

University of Maryland School of Music's Maryland Opera Studio Presents

NEW WORK READING: TWA

Justine F. Chen, composer
Jacqueline Goldfinger, librettist



February 17, 2023
GILDENHORN RECITAL HALL

AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

PROVING UP

Missy Mazzoli, composer
Royce Vavrek, librettist



February 18, 2023
DEKELBOUM CONCERT HALL

AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



**SCHOOL OF
MUSIC**



MARYLAND OPERA STUDIO

Craig Kier, *Director of Maryland Opera Studio*

Corinne Hayes, *Director of Acting*

Steven Bailey, *Principal Coach* | Ashley Pollard, *Manager*

Welcome to this weekend of New Works by the Maryland Opera Studio (MOS). We're pleased to share two consecutive evenings highlighting these important creative teams who wrote *TWA*, the annual MOS New Work Reading, and *Proving Up*. Commitment to new work has always been an integral part of our program's identity and I'm particularly interested in creating opportunities to foster new work that connects composers and librettists to our singers throughout the creative process and allows our audience to witness and take part in its creation. This past fall, Justine F. Chen and Jacqueline Goldfinger worked with the 1st year MOS singers, reading through the libretto with our creative team and exploring the work in its earliest stages. This created a foundation that allowed the roles to be written for our specific singers - the result of this creative process is this weekend's performance of *TWA*.

In addition, as we planned our season, it was clear we had an opportunity to explore one of today's most performed living composers, Missy Mazzoli, and present her remarkable opera, *Proving Up*.

Maryland Opera Studio's dedication to new work is our own response to the growing need to present works by increasingly more diverse, living composers. We're eager to create opportunities for composers and librettists to explore their creative voices, for our singers to create roles, and for our audiences to experience works for the first time. We're excited to present both these operas as we continue to introduce new compositional voices to our singers and audience!

—Craig Kier, Director of Maryland Opera Studio

MARYLAND OPERA STUDIO FACULTY AND STAFF

Jennifer Casey Cabot, *English Diction* ~ Corinne Hayes, *Director of Acting*

Mark Jaster, *Mime* ~ Naomi Jacobson, *Improvisation*

Craig Kier, *Director of Maryland Opera Studio, Conductor and Coach*

Steven Bailey, *Principal Coach* ~ David Lefkovich, *Mask* ~ Ashley Pollard, *Studio Manager*

Lori Şen~ *Vocal Pedagogy* ~ Kevin Short, *Italian Diction*

Rita Sloan, *Director of Collaborative Piano* ~ Gran Wilson, *French Diction*

Delores Ziegler, *German Diction*

UMD SCHOOL OF MUSIC VOICE FACULTY

Diba Alvi, *Diction* ~ Jennifer Casey Cabot, *Soprano*

Jason Max Ferdinand, *Director of Choirs* ~ Kevin Short, *Bass-Baritone*

Gran Wilson, *Tenor (Division Coordinator)* ~ Delores Ziegler, *Mezzo-Soprano*

University of Maryland School of Music Presents

NEW WORK READING: TWA

Music by Justine F. Chen

Libretto by Jacqueline Goldfinger

February 17, 2023
Gildenhorn Recital Hall

CAST

Younger Sister (Act I); Parent B (Act II) Valérie Filloux
Butcher (Act I); Older Sister (Act II) Claire Iverson
Older Sister (Act I); Parent A (Act II) Catherine Moss
Seamstress (Act I); Younger Sister (Act II) Olivia O'Brien
Goblin (Act I); Internet Troll (Act II) Jonas Rimkunas
Goblin (Act I); Internet Troll (Act II) Anthony Anderson
Goblin (Act I); Internet Troll (Act II) Louis Cleare

Musical Direction: Guzal Isametdinova, Steven Bailey

Stage Direction: Corinne Hayes

Assistant Director: Jessica Harika

Program is approximately 2 hours

*Upon a morning fair an clear, She cried upon her sister dear:
 'O sister, come to yon sea stran, An see our father's ships come to lan.'
 She's taen her by the milk-white han, An led her down to yon sea stran.
 The younges[t] stood upon a stane, The eldest came an threw her in.*

-Excerpt from "The Twa Sisters,"
The English and Scottish Popular Ballads,
 Collected by F.J. Child, 1882

"The Twa Sisters" (The Two Sisters) is mid 17th century murder ballad that tells the story of a girl drowned by her sister who is motivated by jealousy. The murdered sister's death is revealed when a harp made from the dead sister's bones sings of her death, during her murderer's wedding.

While the details of these stories differ, the moral is always the same: Beware of Jealousy, for it will ruin your life and the lives of those you love. There are at least 96 English language, and 125 Swedish language versions of the tune spanning hundreds of years.

