

# FUTURE PERFECT



—a modern tale of curiosity

**Christine Steyer** *librettist*   **David Shenton** *composer*  
**Nick Sandys** *director*

Join the adventures of Miranette and friends she meets along her way. All become entwined in a web of quantum entanglement—a state of interconnectedness where anything is possible. A new opera for all ages, co-created with 1,300 Oak Park & Chicago youths.

**Premieres June 23-26, 2022**  
**The Kehrein Center for the Arts, Chicago**

[WorkingInConcert.org/futureperfect](http://WorkingInConcert.org/futureperfect)



## Our Community Builder Sponsors

Many thanks to donors of \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Their gifts have especially made possible the outreach to young performers, interns and audiences, coming from Austin to Maywood and beyond.

An Illinois Arts Council Summer Youth Employment grant

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Suzanne Walsh in memory of Jeanne C. Walsh





# Future Perfect—a dream 8 years in the making finally comes true



Since Bellissima Opera began this endeavor in 2014, our hope has been to create new operas that not only resonate with contemporary audiences but are created in community with them.

*Future Perfect* was cocreated with 1,300 Chicago-area youths in a series of workshops that examined themes of separateness, inter-connectedness, and transcendence through a variety of lenses. Facilitated by a community of musicians, poets, and artists, the workshops yielded many of the opera's lyrics, dance numbers, and costumes.

From the process of its creation to the messages it embodies, *Future Perfect* endeavors to demonstrate the unexpected and magical moments that result when we are in community, listening to each other and learning from each other. We are all Quantumly Entangled!

~Christine Steyer, *Bellissima Opera Artistic Director*

## SYNOPSIS:

*Future Perfect* tells the adventures of Miranette, a curious youth who leaves a forbidding society to go towards a future she wants to see.

Along her travels, she encounters colorful characters and creatures and learns six lessons: imagination; deep listening; vulnerability; humor; mysticism; and lastly conflict & resolution leading to love.

But it's not that simple—quantum entanglement states that once particles are connected, they can never exist independently of each other. And how could this not hold true for human beings? As Miranette absorbs these lessons, she also reflects them back with her own special uniqueness.

The lessons evolve, and change happens.



David Shenton  
Composer



Christine Steyer  
Librettist



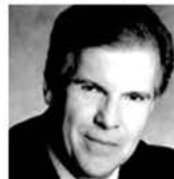
Tim Pahel  
Conductor



Nick Sandys  
Director

## Adult Cast

Wydetta Carter as *Narrator*  
Hailey Cohen as *Ember*  
Dominique Frigo as *Asintmah*  
Jeffrey Goldberg as *Iscovan*  
Rose Guccione as *Baubo*  
Sarah Kropski as *Juniper*  
Susan Lewis Friedman as *Rosett*  
Kaleb Nuesse as *Edeyrn*  
Brian Allen Pember Jr as *Leggo*  
Carl Ratner as *Oxóssi*  
Katie Rub as *Paloma*  
Christine Steyer as *Flanna*  
Peter Stigdon as *Kai*  
Suzanne Walsh as *Verbena*



## Adult Ensemble

Xandra Daigle, Paul Geiger,  
Marcela Ossa, Christina Ray,  
Barbara Smith



Top Row (left to right): Rose Guccione, Brian Allen Pember Jr, Katie Rub, Sarah Kropski, Dominique Frigo  
Second Row (left to right): Susan Lewis Friedman, Peter Stigdon, Wydetta Carter, Paul Geiger, Marcela Ossa  
Third Row (left to right): Hailey Cohen, Barbara Smith, Jeffrey Goldberg, Christine Steyer  
Bottom Row (left to right): Kaleb Nuesse, Suzanne Walsh, Christina Ray, Xandra Daigle, Carl Ratner





## Youth Cast

Tekla Schreiner-Witte as *Miranette*

*Draglions/Flutterbys/Puppets/  
Singers/Dancers*

Isabella Airato, Sam Combs, Benjamin  
Govertsen, Amelia Holly, Shiloh Jennings,  
Caleb Reed-Jennings, Henry Lombardo,  
Norah Lougachi, Ruby O'Shaughnessey

## Youth Ensemble &

### Summer Youth Interns:



Michael Jones. Lena Thomas Jonathan Wilson



Top Row (left to right): Norah Lougachi, Caleb Reed-Jennings, Isabella Airato, Tekla Schreiner-Witte, Ruby O'Shaughnessey, Henry Lombardo

Bottom Row (left to right): Shiloh Jennings, Benjamin Govertsen, Sam Combs, Henry James Hansen, Amelia Holly

