

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white strapless gown, is the central figure. She is holding the edges of the long, flowing skirt of her dress, which is billowing out around her. The background is a soft, light beige color with more pieces of white fabric floating in the air, creating a dreamlike, ethereal atmosphere. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the texture of the dress and the woman's features.

Cleveland Opera Theater

Verdi

La Traviata

Friday, April 26, 7pm

Sunday, April 28, 3pm

Maltz Performing Arts Center
at the Temple-Tifereth Israel
at Case Western Reserve University



Welcome to La Traviata.

Love, sacrifice, jealousy, gambling, dueling, death, and the most famous drinking song ever. Oh, and Verdi too. Executive Artistic Director Scott Skiba, Music Director, Maestro Domenico Boyagian, the Cleveland Opera Theater staff and artists have created another great one for us. We need your help, in return.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Scipione". The script is fluid and cursive.

Don Scipione, Cleveland Opera Theater Board President

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La Traviata

Music by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by libretto by Francesco Maria Piave
based on *La Dame aux camélias* (1852), a play
adapted from the novel by Alexandre Dumas fils

Artistic and Production Staff

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Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master - Dean Buck

Rehearsal Pianist - Tatiana Loisha

Stage Director - Scott Skiba

Scenic Design and Technical Direction - Matthew D. McCarren

Lighting Design - Steve Shack

Costume Coordinator - Esther Haberlen

Costume / Wardrobe / Props - Vanessa Cook: Cook Theatre Designs LLC.

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Supertitle Operator - Dawna Warren

Production Assistant - Rocco Grassi

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Maltz Performing Arts Center staff:

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Special thanks to: Roger and Colette Mehle, Donna Florio and Dr. Richard Mackay, Richard Haber, and Judith and Anthony Pantano for your generous contributions to Cleveland Opera Theater

in Memory of Maestro Vincent La Selva

Maestro La Selva was the founder of New York Grand Opera in 1973, which for 39 years offered fully-staged opera productions free to the public, most of the productions in Central Park. Since the opening performance May 23, 1973 of *La bohème*, Maestro La Selva led 55 operas in upwards of 350 performances. Over the years, these performances were attended by more than three million people.

The New York Grand Opera's presentations ranged from such standards as *Aida*, *Rigoletto*, *Tosca*, to rarities such as Leoncavallo's *La Bohème* and Verdi's *Stiffelio* in their U.S. premieres. New York Grand Opera gave the first fully staged performance in the United States of Verdi's *Giovanna D'Arco*. The company also gave the first staged performances in New York of Verdi's *Aroldo* and *Jérusalem*, the first New York staged performance in 127 years of his *I Masnadieri*, the first New York performance with orchestra of his earliest opera, *Oberto*; the first fully-staged performance of Verdi's eighth opera *Alzira*; and the first company to perform both *La Bohème* operas in a single season.

Venturing indoors, The New York Grand Opera played such diverse venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, the Beacon Theatre, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. It also gave free performances at Co-op City, Eisenhower Park (Long Island), Marine Park (Brooklyn), and the Bronx Botanical Gardens. In addition to his opera performances, Maestro La Selva earned special renown for conducting symphonic scores with directness, lyricism, and great passion. The noted critic B.H. Haggin praised La Selva in the following manner: "It is clear that he has what Bernard Shaw has called the highest faculty of a conductor, the magnetic influence under which an orchestra becomes as amenable to the baton as a pianoforte to the fingers... and not only in orchestra but singers." He led acclaimed performances with the New Jersey Symphony, the Juilliard Symphony, the Brno State Philharmonic in the Czech Republic, the Bern Symphony in Switzerland, the Symphony of the Air (formerly the NBC Symphony,) and he was Music Director of the Greater Trenton Symphony Orchestra. Among his collaborators were such soloists as Leonard Rose, Ruggiero Ricci, Zinka Milanov, Rudolf Firkusny, Murray Perahia, Renata Tebaldi, Franco Corelli, and Peter Serkin. Vincent la Selva was born September 17, 1929 in Cleveland, Ohio, and began performing as a trumpeter at the age of eight and by the age of 12, he was conducting student performances. He received his bachelor's degree from the Juilliard School. He studied conducting with Jean Paul Morel, music composition Peter Mennin, Vittorio Giannini, and Vincent Persichetti, and trumpet with William Vacchiano, The composer Robert Ward taught him orchestration.

