



CLEVELAND  
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

# CONCERT SERIES

2024-25 Season



Season  
Sponsor

**EATON**

## About the Cleveland Institute of Music

The Cleveland Institute of Music empowers the world's most talented classical music students to fulfill their dreams and potential. Its alumni command hallowed stages across the globe as soloists, opera leads, chamber musicians, and ensemble members; compose meaningful, award-winning music; produce Grammy Award-winning recordings; and are highly sought-after teaching artists, administrators, and thought leaders. CIM's faculty likewise hail from around the country and across the world, giving students "The CIM Advantage" as they embark on professional careers. The school's increasingly diverse collegiate and pre-college student bodies benefit from access to world-renowned visiting artists and abundant performance and outreach opportunities, and from 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](https://cim.edu) to learn more.



CIM students are positioned for success, developing 21st-century skills to thrive musically and in life. This is possible because of the **CIM Advantage**, where students' artistic potential is unlocked in our nurturing environment, and hours of work and training are transformed into first-rate performances on professional stages and in the community.

Deepen your support of the **future of classical music** by making a gift to CIM's Annual Fund at:

[cim.edu/supportCIMadvantage](https://cim.edu/supportCIMadvantage)



CLEVELAND  
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC



CLEVELAND  
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

## CIM OPERA THEATER

Wednesday, April 23, 2025 at 7pm  
Friday, April 25, 2025 at 7pm  
Mimi Ohio Theatre, Playhouse Square

### ***Don Giovanni***

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)  
Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte  
Sung in Italian with English supertitles

**JJ Hudson**, stage director  
**Harry Davidson**, conductor

*Presented by Judson Senior Living.  
Supported by a grant from the John P. Murphy Foundation.*

### **Cast**

**Don Giovanni:** Brian James Myers  
**Il Commendatore:** Andrew Allan Hiers  
**Leporello:** Davis Fischer#, Daniel Oh+  
**Donna Anna:** Kiana Lilly#, Mikayla Liu+  
**Donna Elvira:** Lisl Wangermann#, Ariel Wong+  
**Zerlina:** Caroline Friend+, Shira Ziv#, Jade Rojas (understudy)  
**Masetto:** Ku Liang+, Hyeondo Park#  
**Don Ottavio:** John-Joseph Haney+, Jingdian Zhou#

### **Chorus**

Roland Alia, Catherina Carrington, Siân Davies, Colin De Matteo,  
Cassandra Dixon, Yutong Ge, Chenyi Huang, Chuting Huang, Fifi Huang,  
Polina Korniyushenko, Weizheng Ma, Julie-Michelle Manohar, Tehila  
Serri Medvedeva, Morgan Potts, Jade Rojas, Nicholas Schneider, Zara  
Renaë Smith, Ella Sobkowicz, Abby Tidlow-Tranel, Connor Vrooman,  
Ronny Wan, Logan Windley, Zhengheng Wu, Jianyu Yang, Rouyi Yu

+ Performing on April 23 | # Performing on April 25



*"We are paving a path for our next chapter by establishing connections now. We can keep enjoying our wonderful skyline views and musical activities, knowing our plan is in place."*

Max Bunker and Tony Bianchi / Bratenahl

# *Membership* is Music to Our Ears!

As a Judson at Home member, you'll have access to an engaging community, cultural programs, wellness activities and an array of dining venues. Most of all, you have all the services and amenities of a retirement community at your fingertips while living in your own home.

*Judson*  
AT HOME

Become a  
Member Today!

(216) 791-2436  
[judsonsmartliving.org](http://judsonsmartliving.org)

Read more about Max and Tony's  
experience at [judsonsmartliving.org/blog](http://judsonsmartliving.org/blog).

## PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Director ... JJ Hudson  
Set Designer & Lighting Designer ... Dave Brooks  
Scenic Construction ... Hughie's Event Production Services  
Shop Foreman ... Nate Boeman  
Carpenters ... Bradley Walland, Shawn Holland, & Paige Dumdie  
Scenic Charge Artist ... Jenny Hitmar Shankland  
Projection Designer ... Brittany Powell Blaschke  
Costume Designer ... Howard Tsvi Kaplan & Sarasota Opera  
Costume Coordinator ... Esther Haberlen  
Costume Assistant & Swing Wardrobe ... Serenity Grace Tate  
Wardrobe Supervisor & Stitcher ... Cheyenne Smith  
Wig Design ... Mary Schilling-Martin  
Makeup Design ... Francine Grassi & Rocco Grassi  
Wardrobe Crew ... Virgo Denning, Victoria Mearini, & Alice Waraxa  
Production Manager ... Cassie Goldbach  
Stage Manager ... Sarah Renzoni  
Assistant Stage Manager ... Calysta Jacobs  
Assistant Conductor ... Michelle Bushkova  
Vocal Coaches ... François Germain & John Simmons  
Supertitles Operator ... Laura Fisk  
Dance Choreographer ... Julie Andrijeski  
Fight Director ... Dusten Welch  
Intimacy Director ... Laura Welsh  
Dance Captain ... Catherina Carrington  
Fight Captain ... Connor Vrooman  
Intimacy Captain ... Julie-Michelle Manohar

## 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 Assistant ... John Joseph Haney

## CIM VOICE FACULTY

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

## CIM ORCHESTRA

### FIRST VIOLIN

Dariia Rakhmanina, concertmaster  
*Brovary, Ukraine*  
Yaming Zhu, assistant  
concertmaster  
*Burnaby, Canada*  
Tsung Han Hsieh  
*Taipei, Taiwan*  
Joshua Chan  
*Hong Kong*  
Avery Tracy  
*Santa Clarita, CA*

### SECOND VIOLIN

Blake Armstrong, principal  
*Norfolk, VA*  
Clara Kim, assistant principal  
*Frisco, TX*  
Chloe Choi  
*Los Angeles, CA*  
Alex Fried  
*Los Angeles, CA*

### VIOLA

Aubrey Williamson, principal  
*Austin, TX*  
Claire Draney, assistant principal  
*Missouri City, TX*

Jay Lipsutz  
*St. Louis, MO*  
Saurav Chakraborty  
*Brentwood, TN*

## **CELLO**

Matthew Rhee, principal  
*Syosset, NY*  
Ren-Jer Jong, assistant principal  
*Xindian District, Taiwan*  
Andrea Wang  
*Pleasanton, CA*

## **DOUBLE BASS**

Jason Chen, principal  
*Taoyuan City, Taiwan*  
Jake Weichert, assistant principal  
*Traverse City, MI*

## **FLUTE**

Jonah Miller, principal  
*Berea, OH*  
Lara Tsibelman  
*Manhasset, NY*

## **OBOE**

Sebastian Kelzenberg, principal  
*Tacoma, WA*  
Sara Brown  
*Manchaca, TX*

## **CLARINET**

Tao Ke, principal  
*Calgary, Canada*  
Anton Dmitrik  
*Toronto, Canada*

## **BASSOON**

Nathan Muz, principal  
*Cambridge, MA*  
Lucas Black  
*Auburn, GA*

## **HORN**

Elena Miller, principal  
*Orland Park, IL*  
Louis Roy  
*Buffalo, NY*

## **TRUMPET**

Enzo Barrett, principal  
*Lafayette, CO*  
Elijah Leonard  
*Prosper, TX*

## **TROMBONE**

Alex Karstedt, principal  
*Jacksonville, FL*  
Zeek McKinley  
*Columbia, SC*  
Jerry Min  
*Urbana, IL*

## **MANDOLIN**

Owen Axelberd  
*Suwanee, GA*

## **TIMPANI**

Seb Sheldrick  
*Faro, Portugal*

## **HARPSICHORD**

John Simmons  
*CIM faculty*

## 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*), the Natchez Music Festival (*La Bohème*), the 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

**Harry Davidson** (conductor and music director, CIM Opera Theater) is in his 19th 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 30 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 26th 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

