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CONCERT SERIES

2023-24 Season



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The Cleveland Institute of Music empowers the world's most talented classical music students to fulfill their dreams and potential. Its graduates command the most celebrated and revered stages in the world as soloists, leading roles, chamber musicians, and ensemble members; compose meaningful, award-winning new repertoire; produce Grammy Award-winning recordings; and are highly sought-after teaching artists, administrators, and thought leaders. A testament to the excellence of a CIM education, more than half of the members of The Cleveland Orchestra are connected to CIM as members of the faculty, alumni, or both, and CIM alumni occupy hundreds of chairs in major orchestras worldwide. The school's increasingly diverse collegiate and pre-college student bodies benefit from access to world-renowned visiting artists, intensive study with CIM's stellar faculty, and the rich curriculum offered by CIM's partner, Case Western Reserve University. A leader among its peers, CIM is the largest presenter of free performances, masterclasses, and community concerts in the Midwest, hosting hundreds of events each year on campus and at locations regionwide, including Severance Music Center. Explore cim.edu to learn more.



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CIM OPERA THEATER

Friday, March 1, 2024 at 7pm | Kulas Hall
Sunday, March 3, 2024 at 3pm | Kulas Hall

Die Fledermaus

by Johann Strauss II (1825–1899)

Sung in German with English dialogue and supertitles

Dialogue translation and adaptation by Vern Sutton

JJ Hudson, stage director

Harry Davidson, conductor

Funded in part by a grant from the John P. Murphy Foundation.

Cast

Gabriel von Eisenstein: Nick Schneider

Rosalinde: Lisl Wangermann+, Mallory Bogle#, Mikayla Liu (cover),
Zara Smith (understudy)

Adele: Shira Ziv+, Ella Sobkowicz#, Liz Aranda (cover),
Yasmin Gerardi (understudy)

Alfred: Jingdian Zhou+, Madison Hurst#

Dr. Falke: Colin DeMatteo+, Ronnie Wan#

Dr. Blind: Connor Vrooman+, Yuhang Huang#, Elliot Snell (cover)

Prince Orlofsky: Caroline Friend+, Ziqi Wang#

Frank: Daniel Oh, Che Lin (cover)

Ida: Liz Aranda#, Yasmin Gerardi+

Frosch: Laura Fisk

Melanie: Zara Smith

Faustine: AJ Gauger

Natalie: Alyson Culbertson

Butler: Weizheng Ma

Caricone: Zhengheng Wu

+ Performing on March 1

Performing on March 3

Chorus

Elizabeth Aranda, Gillian Beckman, Catherina Carrington,
Amelia Carson, Alyson Culbertson, Ro Dalton, Jingjing Fan, Laura Fisk,
Yasmin Gerardi, Chuting Huang, Chenyi Huang, Polina Korniyushenko,
Xinxin Li, Ku Liang, Weizheng Ma, Heedo Park, Ruby Pine, Zara Smith,
Elliot Snell, Logan Windley, Zhengheng Wu, Jinayu Yang

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Director ... JJ Hudson
Set Designer and Construction ... Jerome Wills
Lighting Designer ... Dave Brooks
Costume Designer ... Inda Blatch-Geib
Prop Master and Set Dresser ... Dred Geib
Prop Crafts and Set Dresser ... Ennin Geib
Wardrobe Supervisor ... Tonya Johnson
Costume Assistant ... Mark Baiza
First Hand ... Donna Pedaci
Supertitles Operator ... Savanna Butcher
Production Manager ... Cassie Goldbach
Assistant Stage Managers ... Catherina Carrington and Ro Dalton
Vocal Coaches ... François Germain and John Simmons
Orchestra Manager ... Jerome LaCorte
Librarian ... Taylor Boyle
Library Assistant ... Jake Taniguchi

CIM OPERA THEATER

Interim Artistic Director ... JJ Hudson
Music Director and Conductor ... Harry Davidson
Program Director and Vocal Coach ... François Germain
Chorus Master and Vocal Coach ... John Simmons
Production Manager ... Cassie Goldbach
Opera Assistants ... Elizabeth Aranda, John Haney,
Kiana Lilly, and Ella Sobkowicz

