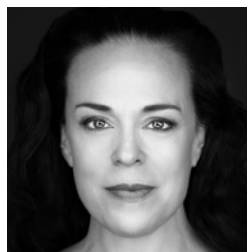


Olivia Darling

Assistant Stage Manager, *The Marriage of Figaro*, CCO in Concert

Previously at CCO: Stage Management Intern, *Dido and Aeneas* (2021), *Rigoletto* (2021)

Recently: Calling Stage Manager, *The Barber of Seville*, Charleston Opera Theatre; Assistant Stage Manager, *The Little Prince*, The Dallas Opera; *La traviata*, Opera Colorado



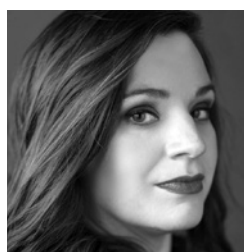
Jennifer DeDominici

Mezzo-Soprano

Maria Callas, *Master Class*

Previously at CCO: Ruth, *The Pirates of Penzance* (2024); Mother, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (2024, 2023, 2022); Franca Naccarelli, *The Light in the Piazza* (2022); Carrie Pipperidge, *Carousel* (2021)

Recently: Lady Capulet, *Romeo and Juliet*, Theatreworks, Colorado Springs; Duchess Estonia Dulworth, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, Lone Tree Arts Center; Mrs. Anderssen, *A Little Night Music*, Denver Center Theatre Company



Alexandra Dietrich*

Assistant Director, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

Recently: Staging Coordinator, *Vanessa*, Boston Symphony Orchestra and Boston Lyric Opera; Director, *A Little Night Music*, Marblehead Little Theatre; Assistant Director, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, Boston Lyric Opera



Alexandra Dill

Costume Shop Manager and Wardrobe Supervisor, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, *Master Class*

Previously at CCO: *Stitcher/Dresser*, *The Rape of Lucretia* (2008), *West Side Story* (2008), *Susannah* (2008)

Recently: *Soft Goods Supervisor*, *The Boys*, Prime Video; *Red One*, Prime Video; *Vought Rising*, Prime Video



Kira Dills-DeSurra ^

Mezzo-Soprano

Cherubino, *The Marriage of Figaro*; **Soloist**, *CCO in Concert*

Previously at CCO: *Prince Orlofsky*, *Die Fledermaus* (2022); *Soloist*, *ENCORE: A Musical Revue* (2018); *Second Lady*, *The Magic Flute* (2018); *Mercédès*, *Carmen* (2017)

Recently: *La Ciesca*, *Gianni Schicchi*, Salt Marsh Opera; *Hansel*, *Hansel and Gretel*, Helena Symphony; *Cherubino*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, Opera Idaho; *Lola*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, Opera Colorado



McKenna Ebert

Lighting Designer, *CCO in Concert*; Assistant Lighting Designer, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, *Master Class*

Previously at CCO: Lighting Designer, *CCO in Concert*; Assistant Lighting Designer, *The Barber of Seville* (2025), *The Knock* (2025), *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025)

Recently: Lighting Designer, *The Precipice*, Irondale, NYC; Assistant Lighting Designer, *Left on Tenth*, Broadway; *The Who's Tommy*, Broadway & Goodman Theatre, Chicago



Brandon Eldredge

Conductor, *CCO in Concert*

Previously at CCO: Conductor, *The Pirates of Penzance* (2024); Associate Conductor & Chorus Director, *The Girl of the Golden West* (2024), *Romeo & Juliet* (2023), *Die Fledermaus* (2022), *The Light in the Piazza* (2022), *Carousel* (2021), *Rigoletto* (2021)

Recently: Guest Conductor, Virginia Symphony Orchestra; Co-Conductor, *Intelligence*, Virginia Opera; Conductor, *The Barber of Seville*, Virginia Opera



Isaiah Feken^

Baritone

Bouncer/Albert/Footman, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*; *Stagehand*, *Master Class*

Previously at CCO: *Harry Easter*, *Street Scene* (2024); *Second Man*, *Kiss Me*, *Kate* (2023); *Giuseppe*, *The Light in the Piazza* (2022)



Elena Flores*

Costume Designer, *Master Class*

Recently: Costume Designer, *Cinderella: A Salsa Fairytale*, South Coast Repertory Theatre; *The Cunning Little Vixen*, USC Thornton School of Music; *नेहा & NEEL*, Artists at Play & Latino Theater Company



José Israel García*

Assistant Director, *The Marriage of Figaro*

Recently: Assistant Director, *Turandot*, The Atlanta Opera; *Le nozze di Figaro*, The Atlanta Opera; *La traviata*, The Atlanta Opera; *Bel Canto*, Aspen Opera Theater/VocalARTS; Stage Director, *Songs for a New World*, Camille Playhouse



Gabrielle Giacomo*

Director, *CCO in Concert*; Assistant Director, *Master Class*

Recently: Assistant Director, *The Silent Serenade*, Mannes Opera, Mannes School of Music at The New School; Assistant Director, *The Rake's Progress*, The Glimmerglass Festival; Assistant Director, *Candide*, Curtis Opera Theatre



E. Martin Gimenez*

Sound Designer, *Master Class*

Recently: Audio Engineer, *Pagliacci*, Pacific Opera Project; *Spanish Dracula*, LA Opera; Sound Designer, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, Chautauqua Opera Company



Hilary Ginther

Mezzo-Soprano

Marcellina, *The Marriage of Figaro*; **Soloist**, *CCO in Concert*

Previously at CCO: *Emma Jones*, *Street Scene* (2024); *Emilia*, *Othello* (2023)

Recently: *Marcellina*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, Opera Columbus; *Giovanna Seymour*, *Anna Bolena*, Musica Viva Hong Kong; *Rosina*, *The Barber of Seville*, Virginia Opera; *Maddalena*, *Rigoletto*, Opera Columbus; *La Maestra delle Novizie*, *Suor Angelica*, Opera Omaha

* CCO Debut

+ Former Studio Artist

^ Former Apprentice Artist

Company Profiles



Kristin Gornstein*

Mezzo-Soprano

Mama McCourt, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

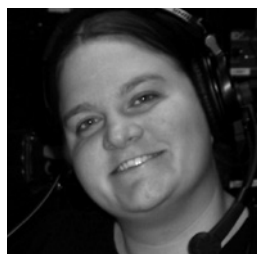
Recently: Shtumer Alef, *The Great Dictionary of the Yiddish Language*, American Opera Projects; Antonio, *Antonio e Cleopatra*, Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado; Dido, *Dido and Aeneas*, Opera Fort Collins



Kendra Green

Stage Manager, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *CCO in Concert*
Previously at CCO: Stage Manager, *The Barber of Seville* (2025), *The Girl of the Golden West* (2024); Assistant Stage Manager, *Street Scene* (2024)

Recently: Production Stage Manager, *La traviata*, Opera Colorado; *Il trovatore* in Concert, Opera Colorado; *La bohème*, Opera Colorado; Stage Manager, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Colorado Ballet; *The Great Gatsby*, Colorado Ballet; *The Nutcracker*, Colorado Ballet

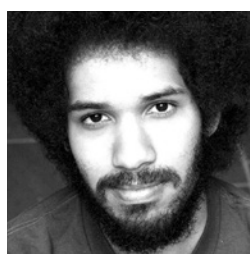


Lucy Guillemette

Assistant Stage Manager, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, *Master Class*

Previously at CCO: Assistant Stage Manager, *The Barber of Seville* (2025), *The Knock* (2025)

Recently: Assistant Stage Manager, *La bohème*, Opera Colorado; *Madama Butterfly*, Kentucky Opera; *Sweeney Todd*, Utah Opera; *Rigoletto*, Opera San Antonio; *Pagliacci*, Opera San Antonio; *The Pirates of Penzance*, Opera San Antonio; *Madama Butterfly*, Opera San Antonio; *Ernani*, Sarasota Opera; *Fidelio*, Heartbeat Opera



Matt Herndon

Resident Fight Choreographer, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

Previously at CCO: Fight Choreographer, *The Barber of Seville* (2025), *The Knock* (2025), *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025) *The Girl of the Golden West* (2024), *Street Scene* (2024), *The Pirates of Penzance* (2024)

Recently: Fight Consultant, *A Masked Ball*, Opera in the Pines; Fight Choreographer, *Carmen*, University of Indiana Jacobs School of Music; *Sweeney Todd*, Jacobs School of Music; *Roméo et Juliette*, Jacobs School of Music



Abigail Hoke-Brady

Resident Lighting Designer, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, *Master Class*