## The Music of Future Perfect

"Good Morning!"  
"Miranette"  
"Don't Label Me!"  
"In a World Without Limits"  
"The Universe Sings"  
"If You Take Time to Know Me"  
"Forest Chorus"  
"Flutterbys Emerging"  
"LMBO!"  
"Be the Tail"  
"The Seraph"  
"Blue, Purple & Yellow"  
"Red is a Trick"  
"The Seeds and the Bridge"  
"Miranette's Transformation"  
"Miranette's Dream"  
"Transcendence"  
"200 Million Cells"  
"200 Million Cells Playoff"

Ensemble (Chorus & Soloists)  
Ensemble (Chorus & Soloists)  
Aria-Paloma  
Duet- Oxóssi, Asintmah  
Aria-Rosetta  
Trio-Kai, Edeyrn, Iscovan  
Youth Chorus  
Instrumental with Dance  
Aria-Baubo  
Song-Baubo, Youths  
Aria-Leggo  
Trio-Juniper, Verbena, Ember  
Aria-Flanna  
Instrumental  
Instrumental  
Instrumental with Movement  
Ensemble (Chorus & Soloists)  
Soloists  
Instrumental

The *Future Perfect* workshops involved students from Chicago's Nicholas Senn, Lane Tech and Al Raby High Schools, John Kinzie and Lincoln Elementary Schools, and youths from the Unity Temple Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Oak Park.

Learn about the workshops, musicians, artists and students who inspired the creation of *Future Perfect* at  
**[workinginconcert.org/futureperfect](http://workinginconcert.org/futureperfect)**

Working In Concert's Bellissima Opera extends deep gratitude to all the young people and their mentors who supported the development and creation of *Future Perfect*.

## Artistic Team, Staff & Volunteers

Christine Steyer, Bellissima Opera Artistic Director  
Tim Pahel, Conductor & Chorus Master  
Nick Sandys, Director/Fight Choreographer  
David Shenton, Musical Preparation  
Claudia Hommel/Working In Concert, Producer  
Emil Clausing, Stage Manager  
Christine Steyer, Production Designer  
Cathy Dunn, Assistant Director/Choreographer  
Peter Stigdon, Rehearsal Accompanist  
Kerri Burkhardt, Administrative Assistant  
Reese Craig, Projection Designer  
Garrett Bell, Lighting Designer  
Jared Peters, Master Electrician  
Antonio O'Neal, Audio  
Paul Geiger & Cappy Kidd, Set  
Kathy Rubel, Costume Consultant

Louise Gale, Kimberly Huizinga, Wardrobe  
Miranda Flanagan, Make-Up  
Xandra Daigle, Props  
Tim Pahel, Closed-Captioning Designer  
Cindy Senneke, Closed-Captioning Operator  
Doug Cotsamire, Closed-Captioning Operator  
Paul Brennan, Jesse Logan, Videography  
Paul Geiger & Peter Engel Storms, Audio Recording  
Meredith Morris, Press Release  
Juliana Engel Storms, Social Media, Internships  
Kenneth Gourlay, Website  
Rich Pokorny, Community Development  
Susan Huizinga, Molly Allsheid, Hospitality  
Diane Piette, Reggie Janczysyn, Hospitality  
Maureen Kwiat Meshenberg, Author  
Peter Pintozi, Photography  
Ben O'Connor, Video & Photo Documentarian

## Orchestra

Tim Pahel, conductor  
David Shenton, piano  
Eli Chen, violin  
Emma Strohbusch, viola  
Brian Hoffman, cello  
Emma Hospelhorn, flute/  
piccolo  
Dan Williams, clarinet/  
saxophone  
Bobby Everson, percussion



## ABOUT THE ARTISTIC TEAM

**Christine Steyer (Librettist, Role of *Flanna*)** has distinguished herself as an artist of great versatility. In addition to receiving 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 in over 40 productions at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Also 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, and Salle Olympe de Gouges and Cabaret Lapin Agile in Paris. Steyer shared the stage with Lawrence Brownlee and members of the Chicago Symphony and Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestras at the Schubert Festival at Unity Temple in Oak Park. She was featured on WFMT's program *Music Notes: Music of Healing and Peace*, singing the aria "Red is a Trick". In April 2021, Steyer premiered the role of the Rio de Janeiro Health Care Worker in Bellissima's new opera *On Call: COVID-19*. 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. Her songbook, *Six Songs for Soprano*, was co-written with several area musicians. She and French composer, Jean-Claude Orfali, are writing a book of original cabaret songs to release in 2023. In 2014, Steyer, as librettist, and Shenton, as composer, began writing Bellissima Opera's *Tales of Transcendence*, an award-winning series of new operas exploring our shared humanity. The first, *On Call: COVID-19* honoring healthcare workers, tied for first place in the 2020-21 National Opera Association Production Award. *Future Perfect* is the second, co-created with 1,300 local students. Additionally, Steyer is President of the vocal arts alliance Working In Concert, and Artistic Director of its Bellissima Opera initiative. Steyer teaches voice privately in Oak Park and as music faculty at Concordia University in River Forest, Illinois. [Christinesteyer.com](http://Christinesteyer.com)