CIM VOICE FACULTY

Mary Schiller, Head, Voice and Opera Division and Voice Department
Clifford Billions
Dina Kuznetsova
Dean Southern

CIM ORCHESTRA

FIRST VIOLIN

Alex Fried, concertmaster

Los Angeles, CA

Yuwa Roten, assistant
concertmaster

Jefferson, NC

Alex Jeoung

Seoul, South Korea

Sean Ellis

Phoenix, AZ

Michelle Bushkova

Moscow, Russia

SECOND VIOLIN

Blake Armstrong, principal

Norfolk, VA

Hayley Camp, assistant principal

Des Moines, WA

Yaming Zhu

Burnaby, Canada

Masato Chang

McLean, VA

VIOLA

Jay Lipsutz, principal

St. Louis, MO

Isabel Barron, assistant principal

Glen Allen, VA

Phoebe Jenkins

Redmond, WA

Mira Vaughn

Ellicott City, MD

CELLO

Bryan Ping, principal

San Diego, CA

Andrea Wang, assistant principal

Pleasanton, CA

Xavier Ip

Watertown, MA

Alona Sella

Tel Aviv, Israel

DOUBLE BASS

Alex Carroll, principal

St. Charles, IL

Matthew Morgan, assistant
principal

Dallas, TX

FLUTE

Harue Suzuki, principal

Buffalo, NY

Ellison Allen

Greenville, SC

OBOE

James Laase, principal
Pearland, TX
Virginia Kao
Jersey City, NJ

CLARINET

David Chang, principal
Valencia, CA
Gina Huang
Hsinchu, Taiwan

BASSOON

Georgia Clement, principal
Tallahassee, FL
Nathan Muz
Cambridge, MA

HORN

Louis Roy, principal
Buffalo, NY
Lauren Jensen
Bay Village, OH
Elena Miller
Orland Park, IL
Jesse Silverberg
Silver Spring, MD

TRUMPET

Sebastian Cole, principal
Macomb, MI
Alisa Crueger-Cain
Harvard, MA

TROMBONE

Micah Kroeker, principal
Montreal, Canada
Zeek McKinley
Columbia, SC
Ryan Whitson
Poway, CA

HARP

Miriam Kessler
Elgin, IL

TIMPANI

Jacob Chang
Winfield, IL

PERCUSSION

Sophia Luong, principal
Des Plaines, IL
Tristan Toma
Kailua, HI

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Dr. JJ Hudson (stage director) is recognized as a dynamic and sensitive director of lyric theater in professional, university, and summer-festival opera. His directing credits include works across the spectrum of lyric theater genres and his productions have received outstanding reviews in *The New York Times*, *Opera News*, and numerous regional and online publications.

In fall 2023, Hudson began as interim artistic director of opera at CIM. In the summers, Hudson is the artistic director of the Harrower Summer Opera Workshop, a young-artist training program based in

Atlanta. Prior to joining the faculty at CIM, Hudson was the Valerie Adams Professor of Opera at Georgia State University from 2021-23.

Hudson has recently directed productions with Sarasota Opera (*Rita* and *Il Segreto di Susanna*), Mississippi Opera (*La Bohème*), Natchez Music Festival (*La Bohème*), Lakes Area Music Festival (*Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Carmen*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *La Belle Hélène*, and *The Rake's Progress*), Tri-Cities Opera (*Tosca*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and *La Bohème*), Opera Tampa (*Così fan tutte*), Opera in the Heights (*La Fille du Régiment*), Asheville Lyric Opera (*West Side Story*), and Opera Roanoke (*South Pacific* and *La Cenerentola*).

Hudson is an in-demand guest director in university and young-artist opera programs. He has directed multiple productions at Temple University, Stony Brook University, Columbus State University, University of Kansas, and North Carolina School of the Arts. He has directed for young-artist programs including Opera in the Ozarks, Red River Lyric Opera, Opera Breve Vocal Intensive, and Miami Classical Music Festival. He has also served on the directing staffs of the Aspen Opera Theater, Oberlin in Italy, and Opera North.

