



SARAH IN THE THEATRE

Sarah in The Theatre Workshop Presentation

July 10, 2026

Sarah in the Theatre

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Mark Adamo, composer & librettist

Steven Osgood, conductor

CONTENT WARNING: Today's workshop presentation of Mark Adamo's Sarah in the Theatre contains strong language and adult themes. Content may not be suitable for those under the age of 13.

Sarah in the Theatre was commissioned by Odyssey Opera (Boston, MA).

Cast

Sarah Caldwell: Sarah Dyer-Jones

Gina Ramos & Imelda Marcos: Kelsey Watts

Icarus & Demarre Hall: Tyrese Byrd

Tim Martin: Joel Clemens

Harpy & Margaret Caldwell: Sara Nealley

Vera Tyrrell: Sarah Rachel Bacani

Benigno Aquino: Brian Linares

Juan Carlos López & Pablo Sanz: Ryan Michki

Ana Maria López & Leocadia Díaz: SarahAnn Duffy

Lily Wasserman Gold & Judith Stein: Faith Adams

Benjamin Cooper Bates & Kurt Jensen: Gabriel Chona Rueda

Mercy Cabot Lee, Meghan Murphy & Laurie Byrne: Sydney Dardis

Charles Ford & Lavar Johnson: Christopher Walters

William Crowninshield, Bob McGill & Pete Simms: Jared Peterson

Musical Preparation/Pianist: Nathaniel LaNasa

Musical Preparation: Carol Rausch

Synopsis:

Over one sleepless day and night: haunting the theater she created, made legendary, and now, by morning, may lose; the director, conductor, and impresario Sarah Caldwell — brilliant, obsessed, intractable — inspires her artists, fends off creditors, relives her triumphs, and battles with ghosts as we wait to learn if she will be given one final chance to continue the work she lives for or whether demons of self-sabotage have, at last, outrun her luck. (*Odyssey Opera*)

Libretto

EXCERPT A

DONORS

Seats, fraying: paint, peeling:
Plaster flaking from the ceiling...

TIM (*spoken*)

(*tapping the mike*) Is this on? This is not on. Can anybody hear me? No one can hear me.
Okay...

DONORS

Doors, sagging: some missing;
Addicts in the alley, pissing...

TIM (*spoken*)

Can we get sound up here? Hello? Sound?

DONORS

Oh, we should go now.
There wasn't any need to come.
And knowing what we know, now,

DONORS (*continued*)

We'd never have agreed to come.
What are we doing here? Why are we doing this?
Pity? Hope? Vanity?
Do the same thing, expect a diff'rent result—
The definition of that?

Insanity.

And yet:

Sarah....

TIM

(*into the newly-functioning microphone:*) Well, those of you who know and love Opera Company of Boston know that it isn't Opera Company of Boston without a little chaos. A *little*—a *very* little—chaos! Anyway, welcome, tonight: if you're here, you've been part of our family, and we hope that after this evening you will be again. We *are* running a little bit behind: the amazing Sarah has been delayed, but is on her way...

DONORS

It's good we came out, yes.
It's good we could remind her of who remembers.
Given, though, her awful, *awful* flameout—
Is there any point to sifting the embers?
What are we doing here? Why are we doing this?
Is it—in the slightest—hyperbolic
To liken bailing Sarah out
To enabling an alcoholic?
To enabling a *raging* alcoholic?
We know: and yet: Sarah...
But don't forget: Sarah---
The seasons, delayed: Sarah.
The artists, unpaid: Sarah.
The money, "mis-laid:" Sarah.
The donors, betrayed: Sarah.
Constantly beset: Sarah.
Blood and tears and sweat: Sarah.
Swing without a net: Sarah
Never not in debt: Sarah!
How many times can we dance this dance?
Offer the hundredth—the thousandth chance?
This is delusional: depraved.

You can't save someone who won't be saved...

And yet: no.

DONORS (*continued*)

We should get out now.

We know this only ends in grief.

And is there any doubt, now?

Disaster is her *Leitmotif*.

What are we doing here? Why are we doing this?

Whatever we had here is lost.

Whatever we hoped for—whatever we paid for—

End of the day; a sunk cost.

And yet: Sarah...

No: ill-met: Sarah.

Let her demons defeat her.

Only regret: Sarah.

Time to forget Sarah!

And yet...

From the back of the theatre, a resonant mezzo-soprano.

SARAH

Sarah. Is in. The theatre.

As a spotlight finds her in the back of the house, SARAH—sizable, imperious, simply gowned but opulently brooched—makes her way up the center aisle like Moses parting the waves; she assumes the stage to applause—some enthusiastic, some much more measured—and borne on waves of orchestra. A long moment, this: it's a welcome, a reunion, and a cross-examination, all at once.

GINA RAMOS, *Opera Company of Boston's* development assistant, joins TIM onstage.

TIM (*sung*)

(*relieved near to tears:*) Friends of opera; friends of the City of Boston; friends of art at its most dazzling, most meaningful, and most original: please welcome—and welcome back—the artistic and general director, the soul of Opera Company of Boston: Miss Sarah Caldwell.

SARAH *has achieved the podium. In rapt, hovering recitative*

So many old friends here: Mercy, Lily—William, I see you...

New friends as well: Ana Maria, Juan Carlos: welcome, welcome.

And Vera, the incomparable Vera Tyrrell: where is she?

Vera Tyrrell? No?

Well: soon, I'm sure...

HARPY (*off*)

I have something to say!

SARAH (*bitter*)

You again.

She turns away from the microphone. A bedraggled WOMAN in her sixties bursts onto the stage—bedclothes barely fastened, she looks as if she could have escaped from her caregivers in a nursing home, except for her surreally colored blue-green hair. TIM and GINA try to keep her from reaching SARAH's microphone.

