



JUILLIARD OPERA PRESENTS

Benjamin Britten's

The Turn of the Screw

With Members of the
Juilliard Orchestra

Juilliard

A scene from
November's Juilliard
Opera production of
Mozart's *Così fan tutte*

Photo by Richard Termine



A Message From Brian Zeger

Benjamin Britten risked a lot in bringing Henry James' novella, *The Turn of the Screw*, to the opera stage. Starting gently as a job interview between a young woman and a distant, wealthy man, the story quickly veers into dangerous territory: mysterious deaths, childhood sexual violence, and the ultimate unknowability of human behavior. How do a composer and librettist bring these dark forces to the stage in a coherent way that audiences can grasp and not be repulsed by?

Britten wrote that one of the essentials of composition is "a firm and secure musical structure which can safely hold together and make sense of one's wildest fantasies." Within Britten's extensive operatic canon, *The Turn of the Screw* is one of his most highly structured and instrumentally elaborate scores, containing its narrative ambiguities in crystalline, elaborate musical patterns. While the operagoing audience may not grasp the rigorous use of theme and variation form which permeates the score, we can feel the lean, sinewy musical style and the virtuoso use of instrumental writing to portray individual characters and the unfolding drama. Britten was so musically certain that he allowed his copyist, Imogen Holst, to send pages of a scene to his publisher before the end of that scene was even sketched. We hear that inevitability in every bar.

Each one of our opera productions is a collaboration on multiple levels. Scenic and lighting designers bring visual storytelling to our stages, challenging the singers to work within different visual vocabularies for every show. Directors bring their own theatrical language to each project. What's notable in *The Turn of the Screw* is the heightened responsibility that Britten gives to the 13 players in his chamber orchestra. Britten demands of these instrumentalists the same musical and technical resources they bring to their recital and concerto repertoire with the added challenge of meshing with the chamber and vocal ensembles.

We're blessed at Juilliard to have deep benches of gifted collaborators in all these areas. In Mary Birnbaum's innovative production, the players and singers will truly be tracing the path of the story together in a shared space. Thank you for joining us for this exploration with open eyes and ears.

Brian Zeger

Brian Zeger

Artistic Director of the Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts

The Juilliard School
presents

The Turn of the Screw

Music by Benjamin Britten

Libretto by Myfanwy Piper, after the novella by Henry James

By arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, publisher and copyright owner

Wednesday, February 19 and Friday, November 21, 2025 at 7:30pm

Sunday, February 23, 2025 at 2pm

Rosemary and Meredith Willson Theater

Zachary Schwartzman, Conductor

Mary Birnbaum, Director

Juilliard Opera

Juilliard Orchestra

The Cast *(in order of vocal appearance)*

The Prologue	Jack Hicks
The Governess	Natasha Isabella Gesto
Miles	Felix Aurelius
Flora	Kerrigan Bigelow
Mrs. Grose	Kayla Stein
Miss Jessel	Page Michels
Peter Quint	Colin Aikins

Scenic Designer: Krit Robinson

Costume Designer: Márion Talán de la Rosa

Lighting Designer: Yuki Nakase Link

Content Warning:

This production contains simulations of sexual violence against minors.

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.



Please make certain that all electronic devices are turned off during the performance. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not permitted.

Covers *(in alphabetical order)*

Colin Aikins (The Prologue), Jack Hicks (Peter Quint), Scarlett Jones (Miss Jessel), Alison Kessler (The Governess), Gimena Sánchez Rivera (Miles), Lauren Torey (Mrs. Grose), Leonor Vasconcelos (Flora)

Assistant Conductor: Gloria Yin

Music Preparation: John Arida

Assistant Music Preparation: Kenneth Merrill

Language Preparation: Kathryn LaBouff

Assistant Scenic Designer: Junran “Charlotte” Shi

Assistant Lighting Designer: Leslie Lura-Smith

Assistant Costume Designer: Jack Wallace

Associate Director: Rory Pelsue

Intimacy Director: Katherine Carter

Fight Director: Mark Olsen

Rehearsal and Performance Keyboardist: Rhys Burgess

Rehearsal Pianist: Amber Scherer

Production Manager: Alec Rigdon

Production Stage Manager: Dustin Z West

Assistant Stage Managers: Jeron Dooling*, Abril Valbuena*

**Member, Professional Apprentice Program*

Performance time: approximately 2 hours and 5 minutes, including an intermission

**Bloomberg
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Lead Digital Sponsor

This production is partially sponsored by Sarah Billingham Solomon.