When Justine was told this story by a dear friend and classics scholar a decade ago, she thought it would make a fascinating opera. For many years, she struggled to find a way to tackle this story; originally, she also wanted to marry it somehow to Christina Rossetti's two-sister poem, "Goblin Market." It was not until she met Jacqueline that they figured out together how to adapt "The Twa Sisters" for the stage.

We use the Scottish word, *Twa* (Two), as the title of the opera to pay homage to the title of the originating folk song. This title also underscores our exploration of duality within the characters and their societies. In addition, *Twa* reflects the structure of the piece; Act I is a retelling of the original ballad and Act II is an adaptation of the story set today.

When we began writing and composing Act I, we embraced the shifts in storytelling which naturally occur when adapting from one form into another. In this case, adapting folk music into opera. For example, both opera and folk music rely on repetition in music and language. However, a key difference between the forms is that folk songs repeat straightforward language to tell a story in very broad strokes. In contrast, opera's language is expansive, the music is epic, and its longer form allows for more nuanced storytelling. In practice, this means that in Act I we keep the same setting (fairytale times) and characters (the Sisters, trolls and villagers) but elaborate on the story to create a more meaningful relationship between the two Sisters and distinct minor characters. By the end of Act I, we have adapted the entire song.

In Act II, we reimagined the murder ballad for our own time. We set our story in New York City in the near future. The two Sisters are successful career women who love one another. In our version, the trolls they face are internet trolls. The villagers are blogs, news sites and social media networks. Our Sisters create a popular Virtual Reality game which the trolls and villagers love. But then jealousy rears its ugly head and the Sisters must decide whether or not to tear one another apart in order to win society's approval. Will they capitulate? If so, what does winning cultural approval look like today? If not, how will they change the age-old narrative that jealousy ruins us all? Will the "*eldest came an threw her in*" the virtual river?

We hope that you fall as deeply in love with the Sisters as we did while writing the opera. Their passion, hopes, dreams, tribulations and deeply flawed human-ness speak as directly to us today as it did to audiences over 300 years ago.

Welcome to the enchanted forest, downtown Manhattan, the dusty village Church, and TikTok.

Welcome to *Twa*.

—Justine F. Chen & Jacqueline Goldfinger

Consider the troll: What image does this word conjure up for you? A great, bulbous giant? A mischievous, grinning imp? A trendy 90s toy with a shock of neon hair and a jewel in his belly? A disheveled silhouette, backlit by a glowing computer screen, scrabbling frantically at a keyboard?

The imagery of folklore, of fairy tale, of myth and legend has an undeniable, cross-cultural staying power. Quasi-human creatures - goblins, gremlins, the aforementioned trolls - become vessels for very human foibles: lust, gluttony, jealousy, cruelty. They allow us to siphon off impulses and behaviors that we find distasteful or even dangerous, our basest instincts made manifest outside of ourselves where we can safely ridicule, shun or even slay them. Thus, as heroes, we vanquish the unwelcome parts of ourselves.

The advent of the internet has birthed a new, particularly vile creature — the internet troll. Characterized primarily by stalking, bullying and harassment, the web acts as a cave of anonymity that shields them from consequence. Yet, these are not folkloric trolls, neatly divorced from what we prefer to see in humanity: they are real people wreaking havoc, with real victims and real consequences.

“Troll,” then, becomes a condemnation of their behavior. But to these human monsters who choose to embrace their darkest impulses, the word is a badge of honor. These are personalities who delight in vitriol – if you’ve spent any time on the internet, you already know the type.

With *TWA*, composer Justine F. Chen and librettist Jacqueline Goldfinger put the past and the present, fantasy and reality, into conversation with one another. As the fairytale goblins of Act I become the internet trolls of Act II, we’re left looking into a mirror - the reflection garish, twisted, but undeniably human.

—Corinne Hayes

University of Maryland School of Music Presents

PROVING UP

Music by Missy Mazzoli
Libretto by Royce Vavrek

February 18, 2023
Dekelboum Concert Hall

CAST

Miles Zegner Michael Butler
Mr. Johannes “PA” Zegner Henrique Carvalho
Mrs. Johannes “MA” Zegner Kira Neary
Littler Zegner Victoria McGrath
Taller Zegner Aleea Powell
The Sodbuster Craig Smith
Peter Zegner Lawrence Barasa

Conductor: Craig Kier

Stage Director: Helen Aberger

Musical Preparation: Pei-Hsuan Lin, Steven Bailey

Projection Design: Leo Grierson

Associate Projection Design: Mark Williams and Rashonda Lazar

Lighting Design: Mike Riggs

Program is approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes

Proving Up by Missy Mazzoli presented under license from G. Schirmer Inc.
and Associated Music Publishers, copyright owners.