**David Shenton (Composer, Pianist)** is an English pianist, violinist, composer, and arranger, based in New York. 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. 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. David tours with his groups, Empire Trio and Uptown Girls, as well as teaching children in the US and Africa, where he and his wife, soprano Erin Shields, frequently volunteer. A prolific arranger, Shenton has worked on Broadway shows, Hollywood movies and at Abbey Road and CTS Studios (London). He 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*. As a coach, accompanist, and teaching professor, David has been on the faculties of NYU, The New School, The Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute, Mannes College of Music, St. Thomas Choir School and Grace Church School. His catalog of 45 recordings is on various record labels including Steinway & Sons and Vocalion. [Shentonmusic.com](http://Shentonmusic.com)

**Nick Sandys (Director)** is an award-winning director, actor, and fight choreographer, as well as an educator. Nick recently served as Artistic Director of Remy Bumppo Theatre Company (2012-21), where he helmed critically-acclaimed productions of: *Howards End* (a world premiere adaptation by Douglas Post); *Puff: Believe It Or Not* (a world premiere translation by Ranjit Bolt); *Great Expectations* (a US premiere adaptation by Tanika Gupta), *Pirandello's Henry IV*, *Travesties*, *Our Class*, and *Seascape*. Other recent directing projects include: Strauss' *Elektra* (Lyric Opera of Chicago and Houston Grand Opera); *The Merry Wives Of Windsor*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Macbeth* (First Folio Theatre); *Bedroom Farce* (Eclipse); *Twelfth Night* (Noble Fool Theatricals); *Persuasion*, *The Consul* (Chamber Opera Chicago), and *Hamlet* (Fort Worth Shakespeare in the Park). Nick is an ensemble member at Remy Bumppo Theatre Company and an Artistic Associate at First Folio Theatre and has acted in over 150 theatrical productions nationwide with Northlight, Goodman, Chicago Shakespeare, Writers' Theatre, Next Theatre, Lookingglass, Marriott Lincolnshire, Drury Lane Oakbrook, Light Opera Works, and Chamber Opera Chicago, as well as regionally and Off Broadway. Nick is also a certified Fight Director with The Society of American Fight Directors, has been adjunct faculty at The Theatre School at DePaul University since 1995, as well as a Resident Fight Director at Lyric Opera of Chicago, designing violence there for over 50 productions. His Jeff-Award-winning fight direction has been seen all over Chicagoland, on Broadway, and at The Metropolitan Opera. Nick has received some 16 Joseph Jefferson Nominations for acting, directing, and fight direction, was nominated for a 2018 APA Audie Award for his audiobook narration of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and he is the recipient of a 2011 Achievement Award from The Helen Coburn Meier and Tim Meier Charitable Foundation for The Arts. Nick holds MAs in English Literature from both Cambridge University and Loyola University Chicago, and is a graduate of Guildford School of Acting and Dance. [www.nicksandys.com](http://www.nicksandys.com)

**Tim Pahal (Conductor, Chorusmaster)** is Professor of Music, Director of Choral and Vocal Activities, and Chair of the Music Department at Monmouth College. His duties include directing the Monmouth College Chorale and Chamber Choir, teaching conducting, music history, Senior Research Methods, and courses in the Music Education curriculum. Prior to coming to Monmouth, Dr. Pahal served as Assistant Professor and Music Coordinator at Carl Sandburg College and also taught courses and directed ensembles at Knox College. Dr. Pahal has toured with the Monmouth Chorale both nationally and internationally, including trips to Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Spain, and New York City. He made his Carnegie Hall debut in May 2018, conducting the Monmouth Chorale and other high school and college choirs and the New England Symphonic Ensemble in a performance of Vaughan Williams's *Dona nobis pacem*. Dr. Pahal has been the director of the Galesburg Community Chorus since 2001, and with that group has conducted numerous major works for chorus and orchestra including, most recently, Verdi's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Dr. Pahal holds a bachelor's degree from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, a master's degree in Piano Performance from the University of Illinois, and a doctorate in Choral Conducting from the University of Iowa, where he studied conducting with Dr. Timothy Stalter. An active member of the American Choral Directors Association, Music Educators National Conference, the Illinois Music Educators Association, and the National Association of Teachers of Singing, Dr. Pahal is a frequent adjudicator for high school solo and ensemble contests as well as a clinician for large group contests and festivals.