Previously at CCO: Lighting Designer, *The Barber of Seville* (2025), *The Knock* (2025), *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025), *The Pirates of Penzance* (2024), *The Girl of the Golden West* (2024), *Street Scene* (2024)

Recently: Lighting Designer, *A Doll's House*, Two River Theater; *Little Miss Perfect*, The Olney Theater; *Intelligence*, Virginia Opera; *La traviata*, San Diego Opera; *Tosca*, Pittsburgh Opera; *Pagliacci*, Seattle Opera



Weston Hurt*

Baritone

Horace Tabor, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

Recently: Germont, *La traviata*, Utah Opera; Tonio, *Pagliacci*, Pensacola Opera; Rigoletto, *Rigoletto*, English National Opera; Sharpless, *Madama Butterfly*, Fort Worth Opera; Baritone soloist, *Carmina Burana*, Reno Philharmonic; Sharpless, *Madama Butterfly*, Houston Grand Opera; Alvaro (cover), *Florencia en el Amazonas*, The Metropolitan Opera

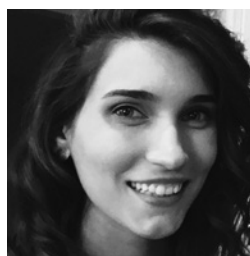


Cynthia Lawrence^

Director, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

Previously at CCO: Colorado Music Hall of Fame Inductee (2024); Soloist, *Cynthia Lawrence in Concert* (2024); Marguerite, *Faust* (1992); Micaëla, *Carmen* (1993)

Recently: Director, *The Magic Flute*, University of Kentucky; *Suor Angelica*, Opera Lucca; *The Barber of Seville*, University of Kentucky; Endowed Chair, Voice/Opera, University of Kentucky

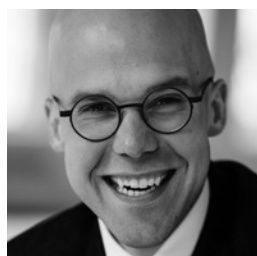


Candace Leyland

Resident Wig & Makeup Designer, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, *Master Class*

Previously at CCO: Wig and Makeup Designer, *The Barber of Seville* (2025), *The Knock* (2025), *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025); Wig and Makeup Assistant, *The Pirates of Penzance* (2024), *The Girl of the Golden West* (2024)

Recently: Wig & Makeup Designer, *The Marriage of Figaro*, Opera Omaha; *La traviata*, Opera Columbus; Assistant Wig & Makeup Designer, *Madama Butterfly*, Pittsburgh Opera; *Don Giovanni*, Opera Omaha



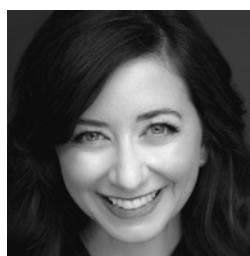
Alex Mansoori

Tenor

Don Basilio/Don Curzio, *The Marriage of Figaro*

Previously at CCO: Jester, *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025)

Recently: Kronprinz, *Silent Night*, Opera Orlando; Pong, *Turandot*, Opera Colorado; Governor/Vanderdendur/Croupier, *Candide*, Cincinnati Symphony; Chip, *On the Town*, Opera Naples; Featured Tenor Soloist, *A Goyishe Christmas to You!*, New York Festival of Song



Laura Mansoori

Meg/Silver Dollar grown up/Samantha/Solo Dancer, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

Previously at CCO: Lady Rowena & Solo Dancer, *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025)

Recently: Choreographer, *Finding Nemo*, Orlando Family Stage; Carol Patterson, *True North* (Regional Premiere), Orlando REP; Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, Dr. Phillips Center for Performing Arts; Associate Choreographer, *The Spongebob Musical*, Orlando REP; Graziella/Pas de Six Dancer, *West Side Story*, Orlando Shakes



Laurel McIntyre

Production Stage Manager, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*
Previously at CCO: Production Stage Manager, *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025), *CCO in Concert* (2025); Stage Manager, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (2024)
Recently: Stage Manager, *Carmen*, San Diego Opera; *Fellow Travelers*, Portland Opera; Assistant Stage Manager, *Aida*, Washington National Opera; *Central Park Five*, Detroit Opera



Maureen McKay

Soprano
Susanna, The Marriage of Figaro
Previously at CCO: Laurey, *Oklahoma!* (2012)
Recently: Callie van Lew, *Intelligence*, Virginia Opera; Papagena, *The Magic Flute*, The Metropolitan Opera; Gretel, *Hansel and Gretel*, Utah Opera; Hirt, *Tannhäuser*, The Metropolitan Opera; Laila, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (World Premiere), Seattle Opera



Virginia Mims*

Soprano
Elizabeth "Baby Doe" Tabor, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*
Recently: *Susanna, The Marriage of Figaro*, Opera in Williamsburg; *Musetta, La bohème*, Sarasota Opera; *Despina, Così fan tutte*, Sarasota Opera; Soloist, *Vivaldi's Magnificat*, Carnegie Hall; *Musetta, La bohème*, Aspen Opera/Vocal ARTS



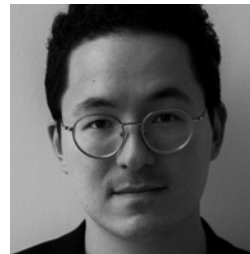
Lawrence E. Moten III

Resident Scenic Designer, *The Ballad of Baby Doe, Master Class*
Previously at CCO: Scenic Designer, *The Knock* (2025)
Recently: Scenic Designer, *Treemonisha*, Washington National Opera; *Merry Wives*, Shakespeare Theatre Company, DC; *Henry 6*, The Old Globe; *Chicken & Biscuits*, Circle in the Square Theatre; *Così fan tutte*, Wolf Trap Opera; *This Little Light of Mine* (World Premiere), Santa Fe Opera; *Covenant* (World Premiere), Roundabout Theatre Company; *Faust*, Wolf Trap Opera



Caitlyn Murphy*

Properties Supervisor
Recently: Prop Supervisor, *Marcel on the Train*, Classic Stage Company; Prop Design, *Room 1214*, 59E59 Theatres, NYC; Prop Design, *Stargazers*, Page 73 Productions, NYC



Artyom Pak

Pianist/Continuo, *The Marriage of Figaro*
Previously at CCO: Pianist/Continuo, *The Barber of Seville* (2025)
Recently: Music Director, Apprentice Artists Program, Sarasota Opera; Chorus Director, *La bohème*, Sarasota Opera; *The Merry Widow*, Sarasota Opera; *Il trovatore*, Sarasota Opera; *Susannah*, Sarasota Opera; Assistant Conductor, *Così fan tutte*, Sarasota Opera; Pianist, *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, The Juilliard School; *Dialogues des Carmélites*, The Juilliard School



Erica Petrocelli*

Soprano
Countess Almaviva, *The Marriage of Figaro*
Recently: *Musetta, La bohème*, LA Opera; *Micaëla* (cover), *Carmen*, The Metropolitan Opera; *Jitka, Dalibor*, Bard Summerscape; *Cio-Cio San, Madama Butterfly*, Colorado Springs Philharmonic; *Fiordiligi, Così fan tutte*, LA Opera; Soloist, *Mahler Symphony No. 4*, Aspen Music Festival and School; *Donna Anna, Don Giovanni*, Sarasota Opera; *Pamina, The Magic Flute*, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis



Emily Pulley

Mezzo-Soprano
Augusta Tabor, The Ballad of Baby Doe
Previously at CCO: *Carmen, Carmen* (2017); Julie LaVerne, *Show Boat* (2013); *Beatrice, Three Decembers* (2010); *Susannah Polk, Susannah* (2008)
Recently: Madeline Mitchell, *Three Decembers*, Eugene Opera; Sam Clay, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* (Workshop), The Metropolitan Opera; Kate Heller, *touch* (World Premiere), Opera Birmingham; Beryl Bennett, *The Cook-Off* (World Premiere), Nashville Opera



Marcia Ragonetti

Mezzo-Soprano
Maria Callas, Master Class (July 31, 7:30pm)
Previously at CCO: *Ottavia, The Coronation of Poppea* (2006); Second Lady, *The Magic Flute* (2002); Touring Artist, *How the West Was Sung* (2000)
Recently: Mrs. Lovett, *Sweeney Todd*, Colorado Springs Chorale; Narrator, *Il trovatore* in Concert, Opera Colorado; *Augusta Tabor, The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Loveland Opera Theatre; *Zita, Gianni Schicchi*, Boulder Opera Company