Praised as an artist of “both voice and character to make him stand out in the crowd” (*Sarasota Observer*), Puerto Rican baritone **Brian James Myer** has earned acclaim for his vibrant stage presence and rich vocal artistry. A 2022 addition to the Metropolitan Opera roster, he has performed with companies across the U.S., including The Atlanta Opera, Opera San José, Florida Grand Opera, and New York City Opera. Recent roles include Youssef Biboldo in Opera Southwest’s world premiere production of Adam del Monte’s *Llantos 1492*, the title character in *Don Giovanni* as a guest artist with the Cleveland Institute of Music, Dandini in *La Cenerentola* with Wichita Grand Opera, and Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Tri-Cities Opera. He has appeared in multiple new works, including *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, *Stonewall*, *Silent Night*, *The Last American Hammer*, and *Approaching Ali*. As a recitalist, Myer has presented programs of Wolf’s *Mörike Lieder* and *Spanisches Liederbuch* with the Brooklyn Art Song Society and curated a program of LGBTQ+ themed art songs with Opera Delaware and Opera Baltimore.

**Andrew Allan Hiers** has been hailed as a “robust” bass-baritone known for his “mature musicianship and superb comic timing.” As a classically-trained singing actor possessing a dark, vibrant timbre with both extensive vocal and dramatic range, he brings a unique color and character to every role he undertakes. Most recently, he performed Donaldo in *Anna di Resburgo* with Teatro Nuovo for its U.S. premiere and the first performance since the initial run in 1835.

As an alumnus of the Merola Opera Program and Opera Colorado’s Resident Artist Program, where he performed Don Magnifico (*La Cenerentola*) and Falstaff (*Falstaff*) respectively, Hiers is no stranger to big stages and leading roles. Other signature roles include Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammemoor*, Leporello and Il Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Mustafà in *L’Italiana in Algeri*, Don Basilio and Don Bartolo in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and Olin Blitch in *Susannah*, in addition to the title roles in *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Gianni Schicchi*, and *Don Pasquale*.

Hiers is originally from West Palm Beach, Florida, and currently resides in central Florida. He received his undergraduate degree from Florida State University where he studied with David Okerlund prior to earning his graduate degree from SUNY Binghamton studying with Thomas Goodheart.

Off the stage he was prominently featured in the PBS documentary *Iron Opera*, currently available to watch on YouTube. In addition to his social media accounts, you can follow along Hiers' musical journey by visiting [andrewallanhiers.com](http://andrewallanhiers.com).

**Roland Alia** (soprano) is studying with Mary Schiller. She has performed in various operas with the CIM Opera Theater in productions such as Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* and Händel's *Alcina*. Previously, Alia has performed in art song recitals and musical theater productions such as Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*.

**Catherina Carrington** (soprano) is a fourth-year Bachelor of Music student at CIM studying with Dina Kuznetsova. Carrington's most recent performance credits include Amy March in Mark Adamo's *Little Women* with Harrower Summer Opera Workshop and Morgana in Handel's *Alcina* at CIM. Her past performances include La Fée in CIM's production of *Cendrillon* followed by Constance in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*. Carrington was recently a semi-finalist of the Camille Coloratura Awards 2024, a finalist in the VanderLaan Competition 2024, a semi-finalist of Schmidt Vocal Competition 2024, and won first and second prizes at Ohio NATS 2022 and 2024, respectively.

**Siân Davies** (soprano) is a sophomore studying at CIM as an exchange student from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

**Colin DeMatteo** (baritone) hails from New York City and is a third-year undergraduate student at CIM currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music studying with Dina Kuznetsova and Tyler Duncan. He has performed with the CIM Opera Theater and Delphic Forge Inc. His previous roles include Dr. Falke (*Die Fledermaus*), Marcus/Ghost cover (*Gracchus*), Papageno/Leporello (CIM Spring Scenes 2023), Thierry/2nd Commissaire (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), and chorus/Premier Ministre (*Cendrillon*).

