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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 5 FOR YOUR SAFETY AND COMFORT**
- 6 A MESSAGE FROM WAYNE S. BROWN**
MOT President and CEO
- 8 A MESSAGE FROM YUVAL SHARON**
The Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director
- 11 SPONSOR RECOGNITION**
- 12 CAST & CREW**
- 14 MOT ORCHESTRA**
- 15 FRIDA SYNOPSIS**
- 18 COMPOSER'S NOTE & PROFILE:**
ROBERT XAVIER RODRÍGUEZ
- 20 COFFEE WITH CATALINA: WILLIAM BERGER**
IN CONVERSATION WITH CATALINA CUERVO
- 22 FRIDA RETURNS TO DETROIT**
- 23 FRIDA KAHLO IN DETROIT**
- 24 ARTIST PROFILES**
- 44 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
- 45 BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
- 48 THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS**
- 60 MOT ADMINISTRATION & STAFF**
- 62 UPCOMING PERFORMANCES**

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FOR YOUR SAFETY AND COMFORT

The safety of our guests, artists, and staff is our greatest priority for *Frida*. To slow the spread of COVID-19, we have updated our safety protocols to align with guidelines and recommendations set forth by the CDC and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

MICHIGAN
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COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES
Please have the following out prior to entering the queue:

 Proof of full vaccination required for entrance to the theatre.

 or

 Guests must provide proof of a negative PCR or Rapid test within 72 hours of their ticket time.

 and

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THANK YOU FOR HELPING US KEEP EACH OTHER SAFE!

Masks must be worn inside Music Hall, properly over the nose and mouth. All patrons **MUST** wear a mask at all times—unless actively eating or drinking, regardless of vaccination status.

Hand sanitizing stations are located in highly visible and accessible locations throughout the building. Training protocols and routine evaluations are ongoing. Cashless payment options, including credit and debit cards and mobile pay applications, are available onsite.

A MESSAGE FROM WAYNE S. BROWN

MOT PRESIDENT AND CEO

Welcome! On behalf of Michigan Opera Theatre, I am pleased to welcome you to Music Hall for an encore performance of *Frida*—an opera by the celebrated Mexican-American composer Robert Xavier Rodríguez that was first mounted by our company in 2015 by MOT Founder and Artistic Director David DiChiera. The work served to launch an MOT Regional Initiative throughout Southeast Michigan within the counties of Wayne, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Livingston.

The opera was mounted in tandem with the Detroit Institute of Arts' *Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in Detroit* exhibition and hailed by local media and audiences alike for its resonance throughout our community. This MOT production, directed by Jose Maria Condemí, was subsequently presented by opera companies throughout the United States, and featured the two leading principals, Catalina Cuervo as Frida and Ricardo Herrera as Diego, on multiple occasions since its creation.

Today's performance was initially envisioned for presentation in 2021 as part of the 50th Anniversary of MOT; however, the pandemic upstaged our plans. Nonetheless, it is fitting that audiences can celebrate the work seven years following its Detroit premiere in 2015 in tandem with a return to Music Hall—the original home of Michigan Opera Theatre. Special thanks are extended to Vince Paul and the entire Music Hall team for their support and collaboration with this presentation.

In a nod to tradition, we extend a hearty acknowledgement to our Title Sponsor—Ford Motor Company Fund—with support from DTE Energy Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, for enabling MOT to revive our 2015 production of *Frida* for Detroit audiences.

In addition, today's performance marks the beginning of the MOT spring season supported by the William Davidson Foundation for which we are most appreciative, and we acknowledge special support from MOT Board Members and fellow Trustees Jesse and Yesenia Venegas for their advocacy and leadership with the MOT Southwest Detroit Initiative.

As Michigan Opera Theatre marks this occasion with a return to indoor, in-person programming, we are pleased to welcome all of you back to opera performances and invite you to the Detroit Opera House on March 19 and 20 for two performances of *Doña Perón: The Rise and Fall of a Diva* by Ballet Hispánico for another MOT dance presentation. Finally, we look forward to our return to mainstage opera beginning on April 2 for the world premiere of a unique and imaginative new production of *La bohème* directed by MOT's Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director Yuval Sharon.

I hope that you enjoy today's performance and will join us again!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne S. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive.

WAYNE S. BROWN
MOT President and CEO

A MESSAGE FROM YUVAL SHARON

THE GARY L. WASSERMAN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

“At the end of the day, we can endure a lot more than we think we can:” an immortal line from a woman who, through her art and through her suffering, became an icon and an inspiration. And an appropriate sentiment for us all, dazed from the whiplash of the last two years of change and uncertainty. We have endured tremendously and faced so much loss—but also, hopefully, so much growth. Frida Kahlo’s inimitable work captured her incomparable life, and her physical and emotional ordeals always found an outlet in unforgettable imagery; art became her path to not just endure but to expand herself, past the pain and towards eternity.

When Robert Xavier Rodríguez’s opera about this incredible artist premiered in Detroit, MOT audiences embraced the opportunity to see the larger-than-life persona as a musical presence on the stage. For its return, I’d like to offer additional context for appreciating both Frida the woman and *Frida* the opera, as the 2021–22 season follows themes that are woven into this work.

The first is the notion of opera depicting “everyday people,” a thread that began with our concert of *Cavalleria rusticana* and goes through Anthony Davis’s *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*. Frida was hardly an ordinary woman, but unlike opera’s early pre-occupations with gods and demons, with royalty and noblemen, opera has increasingly turned its attention to the people we might recognize as our friends and neighbors. Whether it’s The Father in Jeanine Tesori’s *Blue* or the lovable bohemians in Puccini’s *La bohème*, recognizable people in a familiar reality become transformed by opera, which asks us to re-consider our world and the people around us. Within every one of us are the big emotions and dramas that we might call “operatic;” re-telling Frida’s life for the operatic stage means forging an even deeper emotional connection to someone who might otherwise be frozen in time, an unchanging self-portrait.

The other reason *Frida*’s return is so meaningful is because it marks the “second act” of the season, which I’ve called “Coming Home.” After visiting theaters (and non-theaters) throughout the Metro Detroit region, we are beginning the process of returning to our home, the Detroit Opera House, with my new production of *La bohème* starting April 2. As a prelude to those performances, *Frida* gives us a reminder of where we’ve been, both artistically, with a returning audience favorite, and *physically*, by bringing us back to MOT’s first home, Music Hall.

Although I may still be somewhat new myself, I’m happy to be among the first to say, “Welcome home.”



