

EKLUND OPERA PROGRAM

It's a Wonderful Life: Nov. 15-17, 2019

It's a Wonderful Life

An opera by Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer

Stage Director	Leigh Holman
Music Director	Nicholas Carthy
Scenic Designer	Peter Dean Beck
Projection Designs	Iain Court and Teri Wagner
Lighting Designer	Peter Dean Beck
Costume Designer	Ann Piano
Makeup/Hair/Wig Designer	Sarah Opstad Demmon
Choreographer	Bud Coleman
Technical Director	Ron Mueller
Production Stage Manager	Christopher Denver
Assistant Choreographer	Elizabeth Bowersox
Assistant Director	Nnamdi Nwankwo
Second Assistant Director	Christine Li
Assistant Conductor	John McKeever
Production Assistant	Christie Conover

Based on the 1946 Frank Capra movie of the same name (by permission of Paramount Licensing Inc.) and *The Greatest Gift* by Philip Van Doren Stern

Music by Jake Heggie
Libretto by Gene Scheer

Commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera
with Co-Commissioners San Francisco Opera and
the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University
Premiered by the Houston Grand Opera in December 2016

This production will run approximately 150 minutes, including a 20-minute intermission.

PLEASE NOTE

- Latecomers will be seated at the house manager's discretion.
- Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere. CU Boulder is a smoke-free campus!

Cast

ROLE

George Bailey
 Clara
 Mary Hatch
 Mr. Potter
 Harry Bailey
 Uncle Billy Bailey
 Quartet of Winged Angels, First Class

Ernie/Ensemble
 Mother Bailey
 Helen Bailey/Ensemble
 Young George
 Young Harry
 Young Mary (Zuzu Cover)
 Young Sam Wainwright and Janie Bailey
 Tommy Bailey/Ensemble
 Zuzu Bailey
 A Voice
 People of Bedford Falls:
 Ed/Ensemble
 Mrs. O'Malley/Ensemble
 Mrs. Thompson/Ensemble
 A Woman/Ensemble
 A Man/Sam Wainwright/Ensemble
 Suitor/Ensemble
 Mr. Martini/Ensemble
 Mr. Rufino/Randal/Ensemble
 Mr. Delgado/Ensemble
 Mrs. Delgado/Ensemble
 Teller/Ensemble
 Bank Examiner/Ensemble
 Sheriff/Ensemble
 Mr. Potter's Henchman/Ensemble
 Board Members/Ensemble

Ensemble

**Dance captains*

FRIDAY/SUNDAY

Patrick Bessenbacher
 Erin Hodgson
 Mara Riley
 Brandon "Tyler" Padgett
 Nnamdi Nwankwo
 David Starry
 Natalie Simpson
 Berenice Carrera
 Andrew Taylor
 Sam Bruckner
 Brendan Lutes*
 Kelly Riordan
 Elizabeth Bowersox*
 Noah Williams
 Constantine A Ferguson
 Mary-Elizabeth "Liddy" Morain
 Harper Pillari
 Tyler Vinnola
 Etta McCurdy
 Mutsumi Moteki

Mack Rodgers
 Helena Regan
 Alexis Cairy
 Asha Romeo
 Evan Stark
 Thomas Bocchi
 Will Floss
 Kyle Griffin
 Elizabeth Healy
 Leanne Rubinstein
 Anna Hansil
 Christian Atherton
 Joseph Berrios
 John Harless
 Christian Atherton
 Joseph Berrios
 Thomas Bocchi
 Lou Abecassis
 Jessica Kim

SATURDAY

Tanner Johnson
 Sabina Balsamo
 Megan Pryor
 Alex King

Orchestra

Violin 1

Yukina Ono
Ingrid Anderson
Laena Batchelder
Ben Ehrmantraut
Jackson Bailey
Lindey Hoak
An Tran
Jenna Kramer

Violin 2

Mackenzie Hoffman
Natalie Smith
Sophia Thaut

Sun Mi Jin
Holly Sidney
Lucy Rissman

Viola

Conrad Sclar
Jaryn Danz
Ariel Chien
Thomas Maeda

Cello

Gabriel Ramos
Ernie Carbajal
Emily Taylor
Eliot Johnson

Double bass

Luis Granda
Portia Pray

Flute/piccolo

Grace Law

Oboe/English horn

Clayton Williams

Clarinet/bass clarinet

Gleyton Pinto

Bassoon

Anthony Federico

Horn

Dilon Bryan
Kieran Scruggs

Trumpet

Karen Buri

Trombone

Kenny Ross

Percussion

Mallory Graves
Chris Eagles

Harp

John McColley

Piano

Nathália Kato

Synopsis

Act I

Christmas Eve night. Clara, a second-class angel, hears the prayers of the people from the town of Bedford Falls. They pray for George Bailey, a man that has lost sight of his dreams and aspirations. He is standing on a bridge preparing to jump. Clara is assigned to be George's guardian angel in order to save him and earn her wings. Clara is transported to an attic where she receives a hat that can control time. A hatch opens and ushers in a scene of a young George playing with his little brother Harry and childhood friends Sam and Mary. As the children play, Harry falls into the ice and George dives in to save him, at the expense of his hearing in one ear.

