

OPERA WESTERN RESERVE PRESENTS

A star-crossed union of Shakespeare's timeless play and Gounod's soaring opera

ROMEO + JULIET

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 7:30 PM

STAMBAUGH AUDITORIUM

operawesternreserve.org



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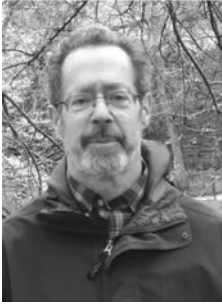
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FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

ELLIOT LEGOW



Welcome Back to live opera at Stambaugh Auditorium! It's been a long time since we have been able to sit together and enjoy the music, the story and the design that add up to opera, the ultimate artform.

We are still being careful as is all the world. Our audience and most of our orchestra is masked. Production Director Scott Skiba has reimagined Romeo and Juliet as partly a two-character reduction of Charles Gounod's opera and partly an acted production of William Shakespeare's play.

This is Scott's second season as our production director but he's still waiting for his debut with a fully staged, fully sung production. Last year his exciting 'Taste of Traviata' was produced without an audience and presented virtually. We're back to closer to normal this fall. Let's hope that in November 2022 when we reconvene we will be in full opera mode for Scott's production of Giacomo Puccini's La Bohème.

During our absence from the Stambaugh stage, we have presented virtual rebroadcasts of past operas and a live cabaret concert at the DeYor Performing Arts Center. One of our co-stars tonight, Jesús Daniel Hernández, was one of our performers that evening, too. We welcome Jesús back again tonight for his performance with OWR and we greet our Juliet, Sarah Joyce Cooper, for her Youngstown debut.

OWR also is revving up to reengage with schools and serve its concurrent mission to bring musical experiences and music education to schoolchildren in our area through the Young Artists Program. During the pandemic Opera Western Reserve has continued to receive very generous financial support from individual donors, corporate donors, foundations and government support, principally the Ohio Arts Council. We are extremely grateful that our mission and the quality of our productions continues to inspire support. We all recognize the importance of the arts to the quality of life in our community.

Holiday Events

Motown Christmas

Sunday, November 21 • 7:30 pm
DeYor Performing Arts Center

ELF: The Musical

December 3-5 & 10-12
The Youngstown Playhouse Main Stage

Ballet Western Reserve Presents, The Nutcracker

December 4 & 5
DeYor Performing Arts Center

TubaChristmas in the Valley

Sunday, December 5 • 3:30 pm
Stambaugh Auditorium

Mannheim Steamroller Christmas

Tuesday, December 7 • 7:30 pm
DeYor Performing Arts Center

YSU's Carols & Cocoa

Wednesday, December 8 • 7:00 pm
Stambaugh Auditorium

Jim Brickman's The Gift of Christmas with the Youngstown Symphony Orchestra

Friday, December 10 • 7:30 pm
DeYor Performing Arts Center

Stambaugh Chorus Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 12 • 4:00 pm
Stambaugh Auditorium



For more information and to order tickets visit any of our websites or call either
330-259-9651 or 330-259-0555.

STAMBAUGH
AUDITORIUM
stambaughauditorium.com

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Performing Arts Center
deyorpac.org

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SYMPHONY
youngstownsymphony.com

THE
*Y*OUNGSTOWN
PLAYHOUSE
youngstownplayhouse.org



OPERA
WESTERN
RESERVE

ROMEO + JULIET

Devised by Scott Skiba

Music by Charles Gounod

Libretto by Francesco Jules Barbier and Michel Carré

Text Adapted from the play by William Shakespeare

DEAN BUCK
GUEST CONDUCTOR

SCOTT SKIBA
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

CAST

Sarah Joyce Cooper.....Juliet
 Jesús Daniel Hernández.....Romeo
 Hon. Carla Baldwin*.....Magistrate Prince
 Leilani Barrett.....Mercutio
 Stephanie Chavara.....Lady Capulet
 Robert K. Ellway.....Lord Montague
 Alexander Kluchar**.....Paris (Mercutio Cover)
 Lynn Ohle.....Sam(pson) (Tybalt Cover)
 Tom O'Donnel.....Friar Lawrence
 Colleen Sabeh.....Nurse
 Joseph Soriano.....Abram (Benvolio Cover)
 Jonathan Stuckey.....Lord Capulet
 Jason Paul Tate.....Tybalt
 Lisa Torrence.....Lady Montague
 Joz Vammer.....Benvolio