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yuval Sharon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

YUVAL SHARON
The Gary L. Wasserman
Artistic Director



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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT
Michelle Devine at 313-965-4271 or mdevine@motopera.org
or visit michiganopera.org/support.

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Yesenia & Jesse Venegas

FRIDA

An opera in two acts
Sung in English and Spanish

MUSIC

Robert Xavier Rodríguez

LYRICS & MONOLOGUES

Migdalia Cruz

BOOK

Hilary Blecher

WORLD PREMIERE

Philadelphia, 1991

DIRECTOR

Jose Maria Condemi

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Monika Essen

CONDUCTOR

Suzanne Mallare Acton

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Ben Rawson

REVIVAL DIRECTOR/ CHOREOGRAPHER

Marco Pelle

WIG & MAKEUP DESIGNER

Joanne Middleton Weaver

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/ ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER

Stephen Hanna

STAGE MANAGER

Ken Saltzman

CAST

Frida Kahlo	Catalina Cuervo
Diego Rivera	Ricardo Herrera
Cristina Kahlo	Marlen Nahhas
Alejandro; Nicholas Murray	Corey Roberts
Dimas' Mother; Lupe Marin	Leah Dexter
Guillermo Kahlo	Jesús Vicente Murillo
Mr. Rockefeller	Jacob Surzyn
Mrs. Rockefeller; Natalia Trotsky	Diane Rae Schoff
Mr. Ford; Leon Trotsky	Brian Leduc
Nurse; Mrs. Ford	Jennifer Cresswell
Calavera	Clodagh Earls
Calavera; Edward G. Robinson	David Moan
Calavera	Antona Yost
Dancers	Stephen Hanna
	Tara Charvat*
	Áine Dorman*
Ballet Folklórico Moyocoyani Izel	Jaime Carrillo
	Luisa Carrillo
	Elyana Cecil
	Kyu Vergara

**Eisenhower Dance Detroit Company*

Original production conceived and directed by Jose Maria Condemi

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Scenery constructed by West End Studios, Detroit, Michigan

Costumes constructed in part and coordinated by
Michigan Opera Theatre Costume Shop

Traditional Tehuana costumes constructed in the region of Isthmus
of Tehuantepec in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, under the direction of
Teresa Lopez Jimenez

Masks by Victoria Shaheen

Fabrics provided by Haberman Fabrics

Frida is a co-production of Michigan Opera Theatre and
the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts

MOT ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN

Eliot Heaton*

VIOLA

John Madison+

CELLO

Andrea Yun^

BASS

Derek Weller+

GUITAR

Kyle Canjar

CLARINET/ SAXOPHONE

Shannon Ford

TRUMPET

Gordon Simmons^

BASS TROMBONE

David Jackson

PERCUSSION

John Dorsey+

ACCORDION

Stas Venglevski

PIANO

Nathalie Doucet

*Concertmaster

+Principals

^MOT Orchestra members

American Guild of Musical Artists

Detroit Federation of Musicians, Local #5, of the American Federation of Musicians

FRIDA SYNOPSIS

ACT I

SCENE 1: MEXICO CITY, 1923

An unruly male gang called Cachuchas, led by the young Frida Kahlo and her boyfriend Alejandro, accosts a group of schoolgirls. Frida and her sister Cristina watch a mother whose child has died beg a vendor for a mat to bury her son. Moved by the poverty they see, Frida and Cristina witness a celebration of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation and take heart in the promise of the revolution.

SCENE 2: FRIDA'S ROOM IN COYOACAN, 1925

Experiencing her first menstruation, Frida tells Cristina of her expectations of life upon coming of age.

SCENE 3: A STREET & FRIDA'S ROOM, 1925

Frida and Alejandro board a bus headed for school, which is then struck by a tram. In the accident, Frida is severely injured, but she resolves to live and begin her life as a painter.

SCENE 4: MEXICO CITY, 1928–29

As Diego Rivera paints a mural at the Preparatory School, his wife Lupe attempts to grab his attention. Frida pays Diego a visit and introduces herself to him. Lupe becomes jealous of the young visitor. Frida shows Diego her portfolio and he encourages her to pursue a career as an artist and begins to court her. Diego asks Frida's father for her hand in marriage. At the wedding ceremony, Lupe makes a dramatic and futile attempt to win Diego back.

SCENE 5: DIEGO'S STUDIO, 1930–31

Frida critiques Diego's work as he paints a portrait of Emiliano Zapata. They are interrupted by revolutionary communists who denounce Diego. Frida and Diego resolve to try their luck in the USA.

SCENE 6: NEW YORK CITY, 1931–33

Frida and Diego attend a dinner party hosted by the Fords and the Rockefellers. Diego enjoys the adulation while Frida ridicules the rich. Rockefeller commissions a mural from Diego, and Frida gives a spirited interview to the press.

SCENE 7: NEW YORK CITY, 1933–34

Diego works on his commission, *Man at the Crossroads*. Rockefeller berates Diego for displaying his communist sympathies by portraying Lenin in the painting. The mural is destroyed, and Frida miscarries. She persuades Diego to return to Mexico.

ACT II

SCENE 1: SAN ANGEL, MEXICO, 1934–35

Back in Mexico, Frida and Diego move to adjacent blue and pink homes. She is overjoyed at being back in their homeland while he is miserable. Frida chooses to ignore the parade of lovers that go through Diego's house, but she is horrified to discover her sister Cristina among them.

SCENE 2: SAN ANGEL, MEXICO, 1937

Leon Trotsky and his wife Natalia visit the Riveras in Mexico. Diego and Natalia confront Frida and Trotsky over their undeniable mutual affection. Cristina expresses regret for betraying Frida. Diego and Frida come to the realization that their differences cannot be reconciled.

SCENE 3

Frida retreats to the seclusion of her home and takes comfort in male and female lovers.

SCENE 4: NEW YORK ART GALLERY, 1938

Diego resolves to promote Frida's work in the USA and meets American actor Edward G. Robinson who purchases several of Frida's paintings. Diego urges Frida to pursue his own career without him. Frida takes photographer Nicholas Murray as her lover. Frida and Diego decide to divorce.

SCENE 5: FRIDA'S IMAGINATION

Haunted by physical and emotional pain, Frida continues to paint while imagery from her seminal works *The Broken Column*, *The Wounded Deer*, and *Self-Portrait with Monkey* come alive in her mind.

