

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY OPERA

PRESENTS

A PROGRAM OF TWO ONE-ACT OPERAS BIOGRAPHIES

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28 AT 8PM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29 AT 3PM

ALEXANDER KASSER THEATER

GIANNI SCHICCHI

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Giovacchino Forzano

Premiere: New York, Metropolitan Opera, December 14, 1918

Sung in Italian with English supertitles

BUOSO'S GHOST

Music & Libretto by Michael Ching

Based on Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*

Premiere: Pittsburgh, 1996

Sung in English with English supertitles

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY OPERA

Anna Rebek, *Director and Staging*

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Kyle Ritenauer, *Conductor*

MSU OPERA GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES

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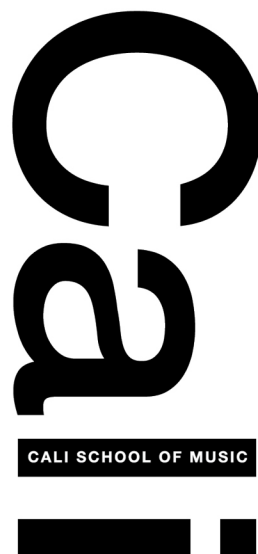
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**MONTCLAIR STATE
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BIOGRAPHIES

CREATIVE TEAM

Anna Rebek (Director)

Anna Rebek is a Mexican and Hungarian-American opera and theater director working in NYC. Anna received her BFA from Yale University in acting, then moved to NYC in 2017 to get her MFA at Columbia in Anne Bogart's prestigious directing program, exploring Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, Peter Weiss' *Marat Sade*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and *King Lear*.

In 2020, Anna was awarded the Opera Directing Fellowship at Juilliard and studied with Stephen Wadsworth and Mary Birnbaum. In 2021 she was elevated to assistant faculty status, teaching acting to Juilliard's most advanced singers.

While at Juilliard, Anna assisted on Donizetti's *L'elisir D'amore*, Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, Nicolai's *Die Lustigen Weiber von Windsor*, and Rossi's *L'Orfeo*. As an AD, she was entrusted with helping individual singers advance their physical presence on stage. Anna's favorite opera directing credits include Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* in the historic Estates Theater in Prague, Puccini's *La Bohème* at Soo Opera in Michigan, and Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* dedicated to La Virgen de Guadalupe at Co-cathedral in Brooklyn.

At Montclair State University this fall, Anna established a rigorous work ethic in her Opera Workshop class. Using techniques ranging from Anne Bogart's Viewpoints to working in neutral masks, the group explored the possibilities of movement and gesture and formed a cohesive ensemble. Anna would like to thank her family, Isaac Beauchamp, DB, her mentors, Lori McCann, Beth Roberts, Jeffrey Gall, Victoria Schwartzman, William Hobbs, Kyle Ritenauer, Heather Freedman, Maamoun Tobbo and Karen Driscoll for their support throughout this process. Toi toi toi to the fabulous cast of *Gianni Schicchi* and *Buoso's Ghost* for their incredible work.

New York City-based conductor **Kyle Ritenauer** is a rising presence in the classical music world. On faculty at the Manhattan School of Music, Kyle

regularly conducts the school's chamber ensemble Camerata Nova, leads the school's Winds, Brass, Percussion Orchestra Training Program, conducts the Composers Orchestra, rehearses the Philharmonia and Symphony Orchestras, and serves as the 5th Director of the MSM Percussion Ensemble in its 63 years of existence. This season Kyle will work with the National Symphony Orchestra, Symphony New Hampshire, NYC's Camerata Notturna, and the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, where he is a finalist for Music Director. He will also be making his operatic debut this winter leading a double bill performance of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, and Michael Ching's *Buoso's Ghost*.

Throughout his career, Kyle has appeared as guest conductor with Symphony New Hampshire, the Norwalk Symphony, the Hudson Valley Philharmonic, the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, and Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect. In the role of assistant conductor, Ritenauer has worked with the National Symphony Orchestra, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Opera de Montreal, Orchestre Métropolitain (Montreal), the Des Moines Metro Opera, the Utah Symphony, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Kyle is a graduate of The Juilliard School's Orchestral Conducting Program as a student of Maestro David Robertson.

Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, **Victoria Schwartzman** (Music Director and Repetiteur) performs regularly as a soloist and chamber musician. Victoria has appeared at the Music Mountain Festival, in the New York Philharmonic Ensembles series at Merkin Hall, at Summit Music Festival with Dmitri Berlinsky, at Bargemusic, in the Gessner- Schocken concert series in Cambridge, WMP Concert Hall, and the Nicolas Roerich Museum concert series in New York City. After graduating from Jerusalem Conservatory, Victoria continued her education at the Longy School of Music and New England Conservatory. While pursuing various degrees in solo and chamber music performance, she was selected to perform in masterclasses given by Dmitri Bashkirov, Menahem Pressler, and Richard Goode, among others. Her principal teachers include Irina Kivaiko, Issak Kossov,

Victor Rosenbaum, Sally Pinkas, Eda Shlyam, and Eteri Andjaparidze.

As a soloist with orchestra, Victoria has performed with the Jerusalem Chamber Orchestra, the Longy School of Music Chamber Orchestra, the Riverside Orchestra, and the Greater Newburgh Symphony Orchestra. She has performed at the Quartet Program in Pennsylvania and participated in the Tel-Hai International Piano Festival in Israel and the Lyrica Chamber Music Festival in New Jersey. She is on the coaching faculty in the Vocal Department at Montclair State University and Long Island University Post as well as on the piano faculty at the Bard College Conservatory Preparatory division. Victoria is also the co-founder of the Newburgh Music Festival, a week-long immersive classical music program devoted to both solo performance and chamber music, located on the shore of the Hudson River, in Newburgh, NY.

Born in Austin, Texas, **William Hobbs** (Assistant Conductor and Repetiteur) received his Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance summa cum laude from the University of Colorado at Boulder, and a Master of Music in Piano Performance, Research and Literature from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. As soloist, Mr. Hobbs was featured with orchestras and ensembles such as the Gulbenkian Foundation Orchestra in Lisbon, Portugal (Mozart) and the University of Colorado Wind Ensemble (Stravinsky, Messiaen). As recitalist, he has been featured in festivals like the Hamptons Music Festival (Southampton NY) and the Chester Music Festival (Chester, England). He has performed full and partial recitals in over a dozen countries, including the United States, England, Korea, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Malta, Poland and others. As chamber musician, he has collaborated with many of today's top performers, including Yo- Yo Ma, Ida Kavafian, James Galway, and many others. As collaborative pianist and conductor, Mr. Hobbs works at many of the world's major opera houses, including the Opéra National de Paris, the Salzburg Festival, San Francisco Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Seattle Opera, Washington Opera and the Opéra de Monte- Carlo. Mr. Hobbs joined the Piano and Voice Faculty at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey in Fall 2010. He joined the Vocal

Arts Faculty of the Juilliard School of Music in 2014. He is currently teaching at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University (Montclair, New Jersey), and the Peabody Institute (Baltimore, Maryland). Mr. Hobbs can be heard in recordings of music by Lowell Liebermann, Xavier Montsalvage, and Dave Soldier, Christos Hatzis, and Kaikhosru Sorabji. He served as Music Director for the Opera America Songbook, which celebrated the opening of the National Opera Center in New York City. He also was the Producer for a recording of songs by Ricky Ian Gordon for Bright Shiny Things recordings, with soprano Jennifer Zetlan and the composer at the piano.

Karen Driscoll (Head of Artistic Operations/Opera) is an Adjunct professor of Voice and an opera director at John J. Cali School of Music. Most recently, she directed the fall chamber opera, *The Beautiful Bridegroom*, by Dan Shore. She has led multiple scenes programs for MSU's Opera Workshop classes, as well as role preparation productions including *Sweeney Todd* and *La Bohème*. She has also enjoyed collaborating on many occasions as not only a soprano soloist with MSU Singers and Chorale choirs but also as director of *Considering Matthew Shepard*. As a soprano soloist, Ms. Driscoll has sung leading roles with Seattle Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Florentine Opera, L'Opéra de Montréal, Vancouver Opera, Virginia Opera, Baltimore Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, National Lyric Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Opera Columbus, Toledo Opera, Opera Carolina, Hawaii Opera Theater, New Jersey State Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Long Beach Opera, Worcester Chorus and Masterwork Chorus to name a few. She is a native of Ohio where she began her music studies at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and also where she holds a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and Master of Music Degree in Vocal Performance.