*OWR Board of Directors Member

** OPERA Western Reserve Young Artist

*OPERA Western Reserve Young Artist



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SYNOPSIS

PLACE: Verona, Italy TIME: Then

ACT I

Overture

Prologue

Scene 1, A public square

Scene 2, A city street

Scene 3, Capulet's Mansion

Scene 4, Juliet's dressing room

Scene 5, Outside the Capulets mansion

Scene 6, Capulet's ballroom

ACT II

Entr'acte

Prologue

Juliet's balcony and garden

INTERMISSION

20 minutes

ACT III

Entr'acte

Scene 1, A public square

Scene 2, Juliet's bedroom

ACT IV

Entr'acte

Prologue

Scene 1, Juliet's Tomb

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Ohio Arts Council

Gasser Chair Company

The DeYor Performing Arts Center

Stambaugh Auditorium

Adler Center for the Arts

Orchestrations rental/reduction supplied by Opera Orchestrations

Brittany Powell Merenda

Glenn Avery Breed at Wardrobe Witchery

Adam Michael at Candid_ _Life

*OPERA Western Reserve Young Artist

ORCHESTRA FOR ROMEO + JULIET

Dean Buck, Guest Conductor

FLUTE

Kathryn Thomas Umble*

CLARINET

Alice Wang*

BASSOON

Thomas English*

HORN

Rob Cole*

TRUMPET

Susan Sexton*

TIMPANI/PERCUSSION

Kirk Georgia*

HARP

Liann Cline

VIOLIN I

Rachel Stegeman, Concertmaster

Maria Viñas

Natalie Sahyoun**

Gloria Slocum

VIOLIN II

Brendan Considine*

Abbey McLaughlin

Eric Baker

VIOLA

Jay Koziorynsky*

Amber Rogers

CELLO

Michael Gelfand*

Jessamyn Fry

BASS

Jeffrey Bremer*

KEYBOARD

Ben Malkevitch

*Principal Player

** Librarian and Assistant

Orchestrations rental/reduction supplied by OperaOrchestrations.co.uk.
Original reduced orchestration by Jonathan Lyness.

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Nicole Zayas-Balaz



OPERA
WESTERN
RESERVE

PRODUCTIONS

- 2004 I PAGLIACCI *Ruggiero Leoncavallo*
- 2005 LA BOHÈME *Giacomo Puccini*
- 2006 LE NOZZE DI FIGARO *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*
- 2007 RIGOLETTO *Giuseppe Verdi*
- 2008 MADAMA BUTTERFLY *Giacomo Puccini*
- 2009 CARMEN *Georges Bizet*
- 2010 LA TRAVIATA *Giuseppe Verdi*
- 2011 TOSCA *Giacomo Puccini*
- 2012 BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA *Gioacchino Rossini*
- 2013 LA BOHÈME *Giacomo Puccini*
- 2014 DON GIOVANNI *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*
- 2015 THE ELIXIR OF LOVE *Gaetano Donizetti*
- 2016 CARMEN *Georges Bizet*
- 2017 LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR *Gaetano Donizetti*
- 2018 MADAMA BUTTERFLY *Giacomo Puccini*
- 2019 MACBETH *Giuseppe Verdi*
- 2020 A TASTE OF TRAVIATA *Giuseppe Verdi*
- 2021 ROMEO + JULIET *Charles Gounod*

FUTURE PRODUCTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION

- 2022 LA BOHÈME *Giacomo Puccini*
- TBA CARMEN *Georges Bizet*

PRODUCTION STAFF: ROMEO + JULIET

Production Director.....	Scott Skiba
Guest Conductor.....	Dean Buck
Production Stage Manager.....	Robert Pierce
Assistant Stage Managers.....	Joyce Jones Frank Bongen
Projection Designer.....	Brittany Powell Merenda
Fight Director.....	Jason Paul Tate
Associate Fight Director.....	Joz Vammer
Hair/Makeup Technician.....	Leah Altiero
Wardrobe Supervisor.....	Brian Palumbo
Costumes Designed by.....	Glenn Avery Breed
Costumes Provided by.....	Wardrobe Witchery
Properties Supervisor.....	Joyce Jones
Supertitles.....	Scott Skiba
Supertitle Operator.....	Benjamin Malkevitch

OPERA WESTERN RESERVE STAFF

Production Director.....	Scott Skiba
Music Director/Conductor.....	Susan Davenny Wyner
Board Chair.....	Elliot P. Legow
Business Manager.....	Christine Legow
Young Artist Program Director.....	Robert Pierce
Administrative Assistant.....	Lynn Ohle, M.M.
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Graphic Designer.....	Jamie Marshall
Advertising & Publicity.....	Kelly McKee-Foos
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Rehearsal Accompanist.....	Benjamin Malkevitch
Printing and Mailing	City Printing

Do you like to sing?

We'd love to have you join us!

*Stambaugh
Chorus*

*What we have planned
for next season:*

Wednesday, December 8th

We join with the Dana Symphonic and Dana Symphony Orchestra for YSO's Carols and Cocoa/Dana Holiday Concert.