VIOLIN I

Anna Luebke, *Concertmaster*
Jonathan Toomer

VIOLA

Brian Shoop

CELLO

Wesley Hornpetrie

BASS

Asa Dawson

FLUTE

Matthew Ober

CLARINET

Kyle Glasgow

BASSOON

Jimmy Ren

HORN

Josh Thompson

TRUMPET

Julia Tsuchiya-Mayhew

PERCUSSION

Don Johns

PIANO & HARPSICHORD

Pei-Hsuan Lin

HARP

Cambria Van de Vaarst

Somewhere in the plains of the young U.S. State of Nebraska, 1868

The Zegners – Ma, Pa and their two young sons Peter and Miles – have moved to Nebraska from the east coast following the Civil War, prompted by the passing of the U.S. Homestead Act, the lure of large parcels of land and a new prosperous life in the American West. As they face drought, famine and the loss of their two daughters, they cling to the American dream of “proving up” through land ownership.

The family tells of the official requirements needed to obtain the title to the homestead, the most elusive condition being the home must have a glass window. Johannes “Pa” Zegner, being in possession of the only glass window in the region, agrees to share it with his neighbors as a farmer’s act of generosity. Ma tends to Peter, her oldest son who has suffered an unfortunate accident.

Pa tells of rumors that an Inspector is on his way to hand out land titles, and convinces Ma to send their youngest Miles on a journey to lend the window out to their neighbors. He hopes to entice the inspector back to their land so he can finally claim ownership of their homestead.

The daughters sing from beyond the grave to reveal that Pa stole the window from the neighboring Yothers’ homestead after the family vanished without a trace. This disappearance is made even stranger since the Yothers had successfully obtained their land’s title only weeks earlier. Ma wakes at night to pray for rain and mourn the loss of her daughters. Miles secretly watches her and makes a startling discovery.

Miles begins his journey. The route is dangerous and difficult; he encounters a rainstorm that turns into a sudden blizzard. His horse, Nore, is blinded by the snow and throws Miles from her back. Miles passes out from pain and exhaustion.

Miles wakes to discover a dirty, disoriented sodbuster sitting next to him. The man holds out a copy of the Homestead Act and tells Miles that he needs the glass window to obtain his title. Miles hesitates but the man is insistent, and he eventually steals the window. Miles fights back and tries to stab the man. The man tells Miles that he knows the window doesn’t actually belong to him, that it was stolen by his father. Miles panics as he hears the malicious laughter of his dead sisters.

Ma and Pa are overjoyed as they see a figure in the distance, convinced that it is Miles returning home. Their joy turns to horror as they realize their mistake. The dead daughters return to their graves with new company. Ma and Peter are silenced as Pa stares at his own reflection in the window’s glass...

JUSTINE F. CHEN, composer, *TWA*, Native New Yorker composer/violinist Justine F. Chen's "propulsive, emotionally resonant" "lyrical, atmospheric... striking" music "balances despair and humor". Her latest opera *THE LIFE AND DEATH(S) OF ALAN TURING* was described as "inventive...revelatory" by the *Chicago Reader*. Her work has been performed and commissioned by New York City Opera, New York City Ballet, The Juilliard School, Banff Music Centre, The Crossing, New York Festival of Song, JACK Quartet, American Composers Orchestra, Chicago Opera Theater, New Juilliard Ensemble, Washington Ballet, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Taiwan's SPRINGAUTUMN Festival, American Lyric Theater, Chants Libres, Bowdoin Music Festival, Merola Opera and Tapestry Opera. Having grown up performing in productions of New York City Ballet as a child dancer, Dr. Chen enjoys collaboration immensely, and has worked on numerous theatrical productions, dance pieces, and animation. She has received prizes and grants from BMI, ASCAP, Jerome Fund for New Music, Frances Goelet Charitable Lead Trust and OPERA America. Her work has been presented at Hiroshima Animation Festival, the New York Expo, the Student Academy Awards, Anima Mundi (South America), New York City Opera's VOX Showcase of American Operas, HERE Arts Center, and on WQXR, WBAI, WNYC, WRTI and PBS.

Recent projects include a long-form oratorio *SHALLOW BREATH AND STEALTH* (for two-time Grammy Award winning choral phenomenon The Crossing), a short film opera *LETTER TO OUR CHILDREN* (Resonance Works, the Decameron Coalition, librettist Jacqueline Goldfinger), a chamber opera *SEVEN SISTERS* (librettist Stephanie Fleischmann) and a collaborative song cycle with WQXR and The Gothamist. She is a 2021-22 Artist Scholar at Manhattan School of Music. She is on the advisory board for American Lyric Theater's Opera Writers Diversity and Representation Initiative.

Chen earned her Doctor of Musical Arts in composition, and her MM, and BM in violin and composition at The Juilliard School- the first student in the history of Juilliard to be accepted for this double major. Dr. Chen is also the first Asian-American female composer to be performed by New York City Opera. Chen has trained in computer music at IRCAM, classical ballet at the School of American Ballet, Bharatanatyam, Hindustani voice and Carnatic voice. Her *SEVEN SISTERS* chamber opera will be workshopped April 2022 at the Manhattan School of Music. Her opera *THE LIFE AND DEATH(S) OF ALAN TURING*, is scheduled to receive its world premiere production in March 2023. A CD of *SHALLOW BREATH AND STEALTH* sung by The Crossing was released in November 2022.