The children disappear and multiple doors are revealed. Each door is a portal to a pivotal time in George's life, and Clara watches through his entire life. She sees George at 22 years old, preparing to leave for college. Harry invites George to the high school dance, baiting him with the chance to run into Mary again. After falling into the pool at the dance, George and Mary end up at the Old Granville House and make wishes for the future. Their romantic moment is interrupted by a frantic Uncle Billy informing George that his father had a stroke. When George's father passes, the greedy Mr. Potter sees an opportunity to dissolve his competition, the Bailey Building and Loan. George

takes it upon himself to stop Mr. Potter and forgoes college, sending Harry instead. He spends four years looking after the Building and Loan, hearing of the adventures that Harry and Mary are having. Harry comes home from college a married man with a job offer in Troy. George runs into Mary while on a frustrated walk and they finally share their feelings.

Act II

Fall 1929. It's George and Mary's wedding day, and they are about to leave on their honeymoon when they see a mob outside of the Bailey Building and Loan. It's the Bank Run of 1929 and people are panicking. They are trying to pull their money out, but there's not enough cash on hand. In order to save the Building and Loan, Mary and George use their honeymoon savings to help.

At the Old Granville House, George and Mary are the proud parents of three children: Janie, Tommy and Zuzu. They have been trying to do renovations, but George wishes he could have given his family more. Mary reminds him of what he has given the other citizens of Bedford Falls.

Next, George meets with Mr. Potter who has a job offer for him. George turns it down. It is now World War II, and the men of Bedford Falls are

headed off to fight. George wishes he could go as well, but cannot due to his ear injury. Harry wins the Congressional Medal of Honor, and everyone prepares for his homecoming. In the excitement, Uncle Billy loses track of an \$8,000 deposit for the Building and Loan that Mr. Potter steals. With the Building and Loan at risk, George goes to Mr. Potter for a bail out, which Mr. Potter denies.

Clara is now caught up to speed as to why George is standing at the bridge preparing to jump. She leaps into the water to deter George from jumping. George pulls her out. He doesn't believe she is his guardian angel and wishes he'd never been born. Clara grants this wish and George sees an alternate reality without him.

Understanding the impact he has made in everyone's lives, George snaps back to reality on Christmas morning. All of Bedford Falls comes rushing in to tell George how much he has helped their lives, and a generous cash advance saves the Building and Loan. Clara, having saved George, earns her wings and becomes an angel, first-class.

Stage director's note

By Leigh Holman

What if you'd never been born? Just think of all of the people that would have been affected: family, friends, and even the person you once honked at, stopping them from colliding with a mom pushing a baby carriage across the street. The different doors of our lives—birth, graduation, marriage, sad times, good times—would have all been closed, and no one you went through these doors with would have been able to open them.

Like many of you, the Frank Capra film starring Jimmy Stewart *It's a Wonderful Life* was one of the most beloved holiday films my parents and I watched together each Christmas. It has such an important message: community, family, our own value, putting things in perspective, and the great importance of our own lives. I was so thrilled, when in 2016, the internationally renowned composer-librettist team (and my dear friends) Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer agreed to participate in our summer New Opera Workshop (CU NOW). For nearly three weeks in Boulder, they used the talents of our singers and musicians to refine, change and dig deep into the music and character of the piece.

I was, of course, honored that Jake and Gene chose CU to work with them on this new work, which was to be a co-production commissioned by Houston Grand Opera, Indiana University and San Francisco Opera. The stage director, conductor and representatives from these companies came to Boulder to hear the workshop and our student singers had the opportunity of a lifetime when singing for them. (I, of course, jumped at the chance to fully produce this heart-warming work this fall.)

Most of all, the joy, love and care that Jake and Gene brought to our students was the greatest gift of all. They have blessed CU twice now, collaborating on workshops for their new pieces and will come back again next summer. These two men have changed lives at Eklund Opera, just as George Bailey changed lives in Bedford Falls. They have certainly changed mine.