Hudson holds a DMA in voice performance and literature and an MM in opera studies: stage direction from the Eastman School of Music, where he was a student of Steven Daigle and Carol Webber. He holds an MA in voice performance from the University of Iowa and a double BM from Stetson University in music composition and voice performance.

ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR & MUSIC DIRECTOR

Harry Davidson (conductor and music director, CIM Opera Theater) is in his 18th season as music director and conductor of CIM Opera Theater with this production. Since the spring of 2006, he has conducted over a hundred performances of more than thirty operas. In addition, Davidson supervised and conducted the score of a film of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and a livestream video trilogy of operas based on Shakespeare plays. He is in his 25th year as music director and conductor of the Duke Symphony Orchestra and professor of the practice of music at Duke University.

In July 2000, he made his major orchestra conducting debut, leading the National Symphony Orchestra in concert at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. Davidson has guest conducted orchestras in

Austria, Finland, and the US, including the Charlotte and Akron symphonies, as well as the symphony and chamber orchestras of the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, where he has held residencies on two occasions. He has held the positions of associate conductor of the Wichita Symphony Orchestra, professor of music and director of orchestras at Wichita State University, conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra, and associate professor of music at the University of Akron. In the past, he has served as a cover conductor for the North Carolina Symphony and The Cleveland Orchestra.

Davidson was a finalist in the Detroit Symphony's Antal Dorati Conducting Competition and the Hans Swarowsky Conducting Competition in Vienna.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Liz Aranda (soprano) is a second-year master's student at CIM, with Mary Schiller. She completed her Bachelor of Music at Northern Arizona University. Her roles include Spirit in *Die Zauberflöte*, Emmie in *Albert Herring*, Nella in *Gianni Schicchi*, Suor Genovieffa in *Suor Angelica*, Sandrina in *La Finta Giardiniera*, Spirit/La Fée (cover) in *Cendrillon*, and Constance (cover) in *Dialogues des Carmélites*. She performed with the Verde Valley Sinfonietta, received third at the NATS Arizona District, was awarded the Lloyd and Sally Hanson Singer/Actor Award of Excellence Scholarship, and attended the Patti and Allan Herbert Frost School of Music Program at Salzburg.

Gillian Beckman (soprano) is a fourth-year Bachelor of Music student at CIM, studying voice with Mary Schiller. Beckman has sung the roles of Despina in *Così fan tutte*, Frasquita in *Carmen*, Lisette in *La Rondine*, The Dewfairy in *Hansel and Gretel*, and Barbarina in *Le nozze de Figaro* in various opera scenes programs. She has had an extensive musical background, studying classical piano for more than 10 years and singing internationally with the Columbus International Children's Choir. She has gained additional voice and piano training through summer programs at the Frost School of Music Program at Salzburg, Interlochen, and Eastman School of Music.

Katniss Bi (mezzo-soprano) is a first-year Professional Studies student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova. Bi's stage credits include Périchole in *La Périchole* (CIM), Third Witch in *Macbeth* (CIM),

Nora in the micro-opera *A Storm We Call Progress* (CIM), Sandman in *Hansel and Gretel* (Chicago Summer Opera), Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Wuhan Conservatory of Music), Fantine in *Les Misérables* (WHCM), and Daisy in *Side Show* (Shanghai International Musicals Festival). She also sang as a young artist at the Master Players Festival & School held by the University of Delaware. She completed her Master of Music degree at CIM.

Mallory Bogle (soprano) is a first-year Graduate Diploma student, studying with Mary Schiller. Her recent roles include the title roles of Handel's *Agrippina* (Chicago Summer Opera) and Massenet's *Cendrillon* (CIM), Prioress Lidoine in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* (CIM), Alice Ford in Act 2 of Verdi's *Falstaff* (CIM), and the roles of The Princess and The Bat in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (Belmont University). She earned her Bachelor of Music in voice from Belmont University in 2020, and recently graduated with a Master of Music in voice from CIM. Upcoming roles include Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* (Berlin Opera Academy) and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* (Vienna Opera Festival).