Support for Juilliard’s 2024-25 Professional Apprentice Program has been provided by Agnes Gund.

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Synopsis

By Mary Birnbaum

ACT ONE

Prologue: The prologue breathes a ghost story into the space. A governess has been hired by the uncle of two children to care for them and live with them in the country under one condition: that she does not worry the uncle at all, but that she “keep silent” and do her best. She accepts his condition.

The Journey: The governess travels to Bly full of anxiety and hope. Will the children like her? Will she fit in with the old housekeeper? Should she have come at all?

The Welcome: The children, Flora and Miles, bombard the housekeeper, Mrs. Grose, with questions about the new governess. The governess arrives and Mrs. Grose welcomes her, introducing her to the children, who bow and curtsy.

The Letter: Mrs. Grose delivers a letter to the governess from Miles’ school. The letter dismisses Miles from school, declaring him “an injury to his friends.” Mrs. Grose and the governess watch Miles and Flora play, rejecting the implication that Miles did something bad, calling the accusation a “wicked lie.” Mrs. Grose asks the governess what she intends to do about the letter and the governess responds, “I shall do nothing.” Mrs. Grose kisses the governess, pleased with her decision.

The Tower: The governess roams the grounds contentedly, having dismissed her fears about her new home. She sees a man on the tower and assumes it is the uncle, her employer. She looks closer and tries to discern who the man is. Who can it be?

The Window: The children play together. The governess prepares to take them for a walk, but she sees the same man from the tower looking in the window. The governess races to catch him but runs into Mrs. Grose, who asks for the description of the man. The governess describes him as “handsome, but a horror” and Mrs. Grose knows him: Peter Quint, the master’s former valet, who was “free with Master Miles” and the former governess, Miss Jessel. Both Quint and Jessel died. The governess realizes that the ghost is here to haunt Miles, and vows to protect the children.

The Lesson: The governess homeschools Miles, who recites his Latin conjugations. Flora begs to switch to history, although the governess ignores her. The governess asks Miles what else he remembers and he sings a song (“Malo”). The governess asks whether she taught it to him. He replies that he found it.

The Lake: The governess and Flora relax at the lake. The governess quizzes Flora on the names of lakes and Flora says that this lake is the Dead Sea. The governess soothes Flora, who sings a lullaby to her doll. The governess sees Miss Jessel’s ghost and hurries Flora off to Miles. The governess exclaims that she is useless and that the children are lost.

At Night: In the middle of the night, Quint calls Miles to the tower and Miss Jessel calls Flora to the lake. Both ghosts tell the children to wait for them “on the paths, in the woods.” The governess and Mrs. Grose search for the children and find them.

ACT TWO

Colloquy and Soliloquy: Miss Jessel and Quint have a ghostly ex-lovers' quarrel. They decide to seek "friends" to ease their woes and declare that "the ceremony of innocence is drowned." The governess wanders through the halls of Bly, wondering which way she should turn for help.

The Bells: A bright Sunday morning. Miles and Flora play outside the church, and Mrs. Grose and the governess observe them. The governess thinks that the children are speaking horrors, but Mrs. Grose sees the children are behaving so sweetly. The bells call them into church. Miles waits to ask the governess whether his uncle agrees with her about the children and "the others."

Miss Jessel: The governess finds Miss Jessel in her room. Miss Jessel threatens to come more often and to wait for Flora. The governess, overwhelmed, realizes she must write to the children's uncle, violating his wishes. She writes him a letter to ask for his help.

The Bedroom: The governess finds Miles in his bedroom. She asks him about what happened at school and what happened at Bly. At the same time, Quint warns Miles to beware of her. Miles frights, and the candle blows out. Miles claims that he blew it out.