**Cassandra Dixon** (soprano) is a first-year Graduate Diploma student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova. Dixon's stage credits include Tatiana Schloezer in *The Death of Alexander Scriabin* (Peabody Institute, independent composer project), Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel* (Chicago Summer Opera), Ma Zegner in *Proving Up* (Peabody Institute), and

Tytania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Chicago Summer Opera). Dixon was also a semi-finalist in the 2023 Classical Singer Vocal Competition. They received their Master of Music in voice performance at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University and their Bachelor of Music in vocal performance at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

**Davis Fischer** (baritone) is a first-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Clifford Billions. Fischer's stage credits include Pirate King in *I* (The College of Idaho), Falstaff in *Merry Wives of Windsor* (The College of Idaho), and Gideon in *Little Women* (Harrower Summer Opera). He completed his undergraduate general music degree at The College of Idaho.

**Caroline Friend** (mezzo-soprano) is a first-year Master of Music student from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, studying with Dina Kuznetsova at CIM. After receiving her Bachelor of Music at CIM, Friend continues to perform in CIM Opera Theater's productions. Her stage credits include Orlofsky in Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, Oberto in Handel's *Alcina*, and Mère Marie in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*. Friend also performed the role of Cherubino from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* in the 2024 La Musica Lirica Festival and at the Estates Theatre in the 2023 Prague Summer Nights Festival.

**Yutong Ge** (soprano) is a first-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Mary Schiller. She completed her undergraduate musicology degree at Wenzhou University. Ge sang at the Asian Music Festival in Singapore and won the gold award. This is her first appearance in an opera performance.

**John-Joseph Haney** (tenor) is a first-year Graduate Diploma student studying with Dina Kuznetsova. He holds a master's degree from CIM and earned his undergraduate degree from the Mannes College of Music. Haney was a Young Artist Fellow with The Cleveland Orchestra during the 2022–24 seasons, where he made his debut as Postiglione in *La Fanciulla del West* under the baton of Franz Welser-Möst. Haney has recently engaged in performances with Virginia Opera, Opera Steamboat, St. Petersburg Opera, Opera on the Avalon, and the National Theatre in Prague. Recent roles include Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Don Basilio and Don Curzio (*Le Nozze di Figaro*),

Paolino (*Il Matrimonio Segreto*), the Unknown Soldier (*Pay No Heed*), and Rodrick Usher (*The Fall of the House of Usher*), as well as soloist in Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's Requiem. Haney recently made his European role debut as Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* at the Estates Theatre in Prague. This summer, he joins Teatro Nuovo as a Young Artist, where he will debut the role of Malcolm in Verdi's *Macbeth*.

**Chenyi Huang** (soprano) is a second-year Bachelor of Music student at CIM studying with Dina Kuznetsova. She has appeared with CIM Opera Theater in *Die Fledermaus* and in scenes from *L'elisir d'amore* and *Little Women*.

**Chuting Huang** (soprano) is a second-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova. Huang's stage credits include Laoula in *L'étoile* (CIM) and Fortuna in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (CIM scenes program). Huang also won first place in the Korea-China International Vocal Competition. She completed her undergraduate voice performance degree in China.

**Fifi Huang** (soprano) is a first-year graduate student at CIM, studying with Mary Schiller.

**Polina Korniyushenko** (soprano) is a second-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* with the Cleveland Opera Theater. She performed in scenes and operas with the CIM Opera Theater. She won first place in the American Protege Competition, first in Ohio NATS 2023, and third in Ohio NATS 2024. In addition to the states, Korniyushenko has competed and performed in Vienna, Rome, and London. She has gained additional voice training through summer programs at the Frost School of Music Program at Salzburg, Interlochen, and the Ukrainian Art Song Project.

**Ku Liang** (bass) is currently studying as a graduate student in voice performance with Dean Southern. Prior to this, he attended Guangxi Arts University and obtained a Bachelor of Music degree.