Jeremy Reger

Head of Music
Previously at CCO: Assistant Conductor, *The Knock* (2025), *Street Scene* (2024), *Kiss Me, Kate* (2023), *The Light in the Piazza* (2022)
Recently: Co-chair, Voice + Opera/Associate Professor of Vocal Coaching, University of Colorado Boulder College of Music; Music Staff, Virginia Opera; Opera Steamboat; Eugene Opera; Hawaii Opera Theater; Mill City Opera; Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra; Minnesota Opera

* CCO Debut
+ Former Studio Artist
^ Former Apprentice Artist

Company Profiles



Lynly A. Saunders

Costume Designer, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*
Previously at CCO: Costume Designer, *The Barber of Seville* (2025)
Recently: Costume Designer, *Treemonisha*, Washington National Opera; *Dido and Aeneas*, Opera Lafayette; *The Rake's Progress*, The Glimmerglass Festival; *Silent Night*, Wolf Trap Opera; *The Barber of Seville*, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; *Così fan tutte*, Wolf Trap Opera



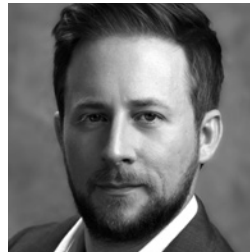
Ashraf Sewailam

Bass-Baritone
Dr. Bartolo, *The Marriage of Figaro*; **William Jennings Bryan**, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*
Previously at CCO: **Dr. Bartolo**, *The Barber of Seville* (2025); *The Speaker*, *The Magic Flute* (2018); *Balthazar*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (2016); Director, *Othello* (2023)
Recently: **Dr. Bartolo**, *The Barber of Seville*, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Des Moines Metro Opera, Seattle Opera, Opera San Antonio; **Samaan**, *Sindbad: The Omani Sailor*, Royal Opera House Muscat/ Múpa Budapest; Commendatore, *Don Giovanni*, Madison Opera



Andrew Simpson + ^

Bass-Baritone
Figaro, *The Marriage of Figaro* (July 24)
Previously at CCO: Soloist, Theatre of Dreams Gala (2026); **Frank**, *Die Fledermaus* (2022); **Count Ceprano**, *Rigoletto* (2021)
Recently: **Sam**, *Trouble in Tahiti*, Florida Grand Opera; **First Soldier**, *Salome*, Dallas Symphony Orchestra; **Angelotti**, *Tosca*, Virginia Opera



Brian Skoog^

Tenor
Chester A. Arthur/Stage Doorman/Old Silver Miner, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*
Previously at CCO: **Tamino**, *The Magic Flute* (2018 Young Artist Matinee); **Don Curzio**, *The Marriage of Figaro* (2014); **Larry/Matt**, *The Face on the Barroom Floor* (2014)
Recently: **Narraboth**, *Salome*, West Bay Opera, CA; **Ferrando**, *Così fan tutte*, Salt Creek Chamber Orchestra, IL; Tenor Soloist, *Beethoven's Ninth Symphony*, Toledo Symphony Orchestra



Nora Marlow Smith

Revival Scenic Designer, *The Marriage of Figaro*
Previously at CCO: Associate Set Designer, *The Barber of Seville* (2025)
Recently: Set Designer, *Annie*, Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre, MO; *Disaster!*, *Waitress*, *Rent*, *Pipeline*, Omaha Community Playhouse; *Once on This Island*, *The Mountaintop*, The Black Theatre Troupe of Upstate New York; *Sweeney Todd*, *Urinetown*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, Proctor's Collaborative School of the Arts, NY; Costume Designer, *The Onion: A New Opera*, Huntington Theatre



Lorna Stephens*

Assistant Stage Manager, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, *Master Class*
Recently: Assistant Stage Manager, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, The Florentine Opera; *Don Giovanni*, The Florentine Opera; *The Flying Dutchman*, Des Moines Metro Opera



Luke Sutliff

Baritone
Count Almaviva, *The Marriage of Figaro*
Previously at CCO: **Figaro**, *The Barber of Seville* (2025); Soloist, *CCO in Concert* (2025)
Recently: **Figaro**, *The Barber of Seville*, Canadian Opera Company; **Silvio**, *Pagliacci*, Lyric Opera of Chicago; **Count Almaviva**, *The Marriage of Figaro*, The Atlanta Opera; **Wolfram Von Eschenbach**, *Tannhäuser*, Houston Grand Opera; **Belcore**, *The Elixir of Love*, Santa Fe Opera; 2025 Winner, Baritone, The Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition



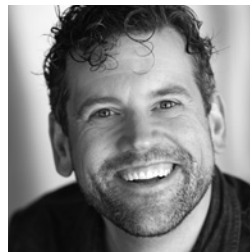
David Radamés Toro

Director, *The Marriage of Figaro*
Previously at CCO: Assistant Director, *Il trovatore* (2018)
Recently: Director, *Tosca*, The Florentine Opera; **Zorro**, Arizona Opera; *Falstaff*, Portland Opera; **Zorro**, Opera San José; *Opera Outdoors: Ópera al Aire Libre 2024*, Opera Omaha; *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, Austin Opera; *The Shining*, Opera Colorado



Tyler Tucker

Director of Choruses & Assistant Conductor, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*;
Conductor, *The Marriage of Figaro* (July 24)
Previously at CCO: Conductor and Pianist Fellow (2025)
Recently: Music Director & Conductor, *All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*, Tri-Cities Opera, NY; Assistant Conductor, *Rigoletto*, Tri-Cities Opera; Assistant Professor (Vocal Coach), School of Music, The University of Oklahoma



Andrew Wilkowske

Baritone
Figaro, *The Marriage of Figaro*
Previously at CCO: **Dr. Bartolo**, *The Barber of Seville* (Training Artist Matinee, 2025)
Recently: **Dr. Bartolo**, *The Barber of Seville*, Minnesota Opera; **Don Alfonso**, *Così fan tutte*, Madison Opera; *All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*, Asolo Repertory Theatre, FL; **Baron de Pictordu**, *Cinderella*, Opera Montana; **VOXSPEX**, Opera Reading Project; **Gary**, *Ofrenda*, Minneapolis Center for the Performing Arts

Developing Artists

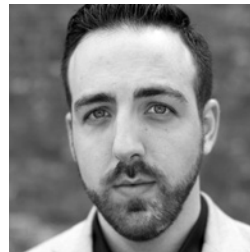
Developing Artists represent the most experienced tier of singers in the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program, engaged to perform or cover leading and supporting roles in our mainstage productions. Their training serves as the bridge between their Apprentice Artist foundations and the launch of their professional careers.



Tori Tedeschi Adams*

Soprano

Susanna, *The Marriage of Figaro* (July 24); Sarah, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*; **Soloist**, *CCO in Concert*
Recently: Iris (cover), *Innocence*, The Metropolitan Opera; Elva Heaster Shue, *Everlasting Faint* (World Premiere), Madison Opera; Susanna, *Le nozze di Figaro*, Opera Las Vegas



Matthew Cossack^

Baritone

Count Almaviva, *The Marriage of Figaro* (July 24); **Soloist**, *CCO in Concert*
Previously at CCO: Sonora, *The Girl of the Golden West* (2024); General Harrison Howell, *Kiss Me Kate* (2023); Count Capulet, *Romeo & Juliet* (2023)
Recently: Figaro, *The Barber of the Cape* (World Premiere), Opera in the Pines; Marcello, *La bohème*, Opera Naples; Dr. Malatesta, *Don Pasquale*, Opera Naples



Jamila Drecker-Waxman+

Soprano

Countess Almaviva, *The Marriage of Figaro* (July 24); **Soloist**, *CCO in Concert*
Previously at CCO: Soprano #2, *The Knock* (2025); Berta, *The Barber of Seville* (2025 Training Artists Matinee); Isabel, *The Pirates of Penzance* (2024 Training Artists Matinee)
Recently: Zerlina, *Don Giovanni*, The Florentine Opera; Elle, *La voix humaine*, Modernized Opera Initiative, Brooklyn, NY; Adina, *The Elixir of Love*, The Florentine Opera



Quinn Middleman+

Mezzo-Soprano

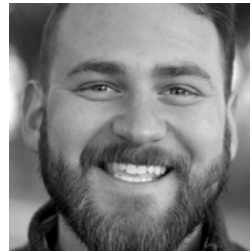
Soloist, *CCO in Concert*
Previously at CCO: Entertainer, *The Burning Fiery Furnace* (2017); Dorabella (cover), *Così fan tutte* (2017)
Recently: Eldest Daughter, *Trusted*, Chicago Opera Theater; Mother/Witch, *Hansel and Gretel*, Opera Montana; Berta, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Annapolis Opera