Quint: Quint wonders what is in the letter, what the governess knows. He urges Miles to take the letter.

The Piano: Miles practices piano while the governess and Mrs. Grose admire his goodness. The governess tells Mrs. Grose that she wrote a letter to the guardian that is ready for the post. Flora plays cat's cradle, and Mrs. Grose nods off. Flora escapes, and the governess and Mrs. Grose run off to look for her.

Flora: Mrs. Grose and the governess find Flora at the lake. Mrs. Grose chastises her for running off and the governess points out Miss Jessel, whom Mrs. Grose doesn't see. Flora throws a tantrum, yelling at the governess and asking Mrs. Grose to take her away.

Miles: Mrs. Grose admits that the governess was right, that she should take Flora away. The governess urges her to take Flora to her uncle, who is expecting them because of the letter. Mrs. Grose reveals that the letter never went. She asks Miles whether he took it, and Quint urges him to be silent to protect their secret. The governess asks Miles who made him take the letter, but as Miles utters Quint's name, he dies in her arms.

Director's Note By Mary Birnbaum

The Horrors of Caretaking

"Are we alone?" asks the Governess of her charge Miles in the final scene of Britten's 1954 chamber opera *The Turn of the Screw*. "Yes, I'm afraid so," the boy replies.

When the Governess receives the babysitting-job-from-hell assignment—missing parents, two kids, a charge of silence—she nonetheless is excited to take it on, thrilled for her new life at Bly and the surrogate family the children will represent. But as she discovers, the house has been poisoned by trauma: the liberties that Peter Quint, the master's valet, took with Miles, Quint's subsequent death and the death by suicide of the former governess, Miss Jessel, whom Quint impregnated.

As I imagined *The Turn of the Screw* with a cast of college/graduate school-age adults, I remembered my own babysitting experiences and thought about the sitters I employ to take care of my son. So often, young women are employed to take care of children when they are still on the threshold of being able to care for themselves (or not). The children's reality necessarily dwarfs the caretaker's reality, and the challenging, sometimes unmanageable task of caring for another person's body looms very large, especially if that body has a secret history that the caretaker doesn't know about. The intimacy of a babysitter with a child and with the child's family is engulfing and can be surprising—to both babysitter and family. Often, the child wields the power in the relationship, despite who is supposedly in charge.

This was my jumping off point—that caretaking can be impossible, the caretaker a ghost of the parent (and in this case, even the parents are ghosts). Designer Krit Robinson dreamed up the metaphor of the garbage bags under the labyrinthine set for the unmanageability of this family's shameful secrets.

Casting Kerrigan Bigelow as Flora and Felix Aurelius as Miles rather than using actual children opens up a world of staging possibilities for the piece, as grown-up bodies substitute (ghost?) for children's bodies. With the help of intimacy director Katherine Carter, we explore power and sexual dynamics between Quint and Miles, Miles and the Governess, Jessel and Quint, and the Governess and Grose.

At its core, Britten's opera—no matter the ages of singers, director, or audience members—asks a terrible question: To what extent are we always uncovering layers of our families' impossible secrets and shedding layers of our own innocence? As the Governess says upon finding out about Quint: "Is this sheltered place the wicked world where things unspoken of can be?"

“Peter Quint—you devil!”

Published in 1898, these four words, found at the very end of Henry James’s serial novella *The Turn of the Screw*, proved to be the undoing of not only the boy uttering them but the field of English literary criticism itself. For more than a century, the insatiable ambiguity of James’s tale—first told via two dozen installments of filigreed prose—has disturbed, provoked, unsettled, and beguiled its audiences: A young, nameless governess, sent to care for two orphaned children at a remote country estate, encounters two ghosts—but are they real or specters of her own corrupt imagination? Since the novella’s debut, the literary world has been abuzz with Freudian interpretations of its subtle (or not-so-subtle) sexual subtexts, transfixed by its gender, power, and class dynamics, and perplexed by the unreliability of its narrators; and yet the more each layer is assayed and analyzed, the more obscure *The Turn of the Screw* becomes. The only clear thing is James’ canny propensity for the uncanny, and his peculiar way of invoking antithetical yet equally plausible conclusions. *The Turn of the Screw*’s title becomes prophecy: Any attempt to illuminate its true meaning—if James intended one—will turn the reader endlessly.