**Kiana Lilly** (soprano) is a first-year Graduate Diploma student studying with Mary Schiller and Tyler Duncan. Her credits include Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues des Carmelites* and Older Alyce in *Glory Denied* with the CIM Opera Theater. This past summer she sang the role of Susannah in *Susannah* with the Harrower Summer Opera Workshop. This season, she will perform Almera in CIM's *Dark Sisters* and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*. Lilly has won the Indiana District in the Metropolitan Opera's Laffont Competition, first place in voice from the Tuesday Musical Competition, and first place and the Richard Miller award from NATS.

**Mikayla Liu** (soprano) is currently completing her Graduate Diploma at CIM studying with Mary Schiller. Recent engagements include Alcina in *Alcina* (CIM), Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* (Opera Quad Cities), Violetta Valery in *La traviata* (University of Iowa), Carolina in *Il matrimonio segreto* (University of Iowa), and Beatrice in *3 Decembers* (University of Iowa). In addition to opera, Liu has been the featured soprano soloist in orchestra performances of Bach's *Magnificat*, Johann Valentin Rathgeber's *Missa in D* and Hadyn's *Missa Brevis*.

**Weizheng Ma** (bass-baritone) is a second-year undergraduate vocal performance major at CIM, studying with Clifford Billions.

**Julie-Michelle Manohar** (soprano) is a second-year Graduate Diploma student, studying with Tyler Duncan and Dina Kuznetsova. She completed her Bachelor of Music in vocal performance and music theory, with a eurhythmics minor. This CIM Opera Theater season, Manohar played Hérisson de Porc-Épic in Chabrier's *L'Étoile*. She frequently sings baroque repertoire and was recently named the 2024 Emmanuel Music soprano fellow, performing at their Bach Institute. She also enjoys championing new music, having recently premiered chapters of Noah Hertzman's *Winnie the Pooh*, Alexander Moiseev's *The Witch*, Emma Cardon's *The Maligned*, and Steven Mark Kohn's *Will We No Longer Recognize this Place?* alongside Yolanda Kondonassis.

**Tehila Serri Medvedeva** (soprano) is an Israeli singer, of Ukrainian-Yemenite descent. She is a bachelor's student at CIM, studying with Mary Schiller. She has performed under the baton of renowned conductors, including Zubin Mehta, Ryan McAdams, and Ilan Volkov, with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. Her recording of world

premiere performance has been featured on the BBC Radio playlist, and she has recorded for the Israeli Prime Minister Prize for Composition. Serri Medvedeva won first prize at the Chestnut Piano International Festival competition in Kyiv. She has also participated in various recording projects, including film soundtracks and concerts

**Daniel (Kwang Keun) Oh** (bass) is a second-year Graduate Diploma student at CIM, studying with Clifford Billions. Oh's stage credits include Melisso in *Alcina* (CIM Opera Theater), Frank in *Die Fledermaus* (CIM Opera Theater), Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore* (KNUA Opera), bass solo in Handel's *Messiah* (CWRU Orchestra), and *Winterreise* by Schubert. He completed his undergraduate voice performance degree at Korea National University of Arts.

**Morgan Potts** (mezzo-soprano) is from Atlanta, Georgia. She is pursuing a Master of Music at CIM studying with Mary Schiller. Potts made her CIM Opera Theater debut as Hérisson de Porc-Épic in Charbier's *L'Étoile*. She has also performed roles such as Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Elisetta in *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, Sherlock Holmes in Hans Bridger Heruth's *A Certain Madness*, Announcer in Douglas Moore's *Gallantry*, and Hänsel in *Hänsel und Gretel*. Potts, a 2023 Presser Scholarship recipient, graduated with a Bachelor of Music in voice performance from Kennesaw State University in 2024. Furthermore, Potts has attended Opera Seme, Summer in Salzburg, and Texas Music Festival.

**Hyeondo Park** (baritone) is a first-year Bachelor of Music student at CIM, studying with Dean Southern.

**Jade Rojas** (soprano) is a sophomore at CIM, studying with Mary Schiller. She has performed in productions like *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, and *Tosca* with Opera Naples and GulfShore Opera. Rojas has taken lead roles in *The Secret World of Og* (2022), *H.M.S. Pinafore* (2022), and *Iolanthe* (2023) with Opera Naples. She has attended renowned summer programs, including Interlochen, ArtsBridge, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, and Bel Canto in Tuscany.