After his graduation from Juilliard, he served in the United States Army and conducted the First Army Band at Fort Jay on Governor's Island. It was in 1954 that he founded the Xavier Symphony Society, made up of volunteer performers, which formed the kernel of his idea for presenting free productions. One of his early successes was Gian-Carlo Menotti's *The Saint of Bleeker Street*, which the composer urged Maestro La Selva to bring to New York City Opera. La Selva's successful production of the Menotti masterpiece led to his being hired to conduct the City Opera's orchestra full-time. In 1969 Maestro La Selva joined the faculty of the Juilliard School where—until 2010—he taught much sought-after conducting classes and opera workshops. For many years, until their demolition, Maestro La Selva gave private lessons at the legendary Carnegie Hall Studios. In 1995 the President of Italy knighted Mr. La Selva as a "Cavaliere" in the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic for his distinguished service to Italian music. Mr. La Selva's contribution to the cultural life of New York was commended by President Bill Clinton, New York Governor George E. Pataki, and former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, an avid opera lover, who awarded La Selva the coveted Handel Medallion, New York City's highest distinction for achievement in culture and the arts.

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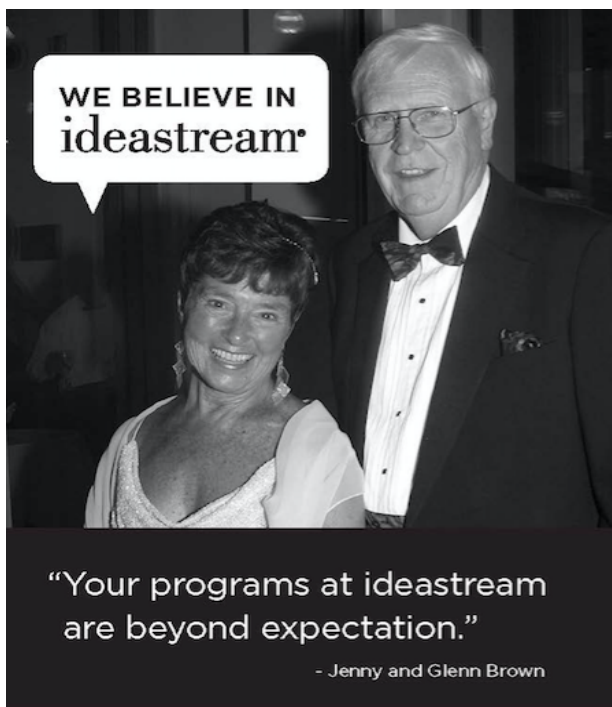
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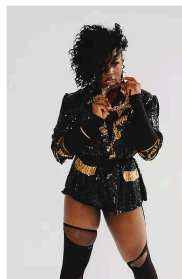
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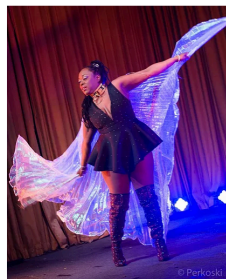
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Bella Sin



Kimmy Katarja



Lady Slay

***La Traviata* Cast**

Violetta Valéry - ANGELA MORTELLARO

Alfredo Germont - BANJAMIN WERLEY

Giorgio Germont,- GRANT YOUNGBLOOD

Flora Bervoix - ELIZABETH FREY

Dr. Grenvil - JAMES EDER

Annina - ALEXIS REED

Gastone de Letorières - BRIAN SKOOG

Barone Douphol - DAEWON SEO

Marchese d'Obigny – BRYANT BUSH

Giuseppe – JOSHUA SANCHEZ MUNIZ

Commissioner - JOHATHAN STUCKEY

Chorus

Soprano

JULIA MIHALICH
SMANTHA KSIEZYK-DeCRANE
ANDREA SONCINA
NICOLE FUTORAN

Tenor

ROBERT BORDON
BRIAN SKOOG
CORY SVETTE
JOSHUA SANCHEZ MUNIZ
CHRISTIAN THOMAS

Mezzo

AMANDA KROHNE-FARGO
ELIZABETH FREY
LONDON LONG-WHEELER
JENNIFER WODA

Bass

BRYANT BUSH
MICHAEL BORDEN
JAMES EDER
DAEWON SEO
JONATHAN STUCKEY

Supernumeraries

SUE HUNDERMARK & BESHOOY HANNA



La Traviata Ensemble, Chorus, & Supernumeraries

It's nice to be the witness, *for once.*

We're excited to join you in watching tonight's amazing performance.

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Maestro Domenico Boyagian, Music Director