Justin Ramm-Damron+

Bass-Baritone

Dr. Bartolo, *The Marriage of Figaro* (July 24); **Soloist**, *CCO in Concert*
Previously at CCO: Le Duc, *Romeo & Juliet* (2023)
Recently: Sparafucile, *Rigoletto*, Heartland Opera Theatre, MO; Leporello, *Don Giovanni*, Shreveport Opera; Colline, *La bohème*, Shreveport Opera



Patrick Starke^

Tenor

Don Basilio/Don Curzio, *The Marriage of Figaro* (July 24); **Soloist**, *CCO in Concert*
Previously at CCO: Frederic (cover), *The Pirates of Penzance* (2024 Training Artists Matinee); Harry, *The Girl of the Golden West* (2024)
Recently: Tonio, *Opera on Tour: The Daughter of the Regiment*, Boston Lyric Opera; Anthony, *Sweeney Todd*, Opera Idaho; Prologue/Peter Quint, *The Turn of the Screw*, Opera Roanoke

* CCO Debut

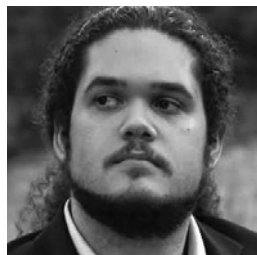
+ Former Studio Artist

^ Former Apprentice Artist

Apprentice Artists

BONFILS-STANTON FOUNDATION ARTISTS TRAINING PROGRAM

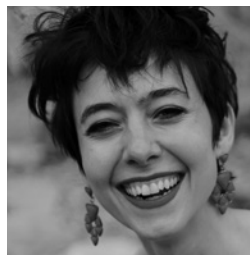
Apprentice Artists are typically early career singers with a blend of academic and professional performance experience. While performing in the chorus and taking on small roles in the mainstage ensemble, these artists understudy larger parts. Apprentice Artists often perform in Festival Extras, including Lunch & a Song recitals, CCO in Concert and St. James Chamber Series concerts.



Levi Adkins*

Tenor

Anthony "Tony" Candelino, *Master Class*;
Papa McCourt, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*;
Soloist, *CCO in Concert*
Recently: Blind, *Die Fledermaus*, Florida
Grand Opera; Pong, *Turandot*, Florida
Grand Opera; Uncle Percy (cover), *This
House* (World Premiere), Opera Theater
of Saint Louis



Sabina Balsamo*

Soprano

Sophie de Palma, *Master Class*
Recently: Soprano Soloist, Haydn's *Paukenmesse*,
Dayton Bach Society; Mamselle, *Sleepers Awake*
(Workshop), Cincinnati Opera & University of
Cincinnati College - Conservatory of Music;
Margery Mansfield, *Welcome to the Madness*,
Opera Steamboat



Nisha Patel Caiozzi+

Soprano

Barbarina, *The Marriage of Figaro*
Previously at CCO: Nightingale of Samarkand
(cover)/Ensemble, *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025);
Ensemble, *The Knock* (2025)
Recently: Soprano Young Artist, *SongStudio*
2026, Carnegie Hall; Cupidon, *Orphée aux enfers*,
Fisher Center at Bard College; Lily, *Shir Hashirim*,
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research



Amanda Densmoor*

Soprano

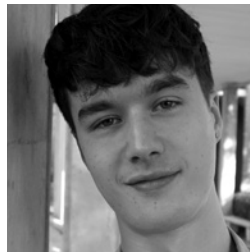
Elizabeth (Child), *The Ballad of Baby Doe*
Recently: Gretel, *Hansel and Gretel*, Shakespeare
Opera Theatre, VA; Girl/1st Trio Member, *Trouble
in Tahiti*, Annapolis Opera; Servilia, *La clemenza
di Tito*, Opera Steamboat



Nicholas Fahrenkrug*

Baritone

Denver Politician, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*
Recently: Danilo (cover), *The Merry Widow*,
Sarasota Opera; Guglielmo (cover), *Così fan
tutte*, Sarasota Opera; Philo/Second Geezer,
Lysistrata, or *The Nude Goddess*, Odyssey
Opera, Boston



Derek Hale+

Bass

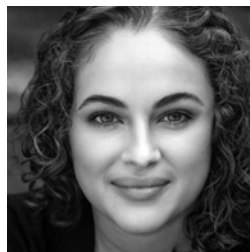
Jacob, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*; Soloist,
CCO in Concert
Previously at CCO: An Officer, *The Barber of
Seville* (2025)
Recently: Don Alfonso, *Così fan tutte*, Florida
State Opera; Nick Shadow, *The Rake's Progress*,
Florida State Opera; Balthazar, *Amahl and the
Night Visitors*, Fine Arts Series, The Episcopal
Church of the Nativity, AL



Olivia Heaner*

Soprano

Kate, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*
Recently: Darlene, *Family Ties: Take Me Down*
(Workshop), TellTale Opera Theatre, Baltimore;
Valeria, *Mayo Buckner: A Life Interrupted*, Seagle
Festival; Micaëla, *Carmen*, Seagle Festival



Francesca Herrera*

Soprano

Barbarina, *The Marriage of Figaro* (July 24);
Soloist, *CCO in Concert*
Recently: Susanna (cover), *The Marriage of
Figaro*, Wolf Trap Opera; Luisa, *Zorro*, Arizona
Opera; Clorinda, *La Cenerentola*, Arizona Opera

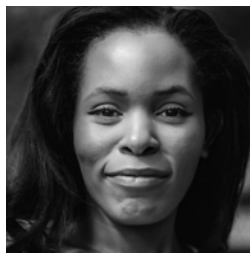


Tres Hunter*

Bass

Antonio, *The Marriage of Figaro*

Recently: Flemish Deputy, *Don Carlo*, The Dallas Opera; Baobab/Hunter, *The Little Prince*, The Dallas Opera; King/Businessman, *The Little Prince*, The Dallas Opera Outreach



Denique Isaac^

Soprano

Sharon Graham, *Master Class*; Soloist, CCO in Concert

Previously at CCO: Lady Lucile, *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025); Soprano #2 (cover), *The Knock* (2025)

Recently: Gertie Cummings, *Oklahoma!*, Pensacola Opera; Violetta (cover), *La traviata*, Pensacola Opera; Bea, *Three Decembers*, Pensacola Opera

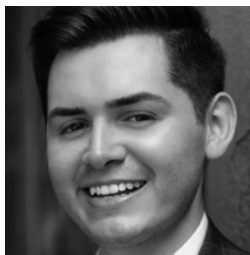


Tess Levine*

Soprano

Soloist, CCO in Concert

Recently: Tytania (cover), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; Nellie, *Summer and Smoke*, Boston Conservatory at Berklee; Tytania, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Boston Conservatory



Jeremy Luis Lopez+

Tenor

Clerk/Father Chappelle/Mayor of Leadville, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*; Soloist, CCO in Concert

Previously at CCO: Jester (cover)/Sir Luce, *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025)

Recently: Little Bat (cover), *Susannah*, Sarasota Opera; Tebaldo (cover), *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, Teatro Nuovo, NY; Camille de Rosillon, *Die lustige Witwe*, Moores Opera Center, University of Houston



Jordan McCready*

Mezzo-Soprano

Cherubino, *The Marriage of Figaro* (July 24)

Recently: Kate Pinkerton, *Madama Butterfly*, Opera Colorado; Flora, *La traviata*, Opera Colorado; Stéphanie, *Romeo & Juliet*, Opera Colorado Community Outreach



Madelin Morales+

Mezzo-Soprano

Emily, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*; Soloist, CCO in Concert

Previously at CCO: Princess No. 12/Ensemble, *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025); Chorus, *The Knock* (2025)

Recently: La Ciesca, *Gianni Schicchi*, Fisher Center at Bard College; Mezzo-Soprano Young Artist, SongStudio 2026, Carnegie Hall



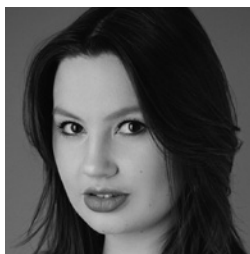
Ryan Nash^

Tenor

Sam, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

Previously at CCO: Prince Dauntless (cover)/1st Knight, *Once Upon a Mattress* (2025); Ensemble, *The Barber of Seville* (2025)

Recently: David Gassaway, *Everlasting Faint* (World Premiere), Madison Opera; Parpignol, *La bohème*, Madison Opera