For more information, please visit www.justinefchen.com.

JACQUELINE GOLDFINGER, librettist, *TWA*, (she/they) began their career as a dramaturg with a focus on education and new work. Their career evolved into Literary Management and Artistic Administration. As the Artistic Associate at La Jolla Playhouse, they helped develop *Jersey Boys*, *Dr. Zhivago*, and Aaron Sorkin's *The Farnsworth Invention* for Broadway. They are a Co-Founder & the Director of Creative Affairs for the Sledgehammer Series at Tripwire Harlot Press. Today, they are also a playwright, librettist and poet who works nationally and internationally on performative texts which interweave humor and heartbreak, speaking to our shared humanity while honoring the nuanced identities of each character. They are an Affiliated Artist at the BMI Lehman Engel Workshop, New Georges, The Claw and the National New Play Network. Their opera and choral libretti have been performed and broadcast around the world. Their new full-length opera, *Alice Tierney*, with Composer Dr. Melissa Dunphy won the Opera America Discovery Grant and the Schlichting Commission. In 2023, it will world premiere at Oberlin Opera and move to Opera Columbus. Their work has been produced at Yale, Decameron Opera Project, Resonance Works, San Diego Opera, La Jolla Playhouse's Without Walls Festival, BBC Radio 3 (UK), Voces8 (UK), St. Martin in the Fields (UK), Mendelssohn Choruses all over the U.S. and others. The filmed version of their short opera, *Letter to Our Children*, won Best Music Video at the Paris Shorts Film Awards and has been screened in film festivals around the world.

Their plays have won the Yale Drama Prize, Smith Prize, Generations Award and Barrymore Award. Their plays have been on The Kilroy's List. They've been a Finalist for the LAMBDA Literary Award, Henley Award and received a Special Citation from the McNally Award. Their plays have been produced by The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Contemporary American Theatre Festival, Court Theatre (New Zealand), École nationale de théâtre (Canada), Perseverance Theatre, Hangar Theatre, Seattle Public Theatre and others.

MISSY MAZZOLI, composer, *PROVING UP*, Recently deemed "one of the more consistently inventive, surprising composers now working in New York" (NY Times), "Brooklyn's post-millennial Mozart" (Time Out NY), and praised for her "apocalyptic imagination" (Alex Ross, The New Yorker), Missy Mazzoli has had her music performed by the Kronos Quartet, LA Opera, eighth blackbird, the BBC Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, Scottish Opera and many others. In 2018 she became, along with Jeanine Tesori, one of the first women to receive a main stage commission from the Metropolitan Opera, and was nominated for a Grammy award in the category of "Best Classical Composition". She is currently the Mead Composer-in-Residence at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and from 2012-2015 was Composer-in-Residence with Opera Philadelphia. Her 2018 opera *Proving Up*, created with longtime collaborator librettist Royce Vavrek and based on a short story by Karen Russell, is a surreal commentary on the American dream. It was commissioned and premiered by Washington National Opera, Opera Omaha and Miller Theatre, and was deemed "harrowing... a true opera for its time" by the Washington Post. Her 2016 opera *Breaking the Waves*, commissioned by Opera Philadelphia and Beth Morrison Projects, was called "one of the best 21st-century American operas yet" by Opera News. *Breaking the Waves* received its European premiere at the 2019 Edinburgh Festival; future performances are planned at LA Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and the Adelaide Festival. Her next opera, *The Listeners*, will premiere in 2021 at the Norwegian National Opera and Opera Philadelphia. In 2016, Missy and composer Ellen Reid founded Luna Lab, a mentorship program for young female composers created in partnership with the Kaufman Music Center. Her works are published by G. Schirmer. missymazzoli.com

ROYCE VAVREK, librettist, *PROVING UP*, the Canadian-born, Brooklyn-based librettist and lyricist received the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Music for his opera *Angel's Bone*, written with composer Du Yun. In addition to *Proving Up* (2018 world premiere, Washington National Opera), he has collaborated with composer Missy Mazzoli on *Song from the Uproar* (premiered by Beth Morrison Projects, subsequently seen nationwide) and *Breaking the Waves* (premiered by Opera Philadelphia, winner of 2017 Music Critics Association of North America's award for Best New Opera, subsequently presented in a new production at the 2019 Edinburgh International Festival). Vavrek and Mazzoli are currently developing a grand opera for Opera Philadelphia and the Norwegian National Opera, as well as an adaptation of George Saunders' novel *Lincoln in the Bardo* for The Metropolitan Opera. Vavrek has also collaborated with composers David T. Little (*JFK*, Fort Worth Opera world premiere, 2016; *Dog Days*, Peak Performances @ Montclair world premiere, 2012) and Ricky Ian Gordon (*27*, 2014 premiere, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis).