HARPY

I have something to say!

TIM

She keeps getting in!

HARPY

You can't stop me;
I have something to say!
SARAH (*oddly heated*)
Can't stop you, can I?
Watch me.

TIM and GINA *have restrained the HARPY, who still struggles.*

SARAH (to TIM)
Take her teeth.

TIM

What?

SARAH

You heard me.

Take out her teeth!

Take out her teeth, or get out of my way!

As TIM and GINA restrain the wailing HARPY, SARAH forces her mouth open and takes out her dentures; wraps them in a cloth; and secretes the bundle in her purse. The DONORS are embarrassed, but not shocked; it's as if they've seen this before. Losing her teeth subdues the HARPY for a moment; but, as TIM and GINA haul her off the stage, she suddenly aims a weirdly threatening, melodic vocalise at SARAH, which the orchestra supports in surreal colors.

It's a charged, non-verbal duel for a moment.

SARAH breaks the spell.

SARAH (to TIM)

You know where to take her.

TIM and GINA haul the HARPY off the stage. SARAH returns her focus to the DONORS and the house.

SARAH
Apologies.

This, this neighborhood.

The DONORS *chuckle.*

SARAH

Where were we?

SARAH, and the orchestra, ready themselves. This is the speech of her life.

Independence Day. I was so young.

Was I nine; was I ten?

I reminded my father,

I'd asked him last year;

Now I asked him, once again:

Give me fireworksⁱⁱ: let me make fire!

Let me make rockets, spiralling, higher and higher;

Let me make diamonds and comets, bejewelling, igniting the air.

They only were fireworks;

Anyone's fireworks.

To me, though, they seemed—still seem

A kind of prayer.

Did I scorch things? Yes.

Even torch things? Yes. But:

The magic I made; those images stayed within you,

Inspiring you, on bad days, to continue;
Such memories. Can anyone live without them?
Some may claim so.
I doubt them.
And now, here we are. None of us young.
The history I wish I could rewrite.
Still, I say to you, now—as I've said in past years—
I say again, tonight:
Here were fireworks: here we made fire!
Here we played music, sang poetry, aimed to inspire,
SARAH (*continued*)
Here we heard voices, ideas, bejewelling, igniting the air.
But these were not fireworks.
Not merely fireworks.
They made opera: to me, to *you*, always:
A kind of prayer.

Did we scorch things? Yes.
DONORS (*skeptically*)
“We?”
SARAH (*undeterred*)
Even torch things? Yes.
DONORS (“*you can say that again*”)
Yes.
SARAH
But the magic we made;
Those images stayed within you;
Encouraging you, on bad days, to continue.
Such memories. Can anyone live without them?
Some still claim so.
I still doubt them.
This moment is dark as dark can get.
Our theatre is desperately, desperately in debt.
WILLIAM (*breaking the spell*)

Whose fault is *that*?

Shh.

DONORS
SARAH (*pushing forward*)
I'd be lying if I said it weren't dire.
But with your help;
DONORS
More?
SARAH
With your passion;
DONORS
More?
SARAH (*dogged*)
With your faith;
DONORS

More?

SARAH

Your generosity;

DONORS

More?

SARAH

We will rise, like the phoenix, from the pyre...

DONORS

To burn again?

SARAH (*undeterred*)

...To make more fireworks, to make new fire!

DONORS

And, thus, more ash?

SARAH

To launch more rockets, spiraling; higher and higher!

DONORS

Until they crash?

SARAH

We'll hear new voices, ideas, bejewelling, igniting the air.

Oh, yes, there'll be fireworks.

But not merely fireworks.

There shall be opera; to me; to *you*,

A kind of prayer.

The DONORS, savagely, join SARAH on her vocalise on the word "Prayer." Their mockery is unmissable.

SARAH (*humiliated, but unstoppable*)

Please, then, bring our theatre back.

Bring us back to life.

From the DONORS, minimally polite applause. But that sixth chair remains empty.

SARAH (*sotto voce*)

Et tu, Vera?

TIM (*reclaiming the podium*)

Let us continue on to dinner—I hope you like quinoa—so—

SARAH (*a toast*)

To Tim and Gina!

DONORS

To Tim and Gina!

GINA

You say that now.

TIM

There's also kale.

GINA, TIM

Kale *salad*. You've been warned.

GINA *leads the DONORS off: caterers strike the chairs. TIM and SARAH remain.*

SARAH

I'll join them for coffee. I need to work.

TIM

They need to see you.

SARAH

They've seen me: they know me.ⁱⁱⁱ I need to work.

TIM

This is the work: we need a company—

SARAH

By evening's end, we'll *have a company*. We'll have a company. Let me work.

Dubious, but game, TIM leaves. SARAH *snaps open her purse, shakes, from an amber bottle, a few Benzedrines^{iv} into her hand, swallows them dry.*

SARAH

Fireworks and prayer; fireworks and prayer

The light changes. A silvery tenor voice, from on high:

VOICE (ICARUS)

Sarah, Sarah...

SARAH (*delighted*)

Icarus!

ICARUS—*20s, Black, confident—alights from the sky. As in classic portraiture of the character, he is lithe, semi-nude, and winged. We must be meeting him before his fall: his wings—feathers and wax, clearly man-made—are beautiful, intact; and he seems to shimmer, as if dusted with gold. He carries a rehearsal smock.*

SARAH

Icarus. I was just thinking of you.

ICARUS

I'm never very far away.

SARAH

Story of my life.

ICARUS

Your wings, Maestra?

SARAH

How kind you are.

He helps her remove her brooch, don her smock.

SARAH

We shall raise this money: we shall save this company; and first thing we do, we revive your opera.