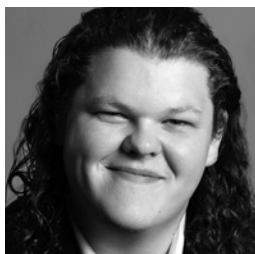


Nicole Plummer*

Mezzo-Soprano

Marcellina, *The Marriage of Figaro* (July 24)

Recently: Frau Reich, *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*, Maryland Opera Studio; Dorabella, *Così fan tutte*, Maryland Opera Studio; Ada, *Cold Mountain*, Seagle Festival



JJ Robinson*

Baritone

Barney, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

Recently: Marco, *Gianni Schicchi*, Knoxville Opera; Zuniga, *Carmen*, Knoxville Opera; Samuel, *The Pirates of Penzance*, Charlottesville Opera



Hallie Schmidt*

Soprano

Mary, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

Recently: Zerbinetta, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Pacific Northwest Opera; Rose, *At the Statue of Venus*, Opera Colorado; Armida, *Rinaldo*, Pacific Northwest Opera

* CCO Debut

+ Former Studio Artist

^ Former Apprentice Artist

Apprentice Artists

BONFILS-STANTON FOUNDATION ARTISTS TRAINING PROGRAM



Cindy Dajeong Song[^]
Mezzo-Soprano
Effie, The Ballad of Baby Doe
Previously at CCO: *Lady H, Once Upon a Mattress* (2025); *Kate, The Pirates of Penzance* (2024); *Mrs. Jones* (cover), *Street Scene* (2024)
Recently: *Bradamante, Alcina*, University of Indiana Jacobs School of Music; *Ramiro, La finta giardiniera*, Jacobs School of Music



Russell Spence^{*}
Tenor
Bushy, The Ballad of Baby Doe
Recently: *Don Berlico, Le gare generose*, FIO MONDO Italia; *The Witch, Hansel and Gretel*, Miami Beach Classical Music Festival; *Orfeo, L'orfeo*, Miami Beach Classical Music Festival



Seth Walley^{*}
Baritone
Solo Dancer, The Ballad of Baby Doe
Recently: Baritone Soloist, *Winterreise*, Canyon Concert Ballet; *Dancaïro, Carmen*, Opera Fort Collins; *Count Almaviva* (cover), *Le nozze di Figaro*, Opéra des Landes

* CCO Debut
+ Former Studio Artist
[^] Former Apprentice Artist

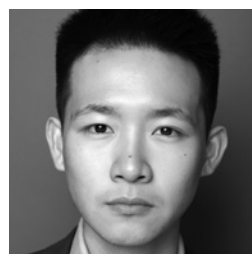
Studio Artists

BONFILS-STANTON FOUNDATION ARTISTS TRAINING PROGRAM

Studio Artists are emerging singers taking the first steps into their professional careers. They appear in ensemble and chorus roles throughout the festival, and may also understudy secondary roles. Beyond the main stage, Studio Artists present Short Works, a festival extra featuring scenes from opera and musical theater.



Lily Bogas^{*}
Mezzo-Soprano
Recently: *Ruggiero, Alcina*, San Francisco Conservatory of Music; *Dorothée, Cendrillon*, San Francisco Conservatory of Music; *Sonia* (cover), *The Dialogue of Memories* (World Premiere), Music of Remembrance

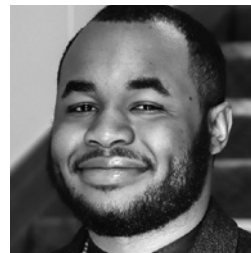


Benjamin Chen^{*}
Baritone
Recently: *Il Conte, Le nozze di Figaro*, Music on Site, Inc.; *Papageno* (cover), *The Magic Flute*, Janiec Opera Company; *Don Giovanni, Don Giovanni*, Temple Opera Theater, Temple University

**Jared Cohen***

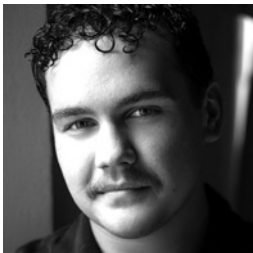
Tenor

Recently: Prunier, *La rondine*, Northwestern Opera Theater, Northwestern University; El Remendado, *Carmen*, Northwestern Opera Theater; Frederic, *The Pirates of Penzance*, The Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company of Chicago

**John Solomon Collins***

Bass-Baritone

Recently: Putnam, *If I Were You*, Maryland Opera Studio, University of Maryland; Nardo, *La finta giardiniera*, Maryland Opera Studio; Morales, *Carmen*, Washington Opera Society

**Joshua Cominsky***

Baritone

Recently: Father, *Hansel and Gretel*, Oklahoma State University Opera; Gianni Schicchi, *Gianni Schicchi*, Oklahoma Opera and Music Theatre Company, Oklahoma City University; Horace Tabor, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Oklahoma Opera and Music Theatre Company

**Nicholas Cravens***

Tenor

Recently: Nemorino, *L'elisir d'amore*, Utah Valley Operafest; Gastone de Letorières/Alfredo (cover), *La traviata*, Opera Idaho; Tybalt, *Roméo et Juliette*, Opera Idaho

**James Eagle***

Bass

Recently: Markheim, *Markheim*, Moores Opera Center, University of Houston; Albert, *Hobson's Choice* (World Premiere), Moores Opera Center; Don Magnifico, *La Cenerentola*, Michigan State University Opera Theatre

**Sidney Grimm***

Soprano

Recently: Valeria, *Mayo Buckner: A Life Interrupted*, Seagle Festival; Gretel, *Hänsel und Gretel*, Eklund Opera Program, University of Colorado Boulder; Littler Daughter, *Proving Up*, Eklund Opera Program

**Olivia Howe***

Soprano

Recently: Cunégonde, *Candide*, University of British Columbia (UBC) Opera; Queen of the Night, *Die Zauberflöte*, UBC Opera; Despina (cover), *Così fan tutte*, Aspen Music Festival and School

**Will Jones***

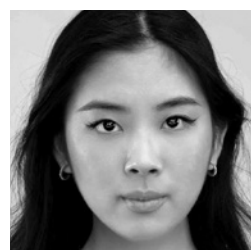
Baritone

Recently: Ricardo/Mr. Novak (cover), *A Nation of Others* (World Premiere), UK Opera Theatre, University of Kentucky; Father, *Hansel and Gretel*, UK Opera Theatre; Count Almaviva, *The Marriage of Figaro*, UK Opera Theatre

**Akshaya Lakshmi***

Soprano

Recently: Noémie, *Cendrillon*, San Francisco Conservatory of Music; Fiordiligi, *Così fan tutte*, No Strings Theatre, Toronto, CA; Mabel, *The Pirates of Penzance*, Stafford Opera Troupe, Virginia

**Kanade Motomura***

Mezzo-Soprano

Recently: Meg Page, *Falstaff*, Shepherd School of Music, Rice University; Ruggiero, *Alcina*, Shepherd School of Music; Hansel, *Hansel and Gretel*, Tri-Cities Opera (upcoming)

Studio Artists

BONFILS-STANTON FOUNDATION ARTISTS TRAINING PROGRAM



Barbie Noyes*

Pianist Fellow; Supertitles, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*
Recently: Pianist, Coach, *Le nozze di Figaro*, Music on Site, Inc.; Pianist, *The Phenomenal Cage* (World Premiere), Boulder Opera; *Proving Up*, Eklund Opera Program, University of Colorado Boulder



Oluwagbemiga David Oluwo*

Bass-Baritone
Recently: King Midas, *The Alchemists*, Annapolis Opera/Maryland Opera Studio, University of Maryland; Bartolo, *Le nozze di Figaro*, Music on Site, Inc.; Principal, *Paul's Case*, Opera Maine



Nuria Shin*

Soprano
Recently: Frau Fluth, *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*, Maryland Opera Studio, University of Maryland; Fiordiligi, *Così fan tutte*, Maryland Opera Studio; Florencia (cover), *Florencia en el Amazonas*, Maryland Opera Studio



Carmen Voskuhl*

Mezzo-Soprano
Recently: Bradamante, *Alcina*, San Francisco Conservatory of Music; Prince Charmant, *Cendrillon*, SFCM Opera; Old Lady, *Candide*, SFCM Opera; Ensemble, *Harvey Milk Reimagined*, Opera Parallèle



Brian Wacker*

Bass-Baritone
Recently: Colline, *La bohème*, Janiec Opera Company, Brevard Music Center; Doctor Grenvil, *La traviata*, Janiec Opera Company; Pangloss, *Candide*, Oberlin Opera Theater



Lily Witemeyer*

Pianist Fellow; Supertitles, *The Marriage of Figaro*, CCO in Concert
Recently: Coach & Rehearsal Pianist, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, University of Tennessee Opera Theatre; Children's Chorus Director, *Carmen*, Knoxville Opera; Rehearsal & Orchestra Pianist, *Cendrillon*, Janiec Opera Company, Brevard Music Center

* CCO Debut



LEFT: *THE BARBER OF SEVILLE*, 2025. RIGHT: *ONCE UPON A MATTRESS*, 2025. PHOTOS BY AMANDA TIPTON.