Sunday, December 12th

Stambaugh Chorus Holiday Concert

Thursday, May 12, 2022

Stambaugh Chorus Spring Concert



Find us on Facebook

facebook.com/stambaughchorus

stambaughchorus.org

STAGE/VIDEOGRAPHY CREW: ROMEO + JULIET

Travis Beatty.....Production Manager / Deck Chief
Courtney Greene.....Production Coordinator
Video Technical Director
Jancarlos Lebrón.....Audio Engineer
James Oakry.....Lighting Designer
Brandon Maffitt.....Camera Operator
Aaron Graneto.....Camera Operator
Jocelyn Bolling.....Spotlight Operator
Chaunise Bonner.....Spotlight Operator
Allison Stabile.....Production Staff

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FROM THE GUEST CONDUCTOR

DEAN BUCK

OWR is delighted to welcome back Dean Buck as guest conductor

Throughout most of this year we have been attempting to return. To return to a word that for a lot of us will never have the connotations it used to: "normal." That word has been redefined more times in the course of 18 months than any of us probably ever anticipated. In some ways we feel we are constantly on the brink of it, but it is often countered by feelings of frustration and redundancy that quell such hopes of said return.

And with this as a frame of reference, we return to a piece that we all know: Romeo and Juliet. We knew that we were going to mount a production, and this was conceived as something that could be executed no matter what safety precautions had to be put in place. If we needed to pivot to virtual, pre-recorded, distanced, etc. we had the flexibility to do so. And in accordance with the sort of proletarian philosophy to which we refer as common sense, necessity has proven yet again to be the mother of invention. We present this story through both its source material, and arguably its most well-known operatic adaptation. You will hear "a plague on both your houses" spoken and "*Amour, ranime mon courage*" sung. And while it is in a format with which we are unfamiliar, we find ourselves recognizing all of the elements of timelessness and tradition, while pursuing innovation.

This, to me, is how we return our lives to that ambiguous state of "normal." Our lives do not look the same as they once did, and many of us are wondering if they ever will. That of course, is not for me to comment on, but I will say that if we are to assume a point of relative omniscience, we see our collective experience taking shape. It is not in the form we are used to, and while it could be jarring at first, it tells the story in just as profound a way. Thus we find ourselves reimagining and reinventing our traditions every day, just as Gounod did with Shakespeare. There is no return to the "normal" of yesterday, yet we know that we must move forward. All of the elements of our stories are still there; it is up to us to reimagine how to put them together.



YOUNG ARTISTS

Opera Western Reserve's Young Artists, under the direction of Robert Pierce and Jon Simsic, have been less active in the past year-and-a-half due to the ongoing pandemic. However, we were excited to revive our Spring 2020 production of *The Three Little Pigs* this year at OWR's recent gala event and the Youngstown Summer Festival of the Arts, and we look forward to getting back to work in earnest in the coming year. Contact OWR on Facebook to keep informed of our upcoming activities!

Robert Pierce, Young Artist Program Director

OPERA WESTERN RESERVE YOUNG ARTISTS

Sopranos

Rebecca Enlow Walker
Sierra McCorvey

Tenors

Emilio Santiago

Bass/ Baritone

Alexander Kluchar

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH STAFF

Program Director

Robert Pierce

Program Coordinator

Lynn Ohle

Musical Preparation/Accompanist

Jon Simsic

FROM THE STAGE DIRECTOR

SCOTT SKIBA

What a wonderful feeling to welcome you back to the beautiful Stambaugh Auditorium to experience this production live and in-person! *Roméo et Juliette*, Gounod's soaring opera is the first opera in which I performed on stage. Nearly 10 years later, I performed in my first production with Opera Western Reserve, *Le nozze di Figaro*. Fast-forward another 15 years later to this evening and I'm delighted to invite you to experience the timeless tale of the world's most famous star-crossed lovers brought to life in a new and exciting way. *Romeo + Juliet* is a reimagined telling of Shakespeare's play and Gounod's opera combining Shakespeare's magnificent text from 'Romeo and Juliet' spoken in English with Gounod's soaring vocal lines and lush music from his opera, *Roméo et Juliette* sung in French.

Born out of necessity to create a production that we could deliver live and in-person, no matter what the state of the pandemic, this production features the same world-class music making, singing, and acting that OWR audiences have come to expect while incorporating new and exciting storytelling elements including dynamic sword fights choreographed by acclaimed New York City based director, choreographer and performer, Jason Paul Tate, whose credits include the Public Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park and the Metropolitan Opera; and the dazzling opulence of Projection Designer, Brittany Merenda, who's award-winning work has been featured at the Washington National Opera and opera and theater companies nationwide.

As we begin our journey back to artistic collaboration and to live in-person music and theater making, we are acutely aware of the necessity of art and human connection to enrich and complete our lives. As we all emerge from our isolation, socially distanced protocols, virtual performances, and seemingly never ending pivots, we artists have a new perspective of our need to create, to collaborate, to bring our creative energies to the stage, and of our impossible-to-overstate-need to connect with you, the live audience.

To the Board of Directors and patrons of Opera Western Reserve and to the Leadership Team and Staff of Stambaugh Auditorium who have made this production possible, and to all whose tireless efforts have made it possible for OWR to thrive amidst unprecedented global challenges, thank you. On behalf of us all in the cast, crew, and artistic team who have the opportunity to share this production with you tonight, live and in-person after so much time apart, thank you! Special thanks to Maestra Susan Davenny Wyner and Maestro Dean Buck for their collaboration in creating this adaptation, to Robert Pierce for his invaluable support in bringing this production to the stage, and to everyone involved in bringing this production to life, thank you for embarking on yet another journey of "What if...?" to bring *Romeo + Juliet* to life.