ICARUS

Revive it? The première is Friday.

SARAH

The première was thirteen years ago.

ICARUS

The première is Friday. And you will not save this company. You, and it, will plunge, burning, into the sea.

SARAH

Thanks for the vote of confidence?

ICARUS

You will plunge, burning, into the sea. Take it from me. Unless...

SARAH

Unless? Unless?

ICARUS

You. Accomplish. Three tasks.

ICARUS, SARAH

You/I. Accomplish. Three tasks.

SARAH

Tell me.

ICARUS

One: Perfect my opera's finale. The staging of it looks like hell.

SARAH

It needs one tech—

ICARUS

Two: Encourage the tenor who plays me. Do what you must: bring him out of his shell.

SARAH

He's twenty-three—one coaching—

ICARUS

And...three: Pay the IRS. Two-fifty K by Friday, or bid your troupe farewell.

SARAH

Surely not *two-hundred and fifty thousand dollars*.

ICARUS

Right you are. More like three hundred. Two eighty eight? Ballpark?

SARAH

Jesus fucking Christ.

ICARUS, SARAH

He hates opera. Repeat after me: One!

SARAH

Perfect the finale:

ICARUS, SARAH

Two!

SARAH

Empower the tenor:

ICARUS

Three!

SARAH

Pay the I. R. S...

ICARUS, SARAH

...or bid this troupe farewell.

SARAH

How can the premiere be *Friday*?

ICARUS

Who is my Sarah? Who is my wonder woman^v?

SARAH *reviewing her pill bottle*

Benzedrine. Right here on the label. I have never—not once—hallucinated on Benzedrine.

ICARUS

Fireworks, Sarah. Make fire.

He rises heavenward.

SARAH

Make fire... *to herself, horrified*: Two-hundred and fifty thousand dollars!

VOICE OF ICARUS *from the sky*)

Two eighty-eight!

SARAH

Go to hell!

ICARUS *is gone*. SARAH *commands an unseen crew*.

SARAH

Dry tech, cue-to-cue: reset, please, for *Icarus* finale!

EXCERPT B

LEOCADIA (*evenly*)

Before you start:

People own cars.

Cars need repair.

People have children.

Children need care.

People need dinner.

Maybe a beer.

So people need paychecks;

Checks that clear.

SARAH

Of course, of course, I know you're right: still—

LEOCADIA (*inexorable*)

People get sick.

People need pills.

So people see doctors.

Doctors send bills.

People admire you.

LEOCADIA (*continued*)

That's why we're here;

But people need paychecks:

Checks that clear.

In silhouette, a CREW MEMBER appears far upstage; dressed as a stagehand, but her disheveled hair is strangely blue-green...

SARAH

Two weeks—

LEOCADIA

Nice, that: what you said back there.

"Artists, sculptors of light and air."

Beautiful. Generous.

Maybe even meant.

Praise like that can lift your heart.

Praise like that can warm your soul.

You know what praise can't do?

Heat your house;

Heal your kid;

Fix your car;

Buy your food,

Pay your rent.

Yes, Sarah:

Food, gas, bills; rent, rent, rent!

SARAH *brittle*

You do this for *love*.

I do this for love!

And the HARPY from Scene One—of course it is she—begins another strange vocalise, in countermelody to LEOCADIA, who doesn't seem to see or hear her.

LEOCADIA

People *do* love this.

That's just it.

People don't want to

Have to quit.

They want to make opera;

Want this career.

So people need paychecks:

The HARPY's singing has become deafening, nearly deranging SARAH.

Oh, sing it with me Sarah, you *know* this tune!

LEOCADIA (*continued*)

Checks that—

SARAH (*screaming*)

I CANNOT LISTEN TO THIS—WHINING—ONE MORE SECOND!

SARAH has rattled LEOCADIA, stunned the HARPY; but the latter doesn't leave.

LEOCADIA *murderous*

"Whining? Whining."

Oh, we're done here.

SARAH

Leocadia, I'm begging you:

Open this opera for me.

I'll pay all I owe.

And this will never—

LEOCADIA

We'll open this opera for you.

Don't pay us? We go.

Forever.

in one breath: consonants like cut glass; a malediction

You will never work with a union crew in this town for the rest of your life;

I will see to it from my deathbed.

"Whining." Jesus, Sarah.

Her contempt palpable, LEOCADIA leaves the theatre.

SARAH *preëemptively, to the HARPY*

You have *nothing* to say.

Unfazed, the HARPY leaves as ICARUS reënters. As before, only SARAH can see him.

ICARUS

Oh, Sarah.

In *this* ballpark?

Strike one.

SARAH *livid*

We *fixed* the cable!

ICARUS

Strike one!

ICARUS dematerializes. As SARAH regroupes, TIM introduces the Filipino man.

TIM

Senator Benigno Aquino^{vi}, —

BENIGNO AQUINO

Former Senator Benigno Aquino—

TIM, AQUINO

New to the board...

AQUINO

Honorary...

SARAH, AQUINO

Hello.

AQUINO

I understand that the First Lady of my country has reached out to you?

SARAH, AQUINO, TIM

Imelda Marcos?

SARAH

Not yet. But we've heard she plans to...

The orchestra, and AQUINO, become suddenly, terrifyingly intense.

AQUINO

Do not do this.

Please do not take her bait.

You will be lied to: betrayed—

This will be the worst mistake you've ever made—

SARAH, TIM

There are no plans—

AQUINO

I am telling you; I am warning you; Miss Caldwell,
do not do this.

I cannot overstate—

Better, now, that you forget her,

Rather than regret the day you ever met her.

True, Imelda: will maintain she's your friend, but;

To Imelda: you're a means to an end.