Phil Clifford (Production Manager) has worked extensively in the live concert industry as a production manager and has toured the United States as an audio engineer for many artists and productions. He has worked directly with such artists as Aretha Franklin, Béla Fleck, Todd Rundgren and many others. At the Cali School, Phil manages day to day operations,

directly oversees all concert and recital activities, and teaches courses for the recording arts and production degree program.

Maamoun Tobbo (Scenic Designer) is a Lebanese theater maker based in New York City who is equally at home in the worlds of Theater, Film, and Performing Arts. He graduated from NYU Tisch School of the Arts with an MFA in Theatre and Film Design. Since then he has assisted well accredited designers, such as Clint Ramos and Jacob a Climer, and designed sets at NYU, Baltimore center stage, Rattlestick Theatre, 59E59, and Yale University. Maamoun has also directed several plays such as “*War on Drugs*” for Global Forms Theater Festival; “*Play*”, a devised work at Tanthem’s “La nuit de l’art festival”; and “*The Aliens Make Thanksgiving Dinner*” at Rattlestick Theatre.

Jeffrey Rosolen (Technical Director) is a freelance Production/Event Manager, Scenic Carpenter, and Owner of The Rose Hammer a woodworking company specializing in sustainable cutting boards.

Benjamin Weill (Lighting Designer) is a NYC based lighting designer. He has received the BroadwayWorld-New Jersey award for Best Lighting Design of a Musical. He is back for his seventh year designing the Cali School Opera. He has designed touring and sit-down shows on both coasts, including: *Trainspotting Live*, *The Mikado*, *They’re Playing Our Song*, *L’Enfant et les Sortilèges*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Monty Python’s SPAMALOT*, *HMS Pinafore*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Les Misérables*, *Ruddigore*, *South Pacific*, *Charlie Brown*, *Songs for a New World*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Into the Woods*, *Book of Days* and *The Crucible*. www.benjaminweilldesign.com

Heather C. Freedman (Costume Designer) is a New York-based costume designer and visual artist working in opera, theater, and film. Heather’s background in illustration makes drawing and painting an essential part of her interdisciplinary process. She holds her MFA in Costume Design from NYU Tisch (2020) and a BFA in Illustration from Rhode Island School of Design (2010). From 2015-2017, Heather was the Resident Fellow of Rhode Island School of Design’s European Honors Program in Rome. There, she collaborated

on costume designs for William Kentridge and Kristin Jones’s *Triumphs and Laments*, an opera performed on the banks of the Tiber River. Recent credits include assistant designer for *Funny Girl* and *Caroline, or Change*, on Broadway, as well as Glimmerglass Opera in Cooperstown, NY.

Maggie Raywood (Costume Production Assistant) joined the NYU Design Department faculty in 1992. Employed in the professional theater since 1975, she has been a draper and costume shop manager on Broadway shows, opera, and dance, in NYC costume shops as well as regional and international theaters. She has designed costumes for contemporary dance companies, for Pan Asian Repertory Company, and for eight summers of productions as part of The Season, NYU’s program of summer performances at Villa La Pietra in Florence, Italy. At Villa La Pietra she is engaged in research into the collection of early 20th Century Callot Soeurs gowns housed in the Acton Collection.