Festival Orchestra

Special thanks to Carole Yaley for a generous donation supporting the CCO Orchestra

VIOLIN

Byron A. Hitchcock, *concertmaster*
Angela Dombrowski, *acting assistant concertmaster*
Elizabeth Derham, *principal second violin*
Chris Jusell, *assistant principal second violin*
Jackson Bailey
Mary Evans
Nina Fronjian
Margaret Gutierrez
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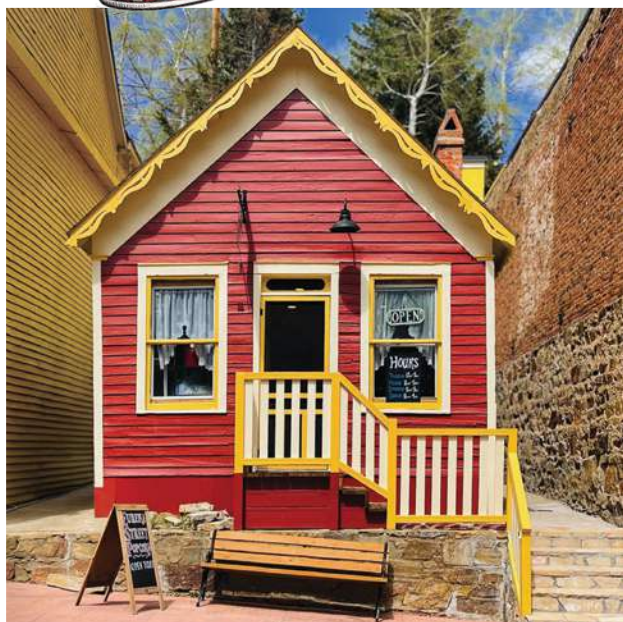
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° *The Marriage of Figaro*

+ *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

^ *Master Class*

* *CCO in Concert*

2026 Theatre of Dreams Gala



Celebrating Colorado's Legacy

ON APRIL 10, 2026, Central City Opera brought the grandeur of Colorado's Gilded Age to the Denver Art Museum for the Theatre of Dreams Gala—and the evening made history. Thanks to the generosity of our guests and the leadership of Co-Chairs Erin Nichols and Johnny Cannon, this year's gala raised more money than any CCO gala has ever raised before.

The celebration was made possible by our Presenting Sponsors Sanctuary Wealth Advisors, Marty & Suzie Erzinger, the Max & Erin Nichols Family Foundation and the generosity of all of our Gala sponsors.

Guests arrived in silver and gold, paying homage to Colorado's mining heritage and the state's 150th anniversary—the inspiration behind the evening's theme. No one was more deserving of the evening's spotlight than honorees Sonny and Pam Wiegand. Pam has been a dedicated Guild member since 1976 and chaired the L'Esprit de Noël Tour in the 1980s, while Sonny joined the CCO Board of Directors in 2016 and became Co-Chair in 2023. Together, they have built a

legacy defined by leadership, generosity and steadfast commitment to our mission.

On stage, soprano Kaileigh Riess and a remarkable quartet—Javier Abreu, tenor; Michael Hoffman, tenor; Andrew Garland, baritone; and Andrew Simpson, bass-baritone—delivered a memorable performance. The evening's musical program was created and led by CCO Head of Music Jeremy Reger at the piano, who took the audience on a surprising journey through opera, barbershop and musical theater, all woven together by threads of Colorado history. Did you know that "Oh Danny Boy" was composed in Ouray? Or that *La traviata* was the very first opera performed at Leadville's Tabor Opera House? The program delighted and educated in equal measure.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Co-Chairs Erin Nichols and Johnny Cannon, our dedicated gala committee and every guest who made the evening so memorable. You helped write a new chapter in CCO's story. ♦



2026 THEATRE OF DREAMS GALA. PHOTOS BY ANDREW FASSBENDER.

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The Central City Opera Guild:

SUPPORTING OPERA, COMMUNITY & CONNECTION SINCE 1974



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KATHY EICHENBERGER AND CCO.

FOR 52 YEARS, the Central City Opera Guild has played an essential role in supporting the artistry and impact of Central City Opera. Through dedicated volunteerism, creative fundraising and a shared passion for the arts, Guild members help bring each season to life.

From beloved annual events to educational initiatives and the care of 28 historic properties that house artists and staff, the Guild's contributions extend far beyond the stage. Members also serve as ambassadors—welcoming new audiences and fostering a lasting appreciation for opera across generations. United by a love of music and meaningful service, the Guild continues to strengthen both the legacy and future of Central City Opera.

GUILD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

Kathy Eichenberger

Central City Opera: How long have you been a part of the Guild?

Kathy: I have been with the Central City Opera Guild since 2014. I received the CCO Teacher's Award in the late 1990s and later became a member.

CCO: Tell us about the Central City Opera Guild.

Kathy: When I think about the Central City Opera Guild, I think about the numerous events we host to support the Central City Opera productions. If you enjoy gardening, we plant flowers in the opera gardens. If you enjoy old homes, we maintain and restore 28 historic properties. If you enjoy committee work, we have an executive board and many committees.

CCO: What makes the Guild special?

Kathy: What always impresses me are the wonderful events that raise money. The other thing that impresses me is how friendly everyone is. At each event, I enjoy getting to know new people and connecting with old friends.

CCO: Why should others join the Central City Opera Guild?

Kathy: It is a wonderful opportunity to make new friends, enjoy amazing music, and find an avenue to volunteer your time in a meaningful way. There are so many different ways to share your talents.

Join the Central City Opera Guild ♦ centralcityopera.org/guild

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The following donors made gifts to support the activities of Central City Opera between April 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026.

While space limits this list to donors of \$100 or more on a yearly basis, every gift is important and truly appreciated. If your name is listed incorrectly or omitted, you have our sincere apologies. Please contact Central City Opera at 303-292-6500 to ensure correction.

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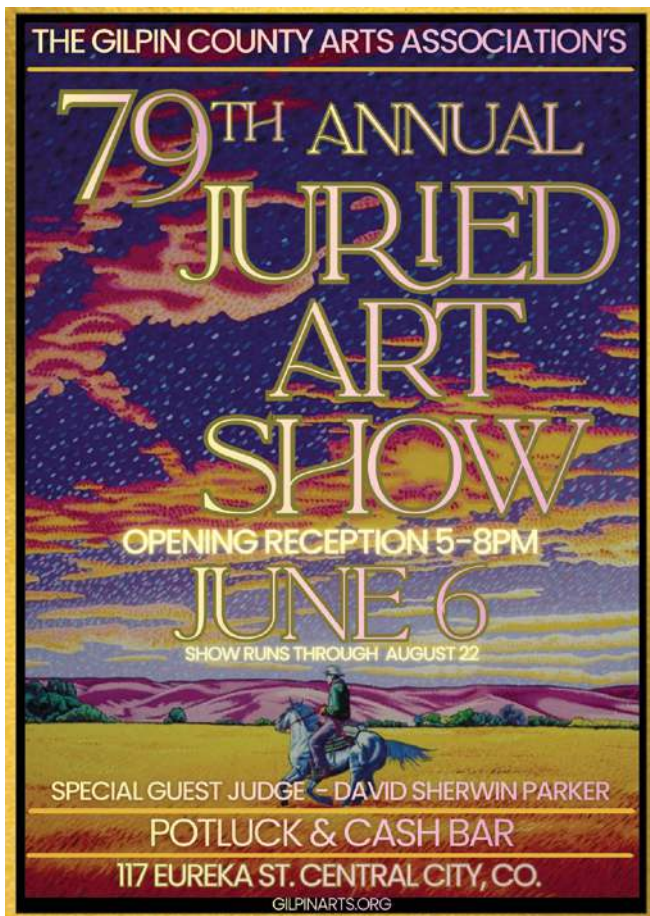
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If you are 70½ or older, you can give directly from your IRA to CCO—up to \$105,000 per year—without the distribution counting as taxable income, and it can satisfy your required minimum distribution.