Nearly 60 years after the novella’s debut, Benjamin Britten was asked to compose a chamber opera for the international modern art festival, La Biennale di Venezia. This new work, he decided, would bring an old iron from the back burner up to the fire: an operatic telling of *The Turn of the Screw*. Born in Suffolk in 1913, Britten was first mentored by his beloved mother, Edith, herself a singer and pianist. Quickly noticing her youngest son’s talent, Edith would remain hugely influential to Britten (she “controlled his life rigorously,” as Philip Brett and Heather Wiebe note) until her death in 1937—the same year he met his lifelong partner, Peter Pears. Britten composed prolifically in his youth, with a certain destiny in mind: “I am a composer of opera,” the young Britten proclaimed to composer Michael Tippett, “and that is what I am going to be throughout.”

The Biennale commission came in 1952, as Britten was finishing his opera *Gloriana* for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. James’ decidedly darker tale was first suggested to him by librettist Myfanwy Piper—the wife of *Gloriana* scenic designer John Piper— and was further encouraged by Pears. Teaming up with Piper, Britten configured *The Turn of the Screw* as an opera, neatly repackaging its narrative into a pair of eight-scene acts that alternate with eight instrumental variations. Each role is set in high tessitura, with no voice below tenor and the role of Miles scored for boy soprano (originated by then 12-year-old actor David Hemmings). Britten’s orchestration is as compact as James’s narrative. The opera is scored for just 13 players: a small string contingent of two violins, viola, cello, and bass; a wind quintet with players doubling on alto flute, piccolo, English horn, and bass clarinet; a harp; a keyboardist covering piano and celesta; and a busy

percussionist playing everything from triangle to timpani. Initially stalled by a bursitis flareup in Britten's right shoulder (he used his left hand to write and compose in the meantime), the opera was rushed to completion in 1954, with final revisions produced just over a month before the premiere at Venice's Teatro La Fenice that September. "Neither Britten nor I ever intended to interpret the work," Piper recalled, "only to recreate it for a different medium."

The opera opens with a Prologue. First abandoning this introduction, Britten and Piper returned to the idea, primarily out of concern that their opera was too short without it. The result is a marvelously atmospheric setting of the stage: Like strange echoes of a forgotten Lied, a sole unnamed narrator, no less alluring than his literarily analog, introduces the Governess' tale to aeolian flutters from the piano.

As the prologue fades into the story, we hear the first iteration of what musicologist Peter Evans calls the "screw theme," which returns again and again and in variation throughout the work. The theme includes each semitone of the diatonic octave, essentially presenting two whole tone scales (A-B-C#-D#-F-G; D-E-F#-G#-Bb-C) that, when performed in alternation, provide cells of tones outlining the circle of fifths. It appears first in the piano (A-D-B-E, then C#-F#-D#-G#) before fading into a tutti claustrophobic cluster containing all 12 of its tones. The theme implies "an infinitely extended pattern," as Evans says, "this screw can turn forever." Early in Act I, Britten presents rhythmic motifs and architectures, such as dotted figures and fast-against-slow juxtapositions, that equally reinforce the opera's insidious sonic soundscape. In the second orchestral variation, quick, articulated eighth notes from the treble voices percolate over the legato theme from the basses like capricious adornments of an unyielding cantus firmus. Much like the pacing of James' work, such clever use of rhythm invokes a sense of extreme urgency pitted against an unbearably laggard passage of time.

The Governess finally arrives at Bly to care for Miles and Flora, having been hired by their uncle on unusual terms: that she would never trouble him with any matters related to her wards. Not long after meeting the children and finding a friend in Bly's housekeeper, Mrs. Grose, the Governess encounters two apparitions: the first a man that Grose identifies as Peter Quint, the uncle's deceased former valet, and the second a woman that the Governess surmises is her late predecessor, Miss Jessel. As the days wear on, the Governess learns that Miles has been expelled from school without an explicit reason, while hints and whispers about Quint and Jessel's suspect past, and even more suspect relationships with the children, fuel her growing unease.