To borrow from Maestro Shakespeare: "In the two hours' traffic of our stage; The which if you with patient ears attend, What here [in our adaptation.] shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Skiba". The signature is highly stylized and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Scott Skiba, Production Director, Opera Western Reserve

OWR MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR



Susan Davenny Wyner has received international acclaim for her conducting. The Library of Congress featured her in its 2003 "Women Who Dare" Engagement Calendar, and the MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour and WGBH Television have presented documentary features on her life and work. Her conducting credits include the Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, Odense Danish Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Lyric Opera, Cleveland Orchestra members in benefit concerts, concerts at the Hollywood Bowl, and recordings for

Bridge and Albany Records. Yo-Yo Ma, André Previn, Lynn Harrell, Claude Frank, Peter Serkin, and Emanuel Ax, have been among her guest soloists.

She has conducted repertoire from the 15th through 21st century—premiering over 40 new works, working with period instruments, and conducting 30 operas. The New York Times called her conducting, "rapturous, richly textured and emotionally compelling." Opera News Online praised the "terrific lyrical moments under Susan Davenny Wyner's baton," The Los Angeles Times praised her "sensitive and thoughtful leadership," The Boston Globe wrote, "Under her baton the music breathes, lilts, romps, sighs, and sparkles," and four times selected her conducted performances among the "Best Musical Events of the Year."

She has been Music Director and Conductor of Boston Midsummer Opera since 2007, the Warren Philharmonic Orchestra since 1999, and Opera Western Reserve since its creation in 2004. From 1999-2005, she was Music Director and Conductor of The New England String Ensemble in Boston, which she brought to national prominence.

Initially trained as a violinist and violist, Susan Davenny Wyner went on to an international career as a Lyric Soprano—singing with the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, London Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Symphony, and other major orchestras. She often premiered works written especially for her and recorded for Columbia Masterworks, Angel/EMI, Naxos, New World, CRI and Musical Heritage, winning both a Grammy and a Grand Prix du Disc. After a hit and run accident destroyed her singing voice, she began her career as a conductor.

She has held conducting positions at New England Conservatory, the Cleveland Institute of Music, Wellesley College, Brandeis and Cornell Universities, and has conducted numerous lecture demonstrations and master-classes for the National Conductors Guild, the Shanghai Conservatory, and Harvard and Yale Universities among many others.

Susan Davenny Wyner graduated summa cum laude from Cornell University with degrees in both comparative literature and music, then continued her studies at Yale and Columbia Universities, at the Tanglewood and Aspen Music Festivals, and at the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute. In 1998, The American Orchestra League named her a Catherine Filene Shouse Conductor – a first-time award given by a national panel of conductors and orchestral managers to a conductor poised for a major career.

OWR PRODUCTION DIRECTOR



Award-winning Stage Director **Scott Skiba** has led more than 75 new productions, earning recognition for his imaginative stage direction and dynamic physical approach to storytelling that is “masterful... ingenious...first-rate...vivid and emotionally charged.” Scott serves as Executive Artistic Director of Cleveland Opera Theater where his recent production of *La Traviata* was named “the best professional opera production Cleveland has seen in years,” and has made multiple company debuts in recent years including Indianapolis Opera, Pensacola Opera, Opera Tampa,

Toledo Opera, Natchez Festival of Music, Opera Grand Rapids, and Mobile Opera.

A proponent of new opera, Scott launched {NOW} Fest, Cleveland Opera Theater’s annual festival to create, develop, and produce new opera, and he serves on the Chamber Opera Composition Committee for the National Opera Association. A pioneer in exploring contemporary approaches to producing opera, Scott’s work includes directing and producing interdisciplinary collaborations in alternative and site-specific venues to promote immersive gateway experiences to engage new audiences.

Scott Skiba continued

An advocate of arts education, Scott serves as Director of Opera Studies for Baldwin Wallace Conservatory, Assistant Artistic Director for Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, and Movement / Acting Instructor for Music Across The Pond (Oxford and Falmouth UK). Previous appointments include: Executive Director, Oberlin in Italy; Instructor of Voice and Opera Theater, Interlochen Arts Academy; and Associate Instructor of Voice, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

Scott devised and directed multiple projects to continue artistic collaboration during the pandemic including: "Opera ON DEMAND" for the Curtis Institute of Music, incorporating green screen, video, and audio technology and remote collaboration; "A Taste of Traviata" a cinematic production adaptation of *La Traviata* for Opera Western Reserve filmed on site at the historic Stambaugh Auditorium; and the "Operas in Place" project to create nine new short-length operas in collaboration with Baldwin Wallace Conservatory, Cleveland Opera Theater, On Site Opera in NYC and 17 World-renowned composers and librettists which will premiere in a virtual event December 1, 2, 3, 2021 at BWVP.org.