Who has made a powerful change in your life for the better? Please celebrate those people with us today. For ...

"No matter how your story ends, no one is a failure who has friends."

—Gene Scheer, *It's a Wonderful Life*

Music director's note

By Nicholas Carthy

One of the great joys of being an opera conductor (or any musician, really) is that occasionally you come across a newly composed piece of music that is so beautifully crafted, and so engaging, that you cannot wait to learn and perform it.

Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *It's a Wonderful Life* is such a piece. Since hearing snippets of it in the CU New Opera Workshop (CU NOW) in 2016, it has been at the top of my contemporary opera wishlist.

So what is it that makes it so special?

Much of the latter part of the 20th century seemed to me to be a time where many composers were trying to synthesize all the various strands and legacies that history and the rise of modernism had left them. The differing dogmas in music had left many composers adrift, trying to find a (post-) romantic voice, and often being dashed against

the rocks of modernism for their trouble. Toward the end of the 20th century this began to change, and new voices were found that were able to bring together all these musical strands, to find an unashamed romanticism for the modern era. In short, we have entered a new era of classical music. Music that is engaging and accessible and exciting. For me, it is really thrilling to be able to witness and to be involved in a truly explosive renaissance of classical music. And one of the leading lights of this renaissance is Jake Heggie.

And even though the genre of opera is seen in some circles to be an anachronism (and even something to be destroyed, in others), Heggie and Scheer show us how opera can be, and how the synthesis of words, music and a timely yet classic storyline can combine into something very magical indeed.

Personnel

SABINA BALSAMO (Clara) premiered the role of Anne in *Verlorene Heimat* with the Cleveland Opera Theater and was in the workshop cast of Tom Cipullo's *Hobson's Choice*. Her other recent roles include: Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Rose in *Ruddigore*, and Elsie in *The Yeomen of the Guard* with the Pittsburgh Savoyards; Fredrika in *A Little Night Music* with Pittsburgh Festival Opera; Maria in *West Side Story* and the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw* with Eklund Opera; and Blanche in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and Polly in *The Threepenny Opera* with the Baldwin Wallace Opera. She will be appearing in Cleveland Opera Theater's premiere production of *Bernarda Alba* in January. She is a student of John Seesholtz.

PATRICK BESSENBACHER (George Bailey) is a tenor from Overland Park, Kansas. He is in his final undergraduate year in vocal performance. Previously, Bessenbacher performed as Tony in *West Side Story*, Lurcanio in *Ariodante*, Raoul in *The Merry Widow*, as well as various chorus roles with Eklund Opera. He is currently under the guidance of Matthew Chellis.

ELIZABETH BOWERSOX (Helen Bailey) is a senior studying vocal performance at the College of Music. Bowersox has been in the chorus of Eklund Opera productions *Eugene Onegin*, *Ariodante*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Merry Widow* and *Die Zauberflöte*. She was also seen as Anita in

West Side Story last fall. Bowersox performed the role of Lucinde in Miami Music Festival's production of *Lully's Armide* this summer. Bowersox is a student of Andrew Garland.

SAM BRUCKNER (Winged Angel, First Class) is a sophomore voice student at the University of Colorado Boulder. He has performed in two shows with the Eklund Opera Program: *West Side Story* (Diesel) and *Eugene Onegin* (Chorus). He has also been involved in *Guys and Dolls* (Nicely Nicely Johnson), *Annie Get Your Gun* (Frank Butler), *Beauty and the Beast* (Beast) and *Damn Yankees* (Joe Hardy). He is a student of Matthew Chellis.

BERENICE CARRERA (Winged Angel, First Class), mezzo-soprano, appeared as a soloist for the first time along with the National Conservatory of Ecuador's orchestra performing the Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*. She has also performed as a soloist in different productions of Opera Express Company that includes repertoire from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*. She appeared with Eklund Opera as Anita in *West Side Story* and as Filipievna in *Eugene Onegin*. She recently appeared as Ms. Hepworth in Tom Cipullo's *Hobson's Choice* in the CU New Opera Workshop. She is a student of Jennifer Bird.

CONSTANTINE A FERGUSON (Young Harry) is 12 years old and attending Boulder Universal, an online school in Boulder Valley School District. He has been a student at the Actors Academy of the Performing Arts and played in *The Little Mermaid*. For the past two summers, he attended a theater camp program at Interlochen Summer Arts Camp and performed in *It's All Greek to Me*.