The sixth scene of Act I fans the fire. Here we find Miles in the schoolroom reciting Latin: “amnis, axis, caulis, collis, clunis, crinis, fascis, follis . . .” (which scholar Valentine Cunningham identifies as a covert string of sexual slang). He concludes his lessons with “Malo,” a haunting tune occupying some liminal space between major and minor and accompanied by a trio of harp, English horn, and viola (the latter two, in their upper tessituras, only heighten the scene’s suspense). As Cunningham points out, Miles distinguishes the Latin verb “*malo* (I wish) from the nouns *malus* (apple tree), *malum* (apple) and *malum* (evil, adversity), and from the adjective *malus* (bad, wicked, noxious).” The tune’s unsettling overtones are clear. “Did I teach you that?” The Governess asks hesitantly, “No! I found it,” Miles replies. “I like it. Do you?”

By adding the dimensions of sight and sound to the mind of James’ novella, the opera naturally includes several departures from its source material that, depending on how you look at it, either augment or abate its extreme ambiguities. Yet like Franz Schubert’s setting of Goethe’s *Erkönig*, if you listen closely enough, can you hear the devil in the details? As James’s obscures the source of the children’s corruption like an unfinished game of Clue (could it be Quint, Jessel—or the Governess herself?), Britten and Piper add even more breadcrumbs to the trail, including the jarring addition of vocal roles for both Quint and Jessel. Whereas both phantoms remain silent in the novel, “Britten was determined that the ghosts should sing—and sing words,” Piper recalled. The words they were given nod to their guilt, if not complicity, in the corruption of Miles and Flora.

The Act I finale is sparked by Quint’s melismatic wailings of the boy’s name. The medieval flavor of this phrase “might never have been put in quite these musical terms if the composer had not heard Peter Pears, the original Quint, singing unaccompanied Perotin in Aldeburgh Church a year or so earlier,” George Lascelles, Lord of Harewood, recalled. We find Miles and Flora are outside, out of bed, responding to the overtures of their respective spirits. The scene’s cacophonous core, featuring the entire cast, is shattered by the Governess’s high B-natural—“Miles! What are you doing here?”—to which the boy simply responds: “I am bad.”

The second act opens with a series of instrumental cadenzas bookended by onerous chordal clusters. The rustling harp, the warbling oboe, and the sylvan flute, once free, cannot escape Bly’s confines—the owls are not what they seem. Calling from the void, Quint and Jessel speak in shadows of their corporeal lives, culminating this time on Jessel’s enharmonic high C-flat—“Quint! Do you forget?” The spirits wail and wail again, “The ceremony of innocence is drowned,” a stanza borrowed from W. B. Yeats’ harrowing post-World War I poem *The Second Coming*. With each phantom cry and each blow from the band our world fractures—the center cannot hold. And what horrors are to be released? “Lost in my labyrinth I see no truth,” the Governess sings, as the double bass dashes off through the Daedalian maze.

After Jessel's final appearance to the Governess, Mrs. Grose finally takes the rattled Flora away from Bly. "What that child has poured out in her dreams," the disquieted housekeeper sings without accompaniment, "things I never knew nor hope to know, nor dare remember." Left alone with Quint are Miles and the Governess, who's determined to deliver the boy from evil—an equally determined passacaglia setting of the "screw theme" drives the opera to a close.

As Quint's ghost appears one final time, is the Governess acting on that primordial impulse to protect her children from a true threat ("But I shall love them as I love my own," as she sang earlier)? Or, in walking that maternal tightrope between protective and overbearing, does she fall into the abyss and become that very threat herself? Confusion and terror abound, questions beget questions, and the bewildered Governess cries "Who do you wait for, watch for?" Miles retorts with his first and last utterance of the apparition's name: "Peter Quint—you devil!"

Georgianne Banker holds a Master of Music degree in Historical Performance from Juilliard.