**Nicholas Schneider** (tenor) is a second-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 Renae Smith** (soprano) is a second-year Master of Music student at CIM studying with Mary Schiller. Smith received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam where she performed the roles of Jessie in Kurt Weill's *Mahagonny Songspiel* and Floriana in Leoncavallo's *Zazá*. During her time at CIM, Smith has covered the role of Rosalinde in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* as well as performed the role of Lazuli in Chabrier's *L'Étoile*. She has participated in the Patti and Allan Herbert Frost School of Music Program at Salzburg as well as Classical Singing and New York in June.

**Ella Sobkowicz** (soprano) is a first-year graduate performance major at CIM studying with Mary Schiller. With the CIM Opera Theater in its 2023-24 season, she sang the role of Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Younger Alyce (*Glory Denied*), and covered the role of Morgana (*Alcina*). In CIM Opera Theater's 2022-23 season, she sang the role of Constance (*Dialogues de Carmélites*) and La Fée (*Cendrillon*). During the summer of 2023, she sang the role of Mrs. Wordsworth (*Albert Herring*) with the Harrower Summer Opera Program in Atlanta. She is the recipient of the 2024 Irvin Bushman Memorial Prize in Singing.

**Abigail Tidlow-Tranel** (soprano) is a first-year undergraduate student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova. She has performed as the Page in *Rigoletto* with the Intermountain Opera Company and as a member of the Bozeman Symphony Choir. Tidlow-Tranel has participated in numerous summer festivals and programs, most notably the Boston University Tanglewood Institute and Curtis Mentorship Program.

**Connor Vrooman** (tenor) is a student of Clifford Billions. As a performer, he has received praise from Cleveland Classical for his acting expansiveness, while still presenting a beautiful and dynamic

voice that heightens the story behind his character. Vrooman has performed roles with CIM Opera Theater such as Younger Thomson in Cipullo's *Glory Denied*, as well as Oronte in Handel's *Alcina*. In addition to CIM Opera Theater, Vrooman has performed the roles of Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance* and Fenton in Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. He also placed as a national quarter-finalist for NATS (2021).

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

**Lisl Wangermann** (soprano) 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. Wangermann is an Artist Diploma candidate studying with Dina Kuznetsova. Her previous roles include Roselinda (*Die Fledermaus*), Blanche (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), Cendrillon (Massenet's *Cendrillon*), 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 in 2024, she was a finalist for the Gerda Lissner Art Song and Lieder Competition and received an encouragement award. Wangermann graduated from Yale University with a Bachelor of Arts in music in 2021 and completed her Master of Music degree in 2023 at CIM.

**Logan Windley** (soprano) is a second-year Bachelor of Music student, studying with Dean Southern. In recent years, she has performed as Eurydice in Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* with The Governor's School for the Arts in Virginia, and in the chorus of Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* with CIM Opera Theater. 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.

**Ariel Wong** (soprano) is a first-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Mary Schiller. Wong's operatic roles include Arminda in *La finta giardiniera* and Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro*. She has also appeared in opera scenes as Hanna Glawari in *The Merry Widow*, the Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*. This season, she is going to perform as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with CIM Opera Theater and Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Vienna Opera Academy.

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

**Jianyu Yang** (tenor) is second-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.

**Rouyi Yu** (mezzo-soprano) is a first-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Dina Kuznetsova.

**Jingdian Zhou** (tenor) is a second-year Master of Music student at CIM, studying with Clifford Billions. Zhou's stage credits include Ruzhou Zhang in *Yi An* (China Conservatory of Music), Ruggiero in *Alcina*, Younger Thompson in *Glory Denied* (CIM), Alfredo in *Die Fledermaus* (CIM), and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* (CIM). He completed his undergraduate voice performance degree at Central Conservatory of Music.