AQUINO (*continued*)

She'll play Lady Bountiful,

She will make you play the fool.

With Imelda: realize that nothing comes *gratis*.

For Imelda recognizes one thing: status.

Don't let her use your artistry

To whitewash her misrule.

Do not play her fool.

I am begging you; I'm imploring you, Miss Caldwell,

Do not do this.

Your risk is far too great.

Though I'm certain she will offer the most generous of deals;

She will sell you into bondage for a pair of Gucci heels—

The music, abruptly, skids to a halt. The next lines feel suspended in air.

AQUINO

I loved her once, when we were young.

Her husband sentenced me to death.

She held her tongue.

Do not do this, Sarah Caldwell:
It's not too late.
Thank you for what you've given us in Boston.

AQUINO *departs.*

TIM (*to SARAH*)

But how does he *really* feel?

EXCERPT C

SCENE THREE (continuous.) OCTOBER 1981: THE RIALTO. OPENING NIGHT, ICARUS, OCB

And here, at full strength, is the Icarus finale: the set, lighting, and costumes complete, and SARAH leading the orchestra in full cry. Stage left, the top of a sunbaked, windswept stone tower, from which winged DEMARRE, as ICARUS, is poised to leap; to the right, on another terrace of the same tower, VERA as DAEDALA, here portrayed as something of a sorceress--- a sheaf of gray-streaked black hair, swathed in rough-hewn, voluminous, billowing robes. Below, lighting and other stage magic gives us the boiling Aegean. VERA, now singing in the written octave, is in glorious voice.

VERA/DAEDALA

And now, my heart, my son, my student,

VERA/DAEDALA (*continued*)

My child of gold;

Fly, fly from this dark maze!

I'll find you in mere days.

Recall, meanwhile, what you've been told:

To flee Apollo's gaze,

The sun-god's fierce rays,

Be bold, but more than bold:

Above all—

Be prudent!

Stay safe, beloved.

Fly not too low, yet not too high.

Stay safe, beloved:

You'll reach the shore.

Stay safe, beloved.

Not meant for us, the arching sky.

Strive less; strain less—

Gain more.

Wax cannot withstand the sun:

Men obey—not make—the rules.

Birds—not boys—were born to fly:

Poseidon's ocean swallows fools.

I know you want the wind, the height,

The bright, clean air:

The gods will never grant you them:

The gods don't care.

The gods will never care.

No, beware, beloved.

Not sun nor sea is on our side.

Don't dare, beloved:
Just aim for shore.
Stay safe, beloved.
Let self-protection be your guide.
All you need to do is glide.
Another time, another place, another life, I'd urge you:
Soar!

But, for now, don't chafe, beloved:
Stay safe, beloved.
Ask for no more.
Begin, child:

Extend your arms to their full length.
Breathe: reach: sweep; and then,
VERA/DAEDALA (*continued*)
Lean in, child.

Repeat, but now, with greater strength.
Breathe: reach; sweep; broader—
Breathe: reach; sweep; stronger—
Again; again; again...

Heeding DAEDALA's coaching, ICARUS takes flight.

DEMARRE/ICARUS

I fly, Mother: I fly!

I fly, Mother:

I claim the sky!

DAEDALA (*in counterpoint with ICARUS*)

No: child:

Wax cannot withstand the sun:
Men obey—not make—the rules.
Birds—not boys—were born to fly:
Poseidon's ocean swallows fools.
I know you want the wind, the height,
The bright, clean air:
The gods will never grant you them:
The gods don't care.

The gods will never care!

DEMARRE/ICARUS

Wax *can* withstand the sun:

I break the rules!

I was born to fly;

Only fools would doubt it—

Oh, the wind, the height,

The bright, clean air!

I claim them; I tame them!

I don't care.

I will never care!

SARAH's note has freed him: DEMARRE is a different singer here—impetuous, ravenous, charismatic—and his voice is ablaze.^{vii}

DEMARRE/ICARUS

The wind: my sister,
The light: my lover,
The sun: my friend;
Mother, I am strong here;
I *belong* here;
DEMARRE/ICARUS (*cont'd*)
Watch me ascend!
I ascend!

But ICARUS' wings are beginning to melt and smoke.

DEMARRE/ICARUS
I fly, Mother:
I fly!
I fly, Mother:
I claim, I tame the sky!
DEMARRE/ICARUS
I breathe: I reach; I sweep; broader—
I breathe: I reach; I sweep; stronger—
Again; again; again—
Oh!
VERA/DAEDALA
No, child: lower!
Only glide!
Aim for shore—
No!

Time stops. We, and ICARUS, wings ablaze, know that this is the final moment of his life.

DEMARRE/ICARUS
However long I live,
Whatever else I do;
I have touched the sky.

ICARUS plummets into the sea: a hissing billow of steam erupts. When it clears, ICARUS is nowhere to be seen. A coup de théâtre.

EXCERPT D

SARAH

Mrs. Marcos. Ma'am. An honor.

IMELDA

Sarah, Sarah, Sarah. A whole year. The magic you worked with our singers in Manila.

SARAH

Very gifted young artists. A pleasure to work with them.

IMELDA

Let me tell you a story.

IMELDA

We were newly married: and,
for my birthday.

My husband built me a bridge.^{viii}
It was terribly impractical: terribly expensive—
But then, beauty often is.

Oh, how it swoops over the ocean!
The sea below, the curving lanes above...
The world calls it a bridge of beauty.
But my husband, my people call it...the bridge of love.
It still stands, today, glittering;
Our bridge of love.