Mitchell Hildebrand (Stage Manager) is a freelance stage manager who has a BFA in Theatre Production and Design with a concentration in Stage Management from Montclair State University. Some of his recent work includes Stage Manager with the Amaze Light Festival; An Assistant Stage Manager of *Maria de Buenos Aires* with Kentucky Opera; Production Assistant with *The Book of Mormon* second national tour (NETworks); and Scenic Designer with The Saddle River Youth Theatre. While at Montclair State University, he worked on: *Into the Woods*, *As You Like It*, *Brooklyn’s Bridge*, *Enemy of the People*, and *Anonymus*. @m.hildebrand

Eponine Myles (Assistant Stage Manager) is a stage manager based in the NYC metro area. She is a graduate of MSU’s BFA theatre production and design program where she concentrated in stage management. Recently, she assistant stage managed *The Office! A Musical Parody* and *The Perfect Crime* at the Theater Center in Manhattan. Other credits include *Pippin* (Montclair State University); *The Eyes of the World: from D-Day to VE Day* (Carnegie Hall); *As You Like It* (Montclair State University); and *come apart* (The Tank NYC). When she’s not in a theater, Eponine enjoys spending time with her kitten, Sabrina

the Teenage Witch.

LeAnn Overton (Surtitle Caller) is a vital member of Montclair State's adjunct faculty where she has served as music director, vocal coach and lecturer. Ms. Overton is also on the faculty of Manhattan School of Music. In addition to her recital and opera role coaching, she was also music director for the Amato Opera in Brief Educational Outreach. She continues her work as music director for the MSM Precollege. In 2014, Ms. Overton founded the summer intensive program Respiro Opera, NYC which focuses on the tenets of Alexander Technique, Body Mapping and Yoga for singers. Other institutions where Ms. Overton has worked: Vocal Arts Festival in Colorado, Metropolitan Opera Guild Educational outreach, Oberlin in Italy, Lingua e Canto Summer program in Italy. She has been a title caller at the Metropolitan Opera since 2000.

CAST

Omar Abdallah (Simone) is a Music Education major whose hope is to be a great choral conductor and performing arts director one day. Omar does both teaching and performing as a profession, singing and playing piano at local performance spots as well as giving lessons to his fellow students at Montclair. Omar is in Professor Jeffrey Gall's voice studio. "This show is so much fun to be a part of and even more fun to watch! Enjoy the crazy antics of the Donati family!"

Taylor Amato (Nella) lyric soprano, received her B.M. in Music Education from Rowan University. As a member of the Opera Apprentice program with Northern Lights Music Festival, she sang the roles of the Shepherd in *Tosca*, Mrs. Gobineau in Menotti's *The Medium*, and Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. She is currently pursuing her Master's Degree in Vocal Performance at Montclair State University under the guidance of Professor Barbara Dever. Her graduate opera performances include First Dame in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Gianetta in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, and Nella in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and Michael Ching's *Buoso's Ghost*, which she is thrilled to premiere. Ms. Amato is a leading member of both Chorale and University Singers, and she serves as Dr.

Heather Buchanan's Graduate Assistant.

William Amory (Betto) is never happier than when he is playing a comic role in a great opera with great colleagues! The role of Betto is a happy return for him as he had the privilege of performing the role of Schicchi as a master's student at MSU. When not on the operatic stage, Mr. Amory teaches voice at our very own Cali School and sings concerts—most recently Schubert's *Winterreise* with Ron Levy at the piano.

Rashaun Ashley (Pinellino/Buoso's Corpo Morto) is a junior undergraduate vocal performance major whose first opera performance will be this one. Before, he studied music informally but always enjoyed music and singing. This inspired him to continue his musical studies at a collegiate level.

Inhye Choi (Zita) is a mezzo-soprano from JeonJu, South Korea. Ms. Choi is currently an Artist Diploma student at Montclair State University under Beth Roberts. She graduated with her master's degree from Manhattan School of Music, and her bachelor's degree from Sookmyung Women's University in South Korea. She debuted in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Susanna) with the New Seoul Opera Company in 2021 and she performed as Mercédès in *Carmen* with Miami Music Festival last summer. Scene works include *Elisir d'amore* (Giannetta) with Gangnamgu in Seoul, *La Traviata* (Violetta), *Hänsel und Gretel* (Hexe), and *Aida* (Radames) with Sookmyung Women's University.

