

The Juilliard School  
presents

## Proving Up

Music by Missy Mazzoli  
Libretto by Royce Vavrek  
Adapted from the short story "Proving Up" by Karen Russell

Wednesday, February 15, and Friday, February 17, 2023, 7:30pm  
Sunday, February 19, 2023, 2pm  
Rosemary and Meredith Willson Theater

Steven Osgood, Conductor  
Mary Birnbaum, Director

Juilliard Opera

Members of the Juilliard Orchestra

### **The Cast** *(in order of vocal appearance)*

The Sodbuster	Joseph Parrish
Mrs. Johannes "Ma" Zegner	Julia Stuart
Littler Zegner Daughter	Georgiana Adams
Taller Zegner Daughter	Mary Beth Nelson
Miles Zegner	Andrew Turner
Mr. Johannes "Pa" Zegner	Trevor Haumschilt
Peter Zegner	Nazrin Alymann

Scenic Designer: Kristen Robinson  
Costume Designer: Oana Botez  
Lighting Designer: Yuki Nakase Link

This production features strong themes, blood, and a non-firing prop firearm.

Bloomberg Philanthropies—Lead Digital Sponsor

Juilliard's livestream technology is made possible, in part, by a gift in honor of President Emeritus Joseph W. Polisi, building on his legacy of broadening Juilliard's global reach.

This production is partially sponsored by Sarah Billingham Solomon and Howard Solomon.

Juilliard's Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts was established in 2010 by the generous support of Ellen and James S. Marcus.

Support for Juilliard's 2022-23 Professional Apprenticeship Program has been provided by Agnes Gund.

Juilliard is committed to the diversity of our community and to fostering an environment that is inclusive, supportive, and welcoming to all. For information on our equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging efforts, visit our website at [juilliard.edu/edib](http://juilliard.edu/edib).

**Covers** (*in alphabetical order*)

Sophia Baete (Taller Zegner Daughter), Sydney Dardis (Littler Zegner Daughter), Jason Hwang (Mr. Johannes "Pa" Zegner), Richard Pittsinger (Miles Zegner), Christine Taylor Price+ (Mrs. Johannes "Ma" Zegner), Jared Werlein (The Sodbuster), Felix Zender (Peter Zegner)

Music Preparation: Adam Nielsen

Language Preparation: Kathryn LaBouff

Associate Coach: John Arida

Rehearsal Pianists: Taylor Burkhardt, Benjamin Pawlak

Fight Director: Mark Olsen

Assistant Director: Jen Pitt

Production Stage Manager: Iván Dario Cano

Assistant Scenic Designer: Ryan Dziedziech

Assistant Costume Designer: Miranda Boodheshwar\*

Assistant Lighting Designer: Leslie Lura-Smith

Assistant Stage Managers: Gabrielle Giacomo\*, Sarah Orttung\*

*\*Member, Professional Apprenticeship Program*

*+Juilliard Alumna*

Score edition by G. Schirmer, Inc.

Performance time: approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes, without an intermission

**Director's Note by Mary Birnbaum**

"Now I understand—this is a dream, a nightmare!" says Miles, our 13-year-old protagonist, as he experiences a blizzard on horseback in late October somewhere far away from his Nebraska homestead.

How conscious can we afford to be of the systems we are complicit in? Is it possible to stay open and sensitive to the world in the face of hopelessness, grief, and failure? These past years have certainly shed light on the shortcomings of the American Dream and tested our collective will to go on working to achieve any kind of existential safety. Missy Mazzoli and Royce Vavrek's ghostly opera based on Karen Russell's subtly horrifying short story centers on one Nebraskan family that has ventured west from Pennsylvania, incentivized by the Homestead Act of 1862, which was intended to encourage the settlement of the West by Northerners (poor white people, free Black people, European immigrants—including a lot of German immigrants, like the Zegners), formerly enslaved people, and even single women. This act, meant to equalize land ownership, also ended up dispossessing many Indigenous people of their land (in Nebraska, it was the "five civilized tribes," most notably

the Pawnee). You can hear the ghosts on the arid landscape in Mazzoli's music and the violence of life on this land in Vavrek's and Russell's words.