Catherina Carrington (soprano) is a third-year Bachelor of Music student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova. Carrington performed Morgana from Handel's *Alcina* in fall 2023 at CIM. She performed her first full role as La Fée in CIM's 2022 production of *Cendrillon* and continued with a principal role in the 2023 production of Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* as Constance. Carrington was recently awarded as a semi-finalist in the Schmidt Undergraduate Vocal competition, honorable mention at the Mirabell Vocal Competition in Salzburg, and first prize at the Ohio NATS 2022 Competition. In addition to singing, Carrington assists with stage managing opera productions at CIM, including the opera scenes programs, the recent production of Cipullo's *Glory Denied*, and Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*.

Amelia Carson (soprano) is a second-year soprano studying with Mary Schiller. Carson's competition credits include second place in NATS first year treble voices, second place in NATS second year Mid-Western regionals, second place in the Mid-Western Schmidt Competition in the high school division, third place in NATS third year Mid-Western Regionals, and second place in NATS fourth year Mid-Western Regionals.

Alyson Culbertson (soprano) is a second-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova.

Colin DeMatteo (baritone) is a second-year undergraduate student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova. He has performed with CIM Opera Theater and Delphic Forge Inc. His stage credits include Marcus/Ghost cover (*Gracchus*), Papageno/Leporello (CIM Spring Scenes 2023), Thierry/2nd Commissaire (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), and chorus/Premier Ministre (*Cendrillon*).

Jingjing Fan (soprano) is a second-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova. Fan has performed the role of a brave girl in the contemporary musical *We are the Brave Ones* in China. She also sang as a young artist at Songfest and studied with Martin Katz and Kathryn Cowdrick in Nashville. Fan won first prize in the Prokofiev International Music Competition. She earned her undergraduate degree in voice performance from Xinghai Conservatory of Music in China.

Laura Fisk (soprano) is in her first year at CIM studying with Mary Schiller, as she pursues a Master of Music in voice performance. Fisk is originally from Pasadena, Maryland, and completed her undergraduate studies at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. At Belmont University, she studied with Dr. Kristi Whitten and most recently performed the role of Cendrillon in Pauline Viardot's *Cendrillon*.

Caroline Friend (mezzo-soprano) is a fourth-year undergraduate student from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, studying with Dina Kuznetsova at CIM. Friend's stage credits include the Spirit in the 2021 CIM Opera Theater film production of *Dido and Aeneas*, Dorothee in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, Mère Marie in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, and Oberto in Handel's *Alcina*. She has also made appearances in CIM's opera scenes programs. She performed in the 65th Annual Sewanee Summer Music Festival & Operafest in 2022. Friend recently made her debut in the Czech Republic as Cherubino in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* during the 2023 Prague Summer Nights Music Festival. She was a featured soloist for a performance marking the 100th anniversary of the Pittsburgh Beaver Valley Choral Society in 2023.

Annalyn Gauger (soprano) is a fourth-year undergraduate student, studying with Dina Kuznetsova. Their stage credits include Soeur Mathilde in Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and First Sprite in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, both at CIM. In summer 2023 they attended the Si Parla, Si Canta program in Arona, Italy, and in summer 2022 they attended the Miami Frost School of Music program in Salzburg,

Austria. Gauger is a Shari Bierman fellowship member of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus and has performed at Severance Music Center and Blossom Music Center.

Yasmin Gerardi (soprano) is a third-year undergraduate student at CIM, studying under the tutelage of Dina Kuznetsova. Gerardi's stage credits include many opera scenes such as Bastienne (*Bastien und Bastienne*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Elisetta (*Il Matrimonio Segreto*), and Bianca (*La Rondine*). Gerardi received honorable mention at the Mirabell Competition in Salzburg, Austria (2023), finalist in the Schmidt Vocal Competition (2020), and second place in the Regional Division of the Reston James Bland Classical Competition (2019). Gerardi is in touch with her Persian culture and performs Persian traditional music.