Flute/ Picc 1

Virginia Crabtree, *principal*

Oboe

Devin Hinzo

Clarinet

Robert Davis, *principal*

Mason Sangster

Bassoon

Ian Morin, *principal*

Horn

Nick Giralico, *principal*

Van Parker

Trumpet

Justin Rowan, *principal*

Bass Trombone

Zachary Whitney

Percussion

Kirk Georgia

Torrell Moss

Violin 1

Allie Switala, *concertmaster*

Ann Yu

Michael Ferri

Sarah Biagini

Cameron Alan-Lee

Natalie Sahyoun

Violin 2

Shaleah Feinstein, *principal*

Natasha Kubit

Kelsey Ferguson

Andrew Paa

Viola

Caleb Cox, *principal*

Emi Mizobuchi

Peter Ayuso

Cello

Benjamin Rogers, *principal*

Ellie Glorioso

Joe Teeter

Kate Robarge

Bass

Mitchell Reiner-Coffey, *principal*

Orchestra Manager, Devin Hinzo



Cleveland Opera Theater Orchestra



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Synopsis

ACT I – Violetta's Parisian Home

Violetta Valéry knows that she will die soon, exhausted by her restless life as a courtesan. At a party she is introduced to Alfredo Germont, who has been fascinated by her for a year. Rumor has it that he has been enquiring after her health every day. The guests are amused by this seemingly naïve and emotional attitude, and they ask Alfredo to propose a toast. He celebrates true love, and Violetta responds in praise of free love. She is touched by his candid manner and honesty. Suddenly she feels faint, and the guests withdraw. Only Alfredo remains behind and declares his love. There is no place for such feelings in her life, Violetta replies. But she gives him a camellia, asking him to return when the flower has faded. He realizes this means he will see her again the following day. Alone, Violetta is torn by conflicting emotions—she doesn't want to give up her way of life, but at the same time she feels that Alfredo has awakened her desire to be truly loved.

-INTERMISSION-

ACT II SC. 1 – Violetta's Country Home outside Paris

Violetta has chosen a life with Alfredo, and they enjoy their love in the country, far from society. When Alfredo discovers that this is only possible because Violetta has been selling her property, he immediately leaves for Paris to procure money. Violetta has received an invitation to a masked ball, but she no longer cares for such distractions. In Alfredo's absence, his father, Giorgio Germont, pays her a visit. He demands that she separate from his son, as their relationship threatens his daughter's impending marriage. Over the course of their conversation, Germont comes to realize that Violetta is not after his son's money—she is a woman who loves unselfishly. He appeals to Violetta's generosity of spirit and explains that, from a bourgeois point of view, her liaison with Alfredo has no future. Violetta's resistance dwindles and she finally agrees to leave Alfredo forever. Only after her death shall he learn the truth about why she returned to her old life. She accepts the invitation to the ball and writes a goodbye letter to her lover. Alfredo returns, and while he is reading the letter, his father appears to console him. But all the memories of home and a happy family can't prevent the furious and jealous Alfredo from seeking revenge for Violetta's apparent betrayal.

-BRIEF PAUSE-

ACT II SC. 2 – Flora's Home

At Flora's party, news has spread of Violetta and Alfredo's separation. There are grotesque dance entertainments, ridiculing the duped lover. Meanwhile, Violetta and her new lover, Baron Douphol, have arrived. Alfredo and the baron battle at the gaming table and Alfredo wins a fortune: lucky at cards, unlucky in love. When everybody has withdrawn, Alfredo confronts Violetta, who claims to be truly in love with the Baron. In his rage Alfredo calls the guests as witnesses and declares that he doesn't owe Violetta anything. He throws his winnings at her. Giorgio Germont, who has witnessed the scene, rebukes his son for his behavior. The baron challenges his rival to a duel.

-INTERMISSION-

ACT III – Violetta's Parisian Home

Violetta is dying. Her last remaining friend, Doctor Grenvil, knows that she has only a few more hours to live. Alfredo's father has written to Violetta, informing her that his son was not injured in the duel. Full of remorse, he has told him about Violetta's sacrifice. Alfredo wants to rejoin her as soon as possible. Violetta is afraid that he might be too late. The sound of rampant celebrations are heard from outside while Violetta is in mortal agony. But Alfredo does arrive and the reunion fills Violetta with a final euphoria. Her energy and exuberant joy of life return. All sorrow and suffering seems to have left her—a final illusion, before death claims her.



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Artist Biographies



Angela Mortellaro (Violetta Valéry) Praised for her captivating stage presence and recognized for her versatility, Soprano Angela Mortellaro excels in diverse vocal styles and consistently delivers quality performances in demanding roles. “The luscious tonal and physical beauty, fluent coloratura and vivacious stage presence Mortellaro brings to the title role makes us root for [her] right out of the gate.” (Chicago Tribune) Mortellaro has sung leading roles in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Thaïs*, *L’elisir d’amore*, *Le nozze di Figaro* and more. She

has participated in the creation of several notable World Premier productions including Charlie Parker’s *Yardbird*, *Silent Night*, and *The Manchurian Candidate* with companies such as the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Minnesota Opera, and Opera Philadelphia, and appeared in *Silent Night*’s television premier on PBS. It has been reported: “Perhaps the most impressive of all was Mortellaro, whose surprisingly powerful lyric soprano carried excitingly through the house.” - Opera News
Mortellaro has performed more than twenty principle roles from the standard operatic repertoire, playing a variety of characters convincingly as she “has a great character actor’s gift of disappearing into a role.” - Pioneer Press. The Soprano has sung five Donizetti heroines: Adina in *L’elisir d’amore* with the Dorset Opera Festival (UK), Norina in *Don Pasquale* with Sarasota Opera, Galatea in *Il Pigmaliione* and the title role in *Rita* with Chicago Opera Theater, and Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Minnesota Opera, Dayton Opera, and Opera North. She has been described as a “perfect” Adina, and gave a “riveting - and heart-wrenching” portrayal of Lucia. Of her performances in Chicago as Galatea and Rita, “There’s not a moment when she is around that you don’t realize that she is on stage.” - Opera Wire, 2018.