About the Artists



Mary Birnbaum (Director)

Stage director Mary Birnbaum (faculty 2011-present) works internationally, from Taiwan (*Otello*) to Central America (*L'elisir d'amore* and *La bohème* at the National Theatre of Costa Rica and Querido Arte in Guatemala), Australia and Israel, as well as across the U.S. (Opera Philadelphia, Seattle Opera, Opera Columbus, Virginia Arts Festival [*Kept*], Ojai Festival, Boston Baroque). She recently directed the U.S. premiere of Aaron Zigman and Mark Campbell's *Émigré* at the New York Philharmonic as well as *Rigoletto* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and a production of Chris Cerrone and Stephanie Fleischmann's *In a Grove* for the Prototype Festival. In 2023, Birnbaum was named the new general and artistic director of Opera Saratoga. She also serves as dramatic advisor for master of music and graduate diploma at Juilliard.



Zachary Schwartzman (Conductor)

Zachary Schwartzman has conducted around the U.S. and in Brazil, England, Bosnia, and Mexico. His orchestral performances have been featured on NPR, including a national broadcast on *Performance Today*. Recipient of a career development grant from the Bruno Walter Memorial Foundation, he has served as assistant conductor for Deutsche Oper Berlin, Opera Atelier (Toronto), L'Ensemble orchestral de Paris, Oakland East Bay Symphony, and Opera Omaha, among others. Schwartzman was associate conductor at New York City Opera as well as conductor in its VOX series, and he served as associate/assistant conductor for 15 productions at Glimmerglass Opera. His credits as assistant conductor include recordings for the Albany, Bridge, Naxos, and Hyperion labels, and a Grammy-nominated, world-premiere recording for Chandos. The assistant conductor for the American Symphony Orchestra since 2012, Schwartzman is resident conductor of the Orchestra Now (TÖN).

Colin Aikins

Tenor Colin Aikins, from Pittsburgh, is pursuing his master's at Juilliard under the tutelage of William Burden. Aikins earned his bachelor's at the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with Julia Faulkner of the Chicago Lyric Opera. He recently debuted as Alfredo in *La Traviata* with City Lyric Opera. At Juilliard, he performed the roles of Gherardo in *Gianni Schicchi* and Jimmy O'Keefe in *Later the Same Evening*, was a soloist in *King Arthur* with Juilliard415, and sang in recitals including Juilliard Songfest with Brian Zeger, New York Festival of Song with Steven Blier, and Liederabend curated by Pierre Vallet. Aikins was featured in many productions for the Curtis Opera Theater, including Mr. Upfold in *Albert Herring*, Chevalier de Danceny in *Dangerous Liaisons*, Nate in *Highway 1 USA*, the Beadle in *Sweeney Todd*, and the Trio in *Trouble in Tahiti*. He also sang Fenton in *Falstaff* for the Aspen Opera Center. Aikins' ambition is to reveal to audiences the enthralling and extraordinary potency of opera, merging the legacy of its legends with a contemporary perspective.



- Allen R. & Judy Brick Freedman Scholarship, Raymond-Cryder Scholarship

Felix Aurelius

Felix Aurelius, a fourth-year undergraduate countertenor at Juilliard studying with Amy Burton, is an alum of the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts. His recent performances include last spring's Juilliard Pride Songbook (with Vol. 2 coming in May). He was second to perform Timothy Peterson's song cycle, *Three Encounters*, at Songfest 2024 in Pomona, California. He has been filming for *Pants Role Project*, a short-film project founded by Theo Claveles about transgender and nonbinary opera singers. Earlier this season at Juilliard, Aurelius made his debut as Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and he sang with Juilliard415 in a German baroque chamber music concert.



Kerrigan Bigelow

Soprano Kerrigan Bigelow (BM '24, voice), who hails from North Andover, Massachusetts, is studying for her master's at Juilliard with Amy Burton. Bigelow debuted as Mariuccia in *I Due Timidi*, covered Aldimira in *Erismena*, sang Sarriaho's *From the Grammar of Dreams* as part of Juilliard's The New Series: The Mad King, was the winner of Juilliard's Vocal Arts Honors Recital, and made her Alice Tully Hall debut. Bigelow has also performed with the New York Festival of Song three times.



