

# WMU Opera Aria Showcase and On Call: COVID-19

**2020–21 Season** Friday 30 April 2021  
**279th Concert** Pre-recorded Performance, 8:00 p.m.  
**280th Concert** Sunday 2 May 2021  
Pre-recorded Performance, 3:00 p.m.

**ON CALL: COVID-19**  
**David Shenton (b. 1975) and Christine Steyer**

**CARL RATNER, Director**  
**DAVID SHENTON, Piano and Violin**  
**NOAH WALTER, Piano**  
**IRYANA KRASNOVSKA, Piano**

## Part I: WMU Aria Showcase

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**  
1756–1791

**“Mi tradì, quell’alma ingrata” from *Don Giovanni***

Brooke Leinbaugh, Soprano  
Noah Walter, Piano

Donna Elvira, seduced and abandoned by Don Giovanni (Don Juan), laments the misdeeds of her betrayer, but admits that she still feels pity for the guilty man.

**Camille Saint-Saëns**  
1835–1921

**“Amour, viens aider ma faiblesse” from *Samson et Delila***

Camille Booth, Mezzo-Soprano  
Noah Walter, Piano

Delilah plans to entice Samson with her charms and then turn him over to the Philistines.

**Giacomo Puccini**  
1858–1924

**“Si, mi chiamano Mimì” from *La Bohème***

Mackenzie Wells, Soprano  
Noah Walter, Piano

Mimì introduces herself to her neighbor, the poet Rodolfo.

**Giacomo Puccini**

**“Un bel dì vedremo” from *Madama Butterfly***

Jessica Parker, Soprano

Iryana Krasnovska, Piano

Cio-Cio-san (Madame Butterfly) tells her companion Suzuki of her vision of the return of her American husband who has been away for three years.

**Part II: Opera – Educational Program World Premiere**

David Shenton

b. 1975

Libretto by Christine Steyer

***On Call: COVID-19***



**CAST** (in alphabetical order)

Helen Delphia: Angie Foster, M.D. – Chicago, USA, Health Care Worker

Arl Echavarría-Duque: Alder Anbulú, M.D. – Beqaa Valley, Lebanon, Health Care Worker

Bethany Moses: Lauren Gale, M.S. – Seoul, South Korea, Health Care Worker

Lindsay Nichols: Kelly McNamee, RN  Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Health Care Worker

Kaleb Nuesse: Peter Harrison – New York, USA, Health Care Worker

Joshua Vreeland: Luigi Duca, M.D. – Lombardy, Italy, Health Care Worker

**MUSIC and TECHNICAL STAFF**

David Shenton, piano and violin

Noah Walter, rehearsal pianist

Christine Steyer, production coordinator and visual designer

David Shenton, audio engineer

Mark Wade, video production

**WMU UNIVERSITY CHORALE**

Kimberly Dunn Adams, Director

Brianna Attard

Camille Booth

Joey Buan

Helen Delphia

Katelyn Dietz

JP Dizon

Alana Dyer

Hannah Elandt

Justin Hamann

Grace Hauschild

Caleb Heemstra

Emily Hoekstra

Jaydenn Knepp

Carson Lampert

Brooke Leinbaugh

Candace MacMurray

Amelia Marciniak

Bethany Moses

Lindsay Nichols

Kaleb Nuesse

Jack Reeves

Kayla Rose

Evan Stoor

Isaac Thompson

Kevin Tran

Joshua Vreeland

Ashton Watkins

Marcell Whitfield

Margaret Winchell

## **INTERNATIONAL VIRTUAL CHOIR**

Mark Allen  
Kathryn Atwood  
John Atwood  
Nathaniel Bauman  
Nicole Cooper  
Stefanie Cruz  
Evelyn Danner  
Diane Deckert  
Jenny Earlandson  
Miranda Flanagan  
Dominique Frigo  
Phil Frigo  
Paul Geiger  
Aaron Grace  
Marie Labellarte

Shirley Lundin  
Brinn Miller  
Gillian Norris  
Jean-Claude Orfali  
Christina Ray  
Katie Rub  
Eleanor Sharpe  
David Shenton  
Erin Shields  
Lydia Smith  
Christine Steyer  
Peter Storms  
Suzanne Walsh  
Jackson Wells

### **SPECIAL THANKS TO**

Bellissima Opera  
David Bernard  
Dan Guyette  
Claudia Hommel  
Keith Kothman  
Iryna Krasnovska, coach/accompanist, Theater Basil, Switzerland, Pocket Piano  
Deborah O'Keefe  
Jack Reeves  
David Shenton  
Christine Steyer  
Mark Wade  
Kevin West  
Working In Concert