Steven Condry (Gianni Schicchi cover) enjoys a career filled with notoriety for his creative portrayals of the great "buffo" roles and is admired not only for his robust and nuanced voice, but also his natural acting ability. He has also been critically acclaimed for his comic timing and naturally clear diction. Renowned for his interpretation of Dr. Bartolo in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, the *Boston Music Intelligencer* raved of his "most delightfully surprising and truly brilliant performance..." He has performed the role over 100 times with companies in Houston, San Francisco, Washington, Portland, Calgary, and many others. Upcoming engagements include Scarpia in *Tosca* with Opera Carolina and *The Pirates of Penzance* Opera Grand Rapids. Mr. Condry also holds the position of

Music Recruitment and Events Coordinator at Cairn University, where he also serves as adjunct faculty and co-director of Opera Theater.

This is **Matt Delavan** (Betto)'s second semester as a musical theater transfer student. Although it is not part of his studies, opera has been a passion of his since he was little. Thanks to his loving family for their undying support!

Soprano **Runyu Feng** (Gherardino) from Hangzhou, China, is a first year master's student at Montclair State University, and received her Bachelor of Music from New England Conservatory in 2022. She sang with the Miami Festival in 2022 as First Spirit in *Die Zauberflöte* and covered Pamina. She also performed with Chicago Summer Opera as Cissie Woodger in *Albert Herring*. During her studies at NEC, she performed as Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Valletto in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and sang in two departmental voice recitals and seasonal choir performances. She also participated as a soloist in Lee Mingwei's "Sonic Blossom", an art installation project in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. She is a member of a Flute-Soprano-Piano trio group with pianist Hanwen Shi, and flutist HuiLam Mak which performed in the Boston area.

Olivia Gasper (La Ciesca) is a versatile soprano whose charm and charisma shine in anything from opera to musical theater to pop and rock. Some of her recent operatic roles include La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi* and *Buoso's Ghost*, Mrs. Nolan in Menotti's *The Medium*, the chorus of *The Magic Flute* with Des Moines Metro Opera, and Cendrillon in Pauline Viardot's *Cendrillon*. Olivia studies with Professor Beth Roberts at Montclair State University, and is working toward a Vocal Performance M.M. degree. Outside of performance, Olivia works as a graduate assistant for MSU's Opera Program

and as an Administrative Assistant for Savannah VOICE Festival.

Mia Grizzuti (Nun 2) is absolutely ecstatic to be in her first opera, *Buoso's Ghost*! She is a freshman musical theater major at Montclair State University. In the past she studied with Linda Benanti, and is excited to continue pursuing her vocal training with Professor Jan Prokop!

Gabrielle Guida (Master Spinelloccio/Amantio di Nicolao/Magistrate), mezzo-soprano, is a junior Voice Performance major at the Cali School of Music. Previous roles include Cherubino in Montclair State University's production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Mozart), Annu in *Thumbprint* (Sankaram) with Cali's Opera Workshop under the direction of Karen Driscoll. She plans to continue her vocal performance studies following her undergraduate degree and would like to thank Anna Rebek, William Hobbs, Vica Schwartzman, Kyle Ritenauer, and Leann Overton for this incredible experience. She studies voice with Dr. Barbara Dever.

Jenna Halvorsen (Gherardino) is a sophomore Music Education major with a vocal performance primary major. She is studying with William Amory. Jenna is from Long Island, New York where she works as a music director at multiple theaters. She hopes you enjoy the performance!

Christos Harakas (Gherardo) is a lyric tenor who graduated in spring 2020 with an M.M. degree from Montclair State University. He has studied voice under the direction of Barbara Dever. He will be singing the role of Gherardo in MSU's fall production of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and *Buoso's Ghost*. He was most recently heard as Tamino in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* directed by A. Scott Parry at this past summer's Northern Lights Music Festival. Other roles/scenes include

Harlekin in Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, Camille in Lehár's *The Merry Widow*, and Don Ottavio in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Mr. Harakas has fulfilled the duties of Graduate Assistant to Dr. Heather Buchanan, director of the MSU Choral Program. Christos plans to continue his preparation this winter for his performance career.