Other distinguished roles include Juliette in Gounod’s *Romeo et Juliette* with Minnesota Opera, and a “tour de force” performance in the title role of Massenet’s *Thaïs* with Florida Grand Opera. In Mozart, Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Minnesota Opera and Despina in *Così fan tutte* with Sarasota Opera and Minnesota Opera, where she has been consistently praised for her acting, and was a “foxy” Despina, delivered with “expert comic timing.” - MinnPost. Other accomplishments are: Micaela in Bizet’s *Carmen* with Central City Opera, Musetta in Puccini’s *La Bohème* with Sarasota Opera, and more. Mortellaro has appeared in concert singing the Soprano Solo in Vaughn Williams *A Sea Symphony* and Orff’s *Carmina Burana* with The Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra and in Beethoven’s *Choral Fantasy* with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. She recently performed Mozart’s *Exsultate*, jubilate with Suburban Symphony Orchestra and Heights Chamber Orchestra, Beethoven’s *Mass in C* with

Akron Symphony, and Margaret Brouwer's Voice of the Lake with the Blue Streak Ensemble. She has sung Bach's Magnificat, Mahler's Symphony No. 4, Samuel Barber's Knoxville Summer of 1915, and James Whitborne's oratorio, Anneliese and has sung in concert with the Key Chorale of Sarasota, Sarasota Orchestra, Artist Series of Sarasota, and Orlando Philharmonic.



Benjamin Werley (Alfredo Germont) praised as having a “gleaming, flexible tenor” (Opera News)—was first bitten by the opera bug while attending a performance of Puccini's *Tosca*. He has been pursuing an operatic career ever since. A graduate of the Jacob's School of Music at Indiana University, Werley was one of twenty singers nationwide selected to sing in the semi-finals of the 2012-2013 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in New York City. He has since participated in many

prestigious young artist programs, including the Merola Opera Program, Santa Fe Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Virginia Opera, Opera Colorado, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and Martina Arroyo's Prelude to Performance. During that time, he sang Don Ottavio in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Merola), Farmer in the world premiere of *The Scarlet Letter* by Lori Laitman (Opera Colorado), Courier in Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* and Deiner 3 in Strauss's *Capriccio*. (Santa Fe Opera), Don José (Martina Arroyo's Prelude to Performance), Arturo in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Narraboth in Strauss's *Salome* (Florida Grand Opera). He has also been a soloist with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, The Western Piedmont Symphony, and the Queens Symphony Orchestra. This season, Werley returned to Virginia Opera in their first ever production of Kurt Weil's *Street Scene*. He makes his Cleveland Opera Theater and role debut as Alfredo in *La traviata* this April, and makes his debut this Summer at Central City Opera as Red Whiskers in their production of Britten's *Billy Budd*, in which he will also be covering Captain Vere.



Grant Youngblood (Giorgio Germont) Hailed as a tall, dashing baritone “with a robust sound with ringing top notes,” Grant Youngblood's many orchestral appearances have garnered enthusiastic praise for his “smooth lyric baritone voice bringing beautiful shading and color to the score.” Recent engagements for Mr. Youngblood have included returns to Dayton Opera as Rigoletto, Iago in *Otello*, and for their season opening Russian Panorama