**Claudia Hommel (Future Perfect Producer, Executive Director and Treasurer of Working In Concert)** directs the Chicago Paris Cabaret Connexion, SongShop workshops and concert productions. Claudia received her Master's in Library Science from Wayne State University and founded the archives of the Detroit Institute of Arts prior to pursuing a full-time career on stage, first in New York City, then Chicago. Actor-singer, teacher, cabaret promoter, Claudia brings her personal connections and passions to Working In Concert. Her recordings of *Paris/Paree*, *Paris in the Jazz Age*, *Romance Language: French Songs for Lovers*, and two *Jazz Fauré Project* albums are a reflection of her Paris-centric repertoire. She is on faculty in the Community Music Division of DePaul University School of Music with SongShop, weekly sessions for song interpretation. She is a founder of Chicago Cabaret Professionals and a coordinator for Chicago Cabaret Week. [Cabaret-paree.com](http://Cabaret-paree.com)

## ADULT CAST

**Carl Ratner (Oxóssi)** began his career assisting directors at the world's major opera houses, including Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera, the Munich Opera, the Spoleto Festival, and Lyric Opera of Chicago, among others. He served as Artistic Director of Chicago Opera Theater from 1994-1999, and of Chamber Opera Chicago from 1985-1993. He has performed the title roles in Verdi's *Falstaff* and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, as well as Papageno in *The Magic Flute* and John Proctor in *The Crucible*. A frequent soloist for oratorio, he has sung Handel's *Messiah*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and many other concert works. He directed and created the role of the Lebanon Health Care Worker in the world premiere of *On Call: COVID-10* with Bellissima Opera, and recently directed and performed the role of the Doctor in *La Traviata* for South Bend Lyric Opera. He has sung in 14 languages and in 7 countries, 10 states, and the District of Columbia. He studied at Oberlin, NEIU, Northwestern, Juilliard, and the Saint Petersburg Conservatory in Russia through a Fulbright grant. He currently serves as Co-Chair of Voice and Director of Opera at Western Michigan University.

**Wydetta Carter (Narrator)** is thrilled to be a part of the premiere of *Future Perfect!* As a part of the Chicago Cabaret Professionals, so many doors have opened to meeting fellow musicians, sharing music and learning something new from each artist encounter. Wydetta is the host of CCP's CABARET BEAT and is also a seasoned Equity actress. Chicagoland credits include *Porgy and Bess* (Court Theatre), *Menopause the Musical* (Apollo Theatre), *Unspeakable* (Broadway Playhouse), *Hats! The Musical* (Royal George Theatre), and *Footloose* and *The Bridges of Madison County* (Marriott Theatre). Other favorites include *The Bikinis* (The Hippodrome Theatre), *Hairspray* (Alhambra Theatre), *All Shook Up* (LTOS), *Festival of The Lion King* (Hong Kong-Disney), *The Trojan Women* (Shakespeare Theatre of D.C.), and Sr. Hubert in *Nunsense*, *Nunsensations*, and *Nuncrackers*.

**Susan Lewis Friedman (Rosetta)** has been a Cantor at Temple Jeremiah in Northfield, IL since 2018. Prior to that, she was seen on the stages of musical theater, regional opera, and in symphonic concerts throughout the U.S. She played leading roles in the Broadway National Tour of *Cats*, regional productions of *The Producers*, *Barnum*, *Swingtime Canteen*, and *Sweeney Todd*, to name a few. She has sung roles with Des Moines Metro Opera, Nevada Opera, Phoenix Symphony, American Symphony Orchestra, and Brooklyn Philharmonic, and has performed with artists such as Betty Buckley, Alberto Mizrahi, George S. Irving, and composer/musician Anthony Newman. She can be heard on the recording of his opera, *Nicole and the Trial of the Century*. She is a composer/arranger of Jewish music and recently released an album of her original songs entitled *Sing, Pray, Repeat!* She also performed in a concert of music by composers of the Theresienstadt ghetto in a benefit for the Virginia Holocaust Museum. Her music has been heard on Jewish Rock Radio. She is the proud mother of Abigail (9) and Zev (7).

**Rose Guccione (Baubo)** is an opera singer, actress, educator, and entrepreneur. Rose has sung extensively in the Chicagoland area (including 20 years at Lyric Opera of Chicago and ten productions with Chicago Folks Operetta), Europe, and South Africa. Her acting credits include *Late Nite Catechism* (ongoing at Greenhouse Theater Center), *The Dinner Detective* (ongoing at Chicago and Schaumburg locations), *Alegriasy Lágrimas* (Instituto Cervantes de Chicago), *Ŭfo (iO)!*, *The View Upstairs* (Pride Films & Plays), *Los Cálices Vacíos* (Instituto Cervantes de Chicago), *Lydia* (The National Pastime Theater), *Living Large in a Mini Kind of Way* (16th Street Theatre), and several sketch comedy and improv shows with Salsation Theatre Company. Rose is a faculty member in the Theatre Arts & Music Department of Dominican University in River Forest, IL, where she teaches music and arts entrepreneurship courses. Her singing telegram company, OperaGram.com®, has been featured in the Chicago Tribune, on NBC5 Chicago, with radio legend John Landecker, and several other media outlets. [RoseGuccione.com](http://RoseGuccione.com).