Recent and upcoming engagements include *Don Giovanni* (Indianapolis Opera Nov. '21), the World-premiere production of *La Casa de Bernarda Alba* (Baldwin Wallace and Cleveland Opera Theater Feb. '22), *Le nozze di Figaro* (Baldwin Wallace March '22), and *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Hawaii Performing Arts Festival July '22).

More info: www.ScottSkiba.com

GUEST CONDUCTOR



Dean Buck is a Cleveland-based conductor, and is excited to be returning to Opera Western Reserve for his second production. His conducting has been described as "fearless and firm," (Cleveland Classical,) and "maintaining a constant, flexible rapport with singers." (New York Observer.) Dean currently serves as Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master for Cleveland Opera Theater, as well as Assistant Conductor for the Firelands Symphony Orchestra, and the Cleveland Pops Orchestra. He has additionally served as Music

Director for Cleveland Opera Theater's {NOW} Fest for the past three seasons, supervising premieres, workshops and performances of works by such composers as Jake Heggie, Nkeiru Okoye, Evan Mack, and Griffin Candey. Dean previously served as principal conductor of the New York City-based LoftOpera. With LoftOpera, he conducted eight productions including their critically-acclaimed stagings of Puccini's *La Boheme*, Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, and Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*. Dean holds a master's degree in orchestral conducting from the Cleveland Institute of Music

PROJECTION DESIGNER



Brittany Merenda is a projection designer and creative director working in theatre, opera and dance throughout the country. At the onset of the pandemic, Brittany pivoted to fully virtual productions including a real-time, 6 live camera feed interactive play titled *Deja Zoom!* with Parallel 45 Theatre. She also served as the Creative Director for a state-of-the-art virtual national convention (summer 2020) and *Virtual/ Live Gala* for New England Conservatory. This November, Brittany will be the Associate Projection Designer for The Washington National Opera's *Come Home Gala*

at The Kennedy Center. Opera productions include *The Light In The Piazza* (Columbus State University), *La Boheme*, *Barber of Seville* and *Madama Butterfly* (Cleveland Opera Theatre), *La Finta Giardiniera* and *The Marriage of Figaro* (University of Tennessee Opera Theatre), *Glory Denied* and *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Baldwin Wallace Conservatory), *Little Women* and *Alcina* (Hawaii Performing Arts Festival), Verdi's *Macbeth* (Opera Tampa), *Carmen* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (The Lakes Area Music Festival), and *Tosca* (Opera Grand Rapids). Previous theatrical works include *Sincerely*, *Oscar* (off-Broadway), *Shrek The Musical* with The Beck Center for the Arts (Cleveland), *Howie D: Back in the Day*, *Elf The Musical*, *The Newsies*, and *The Little Mermaid* at The Rose Theater (Omaha), *Sweeney Todd* with Hawaii Performing Arts Festival and *Oklahoma!* at The Wick (Boca Raton). She has also designed *Appalachian Spring* (St. Paul Ballet) and *Nutcracker in Wonderland* (Ballet Co.Laboratory). Brittany received her Masters of Arts in Digital Arts and Sciences from the University of Florida and received a Barbizon Award for her projection design in dark play, or stories for boys.



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Opera Western Reserve
for a successful production of
Romeo + Juliet!



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PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER



Robert Pierce is entering his thirteenth year of working with Opera Western Reserve and his ninth year as the company's Educational Outreach Director. In addition to directing and performing in annual "mini-mainstage" and children's operas with the Young Artist Program, he has also sung roles in past mainstage productions of *La Bohème*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Tosca*, and *La Traviata* and served as stage management for all the company's productions in the past eight years. A native of the Cleveland area, Robert is an experienced performer of opera and musical theater on other local stages,

such as Cleveland Opera Theater, Valley Lyric Opera, Great Lakes Light Opera, Nightingale Opera Theater, Lakeland Civic Theater, Blank Canvas Theater, and Beck Center for the Arts. Opera credits include: *Tosca*, *Street Scene*, *La Vida Breve*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*. Musical theater credits include *The Little Mermaid*, *Floyd Collins*, *Billy Elliot*, *Violet*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Jerry Springer: The Opera*. He was also the production stage manager for recent productions of *La Bohème*, *La Traviata*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *The Marriage of Figaro* for Cleveland Opera Theater, as well as *Alcina*, *The Rake's Progress*, and *Glory Denied* for Baldwin Wallace Conservatory. Robert holds degrees in vocal performance from Otterbein University and Cleveland Institute of Music.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

HON. CARLA BALDWIN MAGISTRATE PRINCE



Carla J. Baldwin is a lifelong resident of the Mahoning Valley. She presently serves as the Administrative and Presiding Judge of Youngstown Municipal Court where she presides over misdemeanor criminal cases and traffic cases. She also is proud to serve those who have served by presiding over the Veterans Treatment Court.