SCENE 6: HOSPITAL ROOM, LAST DAY OF FRIDA'S LIFE, 1954

In a delirium, Frida relives episodes of her life, including the assassination of Trotsky, of which she and Diego were accused. Diego returns and sings to entertain Frida, finishing with a proposal to marry her again. Frida agrees and a joyful celebration ensues as she departs life with a cry of "Viva la vida, alegria and Diego!" ("Long live life, joy, and Diego!")

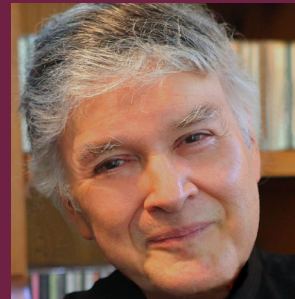
COMPOSER'S NOTE

ROBERT XAVIER RODRÍGUEZ

The music of *Frida* is in the George Gershwin-Stephen Sondheim-Kurt Weill tradition of exploring common ground between opera and musical theatre. The score calls for mariachi-style orchestration—with prominent parts for accordion, guitar, violin, and trumpet—in which authentic Mexican folk songs and dances are interwoven with bits of tangos, colorations of *zarzuela*, ragtime, and jazz. Among the “stolen” musical fragments developed in *Frida* are such strange musical bedfellows as two traditional Mexican piñata songs (“Hora y fuego” and “Al quebrar la piñata”), two narrative ballads (“La Maquinita” and “Jesusita”), the communist anthem (“L’Internationale”), Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony, and Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*. Spanish speakers might also listen for the rhythm of a familiar Mexican curse growling in the trombone as Lupe (Diego’s former wife) insults Frida and Diego at their wedding.

The orchestra continues its ironic commentary throughout the work. Two examples: as Frida and Diego quarrel about their mutual infidelities, the brass offer a snarling version of the tender Act I love music, “Niña de mi Corazon” (Child of my heart); and as Frida’s death figures (*calaveras*) recreate her self-portrait, as the wounded “Little Deer,” in a ballet sequence, Frida is stabbed, both physically (by the arrow) and musically (by piercing orchestral repetitions of Diego’s demand for a divorce, “You don’t need me anymore”).

Deeper musical characterization is achieved through the extensive use of vocal ensembles. Frida and Diego have two important love scenes, one at the beginning and one at the end, with frequent arguments in between. The demanding role of Frida requires not only extensive monologues, both spoken and sung, but also duets, trios, quartets, a quintet, sextet, and several larger ensembles, working up to an intricate nine-part samba finale. In a musical metaphor for Frida’s unique persona, her vocal line is scored with its own characteristic rhythms: often in three-quarter time while the orchestra or the rest of the cast is in duple meter. Frida, thus, sings as she lived: against the tide from the very first note.



COMPOSER PROFILE

ROBERT XAVIER RODRÍGUEZ

Robert Xavier Rodríguez (b. 1946) has written music in all genres—opera, orchestral, concerto, ballet, vocal, choral, chamber, solo, and music for the theatre and stage. His work has received over 2,000 professional orchestral and operatic performances in recent seasons by such organizations as the Vienna Schauspielhaus, The National Opera of Mexico, New York City Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, American Repertory Theater, American Music Theater Festival (now Prince Music Theater), Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Pennsylvania Opera Theater, Michigan Opera Theatre, Orlando Opera, Aspen Music Festival, Bowdoin Festival, Juilliard Focus and Summergarden Series, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Mexico City Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Knoxville, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Boston, and Chicago.

Honors he has received include a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Goddard Lieberman Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, awards from ASCAP and the Rockefeller Foundation, the Prix Lili Boulanger, and the Prix de Composition Musicale Prince Pierre de Monaco. Twenty recordings to date (including a 1999 Grammy Award nomination) feature his works, and his music is published exclusively by G. Schirmer, Inc. Rodríguez is Professor of Music at the University of Texas at Dallas, where he holds an Endowed Chair of Art and Aesthetic Studies and is Director of the Musica Nova ensemble.

COFFEE WITH CATALINA: WILLIAM BERGER IN CONVERSATION WITH CATALINA CUERVO

Author and opera commentator William Berger recently caught up with renowned soprano Catalina Cuervo over Zoom, as she gets set to reprise the title role of Robert Xavier Rodríguez's *Frida*, for Michigan Opera Theatre's 2022 revival production.



William Berger: Tell me about what you're up to.

Catalina Cuervo: We're doing the opera *Frida* by composer Robert Xavier Rodríguez at Michigan Opera Theatre—our second round there. The opera was kind of sleeping for a little bit after its 1991 premiere [in Philadelphia], and then we did a huge revival back in 2015 in Detroit. The arts institutions were celebrating Frida Kahlo: the Detroit Institute of the Arts had an exhibition of her and [husband] Diego Rivera, the ballet and symphony were doing pieces on her, and David DiChiera [the late founder of Michigan Opera Theatre] thought it would be a good time to do a big revival of this piece. He hired an amazing team

that I love, and it was a huge success. Now it's a five-year celebration from that time, plus a little extra time for COVID delays. [She laughs sadly.] I'm excited to see everybody else again.

WB: What about for us in the audience? How will we experience it today in a different way from before?

CC: The main message of this piece—besides getting to know Frida a little bit more—is her last sentence: “Viva la vida,” which is “long live life,” or even “yay life!” All of us are going through a very difficult moment with COVID. Life just got so hard. The message is Viva la vida *as it is*. And Frida had to deal with problems with her health, and accidents, and more. But she was always saying, “but I love life, I'm going to continue fighting *La Muerte*, and live every second of this life, with all the problems and difficulties, and health problems.” I think it's a great message for this moment.

WB: I get that from her art—she's trying to claim her space as a woman, her female anatomy. How much of that is in the music?

CC: [*Frida* composer] Robert Xavier Rodríguez is Mexican-American and the music reflects different influences. It has a lot of folkloric music, but it also has romantic and contemporary, even *bel canto* moments, with some Broadway and opera and *zarzuela*, and that's like Frida herself. One of the most fascinating things about Frida is that she was constantly telling you where she comes from. Her father was 100% German. Her mother was half Indian, half Spanish-Mexican. So, Frida was this mix, and she adored that.

WB: Tell me about your mission with this project.

CC: My mission is to elevate the position of Latin American music with this, not only in the United States but everywhere. People don't take Latin American music as seriously as they take other music—not right away. I've been involved with the music of Astor Piazzolla and Daniel Catán and seen how people embrace it once they open up to it. And I want *Frida* to do that too. Here, and everywhere in the world.