Chenyi Huang (soprano) is a first-year Bachelor of Music student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova.

Chuting Huang (soprano) is a first-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova. Huang's stage credits include Mimi in *La Bohème* (Nanjing University of Art) and Pamina in *The Magic Flute* (Nanjing University of Art). Huang also sang in Korean and China International Vocal Competition and won first prize and second prize of the aria group. She completed her undergraduate voice performance degree at Nanjing University of Art.

Yuhang Huang (tenor) is a second-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Clifford Billions. Huang's stage credits include Commissaire in *Dialogues des Carmélites* and Cavalleria in *Cendrillon*. Huang sang as a young artist at the 6th Austrian Music Festival, where he won the silver medal in the competition, as well as the bronze medal in the Prokofiev Music Competition and gold medal in the Singapore International Music Festival Competition.

Madison Hurst (tenor) is a second-year Graduate Diploma student from Springville, Utah. He studies with Clifford Billions. His roles include Le Chevalier in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (CIM), Fenton in *Falstaff* (CIM's Shakespeare: Operatically), Gastone in *La Traviata* (Utah Valley University), Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* (Utah Vocal Arts Academy), and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* (UVU).

Polina Korniyushenko (soprano) is a first-year Bachelor of Music student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova. Korniyushenko

performed as Amahl in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* for two years and Christa in *Verlorene Heimat*. She won first place in the Little Mozarts Competition and The American Protege. Korniyushenko has performed in Vienna, Rome, and London.

Xinxin Li (soprano) is a first-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova. Li's stage credits include the Labor Day Concert at ShengShi International Music Center, the Gala Celebration for the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, and the 2nd Guangdong-HK-Macau Greater Bay Area International Season Opening Ceremony. Li also participated in many international competitions. In 2021 she won the Potential Award at the Prokofiev International Music Competition and in 2022 she won first prize at the 10th Brahms International Music Festival. She completed her undergraduate voice degree at Xing Hai Conservatory of Music in China.

Ku Liang (bass) is a first-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Dean Southern. Liang has participated in various competitions during his undergraduate studies, such as the Guangxi Arts University "Yiyuan Cup" Vocal Competition and the Preliminary Competition of Opera Group of Vocal Singing. He completed his undergraduate music education with vocal emphasis at Guangxi Arts University. Liang is also interested in Chinese folk music and opera, and has performed in several concerts and events.

Che Lin (baritone) made his opera debut at the Taipei Opera House in 2017 in Verdi's *Macbeth*, and performed as Betto in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*. As a bass soloist Lin has performed Pergolesi's *Magnificat* with NTSO chamber music. He has also participated in many major competitions. He was a finalist of the 8th Mondial Chinese Vocalist Concours, the 52nd Francisco Vinas Singer's Competition-China Area, the 2015 Okiden Sugur Hall Music Competition, and the 13th Golden Bell Award. Lin received both a BA and MA in voice from the Sichuan Conservatory of Music. He is a first-year Professional Studies student at CIM, studying with Clifford Billions.

Mikayla Liu (soprano) is currently completing her Graduate Diploma at CIM, studying with Mary Schiller. She completed her MA in vocal performance at the University of Iowa where she served as a graduate voice TA. This summer she attended AIMS opera institute wherein she sang recitals throughout Graz, Austria. Recent engagements include

Alcina (*Alcina*), Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Violetta Valery (*La traviata*), Carolina (*Il matrimonio segreto*), and Beatrice (*3 Decembers*). In addition to opera, Liu has sung in orchestral concerts as the soprano soloist in Johann Valentin Rathgeber's *Missa in D* and Hadyn's *Missa Brevis*.

Weizheng Ma (bass) is a first-year voice performance major at CIM, studying with Clifford Billions.

Ro Alia Mengert (soprano) is a first-year Bachelor of Music student at CIM, studying with Mary Schiller. From 2022-23, she was a member of the GTCC music pathway program where she studied classical and jazz vocals. From age 8, Mengert has performed in musicals including *Annie* and *Anything Goes*.