ERIN HODGSON (Clara), soprano, is currently an artist diploma student at the University of Colorado Boulder. She has sung with The Minnesota Opera in *Turandot* and *Rusalka*. Her roles with Eklund Opera include Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*, Tatianna in *Eugene Onegin*, and Ms. Jessel in *The Turn of the Screw*. Hodgson has also assistant directed *The Merry Widow* and *West Side Story* and associate directed *Ariodante* with Eklund Opera. Recently she was selected to participate in a new music program, Creative Dialogues, where she studied under Anssi Karttunen, Kaija Saariaho and Daniel Belcher. Upcoming roles include Countess in *The Marriage*

of *Figaro* with Eklund Opera. Hodgson studies with Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson and Matthew Chellis.

TANNER JOHNSON (George Bailey) is a current first year Master of Music in vocal performance student at CU. He completed his undergraduate degree at Drury University in Springfield, Missouri. His recent credits include the title role of *Candide* with Springfield Regional Opera, and Tony in Springfield Little Theatre's production of *West Side Story*. Johnson would like to thank his professors for this amazing opportunity to perform this incredible show. Johnson studies with Matthew Chellis.

ALEX KING (Uncle Billy Bailey), tenor, moved to Boulder to pursue graduate studies in vocal performance. He has had the opportunity to perform in productions of *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Merry Widow*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Ariodante*, and most recently, Eklund Opera's production of *The Turn of the Screw*. He will be a featured soloist for Boulder's Seicento Ensemble in March 2020. Originally from the northwoods of Wisconsin, he has a passion for the outdoors, and in his free time he enjoys hiking and fishing. Completing his master's in spring 2019, he is continuing his education by pursuing a DMA in vocal performance and pedagogy. King studies with Matthew Chellis.

BRENDAN LUTES (Ernie) is a senior at CU studying vocal performance and aerospace engineering. He is thrilled to be acting in his second performance with Eklund Opera after his role as Action In *West Side Story*. Lutes has studied under Mathew Chellis and Sarah Barber.

ETTA McCURDY (Zuzu), age 7, is a second grader at The Studio School in Northglenn, Colorado. Her stage credits include *Music Man Jr.* (Marian Paroo), *Beauty and the Beast Jr.* (Chip) and *Willy Wonka Jr.* (Ensemble). McCurdy loves to dance, sing and act, and was the 2019 first place winner for both the regional and state levels of the Night of the Stars Competition (K-2 vocal).

MARY-ELIZABETH "LIDDY" MORAIN (Young Mary) is extremely proud and excited to join the cast of *It's a Wonderful Life*. Morain, who hails from Arvada, Colorado, is in third grade at West Woods Elementary and lives with her mom, dad, two brothers, two dogs, two fish and a lizard.

Her past theatre experience includes roles in the Missoula Children's Theatre productions of *Gulliver's Travels* and *Pinnocchio*. She is also a student of dance and musical theatre at Move by Morelli in Arvada and has taken piano lessons. Morain spends her free time swimming for the Five Parks Pirhanas swim team, playing with her friends and dreaming of her next theatre role.

NNAMDI NWANKWO (Harry Bailey/Assistant Director) makes his performing and assistant directing debut with Eklund Opera this season. Some of his recent operatic credits include Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, The Father in *Hänsel and Gretel*, 2nd Armored Man in *Die Zauberflöte* (Opera in the Heights, Houston), and The Impresario in *Viva La Mamma*. A native of Houston, Texas, he was also a member and soloist with Bach Society Houston. As a director, Nwankwo made his debut in 2018 directing the world premiere of *Ricardo and Julia*, a new play by Houston playwright Nick Pinelli. He received his BA in theatrical performance & directing from Stephen F. Austin State University, with a minor in music. Nwankwo is now in the first year of his master's degree in voice performance and pedagogy at CU Boulder, studying under John Seesholtz.

BRANDON "TYLER" PADGETT (Mr. Potter) is a second year master's student in vocal performance. This will be Padgett's fourth production with Eklund Opera, his most recent roles being Albert Prosser in Tom Cippulo's *Hobson's Choice* and the title role in Tchiakovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. Padgett's past performance credentials also include The Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance* and John Proctor in Robert Ward's *The Crucible*. Padgett is excited to be a part of the classic story of *It's a Wonderful Life* as told through the innovative power of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer. Padgett studies with Andrew Garland.

HARPER PILLARI (Young Sam and Janie) is a fifth grader at Boulder Community School of Integrated Studies. She has been acting since she was in preschool and has recently performed with Boulder Performing Arts and Peanut Butter Players. Her roles have been in *How The Camel Got His Hump*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Elf*, *The Lion King*, *Wicked* and *Alice in Wonderland*. When she is not acting and singing, she enjoys soccer, playing her trumpet, reading horror novels and practicing karate.