Excerpted from the original interview. Read the complete conversation on the Michigan Opera Theatre Blog at michiganopera.org/blog.

FRIDA RETURNS TO DETROIT

Frida was initially presented during Michigan Opera Theatre's 2014–15 season. Since then, the production has traveled to Cincinnati, Miami, and Atlanta, and has spurred several national productions. In 2022, *Frida* is back in Detroit, and members of the cast, creative team, and administration reflect on the journey that the opera has taken from its successful production in 2015, to the newly revitalized performance today.

Catalina Cuervo, Soprano:

I AM the role of Frida at this point. In 2015, I didn't have any role models for the work. It was as if we were doing the world premiere. But I've been performing *Frida* for six years now, all over. I know this role and everybody's role in the piece like 100%.

Jose Maria Condemí, Director:

This is like a homecoming. I think it's important to say that when we first created it, we didn't know it was going to have the life that it has. *Frida* is compact, and it travels well. The chance to revive it in Cincinnati and Miami and Atlanta has given us a chance to keep working on it and continue to improve certain aspects of the production. There are a lot of little changes and tweaks that we do here and there that have continued to increase the quality.

Julie Kim, Chief Artistic Production Officer:

[Director Jose Maria Condemí] is really approaching it with a fresh eye and looking at it to say, let's not just rely on what we did in 2015. Let's look at this from today. Where are we today? Who are we today? And what do we want to do and say with this production?

Monika Essen, Production Designer:

[Frida] lived through the pain, and she didn't give up. She looked inside herself and found the energy in the power to create amazing art through that. Coming out of COVID, we've got to remember that all of us can create amazing art. We may have been put on hold but we're back at it...we're making magic again. And that's what the show is about. It's about making magic.

FRIDA KAHLO IN DETROIT

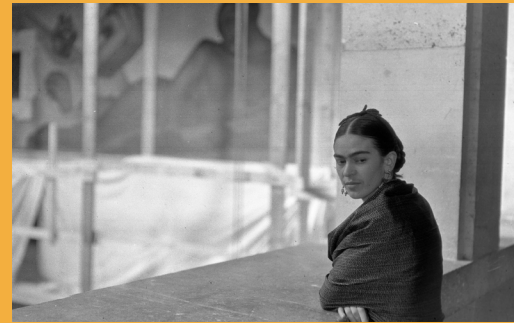


Image credit: Detroit Institute of Arts

In 1932 the famed Mexican muralist Diego Rivera was commissioned to create *Detroit Industry*, a massive mural for the Detroit Institute of Arts. Wilhelm Valentiner, the Director of the DIA, had secured funding from Edsel Ford to create a piece that reflected Detroit's industrial prowess and contemporary

advancements in science and medicine. Rivera arrived in Detroit with his new wife, Frida Kahlo. During their time in Detroit, Kahlo and Rivera created some of their most recognizable works, from Rivera's enormous mural to Kahlo's more intimate, darker self-portraits.

Rivera was taken with working-class Detroiters and the industrial scenery, however, Kahlo was rather unimpressed with Detroit. The young artist found the city "ugly and stupid" and spent much of her time watching movies and painting. When the couple would attend high-society events at the Ford estates, Kahlo shocked guests with profuse profanity, which she falsely ascribed to shaky English. This vivaciousness was paralleled in her developing habit of wearing traditional Mexican clothing, such as *huipil* blouses, *torzal* necklaces, and *rebozo* scarves. These garments simultaneously honored her ancestry while also draping her body, wrecked by polio and a near-fatal bus accident, and her prosthetic leg, the result of a gangrene infection, in colorful, hand-embroidered fabrics.

Kahlo's shifting artistic aesthetics emerged during her Detroit period; while Rivera busied himself with *Detroit Industry*, Kahlo's time in the city was marked by multiple traumas: from her outsider status amongst Grosse Pointe art elites, suicidal thoughts, to a miscarriage at Henry Ford Hospital. During this time, she produced a handful of surrealist oil paintings, including the self-creation of *My Birth*; the desperation of *Henry Ford Hospital*, which depicts her abortion following miscarriage; and *Self-Portrait Along the Border Line Between Mexico and the United States*, in which Kahlo paints herself between two worlds—the agrarian past of Mexico and the industrial future of the United States. Although she was only in Detroit for a single year, the pieces that emerged during this time are some of the most brutal, honest, and most well-loved works created by Kahlo in her short life.

By Austin Richey

ARTIST PROFILES



JOSE MARIA CONDEMI (DIRECTOR)

Jose Maria Condemì's directorial work, which has been presented by companies in North America and abroad, encompasses an eclectic range of styles and repertoire and has been consistently praised for its creatively theatrical and innovative approach. Notable engagements include *Carmen*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Faust*, *Tosca*, *Così fan tutte*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *The Elixir of Love for Families* and the world premiere of *The Secret Garden* (San Francisco Opera); *Ernani*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and *Il barbiere di Siviglia for Families* (Lyric Opera Chicago); *Aida* (Houston Grand Opera); *Luisa Miller* (Canadian Opera Company); *Orphée et Eurydice*, *La bohème*, *Tosca*, and *Il trovatore* (Seattle Opera). Condemì returns to direct *Frida* again for Michigan Opera Theatre.

As Associate Director, he has worked on *The Ring Cycle* and *Les Troyens* (San Francisco Opera), *Così fan tutte* (Lyric Opera Chicago), and *Un ballo in maschera* (Canadian Opera Company). Collaborations with contemporary composers include directing the world premieres of Hector Armienta's *River of Women* and *The Weeping Woman* and the workshop performance of San Francisco Opera's newly commissioned piece *Earthrise* by Lewis Spratlan. Current and upcoming directing engagements include new productions of *Tosca* (Cincinnati Opera) and *La traviata* (Opera Naples).



SUZANNE MALLARE ACTON (CONDUCTOR)

From Handel's *Messiah* to contemporary jazz, Suzanne Mallare Acton is recognized for her versatility and dynamic style. For MOT, her conducting credits include *West Side Story*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *The Music Man*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *La bohème*, *Die Fledermaus*, *La traviata*, *A Little Night Music*, *La fille du régiment*, *Carmina Burana* with members of Cirque du Soleil, *The Medium*, *Frida*, and *Les pêcheurs de perles*. Additional credits include Dayton Opera, Artpark, Augusta Opera, Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, Auditorium Theatre, and Verdi Opera Theatre. Symphonic concerts include Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra, Lexington Bach Festival, Dearborn Symphony, and Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra. For 25 years, Suzanne was artistic director of Rackham Choir (RC). Under her leadership, RC was awarded the 2008 Governor's Award for Arts & Culture.