Judge Baldwin is a recipient of the YWCA's Board

Member of the Year Award and Outstanding Achievement Award. She has been recognized by the Mahoning County Young Professionals as a 25 Under 35 Award Recipient. She received the Community Service Award from Ebony Lifeline Support Group, Inc. In 2018, Judge Baldwin received the Judicial Award from the Ohio Association of Magistrates; received the Trailblazer of the Year Award from Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and the Community Service Award for Attorneys 40 and Under from the Ohio State Bar Foundation. The Judge is also the recipient of the Phoenix Award presented by the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus for her trailblazing efforts in criminal justice reform.

Judge Carla J. Baldwin made history on November 7, 2017, when she became the first African-American female elected as judge in Mahoning County. This is her first appearance on stage..

LEILANI BARRETT MERCUTIO



Leilani Barrett (SAG-AFTRA/ AEA) is a veteran of stage, television, commercial, film and voiceover with 30+ years of experience working in the industry. Previous shows on stage include the title role of Othello, Mark Antony in Julius Caesar, Oberon in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Bolingbroke in Richard II, Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo, August Wilson's Radio Golf, A Raisin in the Sun, and Intimate Apparel. His distinctive voice can be heard in commercials for AMPM, McDonalds, Nike, First Energy, Subway, Time Warner Cable, Ohio Lottery, Chase Bank, Cincinnati

Bell, and more. Locally he has performed on stage with Great Lakes Theatre, Cleveland Playhouse, Ensemble Theatre Cleveland, Cleveland Public Theatre, Cleveland Shakespeare Festival, Near West Theater, Karamu House and Beck Center for the Arts. He can be seen in feature films including "Dog Eat Dog" with Nicholas Cage, "Curvature" with Glenn Moreshower, and "The Big Ugly" with Ron Perlman and independent short films "Use of Force" and "The Basement Job". He is an adjunct professor at Baldwin Wallace University and acting coach at 1st Team Acting Studio

STEPHANIE CHAVARA LADY CAPULET



Stephanie Chavara is making her OWR debut. She has toured for Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, performing in *Hamlet*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Prior to living in the area, she was in Chicago where she performed with Remy Bumpoo Theatre Company, The Goodman, Signal Ensemble, and Adventure Stage among others. In 2015, she was nominated for Best Actress for the Chicago Jeff Awards. She is also a writer and has written and performed personal stories for 2nd Story Chicago and has had her plays produced at the Chicago Fringe Festival and Adventure Stage. She is a teaching artist and has taught and created youth programming in New York, Chicago, Montana, Raleigh and was a teaching artist in residence at Lame Deer Reservation schools in MT. Currently, she is teaching with SMARTS in downtown Youngstown and Walnut Street Lodge in Sharon, PA. She is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School and got her MFA at DePaul's Theatre School.

SARAH JOYCE COOPER JULIET



Soprano **Sarah Joyce Cooper** has been hailed for her "meltingly beautiful" (Opera News) singing and "alluring" (Don & Catharine Bryan Cultural Series) stage presence. This fall, Ms. Cooper looks forward to making her debut with Opera Western Reserve as Juliette in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* and with MassOpera as Violetta in *La Traviata*. She also looks forward to returning to Boston Opera Collaborative to perform in its wildly popular winter Opera Bites series as Sabrina in the new opera *In the Fragrant House of Serenity*. In the spring, Ms. Cooper will make her debut with City Lyric Opera as Alice in a new, multimedia stage production of Elizabeth Raum's *The Garden of Alice*.

Previous performances include Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* (CoOPERative), Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Savannah Voice Festival), Micaëla in *Carmen* (Prelude to Performance), Violetta in *La Traviata* (New York Opera Studio/

Elizabeth R. and Co.), Mimi in *La Bohème* (Opera Theater of Cape Cod), and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* (Boston Opera Collaborative). Last season, Ms. Cooper made her debut with Maryland Lyric Opera as La Charmeuse in a production of Massenet's *Thaïs*, conducted by Louis Salemno and directed by Claudia Zahn. Ms. Cooper has also appeared as a soloist with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, the Maryland Lyric Opera Orchestra, and the Radcliffe Choral Society at Harvard University. In 2019, she was invited to perform as a soloist with the Du Bois Orchestra in the historic world premiere of Florence Price's long-lost cantata, *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight*. Most recently, Ms. Cooper collaborated with Boston filmmakers in the "The Aria Project," an initiative using operatic arias to inspire new and contemporary stories on film in partnership with Boston Opera Collaborative. Ms. Cooper completed her Bachelor's Degree in French at Princeton University, where she first began to develop the foundation for her "mastery of French style" (Opera News) while conducting research for her undergraduate thesis on sacred themes in the mélodies, romances, and cantiques of Gabriel Fauré. She earned her Master of Music Degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from Westminster Choir College.

In addition to performing, Ms. Cooper serves as Volunteer Executive Assistant for Help!ComeHome!, a 501c3 organization dedicated to meeting the needs of under-served communities throughout the US in Jesus' Name. Ms. Cooper is a regular volunteer with the organization, offering both her musical and administrative skills to further its mission.