- Kovner Fellow



- Kovner Fellow

Natasha Isabella Gesto

Uruguayan-Australian soprano Natasha Isabella Gesto is a second-year master's student at Juilliard, studying under Darrell Babidge. She received her bachelor's and her graduate diploma (opera performance) at the Sydney Conservatorium, and she is a recipient of the 2025 American Australian Arts Fund. She recently performed at the Santa Fe Opera as a first-year apprentice artist, creating the role of Diedre in Gregory Spears' *The Righteous*, performing as the Dressmaker in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Magda in *La Rondine* for Opera Scenes, and covering Annina in *La Traviata*. Other recent roles include Nedda (*Pagliacci*), covering Ruth Baldwin (*Later the Same Evening*), La Contessa (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), and Dame Nellie Melba (*Percy—The Opera*), while her concert performances include Brahms' *German Requiem*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Poulenc's *Gloria*, and Mozart's *Requiem*. Gesto, who was selected as a young star of Australian Opera in 2022, is looking forward to completing her studies at Juilliard and is excited to see where her craft will take her.



- NY Community Trust Schoen-Rene Scholarship

Jack Hicks

Jack Hicks (Pre-College '21, voice) is a tenor from Bernardsville, New Jersey, studying with William Burden at Juilliard, where he also serves as an ear training teaching fellow. This year at Juilliard, Hicks sang Don Basilio and Don Curzio in *Le nozze di Figaro*. His concerts this season include *Touching Magic: A Juilliard-Sibelius Academy Collaboration*, Juilliard Songfest, Tom Cipullo's Liederabend, and the second annual Juilliard Pride Songbook. Hicks previously studied voice with Lorraine Nubar at Pre-College, piano with Alice Firgau, and conducting with Oliver Hagen. Passionate about all kinds of theater, Hicks has played the roles of George Antrobus (*The Skin of our Teeth*), Archibald Craven (*The Secret Garden*), Cinderella's Prince (*Into the Woods*), and Robert Martin (*The Drowsy Chaperone*). Hicks is a winner of the Schmidt Undergraduate Competition and the Schmidt Vocal (California) and is a recipient of the Shirley Rabb Winston Scholarship and George London Scholarship.

Page Michels

Soprano Page Michels, an Artist Diploma student at Juilliard studying with Amy Burton, was a 2024 Laffont LA District Winner, fourth prizewinner of the Pasadena Vocal Competition, and third prizewinner of the Premiere Opera Foundation. Michels was a resident at Florida Grand Opera (2021-23), where she sang the role of Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*. She was also a 2022 Loranger Fellow at SongFest in San Francisco, a 2021 Fleming Artist at the Aspen Music Festival, and a 2019 resident at Des Moines Metro Opera. Michels earned her master's at Rice University, where she sang the title role in Floyd's *Susannah*, and her bachelor's at Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where she was the soprano soloist in Dvorák's *Te Deum* and Bach's B-minor Mass. Michels is from beautiful Lake Oswego, Oregon.



Kayla Stein

Chicago native Kayla Stein is a soprano pursuing her master's at Juilliard with Darrell Babidge. In addition to Mrs. Grose, Stein sang Fiordiligi in Juilliard's production of *Così fan tutte*, Knussen's *Requiem: Songs for Sue* with Juilliard's AXIOM in Alice Tully Hall, the Nedda/Silvio duet from *Pagliacci*, and Micaëla in the artist diploma *Carmen* Project. She also covered Elaine in Musto's *Later the Same Evening*. She sang Micaëla in *Carmen* at Music Academy of the West, where she won second prize in the Marilyn Horne Song Competition. Stein earned her bachelor's at the Eastman School of Music, where she sang the title role in Anthony Davis' *Lear on the 2nd Floor* and performed scenes from *La bohème* as Mimì and *L'amico Fritz* as Suzel.