We've built so many projects, my husband and I
It's important to us that we give.
Oh, they're always difficult: all-consuming;
But then, beauty always is.
Architecture, art—and opera—
For me, these aren't hobbies; they're a passion, a thirst.
Yes, people need food, shelter
But above all they need beauty

IMELDA (*continued*)

And for me, and for you, I think—
.(an echo, here, of SARAH's aria from Act One)

Beauty comes first...

SARAH and IMELDA

Art comes first.

SARAH

It is rare to meet someone who truly understands you.

EXCERPT E

HARPY

I tried to tell her.

"Young woman; big woman—

Yes: you have a dream of a career.

You have a voice: alas—which no one wants to hear.

Brave woman; foolish woman—

They would prefer you disappear."

That's what they told me.

"Young lady; shy lady—

Why on earth would *you* want a career?

You have your nursery, your kitchen: *that's* your sphere.

Sweet lady; pretty lady—

You seem both gifted and sincere.

It's just that no one needs you here."

I acquiesced.

I told myself, it's likely for the best.

Coldly, I extinguished my desire.

I kept the house,

I kept the books,

I kept my temper,

I kept my looks,

And, sometimes, I'd conduct the little choir.

(Women were allowed to lead the choir.)

But *she* would tell me:
“Old woman: weak woman!
It’s your lack of courage I deplore.
You claim to love me, yet you tell me not to soar.
Mean woman: craven woman—
I will not shrink from wanting more.
Never will shrink from wanting more.”
But I said:
(DAEDALA’s *aria*, from ICARUS)
“Wax cannot withstand the sun:
Girls obey—not make—the rules.
Men alone were born to fly:
Poseidon’s ocean swallows fools.
I know you want the wind, the height,
The bright, clean air:
The gods will never grant you them:
The gods don’t care.
The gods will never care!”
You know the rest.
I only wish that she had acquiesced.
How happy I wanted her to be!
But I couldn’t get there.
And if I couldn’t get there,
Why should—
I mean, how *could*
She?
So now, you’ve told her.
Brave daughter: foolish daughter.
You’ve done her an extraordinary favor.
Thank you for loving my Sarah enough—not
To save her.
My name is Margaret Caldwell.

Creative Team Bios



Mark Adamo

Composer & Librettist

Mark Adamo is the Grammy-nominated composer-librettist of the operas *Little Women*, *Lysistrata*, *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, and *Becoming Santa Claus*, which have been staged, recorded, and broadcast on six continents since 1998; he is also the librettist of *The Lord of Cries*, to a score by John Corigliano. Recent career highlights include his stage direction of a new production of *Lysistrata* for Odyssey Opera, recorded and set for release by Pentatone in August 2026; more

performances of *Last Year*, his concerto for cello and orchestra, in Nashville, Las Vegas, Chicago, and New York; and the release, also on Pentatone, of Boston Modern Orchestra Project's recording of *The Lord of Cries*, conducted by Gil Rose with a cast led by Anthony Roth Costanzo, which was nominated in 2024 for the Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording of the year. His music is published exclusively by G. Schirmer. markadamo.com.



Steven Osgood

Conductor

This is Steven Osgood's eleventh season as General and Artistic Director of the Chautauqua Opera Company. During his tenure the company has produced operas by Puccini, Verdi, Mozart and Humperdinck alongside contemporary works by Missy Mazzoli, John Corigliano, Philip Glass and others. In 2024 he conducted the world premieres of *A.E. Reverie* and *Love, Loss and the Century Upon Us* -- two chamber operas commissioned by Chautauqua Opera. With the 2026 season, the company draws on his vast experience in the development of new works with the New Opera Workshops.

Steve has conducted the world premieres of over 20 operas, including in recent seasons *The Rising World* at Seoul Arts Center, *Intimate Apparel* at Lincoln Center Theater, *Breaking the Waves* at Opera Philadelphia, *JFK* at Fort Worth Opera, *The Scarlet Ibis*, *Thumbprint*, *Blood Moon*, and *Sumeida's Song* for the PROTOTYPE festival, as well as Missy Mazzoli's *Song from the Uproar* with Beth Morrison Projects. He has been conductor mentor on two occasions for Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative, leading the premieres of six new operas.

From 2001 to 2008 Steven was Artistic Director of American Opera Projects, where he conducted numerous developmental workshops. He founded the company's internationally recognized Composers and the Voice Fellowship and remains the program's Artistic Director. He conducted the premieres of *As One* in its sold-out run at BAM, and Paula Kimper's *Patience and Sarah* at the 1998 Lincoln Center Festival.

Steve has been a member of the Music Staff at The Metropolitan Opera since 2006, with whom he has conducted workshops of several of the company's commissions. He made his mainstage conducting debut at the Met in 2023 with *Dead Man Walking* and returned to conduct Jeanine Tesori and George Brant's *Grounded* in the 2024/25 season.

Artist Biographies



Sarah Dyer-Jones

Sarah Caldwell

Apprentice Artist

Sarah Dyer-Jones, mezzo-soprano, leads a multifaceted career spanning opera, concert, musical theatre, and chamber music. She has performed a wide range of roles with organizations including Central City Opera, Music Academy of the West, Ars Lyrica Houston, Opera in the Ozarks, and the Moores Opera Center at the University of Houston. Notable performances include Federico García Lorca in *Ainadamar*, Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare*, Madame de la Haltière in *Cendrillon*, and Larina in *Eugene Onegin*, among others. She also has been a featured soloist in The Ponce Project, Handel's *Messiah*, and in Houston Grand Opera's "Seeking the Human Spirit" series. Beyond her work onstage, Dyer-Jones is passionate about education, musicology, and community engagement. She is the founder of ConTempo Studios, an interdisciplinary nonprofit dedicated to inclusivity and accessibility in the performing arts. A strong advocate for creative expression, she trains in circus arts, often incorporating aerial and physical theatre techniques into her genre-spanning performances.