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A Charitable Gift Annuity lets you make a gift to CCO and receive fixed income payments for life, plus an immediate tax deduction. A Charitable Remainder Trust works similarly, paying income to you or your beneficiaries for life or a set term before the remainder benefits CCO.

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Name CCO as a beneficiary on a retirement account, life insurance policy, or bank or brokerage account. The process is simple to arrange, requires no attorney, and is easy to update. Retirement accounts are often the most tax-smart asset to leave to charity: heavily taxed for heirs, but entirely tax-free when left to a nonprofit.

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To explore any of these giving options, contact Megan Quilliam, Director of Development,
at 720-693-8065 or mquilliam@centralcityopera.org

The CCO Endowment Fund

NURTURING OUR LEGACY INTO THE FUTURE

THANK YOU to our generous donors who have contributed to our thriving Endowment Fund! Your overwhelming support during the Voice Your Dreams Campaign, which concluded successfully in 2023, has established a foundation for sustainable artistic excellence. As we approach CCO’s centennial in 2032, your continued investment empowers us to expand our summer festival performances, enhance year-round programming, and ensure our musical legacy flourishes for generations to come. A gift to the Endowment Fund today shapes the soundtrack of our tomorrow.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Endowment Fund Board for their steadfast leadership and vision, to Innovest for their expert financial stewardship and especially to the Avenir Foundation for their transformative partnership. Together, you are securing CCO’s future for the next century and beyond. ♦



Endowment Fund

The following funds have been established to preserve the work of Central City Opera for future generations. These noteworthy gifts have an enduring impact, and the company is truly honored to be the recipient of such incredible investments.

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THE JANE HULTIN SOCIETY honors visionary supporters who include Central City Opera in their estate plans. These donors ensure the long-term artistic and financial stability of CCO—sustaining world-class opera, training tomorrow's performers, enriching Colorado communities and preserving our historic properties in Central City.

Planned gifts allow you to make a transformational impact without affecting your current finances. Many options offer significant tax advantages while supporting what you love most about opera.

Current Jane Hultin Society members receive special recognition and invitations to exclusive events. But more importantly, they have the satisfaction of knowing they're helping to secure opera's future in Central City.

Learn More To explore planned giving options and membership of the Jane Hultin Society, please visit our website or contact Megan Quilliam, Director of Development, at 720-693-8065 or mquilliam@centralcityopera.org. All inquiries are confidential, and there's no obligation—just a conversation.

The Jane Hultin Society acknowledges those who are leaving a legacy for Central City Opera through a planned gift. These donors, with their foresight and generosity, are ensuring the long-term artistic and financial stability of Central City Opera.

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Tributes



A TRIBUTE TO **Maureen Barker**

Former Board President

MAUREEN “MO” BARKER, beloved community leader, philanthropist and former President of the Central City Opera Board of Directors, passed unexpectedly on May 15, 2026. For generations, Mo’s family

has been deeply intertwined in the history of CCO. Her father, John “Jack” Kelly, served as a member and Chair of the Board of Directors and remained an Honorary Board member until his death. Her mother, Nina Odescalchi-Kelly, was likewise a passionate advocate for the company and its mission. Following Nina’s passing, the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation established the Nina Odescalchi-Kelly Family Matinee Endowment, which continues to underwrite Central City Opera’s family matinee performance each summer.

Mo’s connection to Central City Opera extended back even further through her grandmother, who worked closely alongside Anne Evans and Julie Penrose during the founding of Central City Opera in 1932. Hers was truly a multigenerational family commitment—one rooted in a belief in community, culture and the transformative power of the arts.

For decades, Mo and her family carried forward a cherished and distinctive tradition: an annual summer picnic in the Central City Cemetery, begun by her grandmother in the 1930s. What started as an intimate gathering evolved into a beloved gourmet picnic attended over the years by generations of family, friends, artists and supporters—a joyful celebration of history, community and enduring connection to the opera and the town it calls home. Fittingly, the 2026 picnic had already been scheduled for July 1, which would have marked Mo’s 70th birthday, a reflection of her lifelong commitment to honoring tradition, creating memories and sustaining the community she cared for so deeply.

As President of the Board, Mo led with intelligence, humor, compassion and fierce loyalty to the organization she championed. She was deeply respected for her leadership, kindness and the genuine care she extended to artists, staff, volunteers, patrons and friends alike. Mo leaves behind a legacy of service, compassion and dedication that will continue to shape the institutions and people whose lives she touched so deeply.

She will be profoundly missed by her family, friends and her entire Central City Opera family.



A TRIBUTE TO **Phoebe Smedley**

Honorary Board Member

PHOEBE ANN ELLIS SMEDLEY was, in every sense, a Central City Opera original—a beloved member of our Board of Directors and Honorary Board, a devoted champion of our work and a spirited

presence whose joy and generosity touched so many. Her love for opera began in childhood when Phoebe’s parents took her and her brother, Bob Ellis, on a trip from their home in Arlington Heights, Illinois, to hear opera in Chicago. That early experience planted something deep and lasting. Phoebe carried that love with her to Colorado, where she would make her home, raise her family and give generously to the arts community she adored.

Phoebe’s commitment to the arts in Denver was extraordinary in its breadth and depth. She served as

a docent at the Denver Art Museum for more than forty years. She was an early supporter of the David Taylor Dance Company and served on the board of the Colorado Dance Festival. And at the center of her support for the arts was Central City Opera, where Phoebe served on our Board before joining the Honorary Board—giving decades of her time and energy to this company and this place. Her love for CCO, and especially *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, was legendary.

Those of us who knew Phoebe felt the warmth of her generous spirit firsthand. Her deep love for Central City Opera was unwavering, and her memory will long be treasured by everyone in this community she held so dear.

Tributes



A TRIBUTE TO **Jim Hilger**

Honorary Board Member

JIM HILGER was the kind of supporter every arts organization hopes for, and few are lucky enough to find: steady, sincere and rooted in a genuine love of the art form. A devoted member of

Central City Opera's Honorary Board, a founding trustee for Opera Parallèle, and a longtime board member of San Francisco Opera, Jim gave of himself quietly and consistently over many years, alongside his beloved wife, Prudy, whose memory he carried with grace after her passing.

A graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where he distinguished himself as a student-athlete, Jim brought

the same combination of discipline, intellectual curiosity and humility to everything he did. He was not a man who sought recognition—he sought connection, and he found it here, in the music and the community of Central City Opera.

One work held a special place in Jim's heart: Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*—a piece of quiet, luminous faith that seemed to reflect his own inner life. Thoughtful, humane, and moved by stories of generosity and hope, Jim returned to that opera the way one returns to something true.

We are deeply grateful for Jim's loyalty and support, and we will miss him more than words can say.



A TRIBUTE TO **Bob Ellis**

Honorary Board Member

Bob Ellis was a visionary force in American opera, whose generosity, wisdom, and entrepreneurial spirit shaped the art form he loved across more than two decades of devoted service. As a member

of the Honorary Board at Central City Opera, and a longtime board member of San Francisco Opera, Bob—together with his late wife, Jane Bernstein—was an ardent supporter of new works, and a rare supporter who combined genuine aesthetic vision with the courage to back ambitious programming. Among the bold, innovative works he championed at San Francisco

Opera were the world premiere of John Adams' *Doctor Atomic* and Francesca Zambello's *American Ring* cycle. Bob also led the charge for using new technologies to increase accessibility to opera. He also served on Opera America's board since 2014.

Bob's love of opera was lifelong and ran in the family. He and his sister, Phoebe Smedley, shared a devotion to the art form that began in childhood. That early spark never left either of them. In San Francisco, that passion found its fullest expression, leaving a profound and lasting mark not only there but in the wider national opera community.



PHOTO BY AMANDA TIPTON.

Tributes IN MEMORY

Central City Opera acknowledges with gratitude the following gifts made in memory of the persons below. Gifts listed were received between April 1, 2025 and March 3, 2026.