ROBERT K. ELLWAY LORD MONTAGUNE



An Active Freemason, Mr. Ellway was a member of and served as vice-president of the former Youngstown Opera Guild. He began acting after his retirement, beginning with the role of Dr. Baugh in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* at the Victorian Players (now the Hopewell Theater), which he regards as his home theater. He has performed in various venues in the Valley, including Shakespeare in the Park, children's theater, radio theater, and deaf theater as Alexander Graham Bell in *See No Beast, Hear No Beast, Speak No Beast*. His favorite roles include Edwin Flagg in *Whatever*

Happened to Baby Jane and Gandalf in *The Hobbit*. This is his premier performance at OWR and his first opera.

JESUS DANIEL HERNANDEZ ROMEO



Jesús Daniel Hernández was born and raised in Juarez Mexico, and moved to the United States as a teenager. In 2003, Jesus chose to enlist in the US Army, and soon after, volunteered to serve in a Chemical Unit being deployed to Iraq. In 2007, a chance encounter with Plácido Domingo in San Antonio, TX changed his life. After a concert given by Maestro Domingo, Jesus Daniel asked if he could sing for the Maestro. Upon hearing the young soldier sing, Maestro Domingo invited the tenor to join the prestigious Plácido Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program with the

Washington National Opera. After an honorable discharge in 2008, Jesus Daniel moved to Washington, DC to pursue his childhood dream of being a professional singer.

While a participant in the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, Jesus Daniel performed with The Washington National Opera in the productions of *Lucrezia Borgia*-G. Donizetti, *La Traviata*-G. Verdi (YA), *Falstaff*-G. Verdi (WNO Look-In), and in *Hamlet*-A. Thomas. Jesus Daniel's other roles have included performances as *il Duka di Mantua* in *Rigoletto*, *Rodolfo* in *La Bohème*, *Camille* in *The Merry Widow*, *Alfredo* in *La Traviata*, *Andrea Chenier* in *Andrea Chenier*, *Rinuccio* in *Gianni Schicchi*, *Cavaradossi* in *Tosca*, *Turiddu* in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pinkerton* in *Madama Butterfly* and numerous *Zarzuelas*. His experience includes concert performances for NEA Opera Honors ceremonies, the Horatio Awards at the United States Supreme Court, and numerous concerts in Europe.

ALEXANDER KLUCCHAR PARIS (MERCUTIO COVER)



Alexander Kluchar is a current fifth-year Bachelor of Music Vocal Performance Major at Youngstown State University. He has been a young artist in Opera Western Reserve's Young Artist Program since 2018. In 2016, he attended Baldwin Wallace University's Conservatory Summer Intensive. He was last seen in the children's opera *The Three Little Pigs* (Don Giovanni) and in a brand new play by up-and-coming playwright Ace Lowry, *The Dying Art of Eye Contact*

(Sam). He has also played Cinderella's Prince (Into the Woods), Renfield (Dracula), and was set to play Mercutio (Romeo and Juliet) before COVID-19 first hit. Partial Roles include Banquo (Macbeth), Figaro (Le Nozze di Figaro), and Jamie (The Last Five Years). After he obtains his B.M. he plans to enter into higher education and continue to develop his performance career.

LYNN OHLE SAM(PSON)



Lynn Ohle is a performer, writer, educator and puppet builder who is making her OWR main-stage debut. A transplant from Andover, Ohio, Lynn moved to Youngstown in 2007 to pursue graduate vocal studies at the Dana School of Music, and has since volunteered and worked with schools and local community theaters teaching music, theater and improv techniques.

A native of Pittsburgh, Lynn quickly became involved in the prolific Youngstown theater community.

A frequent performer at The Rust Belt Theater

Company, which highlights locally-written plays and musicals, Lynn was featured in 2017 with a self-written one-person show, *I Stopped Listening*.

She has choreographed and built props for Andover Community Theater Society (ACTS) and Pymatuning Valley High School show choir. She has written scripts for the ACTS Theater Training Camp, which she founded, the Rude Mechanicals Theater Company, and the live-action, Mary Boldish James sitcom, *STUCK*. She has performed for OWR at fundraiser events and has most recently been seen as Janet in *The Rocky Horror Show* with the Millennial Theater Company.

TOM O'DONNELL FRIAR LAWRENCE



Tom has been involved with Opera Western Reserve for many years having performed in several operas such as *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, and most recently as *King Duncan* in *MacBeth*. Tom is well known in the local theatre community having appeared in over 100 productions at YSU, Youngstown Playhouse, The Rust Belt Theater Company, Salem Community Theatre, as well as other performance spaces.