- Mildred H. Kellogg Scholarship

Krit Robinson (Scenic Designer)

Kristen Robinson is an award-winning designer, artist, and educator whose work ranges from experimental opera to regional theatre and everything in between. Select design credits include *Hilma* (Wilma Theatre), *Drinking in America* (Audible Theater), *Don Giovanni* (Wolftrap Opera), Heather Christian's *Oratorio for Living Things* (Ars Nova), *graveyard shift* (Goodman Theatre), *Familiar* (Steppenwolf Theatre), and *In the Green* (LCT3). She is a founding member of Queens Lighting Collective and co-lead designer on *Gateway to Sunnyside*, a temporary outdoor lighting installation through the Urban Design Forum for Sunnyside, Queens. An assistant professor of scenic design at Purchase College and a Princess Grace Fellow, Robinson received her MFA from Yale University and is a proud member of USA 829.





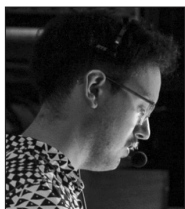
Márión Talán de la Rosa (Costume Designer)

Born in Mexico City and based in Brooklyn, costume designer Márión Talán de la Rosa has nurtured her work by collaborating with innovators of drama, dance, and opera for more than two decades. Some of her recent collaborators include Daisy Prince, Jason Robert Brown, Jonathan Marc Sherman, Anne Kauffman, Julia Wolfe, Heather Christian, Lee Sunday Evans, Sonya Tayeh, Caleb Teicher, Conrad Tao, Joe Salvatore, and Esperanza Spalding. Her work has been featured with renowned theater companies and venues including MCC Theater, Ars Nova, La Jolla Playhouse, New York City Center, the New York Philharmonic, Guggenheim Works in Process, BAM Next Wave Festival, Jacob's Pillow, the Joyce Theater and Juilliard. She was nominated for the Drama Desk Award in 2024 for *The Connector* and the Lucille Lortel Award in 2022 for *Oratorio of Living Things*. She is a proud member of United Scenic Artists Local 829.



Yuki Nakase Link (Lighting Designer)

Yuki Nakase Link's credits with director Mary Birnbaum include *Émigré* at New York Philharmonic (composed by Aaron Zigman, lyrics by Mark Campbell and Brock Walsh) and *In a Grove* at Pittsburgh Opera and LaMama /Prototype Festival (composed by Christopher Cerrone, libretto by Stephanie Fleischmann). At Juilliard, Link's credits include *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Vocal Arts) and *Proving Up* (Vocal Arts) as well as *Stick Fly* (Drama Division). Other recent credits include *Così fan tutte* at Detroit Opera, *Madame Butterfly* at Pittsburgh Opera and Utah Opera, Aaron Siegel and Mallory Catlett's *Rainbird* at Mabou Mines, *Fidelio* at Canadian Opera, *Angel Island* at BAM Harvey/Prototype Festival, *L'Orfeo* at Santa Fe Opera, and Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* at San Francisco Opera.



Dustin Z West (Production Stage Manager)

Dustin Z West is a New York-based producer and freelance stage manager whose credits include *Fidelio*, *Turandot*, *Grounded*, *Elektra* (WNO), *Elizabeth Cree*, *La bohème*, *The Passion of Mary Cardwell Dawson*, *The Sound of Music* (Glimmerglass), *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi* (Juilliard), *West Side Story* (Teatro Lirico, Cagliari), *Fidelio* (Heartbeat Opera), *Portrait and a Dream* (Contemporaneous), *ONCE Nighttime Spectacular* (Vinwonders), *REV. 23* (Prototype), *The Ghosts of Versailles* (Opéra Royal, Versailles), and JoAnne Akalaitis' *Bad News* (Skirball). West is production stage manager for the Glimmerglass Festival and works with many American opera and dance companies. A graduate of what is now Juilliard's Professional Apprenticeship Program, West is a proud member of AEA and AGMA.

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 and master of music 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.

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** Juilliard alum*

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 nearly 400 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 lead the Juilliard Orchestra, including Matthew Aucoin, Daniela Candillari, Patrick Furrer, Giancarlo Guerrero, Ken Lam, Louis Langrée, Earl Lee, Gemma New, and Ruth Reinhardt, as well as faculty conductors David Robertson, the 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 the contemporary music group AXIOM.

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