In 2014, **CRAIG KIER** joined the University of Maryland School of Music as the Director of the Maryland Opera Studio and in 2020, assumed the role of Artistic and Music Director of the Annapolis Opera. This season includes productions of Puccini's *La bohème*, Kurt Weill's *Lost in the Stars* and Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* with Annapolis Opera. He also leads productions of *La bohème*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up* with Maryland Opera Studio and returns to Brevard Music Center. Future seasons include debuts with Opera Columbus and Knoxville Opera. Last season, he led Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and John Musto's *Later the Same Evening* with the Maryland Opera Studio and *La cenerentola* and *Into the Woods* with Annapolis Opera. In the 2019–20 season, he led *Tosca* with Annapolis Opera, was scheduled to return to the Brevard Music Center to conduct their season opening concert and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, returned to Houston Ballet to lead gala performances and *The Nutcracker*, which he has done since 2011, and continued his association with the National Symphony Orchestra, assisting Gianandrea Noseda. In the 2018–19 season, he made his San Francisco Merola Opera Center debut, Indianapolis Opera debut and returned to Opera Birmingham and Houston Ballet. At the University of Maryland, he served as artistic director of the year-long Kurt Weill Festival, conducting performances of *The Road of Promise*, *Mahagonny Songspiel* and *Street Scene*. Recent season highlights include conducting debuts with Wolf Trap Opera leading Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, Brevard Opera Center leading *La cenerentola*, Anchorage Opera leading *Don Pasquale*, Arizona Opera leading *Madama Butterfly* and Opera Saratoga leading Verdi's *Falstaff*. From 2010–13, Kier was associate conductor under Patrick Summers at Houston Grand Opera. During his time with the company, he led dozens of performances including *Madama Butterfly*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Trial by Jury* and the world premiere of Huang Ruo's *Bound*.

CORINNE HAYES *TWA*: stage director, is a stage director and educator, and has recently been named Director of Acting for the Maryland Opera Studio at the University of Maryland; in spring 2023, she leads a staged reading of *TWA*, a new work by Justine F. Chen and Jacqueline Goldfinger, and a new production of *Don Giovanni* in collaboration with the UMD School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies. The 22-23 season continues with a company debut at Annapolis Opera (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and a return to Miami Music Festival (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*). In recent seasons, Hayes has created new productions for Miami Music Festival (*Le nozze di Figaro*, *La rondine*, *L'Orfeo*), Opera Mississippi (*Rigoletto*) and Winter Opera St. Louis (*Così fan tutte*). As an assistant and associate director, Hayes is honored to have worked with such notable artists as Francesca Zambello, Ken Cazan, James Darrah and the late Tito Capobianco; beyond the rehearsal hall, Hayes has presented courses and lectures at the University of Maryland, Temple University, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and Webster University. Hayes serves as Artistic Advisor for DC-based opera theater company IN Series, where she works closely with Artistic Director Timothy Nelson; with IN Series, Hayes conceived and directed a virtual production of Melissa Dunphy's *The Gonzales Cantata*, directed the world premiere of ZAVALA-ZAVALA, and served as Creative Producer on *Black Flute*, *BOHEME in the Heights*, and *OTHELLO/DESDEMONA*.

HELEN ABERGER *PROVING UP*: stage director, makes her Maryland Opera Studio debut with *Proving Up*. An active stage director and intimacy choreographer in the Maryland/DC area, she takes pride in building community through live performance. Aberger has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music from University of Miami's Frost School of Music. Her humble beginnings in opera included acting, dancing and playing oboe in the pit. Post-graduation and well into a career in arts administration, she became director of opera and theatre and most recently an intimacy professional for live theatre. By day, Aberger currently works as Development Operations Manager for Round House Theatre. Select directing credits include *Princess Ida* (Victorian Lyric Opera Company), *La bohème* (Fairfax Symphony) and *Die Zauberflöte* (Bel Cantanti Opera). Select intimacy choreographer credits include *The Tempest* (Round House Theatre), *Circle Mirror Transformation* and *Back of the Throat* (Silver Spring Stage) and *Bright Star* (Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre)

ANTHONY ANDERSON (Washington D.C.), *TWA*: *Goblin/Internet Troll*, baritone, is a first-year graduate student with the Maryland Opera Studio. Anderson joins after graduating with a BM in Voice Performance from the esteemed Oberlin Conservatory. In his time at Oberlin, he performed various roles with the Oberlin Opera Theater including Starvling from Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Guglielmo from Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and the title role in Henry Mollicone's *Emperor Norton*. Anderson made his young artist debut in recital with Cantate Chamber Singers group as its inaugurated Young Artist of Color in the Summer of 2021. Most recently, Anderson made his debut as Jim in Gershwin's *Porgy & Bess* with the Des Moines Metro Opera at their 50th Anniversary Opera Festival. Anderson currently studies voice under the direction of bass-baritone Kevin Short.