Our departure point for the staging was the image of Zegner family obsessively circling around the details of staking their claim, counterbalanced with the vast loneliness of the landscape. If Pa stood on one side of their 160 acres, it would be impossible for him to see the other side at the same time, a truly unmanageable situation for any farmer in the face of drought, hail, locusts, snow, and even a scourge of grasshoppers. We decided that the audience would stand in for the Gamagrass of the libretto, and the experience of watching would contain aspects of intimacy within a surprising vastness, an inability to see everything that is happening. From that point, we started thinking of the piece as a dreamlike installation with a dream logic. We hope you feel a part of the blue-gray ocean of grass that obscures and reveals the Zegner family as they work, grieve, struggle, and dare to hope.

### **Synopsis**

*Proving Up* is an opera about the American dream, told through the story of Nebraskan homesteaders in the 1870s. A family dreams of "proving up" and obtaining the deed to the land they've settled. They obsessively list the requirements of the Homestead Act: five years of harvest, a sod house dwelling, and perhaps the most elusive element—a glass window. With their eldest son incapacitated, Ma and Pa Zegner send their youngest living child, Miles, on a mission to share the valuable commodity with their distant neighbors who are expecting a visit from a government inspector. Miles mounts his gray mare with the window wrapped in burlap and gallops across the land. The elements, natural and otherwise, have other plans, and Miles comes face to face with a strange man who turns out to be the ghost of a neighboring farmer, driven mad by the requirements of "proving up." The willowy figure knows all too well the cost of the American dream, and the window soon becomes a broken mirror reflecting great tragedy. Reprinted by permission of G. Schirmer, Inc.

### **About the Artists**

#### **Steven Osgood (Conductor)**

Steven Osgood recently completed his sixth season as general and artistic director of the Chautauqua Opera Company. His engagements for the 2022-23 season include a return to the Metropolitan Opera as assistant conductor for *La traviata* and *Street Scene* at Rice University. Last season included the world premiere performances of Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage's *Intimate Apparel* at Lincoln Center Theatre. In recent seasons, Osgood conducted the world premieres of *Breaking the Waves* at Opera Philadelphia, *JFK* at Fort Worth Opera, and *The Scarlet Ibis*, *Thumbprint*, and *Sumeida's Song* for the Prototype Festival as well as Missy Mazzoli's *Song From the Uproar* with Beth Morrison Projects. Other notable productions include *JFK* at Opéra de Montréal, the world premiere of Xenakis' *Oresteia* at the Miller Theater, Tan Dun's *Marco Polo* with De Nederlandse Opera, *Three Decembers* at Atlanta Opera, and *Dead Man Walking* at Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

#### **Mary Birnbaum (Director)**

Mary Birnbaum's most recent work in New York includes *L'Orfeo* at Juilliard and the world premiere of Chris Cerrone and Stephanie Fleischmann's *In a Grove* at Pittsburgh Opera. Birnbaum has directed new and classic operas across the U.S. (Santa Fe Opera, Montclair Peak Performances, Opera Philadelphia, Seattle Opera, Bard Summerscape, Opera Columbus, Virginia Arts Festival, Ojai Festival, and Boston Baroque, among others) and internationally, from Taiwan (National Symphony Orchestra) and Central America (National Theatre of Costa Rica and Querido Arte in Guatemala) to Australia, Israel, and Europe, where her Juilliard production of *Dido and Aeneas* toured to Opera Holland Park and Opéra de Versailles. Nominated for best newcomer at the European Opera Awards in 2015, she won the *Opera America* director/designer showcase for her production of Gertrude Stein and Virgil Thompson's *Four Saints in Three Acts*. A Juilliard faculty member since 2011, Birnbaum helps singers tune in to impulse and connect to the

moment in her role as dramatic advisor to the master's and graduate diploma singers. A graduate of Harvard College, she trained professionally in physical theater at L'École Jacques Lecoq in Paris. She lives on the Upper West Side with her husband, Justin; son, Jasper; and dog, Greg.

### **Georgiana Adams (Littler Zegner Daughter)**

- *Allen R. and Judy Brick Freedman Scholarship*

Last summer, American soprano Georgiana Adams made her debut as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with the Chautauqua Opera Conservatory. She's in her second year at Juilliard studying for her master's under the tutelage of Amy Burton. During the 2022-23 season, Adams is making role debuts including Littler Zegner Daughter in *Proving Up* and La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi* at Juilliard and covering Female Chorus in the Merola Opera Program's *The Rape of Lucretia* this summer. Last fall, Adams was a New York district winner in the Metropolitan Opera's Laffont Competition and looks forward to competing again this spring.