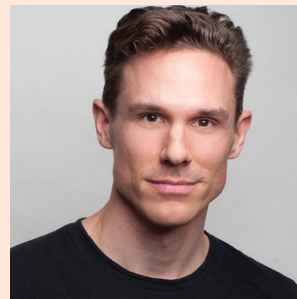
As long-term chorus master of MOT, Suzanne has worked on over 160 productions in seven languages. She is also the founder and director of the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus. She has been recognized by *Corp!* Magazine as one of Michigan's 95 Most Powerful Women. In 2014, she was one of 12 women selected as WJR's Women Who Lead.



**MARCO PELLE
(REVIVAL DIRECTOR/
CHOREOGRAPHER)**

Marco Pelle, recipient of the 2016 Primi Dieci USA Award, under the patronage of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as one of the ten most influential Italians in the USA, began his dance training in Italy and continued in Monaco at the Academie de Danse Classique Princesse Grace before moving to New York City to study under several merit scholarships with Merce Cunningham. He has been one of New York Theatre Ballet's resident choreographers since 2012. He created several works for the company, including *Solitude*, *Spaces*, and *Endless Possibilities of Being*, the scores of which were all composed by his brother, Federico Pelle.

As an opera choreographer, Marco has worked extensively in the US and abroad. In Beijing, China, he has choreographed a total of four productions at the National Centre of the Performing Arts, including *Aida*. In 2017, he had his directorial debut with Florida Grand Opera, directing and choreographing *Un ballo in maschera*. Since then, he has directed and choreographed contemporary operas like *Frida* and *Song From The Uproar* for Cincinnati Opera and *Tosca* for Michigan Opera Theatre.



**STEPHEN HANNA
(ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/
ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER/
DANCER)**

Stephen Hanna started dancing at the age of three at Shade Sisters Dance Studio, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He went on to the Center for Theatre Arts, then Point Park College Conservatory, after which he was accepted into the School of American Ballet in New York City. In 1997 he received the Mae. L. Wein Award for Outstanding Promise and became a member of New York City Ballet. While there, he was promoted to the rank of soloist in 2004, and to the rank of principal dancer in 2005. He appeared in the film *Centerstage* during his time with New York City Ballet.

In 2008 Stephen made his Broadway debut as Older Billy/Scottish Dancer in *Billy Elliot The Musical*. He was in the national tour cast of Twyla Tharp's *Come Fly Away* as Sid. Other roles include Dream Lecter in *Silence! The Musical* in New York, and Dream Curly in *Oklahoma!* at Lyric Opera of Chicago. On Broadway, he has performed in the revival of *On The Town*, as well as in *An American in Paris* and *Hello, Dolly!* starring Bette Midler. As an actor, he has appeared in television shows including *All My Children*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Momsters: When Moms Go Bad Forever*, and *Pose*; the short films *The Morning After* and *Fourth Position*; and the web series *Bi*.



**MONIKA ESSEN
(PRODUCTION DESIGNER)**

Monika Essen is an award-winning, nationally recognized artist and designer. The recipient of the prestigious Lawrence DeVine Award for Outstanding Contribution to Theatre, she studied Interior Architecture and Environmental Design at Parsons School of Design NYC and received her MFA in Scenography from the renowned Hilberry Repertory Co. Monika has designed over 250 productions in theatre, opera, and film, and is currently the Resident Designer at Michigan Opera Theatre where she has just recently designed their highly acclaimed productions of *Frida* and *Bliss*. She has also designed for The Atlanta Opera, Florida Grand Opera, and Cincinnati Opera, working with such notable directors as Tazewell Thompson, John Pascoe, Kenny Leon, Mario Corradi, and now Yuval Sharon. Some local favorite productions include *Murder Ballad* and *American Hero* at Detroit Public Theatre, and *The Foursome*, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, and *The Impossibility of Now* at Tipping Point Theatre. Additionally, she creates art, furniture, museum exhibits, interiors, and full sensory, multi-media environments for residential and commercial clients, including the Detroit Zoo. All her design work can be viewed at studioepoque.com.



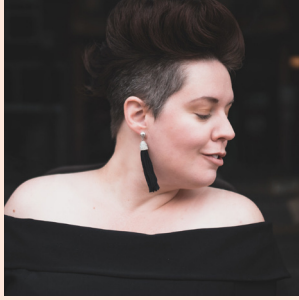
**BEN RAWSON
(LIGHTING DESIGNER)**

Ben Rawson is an Atlanta-based lighting designer for theatre, opera, and dance. His theatrical and opera design work can be seen at The Alliance Theatre, Michigan Opera Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre, The Atlanta Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Theatrical Outfit, Actors Express, Aurora Theatre, Atlanta Lyric Theatre, 7 Stages, and Synchronicity Theatre. Dance design work includes choreographers Ana Maria Lucaciu, Troy Schumacher, Danielle Agami, and Claudia Schreier, as well as with Atlanta Ballet, Terminus Modern Ballet Theatre, Fly On A Wall, Staibdance, Bluebird Uncaged, Proia Dance Project, and Emily Cargill and Dancers. Ben has also worked across the country as an associate & assistant lighting designer for San Diego Opera (CA), The Alliance Theatre (GA), Berkshire Theatre Festival (MA), The Atlanta Opera (GA), Utah Opera (UT), Atlanta Ballet (GA), and Playmakers Repertory Company (NC).



**JOANNE MIDDLETON WEAVER
(WIG & MAKEUP DESIGNER)**

Born in England, Joanne Weaver came to the United States in the late 1980s. She began apprenticing with what was then Washington Opera, now Washington National Opera. She has since designed at many opera companies throughout the US, including Glimmerglass Opera, Central City Opera, Sarasota Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Des Moines Metro Opera. Her notable Michigan Opera Theatre credits include *Die Zauberflöte*, *Macbeth*, *The Passenger*, *Frida*, *The Merry Widow*, *Faust*, *Margaret Garner*, *Cyrano*, and *The Pearl Fishers*.