gala; a return to Central City Opera as Horace Tabor in its 60th anniversary production of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*; and performances at both Baltimore Concert Opera and Opera Delaware in the title role of *Macbeth*. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut & telecast in *Capriccio*; a debut with Opera North in the role of Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*; and a company debut at the Nashville Opera in his signature role of Germont in *La traviata*. Other recent engagements include *Rigoletto* with both Brevard Music Center and Asheville Lyric Opera. Having performed leading roles with opera companies in America & internationally, Mr. Youngblood made his international concert debut with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra in the 1999 Liturgica Festival. He has performed *Reynard*, Mass, *Requiem Canticles*, and *Canticum Sacrum* for a Stravinsky Festival mounted by the San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas; and he has appeared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in concert performances of Copland's *Old American Songs* under the baton of Miguel Harth-Bedoya. Opera-in-concert appearances have included *Figaro in Il barbiere di Siviglia* with the Buffalo Philharmonic, as well as *Ruggiero in Halevy's La Juive* with Opera Orchestra of New York at Carnegie Hall. Concert highlights have included Verdi's *Requiem* with the Orcestra Nacional de Mexico under Carlos Miguel Prieto; Handel's *Messiah* with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, the Duke University Chapel Choir, and the Delaware Symphony; Bloch's *Sacred Service* with the Harrisburg Symphony; *Carmina Burana* with the National Chorale at Avery Fisher Hall, the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, the Charleston Symphony, and the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra; the title role in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Princeton University Concert Choir and Duke University's Chapel Choir; Copland's *Old American Songs* with the Delaware Symphony; Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with the National Chorale at Avery Fisher Hall and at the U.S. Naval Academy; the *Mozart Requiem* with the Master Chorale of Washington D.C. at the Kennedy Center, and with the Phoenix Symphony under the baton of Robert Moody; the Brahms *Requiem* with the Louisiana Orchestra, the Boise Philharmonic, and the Anchorage Symphony; Mahler's *Symphony #8* with the Grand Rapids Symphony; Britten's *War Requiem* with the North Carolina Master Chorale; and Opera Gala concerts with Orlando Opera, L'Opéra de Montréal, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Delaware Symphony, and Sugar Creek Symphony & Song. Mr. Youngblood's orchestral repertoire includes major works of Bach, Barber, Beethoven, Bloch, Brahms, Copland, Duruflé, Fauré, Gounod, Handel, Mahler, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Paulus, Ravel, Saint-Saëns, Stravinsky, Vaughan Williams, Verdi and Walton. Additional concert engagements have included appearances with the Dallas Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the

Florida Philharmonic, the Chautauqua Symphony, the Louisville Symphony, the Naples Philharmonic, the Jacksonville Symphony, the Spokane Symphony Orchestra, and the Bucharest Philharmonic, among others. Mr. Youngblood has been praised as well for his exceptionally expressive artistry in recital, with appearances throughout the United States.



Domenico Boyagian (Conductor and Music Director) Praised as a “born conductor,” by the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Domenico Boyagian, has dedicated himself to symphonic music and opera, producing performances of compelling artistry and beauty. Boyagian “appears to be a conductor for whom the music is the sole point of standing before musicians.” (The Plain Dealer) He is Musical Director of Cleveland Opera Theater and Suburban Symphony. As Music Director, Maestro Boyagian

has made Cleveland Opera Theater the primary destination for opera audiences in Northeast Ohio, providing what “Cleveland has endured so long without.” (The Plain Dealer) Recent seasons under Boyagian’s leadership featured canonical works such as Puccini’s *La Bohème*, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*, Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*, Previn’s *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and more. Recently appointed leader of Suburban Symphony, a robust community orchestra in its 64th year, 2018-2019 marks Maestro Boyagian’s inaugural season with the organization. His repertoire embraces symphonic works by Beethoven, Dvorak, Rachmaninoff, Tchaikovsky, Respighi and Mahler, and operatic works such as *Barbiere di Siviglia* by Rossini and *La Traviata* by Verdi; and he will lead a performance of Margaret Brower’s Oratorio, *Voice of the Lake*. As Music Director of the Ohio Philharmonic, he received accolades for his compact disc recording with Centaur Records, featuring Italian pianist Antonio Pompa-Baldi: “full of muscle and fire where it counts.” (The Plain Dealer) Performing selections of Edvard Grieg, “the soloist and conductor Boyagian maintained such close contact that the score unfolded with seamless vibrancy.” (Donald Rosenberg, The Plain Dealer) Boyagian’s passion for conducting opera extends beyond his work with Cleveland Opera Theater, And has resulted in performances of Mozart, Puccini, Verdi and Donizetti with companies such as Florida Grand Opera, Opera North, Opera Southwest, Opera Delaware and the Manhattan School of Music. Performances of symphonic works include Verdi’s *Requiem* with the National Symphony Orchestra and Chorus of Costa Rica, and appearances with Palm Beach Symphony, Cleveland Philharmonic, and the Sofia Festival Orchestra. Born and raised in Bologna, Italy, Maestro Boyagian is the proud son of internationally renowned Metropolitan Opera Verdi Baritone, the late Garbis Boyagian, who inspired his son’s

innate passion for opera and appreciation for vocal artists. In 2000 Boyagain came to the USA to further his musical studies, after receiving diplomas from Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy, and Conservatorio “G.I. Martini” in Bologna, Italy; and he holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and California State University, Northridge. In recognition of his burgeoning talent, Boyagian was named “one of 10 most successful Italians in the U.S.” by the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce in New York City, and is a “Most Distinguished Artist” Grant Recipient from the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture in Cleveland, Ohio. Domenico is a known and respected member of the musical community in Cleveland, recognized not only as a conductor, but also as a pianist, songwriter and educator.