**Christine Steyer (Flanna)** (See bio under Artistic Team)

**Brian Allen Pember Jr (Leggo)** is a tenor stationed in the great city of Chicago by way of Scranton, PA, and an alumni of Westminster Choir College '17 where they studied with Charles Walker. They most recently appeared on stage with Chicago Opera Theatre in the world premiere of *Quamino's Map* and with Thompson Street Opera Company in the joint premiere of *The Death of Ivan Ilych* as Gerasim. Before this, they appeared on the original cast recording for Paul Scherer's *La Trout Lily* (Benedict), and on the screen in KJR Studio's *Die Fledermaus* (Eisenstein). Other credits include Frederic in GS Opera Company of Chicago's *Pirates of Penzance*, Marty Manning in the world premiere of Olivia Popp's *Double Vision*, and the ensemble with Chicago Opera Theater for their Chicago premieres of *Iolanta* and *Moby Dick*.

**Sarah Kropski (Juniper)** is a soprano soloist and mainstage performer in the Chicagoland area, as well as a collaborator and performer of children's sing-a-long programs at libraries. Sarah originated the role of Henrietta in *Jane Austen's Persuasion: A Musical Drama* with Chamber Opera Chicago and has performed it in numerous international productions. Other credits include: Liesl in *The Sound of Music* and Kitty in *Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice* (Chamber Opera Chicago), Rapunzel in *Into the Woods* (Southland Area Theatre Ensemble), and Phyllis in *Iolanthe* (Prairie Fire Theater). Recently, she was featured on the YouTube world premiere of Elizabeth Rudolph's "Circles, Cycles & Seasons". Sarah earned a Vocal Performance degree from Illinois Wesleyan University and is the recipient of a Bella Voce Award from Chicago's Bel Canto Foundation. She is a project specialist for the Music & Theatre Department and Performing Arts Division of New Trier High School.

**Jeffrey Goldberg (Iscovan)** With a voice praised as "rousing, full-throated," and "ringing," (*San Diego Story*), Southern California baritone Jeffrey Goldberg has performed the roles of Guglielmo in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Dr. Falke and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss, Claudio in Berlioz's *Beatrice et Benedict*, Bartolo and Antonio in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, Peter in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Simone in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, and Howard in the Chicago premiere of *Dog Days* by David T. Little. He has also performed with Pacific Symphony in their Opera for Kids! productions of *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Hansel and Gretel*. On the concert stage, he has performed as soloist in several beloved masterworks including Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*. He is a graduate of Northwestern University, where he obtained a Master's degree in Voice and Opera, and Chapman University, where he obtained a Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance.



**Peter Stigdon (Kai, Rehearsal Pianist, Assistant Music Director intern)** is a newly professional Chicago-area musician. After his first piano recital at age six, Peter fell in love with performing and knew what he would do for the rest of his life. He recently completed his undergraduate studies at Concordia University Chicago, with concentrations in harp, organ, and composition. Peter takes a particular interest in contemporary music and seeks to explore and share unfamiliar (and sometimes challenging) repertoire. He is excited to be joining Bellissima Opera for this inspiring project.

**Dominique Frigo (Asintmah)**, mezzo-soprano, has sung for many venues in the Midwest. She also routinely performs in New York with the Botti Opera Showcase. Her repertoire includes contemporary, Baroque, and Classical music, and she has performed the alto solos for Handel's *Messiah*, the Vivaldi *Magnificat*, the Vivaldi *Gloria*, the Bach *Magnificat*, and the Bach *B Minor Mass*. She was a finalist with the Bel Canto Chorus, a semi-finalist with the Lotte Lehman Foundation's art song competition, and a semi-finalist with the Center for Contemporary Opera's International Opera Singers' competition. She has also performed numerous operatic roles with regional opera companies including La Principessa in *Suor Angelica*, Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, and Maddalena in *Rigoletto*.

**Katie Rub (Paloma)** graduated from Concordia University in 2019 with a B.A. in Theater. She was heavily involved in both the theater and music programs and was cast as the Housekeeper in *Man of La Mancha*, Edith in *Pirates of Penzance*, Polly Peachum in *Threepenny Opera*, Queen Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, and Queen Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Katie won several awards from the theater department and was nominated for an Irene Ryan Acting Award. She also sang in Kapelle, Concordia's premiere touring choir, and in four Honors recitals for the Music Department. Recently, she sang in the virtual chorus for *On-Call: COVID-19*, the world's first opera performed via Zoom. Katie was last seen as the Dew Fairy in *Hänsel und Gretel*.