Kelsey Watts

Gina Ramos & Imelda Marcos

Apprentice Artist

Filipina-American soprano Kelsey Ann Watts is a Binghamton University graduate holding degrees in Opera, Vocal Performance, and Chemistry. In addition to her time as a 2024 Studio Artist at Chautauqua Opera, where she covered roles in Kamala Sankaram's *A.E. Reverie*, Nicolás Lell Benavides' *Pepito*, and Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, she has performed with Tri-Cities Opera, Syracuse Opera, Delaware Valley Opera, and Binghamton University's Opera Ensemble in roles including Zerlina (Mozart's *Don Giovanni*), Clorinda (Rossini's *La Cenerentola*), Pamina (Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*), Gilda (Verdi's *Rigoletto*), and Gretel (Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*). Her passion for contemporary works has led to her performances in Jorge Sosa's *I Am A Dreamer Who No Longer Dreams* and Leif Haley's *Prunella*, though her fondest experience was self-producing a performance of Jake Heggie's *Another Sunrise* paired with a collection of songs written during, in response to, and by victims of the Holocaust.



Tyrese Byrd

Icarus & Demarre Hall

Apprentice Artist

Tyrese Byrd, tenor, is a native of Greenville, South Carolina, hailed for his "golden tenor" voice (*Times of San Diego*). Recent performances include Ubaldo (Haydn's *Armida*) with Opera NEO and the Hungarian State Opera, Prologue/Peter Quint (*The Turn of the Screw*) and Pluton/Aristée (*Orphée aux enfers*) at the University of Michigan, Police Buddy 1 (*Blue*) with Toledo Opera, and Don Basilio (Kjartansson's *Bliss*) with Detroit Opera. As a 2024 Studio Artist, Tyrese covered the role of David in Chautauqua Opera's *Pepito*

(Koch/Benavides), part of the triple bill performance *Love and Longing by the Lake*. As a Madison Opera Studio Artist, Tyrese appeared as Normanno (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Mercury (*Orpheus in the Underworld*), and Don Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*) as a guest artist. Tyrese is also an active concert soloist and recitalist, including performances with the Hugo Wolf Akademie in Stuttgart, The Washington Chorus on their Argentinian tour, the Toledo Symphony, the Akron Symphony, and SC Bach. Tyrese holds degrees from Furman University and the University of Michigan.



Joel Clemens

Tim Martin

Apprentice Artist

Philadelphia-based baritone Joel Clemens has been praised for his strong dramatic acting and thrilling baritone. He recently returned to White Snake Projects to premiere the roles of Marlow and Sam in Mary D. Watkins' *Is This America?*, and sang Ginger Chap in the orchestral workshop of Missy Mazzoli's *Lincoln in the Bardo* with Chautauqua Opera Company. He was named a winner in the Boston District of the Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition and took home second prize in the New England Regional Finals. This season Joel joined the Opera Memphis Handorf Company Artists to sing the role of Fiorello (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and the Doctor (*Pretty Little Room*). In spring 2026, he made his Boston Baroque debut singing La Voce (*Idomeneo*) before joining the Gerdine Young Artist Program at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis to sing Giuseppe Naccarelli (*The Light in the Piazza*) and cover Gregorio (*Roméo et Juliette*).



Sara Nealley

Harpy & Margaret Caldwell

Apprentice Artist

Sara Nealley, soprano, is a native of Ardmore, Pennsylvania. She completed her undergraduate studies in Vocal Performance at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, and her graduate studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow. Sara is currently pursuing a GPD at the Peabody Institute where she studies with Randall Scarlata. Her previous roles include: Rusalka (*Rusalka*), LAH-SOW; Vitellia (*La clemenza di Tito*), Peabody Opera Theatre; Gianetta (*The Gondoliers*), Ohio Light Opera; Violetta (*La traviata*), Mediterranean Opera Studio and Festival; Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Opera in the Ozarks; Hanna Glawari (*The Merry Widow*), College Light Opera Company. Sara was a finalist in the Elgar/Spedding Memorial Lieder Competition and the Ye Cronies Opera Award at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She is the recipient of an Encouragement Award in Arkansas District of the Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition.

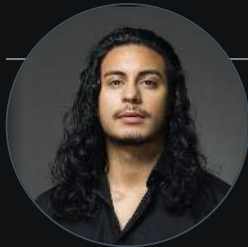


Sarah Rachel Bacani

Vera Tyrrell

Apprentice Artist

Currently a Resident Artist with Toledo Opera, Filipino-American soprano Sarah Rachel Bacani is slated to appear in its spring season as Giannetta (*L'elisir d'amore*), having recently made her role debut as Micaëla (*Carmen*). She will then make her debut with Opera Saratoga this summer, singing the role of Marie (Drift) and covering Giannetta (*L'elisir d'amore*). Previous engagements include Gretel (cover) and Dew Fairy (*Hänsel und Gretel*) with Lakes Area Music Festival; Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*) and Mariola (*Two Remain*) with Central City Opera; and Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) and Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) with the Indiana University Opera Theater. An accomplished competitor, Bacani has earned distinctions including an Opera Index prize, Third Place in the Fort Worth Opera McCammon Voice Competition, and additional honors from James Toland Vocal Arts, Opera Naples, Florida Grand Opera, and Shreveport Opera. She is an alumna of the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and the Manhattan School of Music.



Brian Linares

Benigno Aquino

Apprentice Artist

Brian is a bass with a Master's degree and Performance Diploma from the Manhattan School of Music. He has appeared in a wide range of operatic repertoire, including Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Der Lautsprecher in *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, Nick Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*. Known for his commanding stage presence and warm, flexible tone, he is equally at home in classical, contemporary, and comedic repertoire. He has performed with university and professional opera companies in roles spanning Mozart, Britten, and 20th-century works. In addition to opera, he is an active concert soloist and ensemble performer. Brian is particularly passionate about character-driven roles and remains dedicated to continued artistic growth through performance, collaboration, and teaching.