Kwang Keun (Daniel) Oh (bass) is a first-year Graduate Diploma student at CIM, studying with Clifford Billions. Oh's stage credits include Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore* (Korea National University of Arts), Melisso in *Alcina* (CIM), and Emperor Kojong in *Become wind and clouds* (Seoul Art Center). He completed his undergraduate voice performance degree at Korea National University of Art.

Heedo Park (tenor) is a first-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Dean Southern. He completed his undergraduate vocal degree at Yonsei University.

Ruby Pine (soprano) is a senior at CIM, studying with Mary Schiller. Pine has performed the roles of Older Alyce in Cipullo's *Glory Denied*, Dorothee in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, Madame Lidoine in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Emilia in Verdi's *Otello*, and Young Blind Woman in the world premiere of *The Blind*. Pine performed in the ensemble of The Cleveland Opera's *Manon Lescaut*. Pine studied at the Frost School of Music's summer program in Salzburg, Austria, performing the role of Susanna in scenes from Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. Pine is from New York City and studied violin for 15 years at the School for Strings in New York City.

Nicholas Schneider (tenor) is a first-year Professional Studies student at CIM, studying with Clifford Billions. He most recently performed as Martin in *The Tender Land* and Pluton in *Orphée aux enfers* at Opera in the Ozarks. His other credits include Le Duc (*Chérubin*) with UMKC Opera as well as Ruggero Lastouc (*La Rondine*) and Henrik Egerman (*A Little Night Music*) with Opera in the Ozarks.

Schneider completed his master's in vocal performance at the University of Missouri - Kansas City Conservatory and his bachelor's degree at the University of Central Missouri.

Zara Smith (soprano) is a first-year master's student at CIM, studying with Mary Schiller. Her previous roles include Jessie in *Mahagonny Songspiel* and Floriana in *Zazá* with the Crane Opera Ensemble. Smith participated in the Patti and Allan Herbert Frost School of Music Program at Salzburg as well as Classical Singing and New York.

Isabella Sobkowicz (soprano) is a fourth-year bachelor of music student at CIM, studying with Mary Schiller. She sang the role of Young Alyce in Cipullo's *Glory Denied* with CIM Opera Theater. In the 2022-23 season at CIM, she sang the role of La Fée in Massenet's *Cendrillon* and Constance in Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. In summer 2023, Sobkowicz sang the role of Miss Wordsworth in Britten's *Albert Herring* with the Harrower Summer Opera Program in Atlanta. In CIM's opera scenes programs, she has sung Susanna in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mireille in Gounod's *Mireille*, Gretel in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, and the cover for Nannetta in Verdi's *Falstaff* (Act II, Scene II). She was a student at the Miami Frost School of Music Patti and Allan Herbert Program at Salzburg during the summer of 2022.

Ruoxuan (Nola) Tan is a fourth-year undergraduate voice performance student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova. Tan's stage credits include Mère Jeanne in *Dialogues des Carmélites* (CIM Opera Theater) and the 6th spirit in *Cendrillon* (CIM Opera Theater). She won the gold medal in the Hongkong International Music Competition in both the regional and final rounds in 2019.

Connor Vrooman (tenor) is a lyric tenor from Colfax, California. Vrooman studied classical voice at The College of Idaho. He performed roles including Rinnucio from *Gianni Schicchi* and Frederick from *Pirates of Penzance*. Within his professional career, Vrooman has had solo performances with the Canyon County Symphony, Opera Elect, Gemma Arts, and has performed multiple works through contract with local composers. His performing is inspired by his folk singing background, growing up in the rural Sierra Nevada mountains. Vrooman is currently studying with Clifford Billions at CIM.

Junchen (Ronnie) Wan (baritone) is a first-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Clifford Billions. He performed the role of Melisso in CIM's production of *Alcina* in fall 2023. He received the

gold medal in the Youth Group 2 (Bel Canto) at the 2021 International Art Masters World Tour Exhibition in Chengdu. He was also awarded the second prize for performers in the 16th Song Composition Competition at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music's Composition Department. His notable performances include the roles of Papageno in the first act of *Die Zauberflöte*, Notai in *Gianni Schicchi*, and various roles in the Chinese national opera *Zhuo Wenjun*. He has actively participated as a baritone in various choirs and has contributed to multiple music salon performances and choral concerts.