Mitchell Hernandez (Gherardo) is originally from Canyon, Texas, where he obtained his B.M. in Vocal Performance from West Texas A&M University. Mitchell is pursuing his M.A. in Music Composition from Montclair State University, where he studies composition with Scott Davenport Richards, and voice with Dr. Julia Rolwing. Mitchell has written pieces for musical theater, chamber ensembles, choir, and musique concrete. Mitchell has portrayed theatrical, and operatic roles such as Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*, Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd*, George Gibbs in *Our Town* (opera), Ralph Rackstraw in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Doppelgänger in *Monstersongs*, Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, Abel Tatum in *TEXAS Outdoor Musical*, and Marco in *The Gondoliers*. Mitchell hopes that you enjoy the Donati family high jinx this evening!

South Korean born Baritone **Seungchan Hong** (Gianni Schicchi) is currently in his second year of his Artist Diploma at Montclair State University, studying under Professor Karen Driscoll. Some of his previous roles include the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Montclair State University and Germont in *La Traviata* at Manhattan School of Music, where he also graduated with a M.M. degree. He has also performed scenes as Silvio in *I Pagliacci* and the title role in *Don Giovanni* in MSU's opera scene's program. Seunchan is the recipient of the Gene Consales Endowed Scholarship for Vocal Students.

So Yeon Kim (Lauretta cover) is a soprano based in New York and is originally from the Republic of Korea. She received her master's degree from Manhattan School of Music and is now studying with Professor Beth Roberts as an Artist Diploma student at Montclair State University. She recently made her debut this past fall at MSU singing the role of Frands von Frauenliebe in Dan Shore's chamber opera *The Beautiful Bridegroom*.

Puerto Rican soprano, **Clara Luz Irazo** (Lauretta), has made appearances in Europe, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the United States. Past roles include Dido in *Dido and Aeneas*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Theresa Álvarez in *The Listeners*, Prima Maschera in Zandonai's *Giulietta e Romeo*, and Ilia in *Idomeneo*. She has appeared as a young artist with Houston Grand Opera's YAVA program, Rhodes International Festival, and Phoenicia International Festival with Teatro Grattacielo. She has been a Schmidt Vocal Arts Scholar since 2018, and was named the winner of the 2nd Annual Cali School of Music Vocal Scholarship Competition, which awarded her a full ride for her graduate studies at John J. Cali School of Music. She holds a bachelor's degree from Mannes School of Music, The New School.

GaDa Lambert (Nella), soprano, does not just sing the notes, but lights up the stage with her smile and sings with passion and love for music. She is currently attending Montclair State University for her Artist Diploma, studying under Professor Karen Driscoll and voice coach Mary Pinto. She also received her Vocal Performance M.M. from Montclair State University, and her B.A. in Music from Kean University. In 2021, she was awarded first place in NATS-NYC competition (Adult Classical Division). GaDa has performed the role of The Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* and performed scenes as Magda in *The Consul*, Serena in *Porgy and Bess* and most

recently, worked in an Immersive Residency Masterclass with world renown artist, Rhiannon Giddens on the role of Julie in her opera *Omar*. GaDa sings a wide range of repertoire, and is excited to share her gift with the world after graduation.

Chisom Maduakor (Simone), baritone, is a senior Voice Performance major at the John J. Cali School of Music, studying with Professor Barbara Dever. Last summer, he played Papageno in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*'s family version with the Northern Lights Music Festival. His previous roles in Northern Lights Music Festival include Mr. Gobineau in Menotti's *The Medium* and Dandini in Rossini's *Cenerentola*. He actively performs with Trilogy: An Opera Company in Newark, New Jersey, where he's been featured as Sam in the opera *Nat Turner*, Secretary Wells in *Frederick Douglass*, Arcangel Spirit in *Emmet Till* and, recently, Cecil Campbell in *Fannie Lou, I'm Sick and Tired*.

Mackenzie McCarthy (Nun 1) is thrilled to be joining this wonderfully talented cast. She is a freshman musical theater major at Montclair State University, but is originally from New Hampshire. She would like to thank her family, newfound friends, and the faculty at Montclair for their continuous support. Enjoy the show!

Mezzo-soprano **Churan Qiu** (Master Spinelloccio/Amantio di Nicolao/The Magistrate, La Ciesca cover) is a first-year Artist Diploma student studying with Professor Beth Roberts. This past spring, Ms. Qui performed the roles of Le Prince Charmant in *Cendrillon* and Lucretia in *Rape of Lucretia*.