**JENNIFER CRESSWELL
(NURSE; MRS. FORD)**

Soprano and librettist Jennifer Cresswell has recently been heard as Der Trommler in *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, Magda Sorel in *The Consul*, Hannah After in *As One*, as a soloist with the Toledo Symphony, and in concerts featuring the music of George Gershwin and Kurt Weill with tenor George Shirley. She is dedicated to singing in her native tongue and finding the beauty and humanity in otherwise unsympathetic characters.

As a librettist, she has translated and created six opera reductions for school outreach tours, and has written one original opera libretto, *Respectable Woman*, with composer Kristi Fullerton.

Jennifer is currently a doctoral student at the University of Michigan, where she has been named a Presidential Graduate Fellow by the Rackham Graduate School and an Elsie Choy Lee Scholar by the Center for the Education of Women.



**CATALINA CUERVO
(FRIDA KAHLO)**

Known as the "Fiery Soprano," Colombian-American soprano Catalina Cuervo holds the distinction of having performed the most productions of Astor Piazzolla's *Maria de Buenos Aires* and *Frida* by Robert Xavier Rodríguez in the history of these operas, and is considered one of the leading voices of Latin American repertoire in the world. She has performed for numerous prestigious companies including New York City Opera, Florida Grand Opera, The Atlanta Opera, Cincinnati Opera, and Theatro Municipal de São Paulo.

Catalina made her debut as Frida Kahlo in the revival of the opera *Frida* with Michigan Opera Theatre in 2015 and has since performed the role with Cincinnati Opera (2017), Florida Grand Opera (2019), The Atlanta Opera (2019), Anchorage Opera (2020), and Portland Opera (2021). Those productions ended with all sold-out shows and triumphant reviews, one even calling *Frida* the best opera of the 2015 season. *Frida* will be presented in 2022 at Michigan Opera Theatre and El Paso Opera.

Catalina has a prolific symphonic career as well. She has performed with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, New Mexico Philharmonic, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and Filarmonica de Medellín, to name a few. Catalina Cuervo was named one of the five most successful Colombian sopranos in the opera world by the Ministry of Culture of Colombia. Besides opera, she is also one of the leading voices of symphonic rock/metal music in Colombia.



**LEAH DEXTER
(DIMAS' MOTHER; LUPE MARIN)**

American mezzo-soprano Leah Dexter is elated to be returning to Michigan Opera Theatre for another production of *Frida*, to perform the roles of Dimas' Mother and Lupe once again. Recent engagements have included her debut with Chicago Sinfonietta as the alto soloist in Mahler's Symphony No. 2, the role of Gloria in Chicago Opera Theater's premiere production of Dan Shore's *Freedom Ride*, T-Rex/Cavewoman with Lyric Opera of Chicago's *Rhoda and the Fossil Hunt*, soloist for Chicago's Hearing in Color concert series, *Aida* and Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the Chicago Symphony Chorus, and Delius's *Eine Messe des Lebens* and Mahler's Symphony No. 2 with the Grant Park Festival Chorus.

For the 2020–21 season, she joined the Chicago-based LYNX as a recital soloist for commissioned art songs and an anthology recording project released in fall of 2021, and returned to Chicago Opera Theater for two critically acclaimed premiere productions: *The Transformation of Jane Doe* as the Night Maid and *Taking Up Serpents* as Nelda. The 2021–22 season brings her back to Chicago Opera Theater for several productions: covering the title role of Bizet's *Carmen* for a series of concerts, the role of Ib in *Becoming Santa Claus*, and Mistress Paddington in the world premiere of Errollyn Wallen's opera *Quamino's Map*. Leah is a Detroit-area native who studied violin and cello for many years and holds Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the University of Michigan.



**CLODAGH EARLS
(CALAVERA)**

Canadian soprano Clodagh Earls embraces a range of repertoire from oratorio to contemporary operatic music and is thrilled to return to Michigan Opera Theatre to reprise the roles of Calavera, Bathtub Lover, and Ensemble in Rodríguez's *Frida*. She has performed regularly with Michigan Opera Theatre since 2014, and her credits include the company premiere of *Frida* (2015), Olga in Lehar's *The Merry Widow*, Mrs. Jenks in Copland's *The Tender Land* (2016), and Amy in Adamo's *Little Women* (2017). She also performed as a featured artist in MOT's Summer Serenade Series and in concerts throughout the metro Detroit area.

Clodagh has enjoyed performing the following roles: Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Adina in *L'elisir d'amore*, Miss Silverpeal in *The Impresario*, Olympia in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, and Papagena and Königin der Nacht in *Die Zauberflöte*. She is also drawn to modern opera having starred in two premieres: Emilia in Andrew Ager's *The Wings of the Dove* in Toronto, and Eve in Jonathan Dove's *The Walk from the Garden* with Rackham Choir and Orchestra in Detroit. She also performs concert and oratorio works throughout the USA and Canada. Clodagh holds a Master of Music in Voice Performance from the University of Toronto, and a Bachelor of Music in Honours Voice Performance from Western University, Canada.



**RICARDO HERRERA
(DIEGO RIVERA)**

Bass-baritone Ricardo Herrera is a performer, teacher, and stage director. He has sung more than 50 operatic roles across the USA, Mexico, and Europe, including with San Francisco Opera, Gotham Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, El Paso Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Caramoor Festival, Oldenburgisches Staatstheater, and The Atlanta Opera, among others. After his debut with Michigan Opera Theatre in the 2015 production of *Frida* in the role of Diego Rivera, he has sung this role with Cincinnati Opera, Florida Grand Opera, and The Atlanta Opera.

Ricardo was the First Prize Award Winner of the Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation Competition in New York City and was also invited to participate in Plácido Domingo's Operalia World Opera Contest. As a Merola Opera Program participant in San Francisco, he performed the title role in the Western Opera Theater National Tour of *Don Giovanni*. He received the Demodocus Award that entitled him to his Carnegie Hall debut as the bass soloist in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 after participating in the premiere season of Greece's Opera Aegean. He also received the Adler Fellowship with San Francisco Opera where he appeared in many San Francisco Opera productions including *La traviata*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Mother of Us All*, and *Billy Budd*. Ricardo has presented masterclasses, concerts, and recitals in Europe and in China.



**BRIAN LEDUC
(MR. FORD; LEON TROTSKY)**

Brian LeDuc is no stranger to theatre. He was a member of the chorus at Michigan Opera Theatre for the debut of David DiChiera's *Cyrano*, and continued with *La traviata*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmen*, *The Mikado*, *La bohème*, and *Rigoletto*. He made his main stage debut in the role of Spoletta in *Tosca* in 2010 and was Monastatos in *Die Zauberflöte* in 2011. He also received acclaim for his portrayal of Don Basilio in *Le nozze di Figaro*.