Ziqi Wang (mezzo-soprano) is a second-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Mary Schiller. Wang's stage credits include ensemble in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Fermo Church in Italy) and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* (Nanyi Music Festiva). Wang won second prize of the National Vocal Music Leading Talent Training Program, second prize of the Colorado International Music Competition, and first prize of the Paris Art Society Music Competition. She completed her undergraduate voice performance degree at Nanjing University of the Arts.

Lisl Wangermann (soprano) is a first-year Artist Diploma student and studies with Dina Kuznetsova. Some of her previous roles include Blanche (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), Cendrillon (Massenet's *Cendrillon*), Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*), Della (*The Gift of the Magi*), and Euridice (Rossi's *Orfeo*). In 2023, Wangermann was a semifinalist for the Dallas Opera's Lone Star Vocal Competition and a finalist for the Nightingale Young Artist Competition. She won the 2021 Louis Sudler Prize in the Performing and Creative Arts from Yale University and received a 2020 Encouragement Award from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Logan Windley (soprano) is a first-year Bachelor of Music student at CIM, studying with Dean Southern. In recent years, she has performed Eurydice in Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* and the Plaintiff in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury*, both productions with the Governor's School for the Arts in Virginia. Windley was awarded first place in the Omega Si Phi-Lambda Chapter, second place in the Omega Si Phi-Gamma Xi chapter, and first place in the Bland Music Competition.

Zhengheng Wu (tenor) is a first-year Bachelor of Music student at CIM, studying with Clifford Billions.

Jianyu Yang (tenor) is a first-year Bachelor of Music student at CIM, studying with Dean Southern. Yang's stage credits include a special mention in the Beethoven Young Musician Competition 2023, second prize in The Best Singer of BRS Beijing Royal School 2021, and fourth Prize in The Best Singer of BRS Beijing Royal School 2020.

Jingdian Zhou (tenor) is a first-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Clifford Billions. Zhou's stage credits include Ruzhou Zhang in *Yan* (China Conservatory of Music), Ruggiero in *Alcina* (CIM), and Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* (Central Conservatory of Music). Zhou won third prize in the Hongkong International Vocal Competition. He completed his undergraduate voice performance degree at Central Conservatory of Music.

Shira Ziv (soprano) is a first-year master's student at CIM, studying with Mary Schiller. Ziv's most recent stage credits include Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* (Harrower Summer Opera), Blanche in *Dialogues des Carmélites* (CIM), Ruth in *Ruth* (CIM), and Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte* (CIM). Ziv is the recipient of multiple awards and honors. Most recently, she was a competition winner of the 2023 Mirabell Palace Recital Competition in Salzburg, Austria, where she performed a recital during the highly coveted Salzburg Festival. Ziv is also the recipient of the Martha Bell Sanders Excellence Award and the Dr. Samuel Baker Fund.

ABOUT THE STAFF

Inda Blatch-Geib's (costume designer) work as a costume and production designer for more than 1,000 theatrical, commercial, and film releases has spanned 30 years and crossed four continents. Blatch-Geib's production and costume design has included commercials for Footlocker, The West Virginia Lottery's national award winning campaigns, Microsoft, Under Armor, McDonald's, TroyBuilt and The Original Mattress Factory, as well as the Cleveland Cavaliers' 1970s and 1980s themed videos, national spots for the team, and design for on court half-time shows including their mascot shield design. Her live performance and festival designs include Machine Gun Kelly's US and European tours as well as ESTFEST and Wolstein Arena productions, and her specialty projects include microphone stand designs for MGK and BlackBear. Print designs have included set styling for *Harper's Bazaar* UK Scarlett Johansson cover and spread as well as catalogue

set styling for Foundations and Kilgore Trout. Additionally, Blatch-Geib's designs have been showcased in exhibits at The Smithsonian Institute with film projects including Ohio art direction of *The Signal* starring Laurence Fishburne, and production and costume design of *The Con*. Theatrical design includes production and costume design for the special Broadway production of *Kris Kringle, The Musical*, costume design for the Cleveland Play House production of *Native Gardens*, as well as multiple productions for the Colombian National Opera. Music video production and costume design includes Machine Gun Kelly's "Alpha Omega" and "Let You Go" releases. Blatch-Geib has been the resident designer for Cleveland Public Theatre, Karamu House, Magical Theatre Company, New World Performance Lab, and CIM.