Tom has also performed the one man show *Mr. Lincoln*

Tom O'Donnell continued

throughout the area. The show opened the inaugural season of the Selah Dessert Theatre in Struthers, Ohio and was performed to large audiences at Salem Community Theatre to honor the 150th Anniversary of Lincoln's death and the end of the Civil war. Tom is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor in private practice in Hubbard, Ohio

COLLEEN SABEH NURSE



Colleen is new to opera, but has been heavily involved in community and high school theater for 20 years. She is a Pittsburgh native, but only became interested in theater after moving to northeast Ohio. She is one of the original members of the Andover Community Theater Society, where she has worn every hat in the production process, including acting, set design and construction, tech, stage managing, and directing. Her directorial credits include High School Musical, Jr., *Mamma Mia*, and several others. Colleen has performed in *A Christmas Carol*, *A Night of One Acts*,

several murder mysteries, and a music video. Currently, she is serving as ACTS president of the board, and is employed by the Pymatuning Valley School District as stage manager, tech designer, and set designer for the spring production.

JOSEPH SORIANO ABRAM (BENVOLIO COVER)



Joe is delighted to return to his hometown in his debut performance with Opera Western Reserve. Joe is an actor, director, and combat choreographer that works throughout northeast Ohio including the Akron, Canton, and Cleveland areas. Some of his acting credits include Demetrius in *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, Orsino in *Twelfth Night*, and Armin in *Equivocation* at Rubber City Theatre; George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life* and Bill Fordham in *August Osage County* at Avenue Arts; Mercutio/ Friar Lawrence in *Shakespeare's R&J* at Convergence Continuum; and *The Raven/Old Man in Nightfall*: with Edgar Allen Poe

at French Creek Theatre.

JONATHAN STUCKEY LORD CAPULET



Jonathan Stuckey has been praised for his “smooth deep voice” (Thomas Dyer, Berkshire Fine Arts) as well as his “restrained eloquence and refined bass color” (Robert Rollin, Cleveland Classical). His recent engagements include Banco in Verdi’s *Macbeth* with Opera Western Reserve, Porgy in Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* with OWR and The Cleveland Opera, Pitkin in Bernstein’s *On the Town* with Resonance Works Pittsburgh, and Sarastro in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* with Resonanz Opera. Jonathan holds a Master’s Degree in Vocal Performance from The Peabody Conservatory of Music, where he studied with John Shirley-Quirk.

Conservatory of Music, where he studied with John Shirley-Quirk.

JASON PAUL TATE TYBALT/FIGHT DIRECTOR



Jason Paul Tate is a director, choreographer and performer, whose work has appeared onstage at the Metropolitan Opera, in Central Park and in a number of downtown NYC venues including Classic Stage Company, Ars Nova, Rattlestick, and BAM. His work has also been performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the New York Fringe Festival and regionally at A.R.T., Great Lakes Theatre, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and at a number of the country’s outdoor dramas including the Tony-Award winning

The Lost Colony. Jason has performed stunts for several theme parks, live entertainment venues and on film for the Travel Channel, Amazon and ESPN.

A native Kentuckian, Jason has taught and choreographed productions for The New School, New York Film Academy, Hofstra University, Florida State University, the Asolo Conservatory, University of Kentucky, University of Central Florida, University of North Carolina – Charlotte, Transylvania University, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi and the University of North Carolina School for the Arts. He has also served on the teaching staff at the National Stage Combat Workshop, the Stage Combat Workshop at Louisiana Tech, the New York Summer Sling, the A-Town Throwdown, the

Jason Paul Tate continued

Lonestar Smash and the Tourist Trap Stage Combat & Stunt Workshop, which he co-founded.

Also a founding member of Neutral Chaos, LLC; his company offers year-round classes in various movement and stage combat disciplines to working professionals and students looking to expand their physical acting vocabulary in New York City. Jason is a certified instructor of stage combat with the Society of American Fight Directors and a proud member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

LISA TORRENCE LADY MONTAGUE



Lisa was born in Youngstown, raised in Warren, and currently resides in Youngstown. She is a proud alumna of Youngstown State University, where she is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Social Work. She has been active in local theater for the last five years, performing with the Rust Belt Theater Company, Mahoning Valley Players, and Rude Mechanicals Theater Company. This is her first performance with Opera Western Reserve, in the role of Lady Montague. Lisa would like to thank her son Alex and partner Brian for the love and support, her late husband Bruce for the courage to try, and Robert Dennick Joki for taking the first chance on her, and making her a soldier.

JOZ VAMMER BENVOLIO/ASSISTANT FIGHT DIRECTOR



The Old Globe: Gardens of Anuncia, Thinking Shakespeare LOVE!, Another Shore, Age of Innocence. Globe/USD Shiley Program: A Midsummer Night's Dream, Oedipus Tyrannus, Measure for Measure, The Promise, The Visit, Twelfth Night. Off Broadway: Bernie and Mikey's Trip to the Moon (Strangemen), The School for Wives (Extant Arts), The Snow Queen (The Russian Arts Theater), Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (The Onomatopoeia Theatre Company). Regional: The Merchant of Venice, Fiddler on the Roof (Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre), Cyrano (Saratoga Shakespeare Company), Into the Woods (Hope Summer Repertory Theatre).

Podcast: "The Film Reroll." Education: MFA Globe/USD Shiley Program. jozvam.com, [@jozvam](https://www.instagram.com/jozvam) on Instagram.

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