**Hailey Cohen (Ember, also Asintmah cover)** is thrilled to be in the cast of Future Perfect! Hailing from Edgemont, NY, mezzo-soprano Cohen is gaining recognition on the operatic stage and in concert. Recent opera credits include Hänsel in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Littler Daughter in Missy Mazzoli's opera *Proving Up*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Goddess of Hope in the virtual opera *Droplet*. Cohen completed her Master of Music in Vocal Performance in 2021 from the University of Michigan School of Music, Theater and Dance and was awarded the Underwood-Alger Scholarship.

**Kaleb Nuesse (Edeyrn)**, baritone, is a third-year student at Western Michigan University originally from Bourbonnais, IL. He is pursuing a bachelor's degree in music education and studies voice under Dr. Karen Kness. He was featured in the chorus of WMU's production of *Così fan Tutte* in 2019 and performed the characters of Peter Harrison in the collegiate premiere of *On Call: COVID-19* and Leporello in *Don Giovanni* in 2021. Nuesse is a member of University Chorale, WMU's premier choral ensemble. He is also a member of several extracurricular organizations on campus including one of Western's three a cappella groups, No Strings Attached, and the WMU chapter of the American Choral Directors Association.

**Suzanne Walsh (Verbena)** is a native Oak Park who has studied voice with teachers from Northwestern University, Northern Illinois University, Northeastern Illinois University, and Concordia University. She has sung in the Oak Park choirs Heritage Chorale and City Voices, has studied acting at the Artistic Home in Chicago, and enjoys performing improv and stand-up comedy. She currently studies voice with Christine Steyer and is thrilled to have the opportunity to sing in *Future Perfect*. By day, Suzanne is a licensed clinical social worker in private practice in Oak Park.

## ENSEMBLE CAST

**Paul Geiger (Bass, Set Design)** sang the title roles in *Marriage of Figaro* and *Turk in Italy*, Belcore in *Elixir of Love* and Mustafa in *Italian Girl in Algiers* with Chicago Opera Theater, as well as Olin Blitch in *Susannah*, the Four Villains in *The Tales of Hoffman*, and the title role in *Sweeney Todd* with Des Moines Metro Opera. Other career highlights include Jokanaan in *Salome* with Palm Beach Opera and Hobson in *Peter Grimes* with Lyric Opera of Chicago and San Francisco Opera. He has recently performed as Germont in *La Traviata* and Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with Bellissima Opera, Reverend Hale in *The Crucible* with Chamber Opera Chicago, the roles of both the Notary and Commissioner in *Der Rosenkavalier* with Sinfonia da Camera, and Admiral Croft and Major Domo in a new musical adaptation of Jane Austen's *Persuasion* with Chamber Opera Chicago, which has toured internationally in the UK, Canada, and New York City.

**Christina Ray (Soprano, Juniper cover, Children's Chorus Director Intern)** is excited to be debuting in the world of Opera! Christina is currently going back for her dream degree in Music Performance at Concordia University Chicago, where she studies voice with Christine Steyer. Classically trained, Christina cantors at services/Masses on weekends as well as directs the handbell choir at her local church. She has also been a member of the Kapelle at Concordia University Chicago for four years as well as performed at recitals as a soloist. Aside from her musical passion, she works as an IT Technician at CUC and holds an undergraduate degree in Information Systems Security as well as an MBA graduate degree.

**Xandra Daigle (Mezzo-soprano, Ember cover, Props & Scenic Painter Intern)** is extremely excited and grateful to be part of this production. She has enjoyed working behind the scenes while being a part of the theatre scene again. This is their first professional opera but hopefully not the last show she works on with these incredible artists. Xandra has studied at Concordia University Chicago, where she is a student of Christine Steyer. She has performed with the Collective Department of Theater at CUC, with roles including Jenny in *Threepenny Opera*, Minnie in *The Benefit Committee*, Anselmo in *Man of La Mancha*, Pastor Paul in *The Christians*, Kaycee Jordan in *Never Swim Alone*, and ensemble in *The Winter's Tale* and *An Enemy of the People*. Other roles include the Witch in *Into the Woods* and Rose Lennox in *Secret Garden*.

**Marcela Ossa (Soprano, Flanna cover)** is a Colombian-American operatic soprano born in Medellín, Colombia and raised in Texas. She received a bachelor's degree in vocal performance from the Music Conservatory at the Chicago College of Performing Arts. Marcela has performed around the Chicago area as Metella in Handel's *Silla* with Chicago Summer Opera and Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel* with Sinfonietta Bel Canto. She also worked with the Savoyaires, where she performed in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Ruddigore*. During her collegiate years, Marcela performed at CCPA as Daphne from Barab's *The Ruined Maid* and Parashka in Stravinsky's *Mavra*. She frequently performed as a soloist with Roosevelt's Conservatory Chorus and as a chorus member with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chicago Sinfonietta. When Marcela is not singing, she is a teaching artist, poet, and visual artist. [marcelaossa.com](http://marcelaossa.com), [@marcelaossa](mailto:@marcelaossa)

**Barbara Smith (Mezzo-soprano)** is from Chicago and sings all over the area. Barbara has appeared in shows at Davenport's, Underground Wonder Bar, Rosa's Lounge, Chief O'Neill's, Skokie Theatre, and the Cliff Dwellers Club. Her powerful alto voice is well suited to jazz, blues, and folk music as well as cabaret. She was the 2018 winner of the Skokie Idol contest. She serves as Vice-President for Working In Concert.