Dave Brooks (lighting designer) has been designing and building operas in Kulas Hall for over three decades. His list of favorites is long, but a few of the highlights include productions of *The Rake's Progress*, *HMS Pinafore*, and *Dido and Aeneas* for director Michael McConnell; *The Medium* and *Patience* for director Gary Race; and *The Magic Flute*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, and *Alcina* for director David Bamberger. Brooks' work has also been seen at Lyric Opera Cleveland, Cleveland Play House, Michigan Opera Theater, Dayton Opera, and Opera Pacific. His day job is as a production designer for Hughie's Event Production Services, where he specializes in corporate event design.

François Germain (program director, CIM Opera Theater, and vocal coach) has performed extensively in Europe, the United States, and Canada as soloist and accompanist. Originally from Aix-en-Provence, France, he is the recipient of many awards, including first prizes in the Radio-France Competition and the Paul and Verna Gelinias Competition. He studied at the Conservatoire Darius Milhaud and holds master's and doctoral degrees in piano performance from the University of Montreal as well as a master's degree in political science from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in France.

He is a founder and editor of the website dictionpolice.com, a leading language resource for classical singers and institutions. He has given masterclasses and workshops on French vocal repertoire in Europe and throughout the United States.

Since 2017, he has been on the music staff of the Semperoper in Dresden, Germany, as a guest vocal and language coach for new French productions. For the past 12 years, Germain has also been on

the faculty of the University of Miami Frost School of Music Summer Program in Salzburg, Austria, one of Europe's longest running and most respected programs of its kind for singers and vocal pianists. Prior to his engagement at CIM as vocal coach in 2019, Germain was an associate professor of piano and vocal coaching at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, where he was the head of the piano department and on the music staff of the Crane Opera Ensemble.

John Simmons (vocal coach and chorus master) received a Master of Music degree in piano performance from Peabody Conservatory as a student of Yoheved Kaplinsky. He also holds an Artist Diploma in piano performance from the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, Vienna, Austria, where he was a student of Paul Badura-Skoda. He was appointed to the CIM Opera faculty in 2005.

Simmons has appeared in numerous recitals in Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, and in the US at Weill Recital Hall, Merkin Hall, and the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York City. He has performed with artists and ensembles including Jonas Kaufmann, Christopher Maltman, John Aler, London Symphony Chorus, Westminster Choir, Joffrey Ballet of Chicago, Spoleto Festival Orchestra, and The Cleveland Orchestra in the Beyond the Score Series. Simmons has coached, taught, and performed at AIMS, Spoleto Festival USA, Centro Studi Italiani, Amalfi Coast, Shaker Mountain, and Lincoln Center festivals. He was pianist/coach for two seasons at the Graz Oper, teaching assistant at the Hochschule für Musik in Graz, an associate coach at the Juilliard Opera Center for three years, and on the coaching faculty at the CW Post campus of Long Island University for six years. In 2004-05, he was guest professor of collaborative piano at Rutgers University.

While in New York, Simmons played in the voice studios of many well-known teachers including Doris Yarick Cross and Anna Moffo. He was music director and pianist for New York Opera Project's production of Barber's *Vanessa* in 2004 and assistant conductor for the Lincoln Center Festival and University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, productions of *The Silver River* by Bright Sheng in 2002 and 2007. Simmons is music director and conductor for Nightingale Opera Theater in Hudson.

Jerome Wills (set designer and construction) is professor of design and technology at the University of Louisville with 20 years of experience designing for live theatrical events in the disciplines of scenic, sound, lighting, projections, and underscoring with over 250 credits across these fields.

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