### **Nazrin Alymann (Peter Zegner)**

- *S. Jay Hazan Scholarship in Vocal Arts*

Originally from Malaysia, bass-baritone Nazrin Alymann is a bachelor's student at Juilliard under the tutelage of Kevin Short. Alymann has performed in international locales including Dewan Filharmonik Petronas, Malaysia; Elgar Room, Royal Albert Hall, London; Wiener Saal, Mozarteum, Austria; and Suntory Hall, Japan. He sang the title role in a production of *The Mikado* and was in the Juilliard production of *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor* as a chorus member.

### **Trevor Haumschilt (Mr. Johannes "Pa" Zegner)**

- *Robert A. Morgan Scholarship, Helen and Sam Wilborn Scholarship in Voice*

Baritone Trevor Haumschilt, born and raised in San Diego, is pursuing his master's at Juilliard under the instruction of Kevin Short. As an undergraduate at San Diego State University, Haumschilt performed roles including Orfeo in Peri's *Euridice*, the Minskman in *Flight*, Don Hilarión in *La Verbena de la Paloma*, and the bass solo in Mozart's *Requiem*. This past year, Haumschilt was a winner of the Musical Merit of Greater San Diego Competition.

### **Mary Beth Nelson (Taller Zegner Daughter)**

- *Kovner Fellowship*

Mezzo-soprano Mary Beth Nelson recently sang in Handel's *Atalanta* with Juilliard Opera. This spring, she will appear in two Lincoln Center recitals followed by her summer debut as a Filene Artist with Wolf Trap Opera. Last season, Nelson appeared in Rossi's *L'Orfeo* with Juilliard Opera and at Alice Tully Hall as the alto soloist in Bach's B-Minor Mass with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. Nelson is a member of the Cathedral Choir at the Cathedral St. John the Divine, where she sang the world premiere of Joseph Turrin's "Lullaby for Vaska" at the New Year's Eve Concert for Peace. Guest appearances include Opera Delaware, Opera Baltimore, the Glimmerglass Festival, Florida Grand Opera, and Houston Grand Opera. A native of Southern California, Nelson is a master's candidate and studies voice with William Burden.

### **Joseph Parrish (The Sodbuster)**

- *R. Maurice Boyd Scholarship for Vocal Studies, Helen and Sam Wilborn Scholarship in Voice, Daniel Ferro Scholarship*

Baltimore native Joseph Parrish (MM '22, voice) recently sang the roles of Dr. Cajus in *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*, Il Sacerdote di Minerva in *Teseo*, Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore*, Augure in Rossi's *L'Orfeo* at Juilliard, and Le Baron de Pictordu in the City Lyric Opera's production of Viardot's *Cendrillon*. He has sung in concert at the St. Boniface Church in Brooklyn and at Zankel Hall as well as a soloist with Cantori New York, Bach Vespers at Holy Trinity Church, the Westchester Oratorio Society, and Juilliard415. Parrish is an artist diploma candidate in opera studies at

Juilliard, where he is also a Music Advancement Program teaching fellow, Gluck Community Service fellow, and Morse teaching artist. He studies with Darrell Babidge.

### **Julia Stuart (Mrs. Johannes “Ma” Zegner)**

Soprano Julia Stuart, a California native, is pursuing her graduate diploma at Juilliard studying with Amy Burton. In the fall, Stuart won the New York district’s first prize in the NATS Competition and made her Alice Tully Hall debut performing works by Schubert and Strauss. Last summer, she joined SongFest as a professional fellow, giving the world premiere of Sheila Silver’s *If Trees Could Talk* and performing with pianist Graham Johnson. After that, she joined Classic Lyric Arts in Italy, studying Italian operatic repertoire and making her Italian debut singing in the Tagliacozzo International Festival. Stuart holds a master’s from the Mannes School of Music and a bachelor’s from the University of California, Los Angeles.

### **Andrew Turner (Miles Zegner)**

- *Helen and Sam Wilborn Scholarship in Voice*

Tenor Andrew Turner, from Tacoma, Washington, is an artist diploma student at Juilliard, where he studies with Darrell Babidge. Turner performed the role of Agent 2 in the world premiere of *M. Butterfly* and covered the role of Bardolfo in *Falstaff* as a 2022 Santa Fe Opera apprentice artist. He was a 2021-22 resident artist at Pittsburgh Opera. His roles include First Priest/First Armored Man in *The Magic Flute*, the Beloved/Horus in *The Rose Elf*, Policeman/Ambrose Raines in the world premiere of *In a Grove*, Le Remendado in *Carmen*, and Policeman/Buddy #1 in *Blue*.