## YOUTH CAST

**Tekla Schreiner-Witte (Miranette)** is an 8th grader at Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School. She studies Broadway Voice, Dance, and Improvisation at Ovation Academy of the Performing Arts as well as Park District of Oak Park. She has performed in numerous productions including *Footloose*, *Matilda Jr.*, and *A Year With Frog and Toad Kids* with Bravo Performing Arts; *Junie B. Jones Jr.*, *Fame Jr.*, *Miley Chase the Science Ace*, *Shrek Jr.*, *Annie Kids*, *Seussical Kids* (twice), *The Land of Forgotten Toys*, *The Little Mermaid Jr.* (twice), *Fun House*, *Into The Woods Jr.*, *Alice in Wonderland Jr.*, and *The Aristocats Kids* with Ovation Academy, and *The Pirates of Penzance* with Opera for the Young. She was also seen in a short documentary film, *Open Doors: 606 Records*.

**Henry Lombardo (Brinn 6/23 & 6/24, Draglion, Dancer, Bird, Ensemble)** is a vocal student at Merit School of Music Alice S. Pfalzer Conservatory program. Performance credits include *Macbeth*, *The Magic Flute* and *Luisa Miller* (Lyric Opera of Chicago), *A Christmas Carol* (Goodman Theatre), *An Inspector Calls* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *NINE the Musical* (Bright Side Theatre), *The Christmas Foundling* (The Buena at Pride Arts Center), *Seussical: A Virtual Musical!* (The Virtual Stage Co.) and *Spirit Week Assembly: No PDA* (Second City). Henry has also sung in the children's chorus for Joffrey Ballet's *Nutcracker*. He can be seen in television commercials for Casey's General Store, Camping World, Empire Today, and in several short films.

**Amelia Holly (Brinn 6/25 & 6/26, Anahita, Flutterby, Ensemble)** is a student at John B. Murphy Elementary School. Her favorite roles she has performed include Grace in *Annie Jr.* at the Performer's School, Alice in *The Addams Family* with Northbrook Youth Theatre, Olive in *A Christmas Carol* with Mother Road Productions, Dorothy in *A Wizard of Oz Musical* with Metropolis School of the Performing Arts, and Young Anna in *Frozen Jr.* with Virtuosa Performing Arts. She studies voice at Fine Arts Voice and sings in the Chicago Children's Choir Vivace Group. She has also trained in dance and enjoys playing the violin and the videogame Roblox.

**Caleb Reed-Jennings (Kody, Puppeteer, Tāne, Draglion, Dancer, Bird, Ensemble)** is a student at Catalyst Circle Rock Charter School. He is very excited to perform in his first opera! Caleb and his sister, Shiloh, have performed in church plays at Gospel Temple Church of God in Christ (COGIC) and in praise dance with Children of Virtue. He has also sung with Soul Children of Chicago and is a percussionist in the Sistema Ravinia Orchestra, an intensive music education program for 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Chicago which was first launched at Catalyst Circle Rock School. Caleb participates in sports at Chicago Westside Sports and loves playing football, basketball, and baseball.

**Shiloh Jennings (Flinn, Puppeteer, Draglion, Dancer, Bird, Ensemble)** is thrilled to perform in her first opera and happy that it is being performed at the Kehrein Center for the Arts! She is a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at Catalyst Circle Rock Charter School. Like her brother, Caleb, she has performed in church plays at Gospel Temple Church of God in Christ (COGIC), sings in the church choir, and enjoys being a praise dancer with Children of Virtue. Shiloh is also a cheerleader at her school and a member of the New Generation Drill Team.

**Norah Lougachi (Korel, Draglion, Dancer, Bird, Ensemble)** has just completed her freshman year at Oak Park River Forest High School, where she sings with the OPRF High School Choir and Vocal Jazz Ensemble. In junior high, she sang in the Do-Re-Mi's (All Girl Choir) and Jukebox Choir as well as the Illinois Music Education Association (ILMEA) Honor Choir. She also performed in her junior high productions of *Antigone in Munich: The Sophie Scholl Story*, *Haymarket Eight*, and *Votes for Women*. Norah has always been interested in music, piano, and singing and plans to be an opera singer.