Scott Skiba (Stage Director/ Executive Artistic Director) Award-winning Stage Director, Scott Skiba has led more than 60 new operatic productions. Scott serves as Executive Artistic Director of Cleveland Opera Theater where he has directed productions of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *La Rondine*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Il Tabarro*, *Pagliacci*, and *The Threepenny Opera*. A proponent of new opera,

Scott’s initiatives helped launch {NOW} Fest - Cleveland Opera Theater’s annual event to create, develop, and produce new opera. Other notable directing credits include: *Roméo et Juliette* (Pensacola Opera), *Macbeth* (Opera Tampa), *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (Toledo Opera) *La Finta Giardiniera* (Univ. of Tenn. Opera Theater), *Faust* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Natchez Festival of Music), *The Student Prince* (Opera Grand Rapids), *Carmen* (Opera Western Reserve), *Suor Angelica* and *La Bohème* (Mobile Opera), and *Don Giovanni* (Hawaii Performing Arts Festival). A proponent of new opera, Scott’s initiatives helped launch {NOW} Fest, Cleveland Opera Theater’s annual event to create, develop, and produce new opera; and The New Opera Project – fostering the development and world-premiere of Six Micro-Operas in collaboration with Interlochen Arts Academy, Parallel 45 Theatre Company and Inside Out Gallery in Traverse City, Michigan. Scott’s work includes producing interdisciplinary collaborations in alternative venues including: the professional premiere of *Sweets By Kate* (Marble City Opera) performed in Sugar Mama’s Bakery in Downtown Knoxville, and the *iLyríc* project - an installation of nine different operas in the piazze of Arezzo, Italy in collaboration with the ICASTICA Festival. Scott serves as Executive Artistic Director of Cleveland Opera Theater, Director of Opera Studies for the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music, Assistant Artistic Director for Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, and Acting instructor for the Cornish

American Song Institute. Upcoming engagements include: *La Tragédie de Carmen* (Hawaii Performing Arts Festival), *La Bohème* (Cleveland Opera Theater), and *Don Giovanni* (Indianapolis Opera)
www.ScottSkiba.com

Dean Buck (Assistant Conductor) is a Cleveland-based conductor currently completing his Masters of Music at Cleveland Institute of Music under the instruction of Carl Topilow. Born and raised in Westlake, Ohio, Dean completed his undergraduate studies in music performance at The New School in New York City in 2012. Upon graduating, Dean served as principal conductor of the Brooklyn-based company LoftOpera from 2013 to 2016. With LoftOpera, he conducted eight productions including their critically-acclaimed stagings of Puccini's "La Bohème", Britten's "The Rape of Lucretia", and Mozart's "Cosi fan Tutte". An avid conductor of new music, Dean has led over 20 premieres of new works including Keith Fitch's "The Range of Light" at CIM and Spencer Snyder's "Scopes" with the New York-based Fresh Squeezed Opera. Dean has served as assistant conductor for Cleveland Opera Theater since fall of 2017, and has worked on their productions of Weill's "The Threepenny Opera," Puccini's "Madama Butterfly," and Rossini's "Il Barbiere di Siviglia." Recent and upcoming engagements include concerts with Heights Chamber Orchestra, Suburban Symphony Orchestra and the premiere of John Aylward's "Switch" with Fresh Squeezed opera.

Elizabeth Frey (Flora Bervoix) mezzo-soprano, has been lauded by critics as an "achingly sensitive singer," praised for her "warm shimmering voice and engaging stage presence." Recent performances include Romeo in The Cleveland Opera's production of Bellini's *I capuleti e i Montecchi*, Mercedes in Dayton Opera's production of *Carmen*, as well as the alto soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Dayton Philharmonic. Ms. Frey also recently performed with the Utah Festival Opera as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* and Edith in *The Pirates of Penzance*. She has also performed with Des Moines Metro Opera, and the Maryland Opera Society. Ms. Frey has performed the roles of Dido in *Dido and Aeneas*, Sesto in *La clemenza di Tito*, Hansel in *Hänsel und Gretel*, and Ruggiero in *Alcina*, and Dryad in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Upcoming performances include a debut with Opera MODO, and as the Alto Soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Fort Collins Symphony Orchestra.

James Eder (Dr. Grenvil) Acclaimed as having a "robust" and "resonant" voice of "ample quality and quantity," bass, James Eder, has performed in a variety of concerts and roles across the operatic repertoire. His dramatic interpretations have been hailed as "inspired," "laugh-out-loud

funny,” “a comic delight” and “marvelously sinister and threatening.” James has worked with companies including Sarasota Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Opera Columbus, Knoxville Opera, Pittsburgh Festival Opera, Cleveland Opera Theater, Chattanooga Symphony & Opera, and Opera Theater of Pittsburgh. Earlier in 2019, James performed as the High Priest of Baal in *Nabucco* and the 2nd Armored Guard in *Die Zauberflöte* with Sarasota Opera. This summer, following an unsuccessful run as Dr. Grenvil in *La traviata* in 2018 with Cincinnati Opera, James will return to Cincinnati as Truffaldino in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. A native of Cleveland, James received his M.M. in Vocal Performance at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville and his B.M. in Vocal Performance from The Ohio State University.