LAWRENCE BARASA (Nairobi, Kenya) *PROVING UP: Peter Zegner, tenor*, is the Performance Director of the Kenyan Classical Singers' Organisation. A tenor from Kenya, he developed his artistic profile as a member and Assistant Production Manager of The Kenyan Boys Choir. He has performed the roles of Spoletta in Astoria Music Festival and Eugene Opera's production of *Tosca*. He also appeared as Don Basilio and Don Curzio in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Astoria Music Festival in 2018, and as Hoffmann in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* and Don José in *La Tragedy de Carmen* at the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance. He also completed training at the Savannah Voice Festival 2019-2020 under the tutelage of Sherrill Milnes and Maria Zouaves. This spring, he will sing Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*. Barasa graduated from the University of Oregon with a Vocal Performance Degree under Dr. Karen Esquivel. He is currently a Graduate International Student in the University of Maryland Opera Studio studying under Professor Delores Ziegler.

MICHAEL BUTLER (Bowie, MD) *PROVING UP: Miles Zegner, tenor*, is a second year student of Kevin Short in the Maryland Opera Studio. He has performed with companies such as New York City Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera and Baltimore Opera. This past summer, Butler debuted the role of *Fenton* in Verdi's *Falstaff* in Aspen Opera Theater's production with Sir Bryn Terfel in the title role. Recent accolades include Second Place in the 2023 Carolyn-Bailey Argento Voice Competition, First Place in the 2020 Sue Götz Ross Memorial Voice Competition, First Place in the 2020 National Classical Singer Competition and Encouragement Award in the 2020 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (Capitol District). Butler will reprise the title role of Faust with Opera Baltimore this April. Next season, he will pursue an Artist Diploma in Opera Studies at The Julliard School.

HENRIQUE CARVALHO (São Paulo, Brazil) *PROVING UP: Mr. Zegner, baritone*, is a second-year student in the Maryland Opera Studio. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Voice Performance from the University of Maryland School of Music. Carvalho's most recent roles include Marcello with Maryland Opera Studio, the Sergeant in Annapolis Opera's *La bohème* (2022), the title role in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* at the Montefeltro Festival (2022), covering Joe Harland and Ronaldo Cabral in the Maryland Opera Studio's production of *Later the Same Evening* by John Musto (2022), Alan Turing in scenes from Justine F. Chen's *The Life and Death(s) of Alan Turing* with the Maryland Opera Studio (2022), Jake in the Annapolis Opera and Maryland Opera Studio's co-production of the New Work Reading: *Sunder* by Nailah Nombeko and Alicia Haymer (2021) and the title role in Thomas Pasatieri's *Signor Deluso* with the University of Maryland's student-run opera company OperaTerps (2020). Carvalho is a student of Kevin Short.

LOUIS CLEARE (Nassau, The Bahamas) *TWA: Goblin/Internet Troll, bass-baritone*, is a first year student in the Maryland Opera Studio. He is a graduate of Oakwood University where he received a BA in Music and also a graduate of the University of the Bahamas where he received his BS in Small Island Sustainability. In addition to his undergraduate studies, he has performed as a bass soloist with several choirs in South Africa, throughout the Bahamas and across the US, featuring works such as Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Magnificat*. He is a student of Kevin Short.

VALÉRIE FILLOUX (Redwood City, CA) *TWA: Younger Sister / Parent B, mezzo soprano*, is a first-year in the Maryland Opera Studio, studying with Delores Ziegler. She recently finished her undergraduate studies with professor Theresa Brancaccio at Northwestern University, earning a Bachelor of Music in Voice & Opera with program honors and a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies. She spent her summer at Aspen Music Festival, performing scenes from *Little Women* and *L'italiana in Algeri*, singing on several recitals and concerts, and devising and premiering a new work in collaboration with composer Gala Flagello as part of the Aspen Composition Project. Other recent performances include Zita in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* (Janiec Opera Company, Brevard Music Center), Hansel in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* (OPUS, Bienen School of Music), Mezzo-Soprano soloist in Vivaldi's *Gloria* (Trinity United Methodist Church) and Olga in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* (Russian Opera Workshop).

LEO GRIERSON (Ashland, OR) *PROVING UP: media designer*, is a first-year Media Design MFA. University of Maryland Credits include *As You Like it* (Assistant Media Design). Outside Credits include *Section 230* (HEREarts Center), *Cabin 12* (New American Theatre Festival), *The American Girl Cycle* (Oregon Fringe Festival) and *Oedipus* (Isolation Theatre Company). Grierson is also the Artistic Director of The Juvenilia Collection.