**Shira Ziv** (soprano), a second-year Master of Music student studying with Mary Schiller, made her debut with the Jerusalem Lyric Opera as Cleopatra in their 2024 production of *Giulio Cesare*. Her additional credits include Adele, Morgana, and Blanche with the CIM Opera Theater, and Pamina with the Harrower Summer Opera Workshop. This season, she will perform Zina in CIM's *Dark Sisters*. In 2024 alone,

Ziv earned first place awards from the NATS Awards, International Mozart Competition, Paris International Music Competition, and Bizet International Music Competition, along with the Boris Goldovsky Prize in Opera from CIM.

## ABOUT THE STAFF

**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 would have to 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.

**Michelle Bushkova** (assistant conductor), born in Moscow in 2004, is a violinist, pianist, and conductor. She is a graduate from both the Gnessin Music College and the Central Music School by the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory. Currently she studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music with Ilya Kaler and Olga Dubossarskaya Kaler on the violin, and Antonio Pompa-Baldi on the piano. In 2023, Bushkova began her conducting studies. Since then, her mentors have included Kathleen Horvath, Carlos Kalmar, Jorma Panula, Anthony Parnter, and Victor Yampolsky. She has performed as a soloist with the Moscow Virtuosi and New Russia Symphony orchestras in Moscow; the philharmonic orchestras of Saratov, Yaroslavl, Ankara, and Istanbul; and the chamber orchestras of Minsk (Belarus) and Portland (Oregon). As an instrumentalist, Bushkova has participated in international music festivals such as Keshet Eilon (Israel), Stay-in-May (Florida), Musica Mundi (Belgium), NYMF in Gstaad (Switzerland), Moscow Autumn (Moscow), and Siletz Bay (Oregon). As a conductor, she took part in the Conducting Intensive at The Juilliard School and the International Jorma Panula Masterclass in Kecskemét (Hungary). Bushkova was appointed undergraduate assistant conductor of the CWRU Symphony Orchestra for the 2024-25 academic year.

**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 contributor to the website [dictionpolice.com](http://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 coach at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam in New York, where he was the head of the piano department and on the music staff of the Crane Opera Ensemble.

**Esther Haberlen** (costume coordinator) is thrilled to return to CIM Opera Theater with this fantastic cast and creative direction. Her work in theater, opera, and burlesque has been seen on numerous stages around NE Ohio including Cleveland Opera Theater, Baldwin Wallace University, Cleveland Play House, Beck Center for the Arts, Cleveland Public Theater (CPT), and Great Lakes Theater (GLT), where she is the costume director and resident designer. Haberlen has also worked for 18 seasons with the Idaho and Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festivals, with which GLT is a producing partner. Recent critically acclaimed productions include *The 39 Steps* and *Murder on the Orient Express* at GLT, and *Dialogue of the Carmelites*, *The Coronation of Poppea*, and *The Threepenny Opera* with Baldwin Wallace/Cleveland Opera Theater. Haberlen holds a BFA in theater production and design from SUNY Fredonia, with minors in art history and music. Her musical hobbies include the Cleveland Pride Band (vocalist/second

clarinet) and burlesque performance as Hilde Häschenbetty. Upcoming productions include *Tease the Season* at CPT and *Peter and the Star Catcher* at GLT.

**Howard Tsvi Kaplan** (costume designer) has been the resident costume designer for the Sarasota Opera for 26 seasons, where he has designed over 120 productions. His recent endeavors include designing the costumes for *Blithe Spirit* (which he won Best Costume Award for Berkshire Area Broadway World Award) for Capital Rep; *My Fair Lady* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* for The Barter Theatre; and *Streetcar Named Desire*, *Werther*, and *The Consul* for Florida Grand Opera. Design credits include 12 years as the principal designer for Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Clown College; *THE MIKADO* at Pittsburgh Public Theatre; and *Man of La Mancha* for the Olney Theatre, for which he was nominated for a Helen Hayes Award. He was a resident designer for both The Alley Theatre, where he designed the American Premiere of ...*HENCEFORWARD*, written and directed by Alan Ayckbourn, and The Asolo Theatre, where he designed the world premiere of Horton Footes' *Talking Pictures*.