### **Oana Botez (Costume Designer)**

Oana Botez is an international set and costume designer for film, theater, opera, and dance. She is a Princess Grace and NEA/TCG Career Development Program recipient, has received the Barrymore Award, and was nominated for the Henry Hewes Design and Lucille Lortel awards. Her New York credits include BAM Next Wave, Bard Summerscape, Playwrights Horizons, Baryshnikov Arts Center, David H. Koch Theater, Big Apple Circus, and Classic Stage Company. Her opera credits include *Song of Ambassadors* (Alice Tully Hall); *Carmen* (Minneapolis Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Portland Opera); *In a Grove* (Pittsburgh Opera); *Persona* (National Sawdust, REDCAT); and *A House in Bali* (BAM). International credits include the Bucharest National Theater, Château de Versailles, Théâtre National de Chaillot, Les Subsistances, the Old Vic, Budapest National Theater, Cluj Hungarian National Theater (Romania), Le Quartz (Brest, France), La Filature (Mulhouse, France), Exit Festival/Maison des Arts Creteil, Tanz im August Festival Hebbel am Ufer—HAU1(Berlin), Edinburgh International Festival, and Singapore Arts Festival.

### **Yuki Nakase Link (Lighting Designer)**

Yuki Nakase Link’s previous projects with Mary Birnbaum include *In a Grove* (Pittsburgh Opera) and the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Patron Concert (Peter Jay Sharp Theater). At Juilliard, she worked on the Drama Division’s production of *Stick Fly*. Her recent and upcoming projects include *Orpheus and Eurydice* (San Francisco Opera); *Madame Butterfly* (Cincinnati Opera); *Orfeo* (Santa Fe Opera); *Is It Thursday Yet?* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Four Saints in Three Acts* (Target Margin Theater); *Anna in the Tropics* (Miami New Drama); *Embarqued: Stories of Soil* (BAM Fisher); *The Orchard* (Baryshnikov Arts Center); *Red Velvet* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *Our Town* (Dallas Theater Center); *Seven Deadly Sins* (New York City, Miami Beach); *Blood Moon* at Prototype Festival (Baruch Performing Arts Center); *Triptych: Eyes of One on Another* (Disney Hall, Kennedy Center, BAM Howard Gilman Opera House). She holds an MFA from New York University.

### **Kristen Robinson (Scenic Designer)**

Kristen Robinson is an award-winning designer, artist, and educator whose work ranges from site-specific installations to outdoor Shakespeare. She recently designed *Jane Anger* at Shakespeare Theatre Company and *The Flaming Arrow* in Saudi Arabia, and co-devised and directed W. David Hancocks’ site-specific *The Race of the Ark Tattoo* in New York City. A founding member and liaison of Equity Through Design Mentorship, Robinson is assistant professor

of scenic design at Purchase College. A Princess Grace fellow, she holds her MFA in theater design from Yale University and is a member of union local USA829. Her upcoming credits includes *Antigone* at Westport Country Playhouse, *Don Giovanni* at Wolf Trap Opera Company, and *Pigeon Keeper* at Santa Fe Opera.

### **Iván Dario Cano (Production Stage Manager)**

A Colombian-American stage manager, Iván Dario Cano (he/him) earned his master's in stage management from the University of Missouri—Kansas City and is an alumnus of Juilliard's Professional Intern Program. His credits include Dallas Theater Center's *Our Town/Nuestro Pueblo*, Barrington Stage Company's *Get Your Pink Hands Off Me Sucka* and *Give Me Back*; Gala Hispanic Theatre's *Las Divorciadas* and *La Candida Erendira*; Juilliard's *Crumbs From the Table of Joy*, *Plano*, and *The Power of the Dog*; and Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre's 2016-22 summer seasons and *A Christmas Carol* (2015-18). Cano has been a proud AEA member since 2015.

### **Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts**

One of America's most prestigious programs for educating singers, Juilliard's Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts offers young artists programs tailored to their talents and needs. From bachelor's and master's degrees to an advanced Artist Diploma in Opera Studies, Juilliard provides frequent performance opportunities featuring singers in its own recital halls, on Lincoln Center's stages, and around New York City. Juilliard Opera has presented numerous premieres of new operas as well as works from the standard repertoire. Juilliard graduates may be heard in opera houses and concert halls throughout the world; diverse alumni artists include well-known performers such as Leontyne Price, Renée Fleming, Risë Stevens, Tatiana Troyanos, Simon Estes, and Shirley Verrett. Recent alumni include Isabel Leonard, Susanna Phillips, Paul Appleby, Erin Morley, Sasha Cooke, and Julia Bullock.