**Isabella Airato (Kara, Flutterby, Ensemble)** is a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student at Longfellow Elementary School in Oak Park. She has been performing in musical theater and dance recitals since she was 4 years old. Isabella takes musical theater classes (acting, dance and voice lessons) at Ovation Academy in Oak Park and has performed in numerous musicals including *Seussical KIDS* (2 times), *Flat Stanley Jr.*, *Moana Jr.*, *Descendants the Musical*, *Land of Forgotten Toys*, *Little Mermaid Jr.*, *Aristocats KIDS*, *Junior B. Jones*, and *Annie KIDS*. She is a member of Ovation's junior company that attends Junior Theater Festival in California every year. She is happy to be a part of "a performance that includes input from kids and is on a big stage!"

**Ruby O'Shaughnessey (Ninn, Puppeteer, Ensemble)** is thrilled to sing in her first professional opera! As a rising 8th grader at Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School, she loves playing the flute and singing (along with her twin brother) in the vocal ensemble Downbeat. She has studied acting with Gigi Guerin Hudson of Actor's Garden, where she has performed roles in summer musicals for years (such as *Becky Thatcher*, *Mount Olympus*, and *The Good Knight*). Off stage, Ruby enjoys ice hockey, reading, and creating beautiful origami. Many thanks to family and friends!

**Ben Govertsen (Tiny Draglion, Ensemble)** This is Ben's second time on stage since he learned to walk. Earlier this year, he was seen as Vladimir in *The Death of Ivan Ilych* with Thompson Street Opera. His parents are professional singers and music teachers, so he loves to enthusiastically sing everywhere! While in utero, he was also seen as the Bump in *The Telephone* and *Hello Out There*, and in infancy as Little Papageno in *The Magic Flute*. Ben just finished first grade and has sung in the Park Ridge Community Junior Choir as well as solos at church and school. He enjoys soccer, swimming, drawing, reading, building with Legos, cats, outer space, and dinosaurs.

**Sam Combs (Tiny Draglion, Ensemble)** is entering second grade at Decatur Classical School, where her favorite subject is Math. She enjoys reading fantasy, mysteries, and scary stories; watching movies; bike riding; snacks; Pokémon; and tumbling class at Loyola Park. Sam loves to sing, and is thrilled to make her performing debut with *Future Perfect* on her path to stardom!

## CATALYST SCHOOL YOUNG PROFESSIONAL INTERNS

**Michael Jones** is valedictorian for his graduating class at Catalyst Circle Rock Charter School and is a member of the National Junior Honor Society. He was in the choir for two years, participated in the Etiquette Club from 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and is joining the Sheriff's Program. Michael was accepted into many prestigious high schools and will be attending Proviso Math and Science Academy in the fall.

**Lena Thomas** is a recent Graduate of Catalyst Circle Rock, where she was the recipient of the Principal's Award and "The Other Grammy" Award. She was also recognized with the Ladies of Distinction Award and was a member of the National Junior Honor Society. Lena has stayed very busy participating in ballroom dancing, orchestra, basketball, and peer tutoring. She will be attending Chicago Bulls College Prep School in the fall and would like to pursue Nursing once she graduates from high school.

**Jonathan Wilson, Jr.** recently graduated from the Catalyst School, where he was awarded the Glen Kehrein Award and was a Legacy Scholar from K-8<sup>th</sup> grade. He also earned the De La Salle Scholar Award in 2021, the Imani Pearls Community Development Foundation MLK Day of Service Community Spirit Award, and "The Other Grammy" Award and Chromebook recipient. Michael performed in the Black History Program and participated in the Circle of Brotherhood, Drama Club, National Junior Honor Society, Sheriff's Program, Student Council, Yearbook, and Ballroom Dancing. He will be attending Intrinsic Charter High School in the fall.

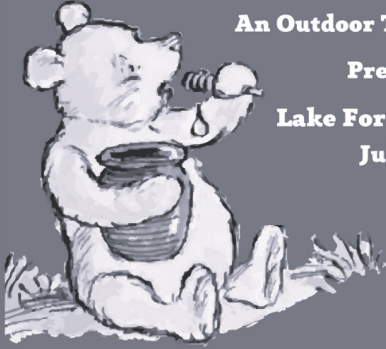
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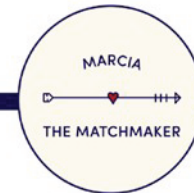
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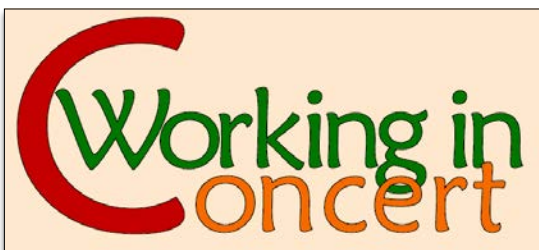
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