Alexis Reed (Annina) Soprano Alexis Reed is in her fourth year at Oberlin College and Conservatory, where she pursues a B.Mus. in voice performance under the tutelage of Marlene Rosen. Reed has been praised by Cleveland Classical for “soaring vocally” and demonstrating “her gift for acting”. Recently, Reed was seen as Ma in *Proving Up*, for which she collaborated with composer Missy Mazzoli. Reed also worked with composer Du Yun as Mrs. X.E. in the second-ever production of *Angel’s Bone* in 2018. Other credits include *La Rondine* (Lisette), *The Turn of the Screw* (Miss Jessel), and *The Mikado* (Yum-Yum). Reed has presented Berio’s *Folk Songs* and debuted Kim’s *Four Love Songs* with Oberlin Sinfonietta, appeared in masterclasses with renowned musicians Marilyn Horne and Gerald Finley, and performed in intimate recitals with non-profit organization *Stars in the Classics*. *This March*, Reed received the Arden J. Yockey Scholarship for voice at Tuesday Musical’s Scholarship Competition.

Brian Skoog (Gastone de Letorières) is an American tenor known for his “strong voice” and “lovely vocal quality” (Cleveland Classical). Last summer, he performed the role of Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* for the Nina Odescalchi Kelly Family Matinee at Central City Opera, where he also sang the dual role of Larry/Matt in Mollicone’s *The Face on the Barroom Floor*. In 2018, Skoog made his Nashville Opera debut, singing Theseus in Morganelli’s *Hercules vs. Vampires* and Elder Hayes in Floyd’s *Susannah*. He also recently premiered with Utah Festival Opera, Dayton Opera, and Toledo Opera. Earlier this season, Skoog performed the role of Tebaldo in Bellini’s *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* with The Cleveland Opera. Skoog has previously appeared in Cleveland as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Tito in *La clemenza di Tito*, Jenik in *The Bartered Bride*, and the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel*. In February, he will perform the role of Count Gustav in Lehár’s *The Land of Smiles* with The Cleveland Opera. This April, Skoog will appear as Chester A. Arthur

in *The Ballad of Baby Doe* with Toledo Opera. Skoog recently performed with the Toledo Symphony as the tenor soloist for Handel's *Messiah*. In December, he was featured as the tenor soloist for *Messiah* with members of the Fort Collins Symphony in Colorado. He has also sung with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, most recently performing Bach and Beethoven on their Masterworks Series. Last season, Skoog appeared in a series of performances of Schumann's *Dichterliebe*. In 2017, he was the tenor soloist for the world premiere of Margaret Brouwer's *Voice of the Lake*. Seen and Heard International praised his "brilliant" singing and called him "one of the highlights." Earlier this season, Skoog reprised his role in *Voice of the Lake* in two additional performances led by Domenico Boyagian. On March 2, Skoog will be a guest artist in a concert with soprano Chanáe Curtis and at Forest Hill Church in Cleveland Heights.

Daewon Seo (Barone Douphol) A native of South Korea, baritone Daewon Seo will be making his debut with the Cleveland Opera Theater in the role of Barone Douphol from *La Traviata*. He has recently received Artist Diploma degree from Oberlin Conservatory. This season, he joins the Canto-Louisville program to sing Escamillo from *Carmen*. He also will be covering the role of Falke from *Die Fledermaus* with Martina Arroyo's Prelude to the Performance and the role of Siméon from *L'enfant prodigue* with Camerata New Jersey Opera. He has been chosen as the winner of Butler Opera Competition, William C. Bard Competition and Lois Alba Aria competition and the S.Livingston Mather Competition for three years. Previous credits include *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Harlekin) with Miami Music Festival, *Le nozze di Figaro* (Conte) with Oberlin Opera Theatre, *Don Giovanni* (Don Giovanni) with Seoul National University, and *Le nozze di Figaro* (Figaro), *Hansel und Gretel* (Vater) with Butler Opera Center.

Bryant Bush (Marchese d'Obigny) the Bass-Baritone from Mobile, Alabama is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music, studying under the direction of Dr. Dean Southern. Bush performed in leading roles such as Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*. In April, 2018, Bush was invited to represent the CIM Voice Department in a concert series at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. where he sang Russian art songs by Dmitri Shostakovich. That same spring, Bush made his debut with Cleveland Opera Theater as the Imperial Commissioner in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. Bush is a frequent young artist for Cleveland Opera Theater, having most recently appeared as King Melchior in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (December 2018), and as Stan in *Coal Creek* (February 2019), a brand new opera produced as part of Cleveland Opera Theater's annual Opera {NOW} Fest.