### **Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts**

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Adam Nielsen, *Associate Artistic Director, Master of Music and Graduate Diploma*

Justina Lee, *Associate Artistic Director, Undergraduate*

Andrew Gaines, *Administrative Director*

DeAnna Sherer, *Associate Administrative Director*

Annie Shikany, *Assistant Director of Curriculum and Schedules*

Mariel O'Connell, *Assistant Director of Opera Activities*

Amanda Seal, *Production Administrator*

Sofia Selowsky, *Projects Administrator for Performance Activities*

Jeremy Lopez, *Schedule and Program Associate*

Michaela Maldonado, *Vocal Arts Administrative Apprentice*

### **Voice Faculty**

Darrell Babidge, *Chair*

Elizabeth Bishop

William Burden

Amy Burton

Cynthia Hoffmann

Marlena K. Malas, *Senior Vocal Advisor*

Kevin Short

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Kathryn LaBouff  
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Diane Richardson, *Principal Coach and Music Advisor for Artist Diploma in Opera Studies*  
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Anne Shikany  
Jeanne Slater  
Avi Stein  
Cameron Stowe  
Stephen Wadsworth, *James S. Marcus Faculty Fellow, Director of Artist Diploma in Opera Studies*  
Howard Watkins  
Gary Thor Wedow  
Reed Woodhouse  
Brian Zeger, *Artistic Director*

### **2022-2023 Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts Fellows**

Liza Armistead, *piano*  
Taylor Burkhardt, *piano*  
Jen Pitt, *opera directing*

### **Juilliard Orchestra**

Juilliard's largest and most visible student performing ensemble, the Juilliard Orchestra is known for delivering polished and passionate performances of works spanning the repertoire. Comprising more than 375 students in the bachelor's and master's degree programs, the orchestra appears throughout the season in concerts on the stages of Juilliard's Peter Jay Sharp Theater, Alice Tully Hall, and Carnegie Hall. The orchestra is a strong partner to Juilliard's other divisions, appearing in opera, dance, and drama productions as well as presenting an annual concert of world premieres by Juilliard student composers. This season, an impressive roster of world-renowned conductors leads the Juilliard Orchestra, including Giancarlo Guerrero, Manfred Honeck, Speranza Scappucci, Bertrand de Billy, Roderick Cox, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Simone Young, and Keri-Lynn Wilson as well as faculty conductors David Robertson, director of conducting studies and distinguished visiting faculty, and Jeffrey Milarsky. Among the virtual projects students from the orchestra participated in during the 2020 lockdown was *Bolero Juilliard*, which became a viral sensation. The Juilliard Orchestra has toured across the U.S. and throughout Europe, South America, and Asia, where

it was the first Western conservatory ensemble allowed to visit and perform following the opening of the People's Republic of China in 1987, returning two decades later, in 2008. In summer 2019, the orchestra traveled to London, where they performed alongside the Royal Academy of Music in Royal Albert Hall at the BBC Proms. Other ensembles under the Juilliard Orchestra umbrella include the conductorless Juilliard Chamber Orchestra, Wind Orchestra, Lab Orchestra, and contemporary music group AXIOM.

### **Orchestra Administration**

David Serkin Ludwig, *Dean and Director of the Music Division*

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Joanna K. Trebelhorn, *Senior Director, Performance Operations and External Venue Relations, Music Division*

Eric Oatts, *Administrative Director of the Music Division*

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Michael Dwinell, *Orchestral Studies Associate*

Justin Kang, *Orchestra Management Apprentice*

### **Members of the Juilliard Orchestra**

**Steven Osgood**, *Conductor*

#### **First Violin**

Isaac Park

#### **Flute/Piccolo**

Chris Boyadjiev

#### **Percussion**

Kyle Rappe

#### **Second Violin**

Luke Henderson

#### **Clarinet/Bass Clarinet**

Yvonne Wang

#### **Piano/Harpsichord**

Taylor Burkhardt

#### **Viola**

James Preucil

#### **Bassoon/Contrabassoon**

Ricky Shi

#### **Harp**

Krissy Teng

#### **Cello**

Ian Maloney

#### **Horn**

Yicheng Gong

#### **Harmonica**

Chris Boyadjiev

Ricky Shi

#### **Double Bass**

Lucas Caceres

#### **Trumpet**

Richard Stinson

Richard Stinson

Yvonne Wang