GUZAL ISAMETDINOVA (Uzbekistan) *TWA: pianist*, has cultivated her passion for music from a very early age. As a soloist, she appeared with the Chamber Orchestra of Uzbekistan. As a chamber musician, Isametdinova won the Lyric Chamber Competition in Florida with her group, Trio Fantasia, which led to their New York recital debut. She is also a prize recipient of competitions as a soloist and as a chamber partner held in the United States, Europe, Russia and Uzbekistan. She has participated in Masterclasses for Leon Fleisher, Jonathan Feldman, Warren Jones, Martin Katz and many more. Among her summer programs were Aspen Music Festival and Collaborative Piano Institute. Isametdinova's experience as a pianist ranges from baroque repertoire to contemporary music, including playing on an organ and harpsichord. Isametdinova is currently pursuing a Doctoral Degree at the University of Maryland under the guidance of Rita Sloan.

CLAIRE IVERSON (Baltimore, MD) *TWA: Butcher / Older Sister, soprano*, is a first-year student in the Maryland Opera Studio. She is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University and Peabody Conservatory, where she received a BA in International Studies and French Languages and Literature and a BM in Voice Performance. During her time at Peabody, Iverson sang the roles of The Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*), Jane Bennet (*Pride and Prejudice*, staged world premiere) and collaborated with the Peabody Voice Department and *Now Hear This!* to present Kaija Saariaho's opera *Émilie* (Émilie). Other recent operatic credits include Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with the Prague Summer Nights Festival in July 2022, and Suor Genovieffa in Music On Site's *Suor Angelica* (December 2019). She studies with Jennifer Casey Cabot.

PEI-HSUAN LIN (Taiwan) *PROVING UP: pianist*, has performed internationally as both a solo and collaborative pianist. A passionate recitalist, she has performed at Weill Recital Hall and Zenkel Hall at Carnegie Hall, Field Concert Hall, François-Bernier Concert Hall, Harris Concert Hall, Wheeler Opera House and Duomo di Todi. Lin was Selected to participate in Renée Fleming’s SongStudio at Carnegie Hall with mezzo Maire Therese Carmack in 2023. She was a Collaborative Piano Fellow at the Aspen Music Festival, Fall Island Vocal Arts Seminar. Lin received a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from the National Taiwan Normal University, duo Masters degrees in Piano Performance and Collaborative Piano and a Graduate Diploma in Vocal Accompanying from the Peabody Conservatory. She is currently in her second year at the University of Maryland, pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in Collaborative Piano. Her teachers include Rita Sloan, Craig Kier, Eileen Cornett, Alexander Shtarkman and Grace Chung.

VICTORIA MCGRATH (New York, NY) *PROVING UP: Littler Sister, soprano*, is a Master’s candidate at the Maryland Opera Studio, where she studies with Kevin Short. Her performance experience includes concert work, opera and new music. Recent engagements include singing Papagena with Washington Opera Society; performing as a semifinalist for the Camille Coloratura Awards; fundraising concerts for the Ukraine with Baltimore Musicales and Aquilon Music Festival in Oregon; and curating recitals for Easton Art Academy and the Columbus Citizens Foundation. She is an advocate for new music who has covered roles in operas such as Musto’s *Later the Same Evening* and Davies’ *Ourland*, performed scenes from Chen’s *The Life and Death(s) of Alan Turing* and premiered/ recorded Daniel Ficarri’s *Ave Maria*, which subsequently aired on Christ Cathedral’s radio program, “Music from the Tower.” She holds Bachelor’s degrees in Vocal Performance and History from Queens College, where she graduated *magna cum laude* with a full scholarship.

CATHERINE MOSS (Ann Arbor, MI) *TWA: Older Sister / Parent A, soprano*, is a first-year masters student in the Maryland Opera Studio. She has appeared on the operatic stage most recently as Norina (*Don Pasquale*), Josephine (*The H.M.S. Pinafore*) and Königin der Nacht (*Die Zauberflöte*). Moss has appeared as a young artist for the Taos Opera Institute and an apprentice artist with Opera NEO. In conjunction with her operatic performances, she has appeared as the soprano soloist for works such as Handel’s *Dixit Dominus* and Faure’s *Requiem*. Moss appeared internationally in concert in The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland’s concert series The American Dream performing “Glitter and be Gay” (*Candide*). She is the winner of the University of Michigan Friends of Opera Competition, performed as a finalist in the University of Michigan Concerto Competition (*Knoxville: Summer of 1915*) and a semi-finalist for the Camille Coloratura Awards. Moss is currently studying with Gran Wilson.

KIRA NEARY (New York City, NY) *PROVING UP: Mrs. Zegner, soprano*, is currently getting her master's degree at the Maryland Opera Studio, after having completed her undergraduate study at Northwestern University. Recent roles include Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* with Washington Opera Society, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* at Prague Summer Nights, Mimi in *La bohème*, Sara Turing in scenes from *The Life and Death(s) of Alan Turing*, Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte* with Maryland Opera Studio, La Musica in Northwestern University's online production of *L'Orfeo*, Mother in David T. Little's *Dog Days* and Theodora in Handel's *Theodora* with Northwestern University Opera Theater and Poppea in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* at Miami Music Festival. She also sang First Wren in a workshop of Justine F. Chen's *The Life and Death(s) of Alan Turing* with Chicago Opera Theater. This spring, she will sing Donna Elvira in Maryland Opera Studio's *Don Giovanni*. Neary is a student of Kevin Short.