In Memory of Nancy Jeanne Beck
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In Memory of Fritz Trask
Lisa Duffek

In Memory of Gene Young
Linda Young

CENTRAL CITY OPERA ALSO REMEMBERS:

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(1941 – 2026)
*Supporter, volunteer,
Voice Your Dreams
donor, Jane Hultin
Society Member*

Antonia Banducci
(1945 – 2024)
*Opera Scholar,
Supporter,
Jane Hultin
Society Member*

Lillian Connelly
(1945 – 2024)
*Supporter,
Jane Hultin
Society Member*

Jo Anne Foster
(1935 – 2025)
*Supporter,
Jane Hultin
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Scott Graves
(1981 – 2025)
*Husband
of CCO Staff
Member Margaret
Ozaki Graves*

Robert “Bob” Hemming
(1949 – 2026)
*Supporter, volunteer,
husband of
Nancy Hemming
(Guild President ‘23)*

William “Bill” Lewis
(1950 – 2025)
*Vocal Coach,
Accompanist*

Ted Peacock
(1941 – 2025)
*Supporter, husband
of Heidi Burose
(Guild President ‘25)*

Ruth Schoening
(1937 – 2025)
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Central City Opera acknowledges with gratitude the following gifts made in honor of the persons below.
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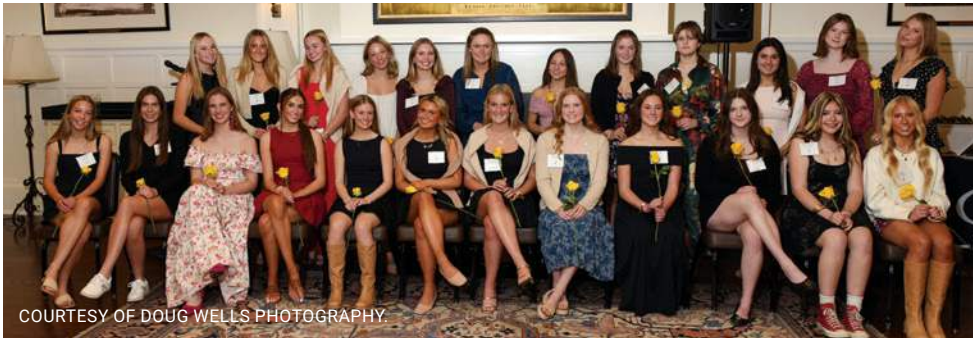
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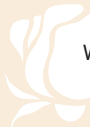


PHOTO BY AMANDA TIPTON.

2026 Yellow Rose Ball Flower Girls



THE FLOWER GIRL TRADITION dates back to 1932 when the historic Central City Opera House celebrated its grand re-opening. Two young women, Nancy Kountze and Elaine Oakes, became the inaugural Flower Girls, when they began distributing fragrant nosegay flowers to audience members during intermission at the first production in the newly renovated opera house. The tradition continues today, with young women from Colorado families being invited to serve as Central City Opera Flower Girls. Their formal presentation marks the festive beginning of each year's Central City Opera Festival season, connecting modern audiences to this cherished cultural heritage.



Are you a Flower Girl alumna or the family of a past Flower Girl?

We'd love to hear from you—we are actively working to build a lasting network for this program and its remarkable community of families. Reach out to Megan Quilliam, Director of Development, at 720-693-8065 or mquilliam@centralcityopera.org.

Miss Vivian Claire Blessing
Miss Elisabeth Grace Burkholder
Miss Kaitlin Shea Derwin
Miss Flora Louise Ilima Dollarhide
Miss Ariana Kristine Dvorak
Miss Elizabeth Kennedy Earley
Miss Anna Faye Engles
Miss Sophia Louise Freyer
Miss Brooke Elizabeth Griggy
Miss Abigail Martine Hollis
Miss Nora Abigail Lively
Miss Katherine Keehner Lynch
Miss Hazel Rush McDonnell
Miss Caroline Elizabeth McKinster
Miss Chloe Marie McKinster
Miss Keaton Dale Miller
Miss Morgan Ritchie Miller
Miss Dylan Marsico Milo
Miss Sloane Ella Moritz
Miss Margot Marie Oravez
Miss Leighton Helene O'Shaughnessy
Miss Ainsley Elizabeth Rippey
Miss Alexa Karina Schulte
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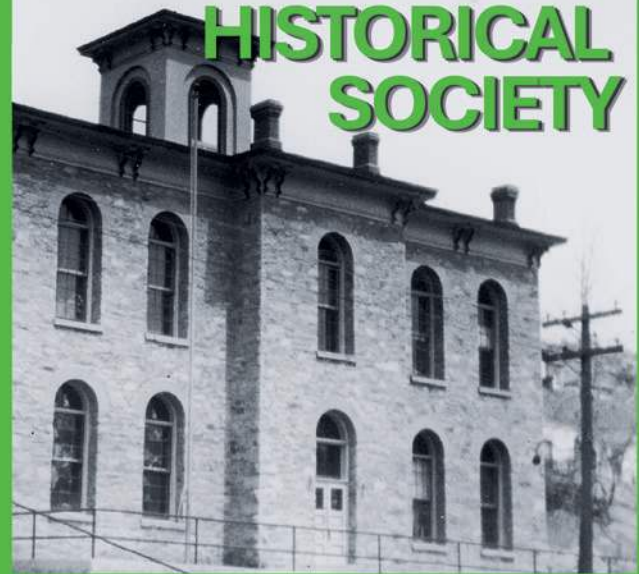


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Hazel Rush McDonnell
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PHOTOS BY AMANDA TIPTON.

A BELOVED HOLIDAY TRADITION



L'ESPRIT DE NOËL

HOLIDAY HOME TOUR

A Guild Fundraiser Benefiting Central City Opera

SAVE THE DATE

**FOR THE 50TH
ANNIVERSARY
OF L'ESPRIT
NOV 20-21, 2026**

IN NOVEMBER 2025, the Central City Opera Guild welcomed guests to the 49th annual L'Esprit de Noël, continuing a cherished tradition that brings together community, creativity and philanthropy in support of Central City Opera. Held in Denver's historic Hilltop neighborhood, the two-day tour invited visitors inside five beautifully curated homes, each transformed into a unique holiday experience.

Guests explored inspired interiors featuring imaginative floral design and elegant tablescapes, as talented designers and florists brought seasonal visions to life. Beyond a celebration of the holidays, the tour offered an opportunity

to gather, connect and experience the artistry that defines L'Esprit de Noël, all while raising vital support for Central City Opera's artistic and educational programs. This beloved event is made possible by the generosity of homeowners, volunteers, sponsors and supporters whose collective efforts ensure its continued success.

As the Guild looks ahead, plans are already underway to celebrate the 50th anniversary of L'Esprit de Noël in 2026, honoring a remarkable legacy while setting the stage for an exciting new chapter.

2025 L'ESPRIT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Co-Chairs: Margaret Baker & Stephen Edmonds

Additional Committee Members: Suzie Erzinger, Katie Grassby, Bonnie Neiheisel, Melissa Rick, Karen Ritz, Denise Sanderson

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Central City Opera Venue Information

LATE SEATING POLICY

Performances begin promptly at the advertised time. Due to the historic and intimate nature of our venue, we cannot guarantee seating for latecomers. We offer a live television stream of the performance for latecomers in the Teller House Terrace Room, until seating is appropriate, which may not be until after the first intermission.

VENUE & PERFORMANCE POLICIES

- Use of cellular phones, cameras, and recording devices is not permitted during performances.
- Beverages in covered cups or capped bottles are allowed inside the opera house.
- Please refrain from talking or making other audible disturbances during the performance.
- Unless the performance is canceled, no refunds are given for any reason.
- Casting is subject to change without notice.
- If you or another patron needs first aid, please contact the nearest usher.
- A limited number of assisted listening devices are available upon request, on a first-come, first-served basis.

RESTROOMS

Restrooms are located across the Opera House Patio (on the west side of the Opera House), or on the lower floor of the Teller House. An accessible restroom is located on the first floor of the Teller House in the Terrace Room.

GIFT SHOP

Be sure to stop by the Central City Opera Gift Shop and Boutique, located in the Teller House.

BOX OFFICE

Year-Round Box Office:

4875 Ward Road, Suite 100, Wheat Ridge, CO 80033.
Open 10am - 4pm, Monday through Friday.

Central City Box Office: Teller House First Floor, directly east of the Opera House. Open one hour before curtain on performance days.

Phone: 303-292-6700

Email: boxoffice@centralcityopera.org

Online Ticketing: centralcityopera.org

Credits & Acknowledgements

PROGRAM BOOK

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Central City Opera acknowledges that we gather and operate on the traditional lands of the Cheyenne, Ute and Očhéthi Šakówinj past, present, and future. As part of our commitment to Colorado history, we are dedicated to better stewarding of the land we inhabit.

Central City Opera is funded in part by the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). We thank the SCFD and the voters and taxpayers in the seven-county district for their support of scientific and cultural organizations.

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