Joshua Sanchez Muñiz (Giuseppe) tenor, will be performing the role of Giuseppe and also a chorus member. He is a junior vocal performance student at Kent State University and studies with Timothy Culver. A performer in diverse genres, Joshua is a member of the Kent State Chorale and has sung with the Cleveland Chamber Choir. He has performed in opera chorus with Cleveland Opera Cleveland. Joshua has also performed various opera roles, including Alfredo (Die Fledermaus) and Tom Richards (The Story of an Hour) with Kent Opera, Slender (Merry Wives of Windsor) with Eastern Kentucky University, Lover (Il Tabarro) with Opera Per Tutti, and a villager (Verlorene Heimat) with Cleveland Opera Theater as well as various Opera Scenes with KSU. Joshua is excited to perform with this wonderful cast and excellent company once again.

Matthew McCarren (Scenic Designer) currently serves as the Resident Scenic Designer and Technical Director for Cleveland Opera Theater and Thingamajig Theatre Co. in Pagosa Springs, CO. Matthew's designs have been featured nationally and internationally at the 2007 Prague Quadrennial, and the 2013-2016 ICASTICA Arts Festival, Arezzo, IT. His regional credits include work at 59E59 NYC, The Helen Mills Theatre, NYC, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, The Crook Theatre Co., NYC, Thingamajig Theatre Co., and Parallel 45 Theatre Co. Productions include *Blood Wedding*, *Spring Awakening*, *Man of La Mancha*, *The Blowin of Baile Gall*, *Stones in His Pockets*, *A Little Night Music*, *'Night Mother*, *My Fair Lady*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Mr. Burns*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Madama Butterfly*.

Steve Shack (Lighting Designer) is a Cleveland-based designer whose most recent work has been seen at Cleveland Opera Theater, Baldwin Wallace University, Beck Center for the Arts, Cain Park, Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, Magnificat High School, and Playhouse Square. Steve made his opera debut last season with *Il matrimonio segreto*, and has since designed *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *The Rakes Progress*, and the Midwest premiere of Tom Cipullo's, *Glory Denied*. Steve returns to Hawaii Performing Arts Festival this summer to design *La Tragédie de Carmen*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Company*.

Esther Haberlen (Costume Coordinator) As a costume designer, draper and wardrobe supervisor, she holds over 100 production credits at Beck Center for the Arts, Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Music, Case Western Reserve University/ Cleveland Playhouse MFA Acting Program, Great Lakes Theater, Cleveland Institute of Music, Cleveland Opera Theater, Cleveland Public Theater, and Dobama Theater. Esther holds a BFA in theater production and design from the State University of

New York- Fredonia and has also worked regionally for such theaters as the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, Pittsburgh Public Theater and The Chautauqua Conservatory. Esther is also costume director for ISF's sister companies Great Lakes Theater and Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival. A native of Syracuse, NY she now resides in Cleveland, OH and Boise, ID with her husband Richard.

Vanessa Cook (Costume / Wardrobe & Props) Ms. Cook is a graduate of the Baldwin- Wallace Conservatory and Regent University, where she earned her Master of Arts in theater. She is the owner of Cook Theatre Designs, LLC, a freelance design firm that serves community, professional and educational theatre programs. Ms. Cook has expert experience in the area of theatre production specifically costume, set and prop design and production. She is the former set/costume designer, Technical Director and adjunct professor with the Heidelberg University's School of Music and Theatre. In addition, she served as Costume/Set designer for Heidelberg's Community Music School Children's Musical theatre program. Currently, she is a theatre teaching artist (K-6) with Spark Theatre 4 Youth (Elyria) and set designer for their upcoming production of *New Kid*, an anti-bullying play slated to reach twenty schools in NE Ohio. Ms. Cook resides in Norwalk, Ohio with her husband Jeff and their four-active theater loving boys.

Robert Pierce (Production Stage Manager) began his association with Cleveland Opera Theater singing onstage in the 2014 production of *La Rondine*, later appearing in *The Pirates of Penzance* and singing the role of Angelotti in *Tosca*. He has since worked behind the scenes with the company as the Production Stage Manager for *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and {NOW} Fest. A graduate of Otterbein University and Cleveland Institute of Music, Robert is a frequent performer on northeast Ohio stages in both opera and musical theater. He has worked with Opera Western Reserve, Nightingale Opera Theater, Beck Center for the Arts, Lakeland Civic Theater, Blank Canvas Theater, and many others including production stage manager for *Glory Denied* and *The Rake's Progress* for Baldwin Wallace Opera. Favorite productions include *La Bohème*, *Street Scene*, *The Little Mermaid*, *City of Angels*, *Billy Elliot*, *Violet*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Jerry Springer: The Opera*. Additionally, Robert is a director and performer of operatic programming for young audiences in his role as Educational Outreach Director for Opera Western Reserve, where he is also the resident Production Stage Manager.



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