OLIVIA O'BRIEN (Chapel Hill, NC), *TWA: Seamstress / Younger Sister, mezzo-soprano*, is currently a first-year student in the Maryland Opera Studio where she studies with Delores Ziegler. She graduated from Northwestern University, earning a B.M. in Voice & Opera with a minor in Music Criticism and a B.A. in Communication Studies. During her time at Northwestern, O'Brien was the continual recipient of the Dorothy Vetter Music Scholarship. O'Brien's recent roles include Arsamene in Handel's *Serse* with Chicago Summer Opera, Rachel in Jake Heggie's *If I Were You* with the Northwestern Opera Theater and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* with Atlantic Music Festival. O'Brien also appeared in a number of productions with Northwestern's Opera Projects for University Singers, such as *Hänsel und Gretel* (Getrud) and *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Cupid).

ALEEA POWELL (Baltimore, MD) *PROVING UP: Taller Sister, Soprano*, is a second-year student in Maryland Opera Studio. She is a graduate of The Juilliard School, where she earned her Bachelor's degree. During her undergraduate study, she was the recipient of the Cecille Weber, Hans J. Heinz, and Tatiana Troyanos Scholarship. Powell's engagements this season are Musetta in *La bohème* and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, both with the Maryland Opera Studio. Powell's recent opera scene roles include Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* (2022), Léontine in *L'amant Anonyme* (2022), Madama Cortese in *Il viaggio a Reims* (2022) and Joan Clark Justine F. Chen and David Simpatico's *The Life and Death(s) of Alan Turing* (2022). Powell has also been featured in works, such as Natalia Katyukova's *Liederabend* (2020), Blanche in *There's Blood Between Us*, excerpts from *Dialogue of the Carmelites* (2019) and Cleopatra in *Guilio Cesare* (2019). Powell is a student of Kevin Short.

MIKE RIGGS (Foscoe, NC) *PROVING UP: Lighting Designer*, a first year lighting MFA Candidate, Riggs is an aspiring teacher. After earning his B.A. at Vassar, Riggs lived and worked in New York City for 20 years. He has designed for A.R.T, Capital Rep, the Edinburgh Fringe, Hudson Valley Shakespeare, Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center, PS122, The Public, Stages Rep, Williamstown, Little Opera Theatre of New York, Opera Tampa and many others. He has made original dance works with Dance Exchange, Misnomer, Momix, ODC, Pearson/Widrig, Matthew Westerby Company and more.

JONAS RIMKUNAS (Gorham, ME), *TWA: Goblin/Internet Troll*, tenor, is a first year MOS student, and a recent graduate from The University of Southern Maine's Osher School of Music where he performed the role of Tamino in USM's production of *The Magic Flute*. Rimkunas performed in Opera Maine's *L'elisir d'amore* in 2021, *The Flying Dutchman* in 2022 and named the 2022 Ellen Chickering Young Artist. In June 2022 under the direction of Nicolas Dosman, Rimkunas shared the stage at Carnegie Hall with Met singers David Margulis, Allison Charberlan and Sidney Outlaw in an Opera Chorus concert presented by National Concerts. Rimkunas is currently studying with Gran Wilson.

CRAIG FRANCIS SMITH (Rochester, NY), *PROVING UP: The Sodbuster*, baritone, is a second-year student in the Maryland Opera Studio. Smith has performed with Annapolis Opera, the Janiec Opera Company at The Brevard Music Center and the award-winning Crane Opera Ensemble. Recent credits include Ronaldo Cabral in *Later the Same Evening*, Armoured Man/ First Priest in *Die Zauberflöte*, the title role in *Gianni Schicchi*, the title role in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the Duke of Verona in *Romeo et Juliette*, Ivan in *Die Fledermaus* and The Superintendent in Tom Cipullo's world premiere of *Mayo*. In the 2022-2023 season, Smith will be singing the roles of Schaunard in Puccini's *La bohème*, The Sodbuster in Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up* and Leporello in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Smith has received a Bachelor of Music degree from the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, where he studied with Dr. Colleen Skull. Smith is a student of Kevin Short.

Please Join Us For:

DON GIOVANNI

W.A. Mozart

APRIL 14, 19, 21, 23, 2023

KAY THEATRE

While fleeing the scene of his crime, the lascivious Don Giovanni commits an unimaginable murder. This depraved act unleashes hell itself in an opera that masterfully combines dark comedy with the darkest of acts. With themes that continue to resonate today, Mozart and Da Ponte create a world as troubling and complicated in our time as it was at its premiere. This opera will be performed in Italian with English supertitles.