Diogo Ramirez (Pinellino, Buoso's Corpo Morto) is a Freshman musical theater student who is excited to start the spring semester off with a bang by being a part of *Gianni Schicci* and

Buoso's Ghost! His interest in opera peaked after listening to classical musicians at a young age. Later in the spring, he will be a part of the Department of Theatre and Dance's production of the musical *Bright Star*!

Born in Bayamón, Puerto Rico, baritone **Jairo Santana-Figueroa** (Marco) received his B.A. from The University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus. There, he had the opportunity to sing numerous works with the San Juan Philharmonic Chorale, including the requiems of Mozart, Fauré, and Verdi; Krzysztof Penderecki's *Credo*, conducted by Penderecki himself as part of the Casals Festival 2017; and Handel's *Messiah*. He also sang in the operas *Tosca*, *Pagliacci*, *Carmen*, and Manuel de Falla's *La vida breve* as part of the Lyric Chorale of Puerto Rico. While singing with Coralia, the Concert Choir of the University of Puerto Rico, he traveled to Colombia and Italy to participate in choral festivals and competitions. Jairo is currently pursuing an M.M. in Vocal Performance at MSU, studying under Professor Mark Schnaible.

Eric Sebek (Rinuccio) is a fourth year musical theater student at Montclair State University. He is excited to perform his first role in an opera with a family of opera singers supporting him. Some of Eric's favorite previous roles are Patrick in *The Radio City Christmas Spectacular*, *Pippin* at Nutley High School, and Musidorus in *Head Over Heels* at MSU. Eric is looking forward to graduating soon and auditioning for a wide range of roles and productions.

Helena Waterous (La Ciesca) has received international praise for her unique vocal beauty, expressivity, and versatility as a singer and performer. She has performed in opera theaters and recital halls across the U.S. and Europe and has recently made her film debut with the Brooklyn Telemann Chamber Society.

Helena is a graduate of Indiana University and the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, and is completing her Artist Diploma degree at Montclair State with Professor Beth Roberts.

Yun Xie (Lauretta) is a first year artist diploma student continuing her personal training at the Cali School of Music under Professor Beth Roberts. She has been a guest in the World Choir Games Socchi closing ceremony, directed by Fred Sjöberg. She has been awarded “honorary citizenship of Louisville,” and has been mentioned in *The New York Times*, *China News*, *Phoenix Television*, and *The People’s Daily*. She has also performed in the 2020 World Famous Music Institution Exchange Performance Season, as well as many well-known halls including Takarazuka Concert Hall (Japan), Carnegie Hall, National Opera House (Beijing), and Santa Maria de Monserrat Abbey (Spain). As a faculty member of Xinghai Conservatory of Music, her students have been accepted into famous conservatories in Europe, USA, Korea, and China. She has coached with Cecilia Bartoli, Diana Damrau, Renee Fleming, and Ruth Falcon, and is also an alumni of the International Vocal Arts Institute, directed by Joan Dornemann.

Doohyun Yoon (Rinuccio), tenor, is working toward his Artist Diploma, studying classical voice with Professor Beth Roberts. Doohyun was born in South Korea, and is a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music. He is heading toward his dream of performing in New York with strong enthusiasm.

WeiYu Zhang (Zita) is a mezzo soprano, and serves as the music director at Wesley UMC. She sang the national anthem at the 2019 Hunter College CUNY commencement in Madison Square Garden, where Hillary Clinton was the guest speaker. She has performed Naomi in *Naomi in the Living Room*, ZhuDan

in the Chinese Opera *Red River Valley*, Martha in *Patience and Sarah*, and Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro*. She has also performed concerts at the Kaufman Dance Studio at The Juilliard School, Carnegie Hall, the Concert Hall of the China Conservatory, the Beijing TV Golden Microphone Award Ceremony, the Beijing Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, the Tianjin Concert Hall, the Great Hall of the People, the Beijing National Cultural Palace, the Shanghai Symphony Concert Hall, and the Beijing Zhongshan Concert Hall.