SarahAnn Duffy

Ana Maria Lopez & Leocadia Díaz

Apprentice Artist

Praised for her "liquid gold" mezzo (*Opera Today*) American mezzo-soprano SarahAnn Duffy is quickly establishing herself as an exciting communicator of repertoire spanning the Baroque to the present day. Upcoming events include a return to Carnegie Hall for her debut as the mezzo soloist in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and her return to Chautauqua Opera. Recent performances of the 2025 season include debuting at Carnegie Hall with MidAmerica Productions and the New England Symphonic Ensemble in Notareschi's *Climate Mass*, as well as in *Sunday in the Park with George* as Celeste 2 and Elaine at the Glimmerglass Festival. Her 2024 season included the debuts of Mercédès in *Carmen* and Laura in *Luisa Miller*, both with Sarasota Opera, as well as the role of Endimione in Cavalli's *La Calisto* with the Glimmerglass Festival. Events of the 2023 season included her role and company debut as Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at Opera NEO, and Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* in her return to the Sarasota Opera, where she was awarded the Helen Jepson Dellera Fellowship Award for an outstanding Studio Artist. Other recent events included

joining Chautauqua Opera, where she workshopped *Love, Loss and the Century Upon Us*, a commission with music by Rene Orth and libretto by Jerre Dye.



Ryan Michki

Juan Carlos López & Pablo Sanz

Studio Artist

Ryan Michki is an operatic tenor and scholar working in all aspects of music, opera, and theater. He graduated Bard College Conservatory of Music in the spring of 2026 with a B.M. in Voice Performance and a B.A. in Historical Studies with a graduate thesis focused on the study of Black American composers Undine Smith Moore and David N. Baker during the Civil Rights era. Some of his recent musical endeavors include performing as a chorus fellow in the 2024 Spoleto Festival, participating in Opera Saratoga's 2025 summer festival, singing in The Berkshire Opera's 10th Anniversary Concert, and most recently, performing with The Orchestra Now (TÓN) the rarely programmed orchestral version of Ralph Vaughan Williams' song cycle *On Wenlock Edge* in November of 2025. This fall he will be a Resident Artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia



Faith Adams

Lily Wasserman Gold & Judith Stein

Studio Artist

Faith Adams, soprano, is a native of Fort Worth, Texas. Onstage, she vies to bridge storytelling with song to enhance the enjoyment and accessibility of opera. She graduated in May 2026 with her Master of Music degree from Loyola University New Orleans, where she reprised the title role in Floyd's *Susannah* in collaboration with the Carlisle Floyd Centennial and members of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. In the 2024-25 season, Faith performed as La Contessa (Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*) in the inaugural Tokyo Opera Studio season and as Diana (Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*) with Loyola Opera Theatre. While obtaining her Bachelor of Music at Texas Christian University (TCU), Faith performed the title role in Floyd's *Susannah*, Pamina (Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*), and First Witch (Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*), and she maintained a residency at OPERA America over summer 2023 with Manhattan Opera Studio, where she performed as both Pamina and Papagena (Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*). Faith is the Second Prize Winner of the 2023 Young Soloist International Music Competition and a two-time semifinalist in the 2025/26 Young Texas Artists Music Competition. She frequently performs as a soloist, with recent venues including Carnegie Hall, the Fort Worth Rodeo, and the National Rodeo. With a passion for music education, Faith privately instructs voice and piano alongside her work as a professional sacred choir soprano.



Gabriel Chona Rueda

Benjamin Cooper Bates & Kurt Jensen

Studio Artist

Gabriel Chona Rueda is a Colombian tenor and emerging artist with the Moores Opera Center at the University of Houston. Recent roles there include Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Will Mossop in the world premiere of *Hobson's Choice*, Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, Emperor Altoum in a concert performance of *Turandot*, and most recently the Stranger in *Markheim* by Carlisle Floyd. Beyond the Moores Opera Center, Gabriel has collaborated with several performing organizations. This season, he participated in a workshop with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis for the new opera *Safe Haven* by Tobias Picker and appeared as a featured soloist in Houston Chamber Choir's performance of Mozart's *Requiem*. Competition honors include being named a national finalist in the Carolyn Bailey and Dominick Argento Vocal Competition, runner-up in the Madame Rose Palmatier-Tenser Scholarship Competition presented by Mobile Opera, and a finalist in the vocal competition of the Tuesday Musical Club of San Antonio. Gabriel holds a Bachelor of Music in Opera Performance from the University of British Columbia and will complete his Master of Music in Vocal Performance this year before pursuing his Master's in Arts Leadership at the University of Houston. A member of the studio of Melanie Sonnenberg, he continues to build a career distinguished by expressive artistry, musical versatility, and a commitment to both standard and contemporary repertoire.

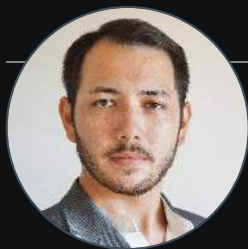


Sydney Dardis

Mercy Cabot Lee, Meghan Murphy & Laurie Byrne

Studio Artist

Soprano Sydney Dardis, a native of Laguna Niguel, California, recently graduated with a Master of Music degree in Vocal Arts from The Juilliard School. In Summer 2025, Sydney was pleased to perform roles in *Once Upon a Mattress* and *The Knock* with Central City Opera. During the 2024/25 season, Dardis was a Studio Artist with the Florida Grand Opera, where she performed as Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte* and Frasquita in *Carmen*. In Summer 2024, Sydney performed as Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance* and covered Greta Fiorentino in *Street Scene* with Central City Opera. During her time at Juilliard, Ms. Dardis performed Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*, Tytania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Flora in *The Turn of the Screw*. In 2023, Ms. Dardis was honored to be named a New York District Winner in the Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition. In Summer 2022, Ms. Dardis was pleased to cover roles such as Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Nannetta (*Falstaff*), and Frasquita (*Carmen*) at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and the Aspen Music Festival.