A native of Detroit, Brian attended Wayne State University for undergraduate studies in instrumental education and voice performance; he received acclaim in both operatic and musical theatre productions. He has given life to such roles as Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance* and Che in *Evita*. Brian has appeared as a guest artist on many programs, and made appearances at churches and theatres all over metro Detroit and around the world. Following a ten-year post as Assistant Director of Music at Christ Church Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, Brian currently takes residence on the music staff of The Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Midtown Detroit, and as Assistant Director of Music at Holy Name Catholic Church in Birmingham, Michigan. He also serves as Assistant Director of the Festival Choir at Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield, Michigan.



**DAVID MOAN
(CALAVERA;
EDWARD G. ROBINSON)**

David Moan is ecstatic to be reprising his roles in *Frida* with Michigan Opera Theatre. Along with the 2015 production of *Frida*, other previous MOT credits include Martin in *Candide*, Il Notaro/Magistrate in *Gianni Schicci/Buoso's Ghost*, Bird Seller/Dr. Fogg in *Sweeney Todd*, and as Jack in MOT's children's tour of *Jack and The Beanstalk*. David is also the current drama director for the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus and the Big Bad Wolf in the MOT's children's tour of *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Other favorite performances include John Wilkes Booth (Wilde Award Winner) in *Assassins* and Sweeney Todd in *Sweeney Todd* at the Encore Musical Theatre Company; Monty in *A Gentleman's Guide...* (Wilde Award Winner) and God/Himself in *An Act of God* at the Dio; and Cinderella's Prince/Wolf in *Into The Woods* at the Ringwald Theatre. David is also one-half of the musical improv duo Torch Song.



**JESÚS VICENTE MURILLO
(GUILLERMO KAHLO)**

Bass-baritone Jesús Vicente Murillo has been performing opera, musical theatre, concerts, and art song across the USA and Canada since making his debut with Michigan Opera Theatre as The Android in *The Very Last Green Thing* at age 18. In 2019 he completed a two-year residency in Salt Lake City's Utah Opera where he sang over 400 performances with the company. Since then, he has gone on to perform Figaro in *Figaro! (90210)* with Chautauqua Opera, Dr. Bartolo in *Le barbiere di Siviglia* with Fargo-Moorhead Opera, Betto in *Gianni Schicchi/Buoso's Ghost* with Michigan Opera Theatre, and Masetto in *Don Giovanni* with Bare Opera. He has also made numerous appearances with Opéra Louisiane, Charlottesville Opera, Opera in Williamsburg, Salt Lake Choral Artists, Opera Saratoga, Seagle Music Colony, Arbor Opera Theater, Thompson Street Opera, Main Street Opera, and many others. Projects for the 2021–22 season include Leporello in *Don Giovanni* with Fargo-Moorhead Opera, Guillermo Kahlo in *Frida* with Michigan Opera Theatre and El Paso Opera, Cassandra in *Kassandra* with The Chamber Cartel of Atlanta, and Jeff in Lisa Despain's *That Hellbound Train* through a generous grant from The National Endowment for the Arts.

Murillo has a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Michigan, and a Master of Music in Opera and Voice Performance from McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. Currently based out of Philadelphia where he maintains a vocal studio, he is also a member of the Vox Ama Deus ensemble, and bass soloist at All Saints Church in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania.



**MARLEN NAHHAS
(CRISTINA KAHLO)**

Mexican-Lebanese soprano Marlen Nahhas recently completed the Cafritz Young Artists program with Washington National Opera. Highlights of her time at WNO include *Die Zauberflöte* (Pamina), *La traviata* (Violetta), Tesori's *The Lion, The Unicorn, and Me* (Flamingo), *The Consul* (Foreign Woman), the world premiere of Sankaram's *Taking Up Serpents* (Queer Kid), and a Concert of Comedic Masterpieces under the baton of Joseph Coloneri. Next season she will debut with Virginia Opera in *La bohème* as Musetta, a role she performed with Opera Naples and Finger Lakes Opera. Recent orchestral debuts include the National Symphony Orchestra in excerpts from *La bohème* (Mimi) and Kansas City Symphony for excerpts from *Le nozze di Figaro* (Susanna).

Marlen was a member of the Merola Opera Program at the San Francisco Opera Center where she performed scenes from *Il tabarro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Don Carlo*, and *La rondine* in the Schwabacher and Grand Finale concerts. She was also an Apprentice Artist with Central City Opera where she covered roles in *Tosca* (title role) and *Così fan tutte* (Fiordiligi). Additional performing experience includes *Madama Butterfly* (title role) and *Die Fledermaus* (Rosalinde). Marlen was a National Semi-finalist in The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and a graduate of Oklahoma City University and Indiana University.



**COREY ROBERTS
(ALEJANDRO;
NICHOLAS MURRAY)**

Detroit-born tenor Corey Roberts is thrilled to return to Michigan Opera Theatre to reprise his role as Frida's first love Alejandro in Rodríguez's *Frida*. A passionate creative with a penchant for pushing boundaries, Corey draws on his eclectic experience on stage, in the studio, and in front of the camera to bring the characters he plays to life. Most recently, he portrayed the role of Rumples in *Rumples*, an immersive video opera experience that premiered at the Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh, followed by a New York premiere at the White Box Gallery. Corey and his husband Cristian can be seen co-hosting Series 1 of *On-The-Road*, a So-Cal travel series presented by Toyota. Since his Michigan Opera Theatre debut during the original 2015 production of *Frida* and as a featured MOT artist during the Detroit Tree Lighting ceremony, Corey has continued to expand his experience in the studio and on stage in Los Angeles. He also has found tremendous inspiration focusing on new works. He originated the role of The Sweeper in Alex Weston's *The Lingerer* for the English National Opera and spent five years giving a voice to Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Bonhoeffer the Musical*—from a single demo to a full studio album and multiple sold-out showcases nationwide. Corey has been musically inclined his entire life, studying French horn and later receiving his BFA in Voice from Carnegie Mellon University.