**Brittany Powell Blaschke** (projection designer) is an award-winning projection designer working in theater, opera, and dance throughout the country. Previous opera productions include *Alcina* (CIM); *Carmen* (Opera Western Reserve); *Our Town* (Georgia State University); *La Bohème* (Columbus Symphony, Jacksonville Symphony, and Cleveland Opera Theatre); *Come Home Gala* (Washington National Opera); *The Light In The Piazza* (Columbus State University); *Alcina*, *Glory Denied*, and *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Baldwin Wallace Conservatory and Penn State); *Little Women* and *Alcina* (Hawaii Performing Arts Festival); Verdi's *Macbeth* (Opera Tampa); and *Tosca* (Opera Grand Rapids). Blaschke received her Master of Arts in digital arts and sciences from the University of Florida.

**John Simmons** (vocal coach and chorus master) received a Master of Music 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 and 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, Ohio.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Monday, May 5**

7:30pm | *Mixon Hall*

**Advanced Piano Trio Program Concert**

**Tuesday, May 6**

7:30pm | *Mixon Hall*

**Advanced String Quartet Program Concert**

Find more upcoming concerts and watch livestreams at [cim.edu/events](http://cim.edu/events).

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## LIFE TRUSTEES

*CIM's highest honor bestowed on an individual who has made historically significant, unique or exemplary contributions and has played a defining role.*

A. Malachi Mixon, III\*  
Barbara S. Robinson†

## CHAIR EMERITI

Richard J. Bogomolny  
Richard J. Hipple  
Douglas J. McGregor  
Joseph B. Milgram†  
Robert F. Miller  
A. Malachi Mixon, III\*  
Richard W. Pogue  
Barbara S. Robinson†

## TRUSTEES EMERITI

*Served a minimum of ten years or has achieved a record of demonstrated distinction.*

Charles A. Bittenbender  
Peter J. Brodhead  
Brent M. Buckley  
Robert Conrad  
Rosemary Deioma  
Terrance K. Donley  
John D. Gilliam

Jeffrey P. Gotschall  
Eleanor M. Hayes  
Douglas J. McGregor  
Robert F. Miller  
Marilyn Sanders Mobley,  
PhD  
Richard W. Pogue

Mrs. Alfred M. Rankin\*  
Astri Seidenfeld  
John F. Shelley  
Christopher J. Swift  
Sonali Bustamante  
Wilson

## OFFICERS

Susan A. Rothmann, PhD  
*Chair*  
Eric W. Bower (MM '82)  
*Vice Chair*

Kevin Stein  
*Vice Chair*  
Katrina Redmond  
*Treasurer*

Bonnie M. Cook (BM '77)  
*Secretary*

## BOARD MEMBERS

*The Board of Trustees is responsible for maintaining a culture of high engagement, accountability and strategic thinking. As fiduciaries, Trustees oversee all CIM financial activities and assure that resources are aligned with the CIM mission.*

A. Chace Anderson  
Cynthia Bassett  
Michael W. Beedles  
Susan Silverberg Bewie\*  
*President, Partners for CIM*  
Daniel J. Brown  
Ann Buescher  
Irad Carmi (BM '87, MM '88)  
Charles P. Cooley, III  
Jeffrey M. Davis  
C. Thomas Harvie

Bruce Hearey  
Richard J. Hipple  
Paul W. Hogle\*  
*President*  
Peter T. Kjome (BM '89)  
Jeffrey B. Linton  
John L. Malcolm IV  
Charles S. Marston  
Roy D. Minoff  
Shawn M. Riley  
Elliott L. Schlang  
Joseph H. Thomas

Titus Underwood\*  
(BM '08)  
*Alumni Representative*  
Sanford E. Watson

## INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

Christoph von Dohnányi

Michael Tilson Thomas

\*Ex-Officio  
†deceased

As of February 12, 2025



CIM is supported in part by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.



CIM is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.



CIM is supported in part by the State of Ohio.



CLEVELAND  
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

11021 East Boulevard, Cleveland, OH 44106 | [cim.edu](http://cim.edu)