[Rather than "special thanks" I would group Bellissima, Claudia and WIC as "By special arrangement with Bellissima Opera, an initiative of Working In Concert, Executive Director Claudia Hommel"]

### **And the Financial Support of**

Carol Payne Smith and the late Robert L. Smith  
The William Appel Family Opera Enrichment Fund  
Robert W. and Patricia S. Huiskamp  
Carl Ratner and the late Bernard J. Brommel  
Elizabeth Upjohn Mason

### **On Call: COVID-19**

The opera's three scenes look in on a series of online conference calls by six medics from Chicago, Seoul, Rio de Janeiro, Lombardy, New York City, and a Syrian refugee camp near Beirut as they each struggle with unfolding pandemic unfolding in their unique geographical location. During these calls, they provide a lifeline to each other, and ultimately discover kindness and compassion can be as powerful as a tool as a vaccine and a ventilator. *On Call* is drawn from 200 articles about global healthcare workers facing the COVID-19 pandemic. Each cast member has chosen their own character's name to honor either a healthcare worker or someone who has died from COVID.

**DAVID SHENTON** is an English pianist, violinist, composer, and arranger, based in New York City. Shenton has collaborated with musicians in diverse genres, including Vanessa Williams, Tony Bennett, Sierra Boggess, Denyce Graves, Renée Fleming, Sherrill Milnes, Sir André Previn, Alan Menken and Stephen Schwartz.

Composing since the age of nine, Shenton has written hundreds of works including sonatas, concerti, a symphony, an oratorio, string quartets, numerous songs, instrumental works, and operas. Currently, Shenton is composing Bellissima Opera's Tales of Transcendence – a series of operas exploring our shared humanity. The first, *On Call: COVID-19*, honoring healthcare workers, premiered online April 17– 18, 2021. *Future Perfect*, co-created with 1300 local students, will have its Chicago premiere in 2022.

Shenton's career includes conducting his orchestra/big band at Carnegie Hall in 2014; Jazz @ Lincoln Center Rose Theater as a jazz pianist in 2008; classical piano at Lincoln Center's Rubenstein Atrium for the 200th anniversary Schumann and Chopin celebration, and as music director/arranger/pianist for the Center's 100th Anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. Shenton is a founding member of the acclaimed classical crossover group, Empire Trio.

A prolific arranger, Shenton has worked at Abbey Road and CTS Studios (London), on Hollywood movies, and Broadway shows. Shenton has co-created more than a dozen shows with lyricist Martin Charnin (*Annie*). He arranged and orchestrated for the long-running West End production of Howard Blake's *The Snowman*, for Charnin's last musical, *Robin Hood: the Untold Story*,

and for Opus X, with trumpeter Chris Botti. Shenton has composed numerous art songs and collaborated with Steyer on *Six Songs for Soprano*. He is a composer-in-residence at the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theater Workshop. His recordings include several albums for major record labels, including the award-winning solo piano CD, *Sunnyside Blues*. [italics] shentonmusic.com

As a performer, **CHRISTINE STEYER**, soprano, has distinguished herself as an artist of great versatility. In addition to being the recipient of national awards such as the 2020 Honored Artist of The American Prize for outstanding contributions to the arts, and the Johnny Mercer Award, Steyer has received acclaim for her portrayals of the title role in *Madama Butterfly* and *Violetta* in *La Traviata*. Since 2000, she has sung as a chorister and in several small roles in over 40 productions at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

A frequent recitalist, Steyer sang several concerts of Russian and American music with pianist Philip Morehead and concerts of Spanish music with guitarist Brandon Acker. In 2019 Steyer sang in France with The Chicago Paris Cabaret Connexion at the Montpellier Opera House, Paris' Salle Olympe de Gouges and the Lapin Agile. Last year, she sang at the Schubert Festival at Unity Temple, in Oak Park, where Steyer shared the stage with Lawrence Brownlee and members of the Chicago Symphony and Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestras, and a recital at The 19th Century Club Music of Hope and Healing.

As a music advocate, Steyer has brought classical music to 23,000 youth in underserved areas with her organization, Bellissima Opera Outreach. She collaborates with other professional musicians to create new works on relevant, contemporary themes. She and composer Jean-Claude Orfali are writing a book of original cabaret songs. Steyer's songbook, *Six Songs for Soprano*, was written with several musicians including David Shenton.

In 2014 Steyer, as librettist, and Shenton, as composer, began writing Bellissima Opera's Tales of Transcendence – a series of new operas exploring our shared humanity. The first, *On Call: COVID-19*, in which Steyer also sang the role of the Rio de Janeiro Health Care Worker, premiered online April 17–18, 2021. *Future Perfect*, co-created with 1300 local students, will have its Chicago premiere in 2022. christinesteyer.com