**DIANE RAE SCHOFF
(MRS. ROCKEFELLER;
NATALIA TROTSKY)**

Mezzo-soprano Diane Rae Schoff is a regular character on stage with regional companies throughout Michigan and around the country. Over the past six seasons at Michigan Opera Theatre, Diane has performed many roles, including Zita in *Gianni Schicci*, Second Maid in *Elektra*, Natalia Trotsky in *Frida*, Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, Aunt Cecilia in *Little Women*, and most recently in *Bliss* at the historic Michigan Building Parking Garage. Recent performances around the area included joining Opera Grand Rapids as Katisha in their production of *The Mikado*, and Toledo Opera as Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* and the Old Baroness in *Vanessa*. In 2017, Diane made her Opera Carolina company and role debut as Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro*. Opera Carolina has since hosted Diane on many occasions including as the Duchess of Crackenthorpe in *La fille du régiment* and as Madame Larina in *Eugene Onegin*.

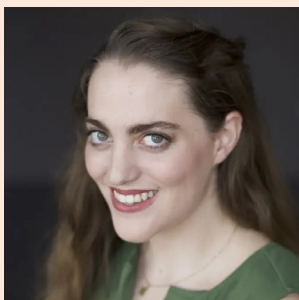
Diane can often be heard in Opera in the Park with MOT's outreach concerts and at Spirit Plaza. An avid performer of concert and oratorio works with orchestra, she has sung many of the alto solos in J.S. Bach's Cantatas over the years and debuted with Orchestra Sono as the alto soloist in Haydn's *Missa in Angustiis* and Schubert's Mass in G. Diane holds the honor of being a National Semi-finalist in The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and is a graduate of San Francisco Opera's Merola apprentice program.



**JACOB SURZYN
(MR. ROCKEFELLER)**

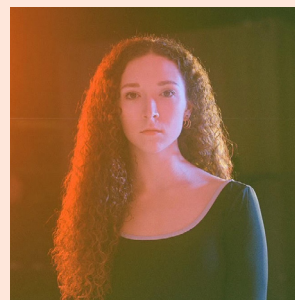
Jake Surzyn is glad to perform in Michigan Opera Theatre's *Frida* as Mr. Rockefeller! He is a graduate of the University of Michigan where he performed the roles of Schauard in *La bohème*, Melisso in *Alcina*, and Cacambo/Don Issachar in *Candide*. He returned to the University of Michigan in 2020 as a guest performer to portray Johannes "Pa" Zegner in Mizzy Mazzoli's *Proving Up*.

Born and raised in Michigan, Jake has worked with companies such as Plymouth's Main Street Opera Theatre, Ann Arbor's Arbor Opera Theatre, and Detroit's Opera MODO. With these companies he has performed as Marquis de la Force in *Les dialogues des Carmélites*, Doctor Gregg in *Gallantry*, Jupiter in *Orphée aux enfers*, Crespel in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, King Melchior in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*. A pioneer of virtual opera, Jake covered the role of Guglielmo in Opera NexGen's inaugural performance of *Così fan tutte*. Last summer, Jake was a resident artist with Opera North performing the role of Marcello in *La bohème*, and in March of 2020 he made his debut with First Coast Opera where he sang the role of The Pilot in Portman's *The Little Prince*. Jake has been a Young and Apprentice Artist with Charlottesville Opera where he covered the roles of Marcello, Lancelot, and Escamillo. An avid performer of oratorio, Jake has sung as the soloist in concerts of music ranging from Baroque to contemporary repertoire.



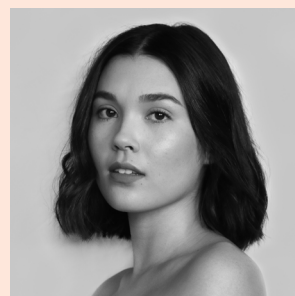
**ANTONA YOST
(CALAVERA)**

Mezzo-soprano Antona Yost grew up in Salt Lake City where she discovered a passion for singing while a student at the Madeleine Choir School. She went on to complete a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from the University of Southern California and a Master of Music in Voice Performance from the University of Michigan. In 2018, she made her professional operatic debut with Detroit-based Opera MODO, singing the role of Angelina in their innovative adaptation of Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. Since then, she has continued to nurture her love for opera, oratorio, and choral music, performing operatic roles with various companies in the upper Midwest region, and appearing as a soloist and ensemble member with groups such as Ann Arbor's UMS and the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Antona is passionate about teaching and maintains a small voice studio in Ann Arbor, where she is based.



**TARA CHARVAT
(DANCER)**

Tara Charvat is Company Member in Eisenhower Dance Detroit. She graduated *summa cum laude* in 2018 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from Western Michigan University. She attended summer programs with New Dialect, chuthis., BODYTRAFFIC LA, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Big Muddy Dance Company, and DanceWorks Chicago. In 2018, she received a scholarship to the Lou Conte Dance Studio. Tara joined NewDances in 2019, a collaboration between Thodos Dance Chicago and DanceWorks Chicago. For the 2019–20 season, she apprenticed with Eisenhower Dance Detroit, and was promoted to company member in fall 2020. Tara is also a teaching artist for the School of Eisenhower Dance Detroit as well as other studios in the Metro Detroit area.



**ÁINE DORMAN
(DANCER)**

Áine Dorman is Apprentice with Eisenhower Dance Detroit. She was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, beginning her dance training at the San Francisco Ballet School. She graduated from the University of California, Irvine in 2019 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Performance and a Bachelor of Science in Public Health Sciences. She then completed postgraduate studies at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago's Professional Program under the direction of Alexandra Wells. She has performed works by Lar Lubovitch, Robyn Mineko Williams, Ryan Mason, Rena Butler, and Peter Chu, and supplemented her dance training with workshops including BODYTRAFFIC and Post:Ballet. Áine is the owner of her clothing brand Undercurve, with which she explores fashion as a means to connect the community to movement and dance.

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In remembrance of our founder and long-term general director,
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The Michigan Opera Theatre Board of Directors began the first phase of fundraising for Detroit Opera House capital improvements in January 2020. This multi-phase capital campaign grew from recommendations identified in the facilities master plan completed by Albert Kahn Associates, Inc. Scheduled facility improvements and upgrades will shape the patron experience at the Opera House for years to come.

We look forward to sharing full details about the capital campaign in the coming months. Until then, we extend heartfelt thanks to the following donors who made contributions that enabled capital improvements to begin.



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*Listing reflects gifts and pledges as of December 31, 2021 in alphabetical order.

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The Italian word avanti means "ahead," or "forward." Michigan Opera Theatre's Avanti Society represents a designated group of friends who have made plans to include MOT in their estates—whether by will, trust, insurance, or life income arrangement. We are grateful for the generosity and foresight of those listed below, who have chosen to declare their intentions and join the Avanti Society.

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