Christopher Walters

Charles Ford & Lavar Johnson

Studio Artist

Baritone Christopher Walters regularly performs across southern California, often appearing with Pacific Opera Project and Lyric Opera of Orange County. He has also appeared with Opera Santa Barbara, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and the San Diego Symphony. Christopher is honored and excited to make his debut with Chautauqua Opera as a Studio Artist in their 2026 season. The 2025–2026 season also saw his role debut in the title role of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* with Genesis Opera Theatre, his appearance covering the role of Lord Hardcash in Pacific Opera Project's *Fra Diavolo*, and his chorus debut with

San Diego Opera (*Carmen*). Past season highlights include chorus in Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* (LA Master Chorale; LA Philharmonic), chorus in Mahler's 2nd Symphony (San Diego Symphony), and the role of Cinderella's Father in Pacific Opera Project's pastiche work, *A Cinderella Story*. Christopher holds his Bachelor of Music from California State University, Long Beach, and studies with Chautauqua Opera alum Joel Balzun.



Jared Peterson

William Crowninshield, Bob McGill & Pete Simms

Studio Artist

Jared Peterson, bass, graduated from the University of Arizona with a Master's degree in Vocal Performance, having previously earned his Bachelor's degree in Music Education from Washington State University. Leading operatic roles include Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Mr. Ford in *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*, Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas*, and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*. In December 2024, Jared sang the title role of Duke Bluebeard, alongside Korby Myrick, in Passion Project: Opera!'s production of Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*. Most recently, he made his Arizona Opera debut, singing the role of Soldier #2 in the Arizona premiere of Héctor Armienta's *Zorro*. He also recently sang the roles of Older Hänsel and the Father in Arizona Opera's production of *Hänsel and Gretel versus The Witch* as part of their youth outreach program, Arizona Operatunity. In November, Jared sang the extensive and demanding basso profundo solo in The Helios Ensemble's fall concert of Rautavaara's *Vigilia: Vespers*, sung in the original Finnish. He also appeared as a guest artist with the University of Arizona's Opera Theater, singing the role of the Baron in Viardot's *Cendrillon*. Jared currently studies voice with Korby Myrick and maintains an active vocal studio in Tucson.



Nathaniel LaNasa

Musical Preparation/Pianist

Music Staff Pianist

A consummate collaborator, pianist Nathaniel LaNasa has been praised for his "stormy lyricism" (*New York Times*) and his "poise and elegance" (*Feast of Music*). In 2022, he performed Ricky Ian Gordon's *Intimate Apparel* sixty times at Lincoln Center; he returned for LCT's 2025-26 *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with Joyce DiDonato. His recital partners have included Leona Mitchell, Will Liverman, and Gregory Feldmann; his premieres include works by Timo Andres, Matthew Ricketts, Molly Joyce, Iain Bell, and Iván Rodríguez. Nate curates NYFOS Next at New York Festival of Song, for which critics have lauded his "thematically coherent, well-paced, and musically varied" programs and his "exquisite" piano playing. NYC credits include Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, MoMA, Brooklyn Art Song Society, and (le) Poisson Rouge; he's performed at the Musée d'Orsay (Paris), Wigmore Hall (London), and Burning Man (Black Rock City). Nate is a graduate of the Juilliard School and MSM.

Leadership & Staff

General & Artistic Director: Steven Osgood

Music Administrator: Carol Rausch

Music Staff: Miriam Charney, Rick Hoffenberg, Nathaniel LaNasa, and Allison Voth

Director of Production: Michael Baumgarten

Production Stage Manager: Valerie Wheeler

Assistant Stage Managers: Hanna Atkinson and Alexandria Griner

Technical Director: JP Woodey

Costume Shop Supervisor: Cristine Patrick

Costume Shop Crew: Claire Gibbons and Natalie Juran

Wig Supervisor: Martha Ruskai

Manager: Helen Hassinger

Company Scheduler: Rick Hoffenberg

Management Associate: Kara Post

Marketing Associate: Nick Kemp

Opera Guild Intern: Mia O'Malley

Composer Intern: Jeremiah Trowbridge

Supporters

This performance is made possible by the support of The Emily McKnight Corry Endowment and The Miriam S. Reading / Richard H. Miller Fund.

2026 Chautauqua Opera Guild

Archangel (\$2500+)

Barton, Constance

Eckert, Eileen

Georgescu, Barabara & Peter

Gorelick, Dr. Cheryl

Norton, Cynthia

Peters, Steven

Angel (\$1000+)

Baird, Bruce

Barensfeld, David & Wendy

Branch, Laurie

Cummings, Conrad

Goldfarb, Joe

Goodman, Marylouise

Hajinilian, Arlene

Hopkins, John

Twist, Angela

Benefactors (\$500)

Adele Thomas Charitable Foundation

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Langston, Nancy

Murrett, Ellen

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Telkins, Pat & Steve

Tebor, Sue & Gary

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Bowser, Rob

Claire, Judith

Goldman, Judith H.

Goldman, Judith & Elliott

Nickerson, David, list in program “In loving memory of Jean Swope Nickerson”

Osgood, Steven

Saulino, Lorraine

Walker, Mitchell

Zucker, Burton & Sandra