MEGAN PRYOR (Mary Hatch), soprano, was born in California and raised in Colorado. She is currently in the third year of her undergraduate here at CU. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Music in musical theatre. She most recently appeared as Miles in Eklund's *The Turn of the Screw*. Previous roles with Eklund Opera include Anybodys in *West Side Story*, The Beggar Woman in *Sweeney Todd*, and JouJou in *The Merry Widow*. She'd like to dedicate this performance to her mother, who watches *It's a Wonderful Life* each and every Christmas. Pryor studies with Matthew Chellis.

MARA RILEY (Mary Hatch) is pursuing a double BM in flute and vocal performance. Roles with Eklund Opera have included "A girl" ("Somewhere") in *West Side Story*, Flora in *The Turn of the Screw*, and Mary Hatch in *It's a Wonderful Life*. She was a winner of the Undergraduate Vocal Scholarship Competition in 2018 and 2019, as well as a NATS National Semifinalist. She was selected as one of the artists of the Young Musicians Foundation of Colorado for 2019-20. This semester, she performs with the CU Symphony Orchestra and University Singers. Riley is a student of Christina Jennings and Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson.

KELLY RIORDAN (Mother Bailey), mezzo-soprano, has been praised for her "exuberant honesty" on stage (The Pantagraph). Originally from the suburbs of Chicago, Riordan is pursuing her MM in performance and pedagogy here at CU. This past year, Riordan performed the roles of Little Buttercup in Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore* and the Mother in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. Favorite past roles performed include Cherubino (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) and Cleo (*The Most Happy Fella*). This past summer, Riordan took second place at the national competition of NATS. She is excited to make her Eklund Opera debut as Mother Bailey. Riordan studies with Abigail Nims.

MACK RODGERS (Ed) is a sophomore BM vocal performance and astrophysics major. He has performed in two prior Eklund Opera productions: *West Side Story* as Geetar and *Eugene Onegin* as a chorus member. He attended the Interlochen Center for the Arts for the summer of 2016 and NAFME All-National Choir in November 2018. He was awarded scholarship for Outstanding Freshman 2018-19 academic year. Rodgers studies with Matthew Chellis.

NATALIE SIMPSON (Winged Angel, First Class), a Boulder native, holds a bachelor degree in cello performance from Adelphi University. Now in her second year mastering in voice. Roles performed include Mrs. Grose in Eklund Opera's *The Turn of the Screw*, Madame Larina in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, and the title role of Handel's *Xerxes*. Natalie also greatly enjoyed her directorial debut in the Fall 2018 scenes showcase and working as assistant director with CU NOW's 2019 production of *Hobson's Choice*, an opera-in-progress by Tom Cipullo. Next year she intends to seek further performing opportunities internationally as well as at home. She is delighted to continue studying with John Seesholtz and Abigail Nims at CU Boulder.

DAVID STARRY (Uncle Billy Bailey) is a second-year Master of Music student in vocal performance at CU Boulder. His recent Eklund Opera credits include Peter Quint in *The Turn of the Screw* and Arab in *West Side Story*. He is a member of Eklund Opera's outreach program, Opera Theater Singers. This summer, he sang the role of Alejandro/Ford/Trotsky in Opera Steamboat's production of *Frida*. This November, Starry will make his professional oratorio debut with the Rockford Symphony Orchestra in their production of Mozart's *Requiem*. He loves exploring Colorado's beauty with his wife Kathy and their dog Lulu. Starry studies with Matthew Chellis.

ANDREW TAYLOR (Winged Angel, First Class) is currently in the second year of his master's program in vocal performance and pedagogy. Past roles: Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*) and Tony (*West Side Story*) with Eklund Opera; Il Contino (*La finta giardiniera*), Kaspar (*Amahl and the Night Visitors*), and Astolfo (*La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina*) with USU Opera; and Ivan (*The Music Shop*) with Opera Outreach Quartet. Taylor was a featured soloist in the Xi'an International Choral Festival. He was also a soloist in the Utah State University Chamber Singer's recent album, *Amazing Grace*. Taylor studies with Matthew Chellis.

TYLER VINNOLA (Tommy Bailey) is a junior at the University of Colorado Boulder, pursuing a BM in vocal performance. Vinnola has performed with Central City Opera in such shows as Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and Verdi's *Tosca*. At CU he has been involved in the Henry Purcell concert, Songs

of East Asia concert, and *Eugene Onegin*. His most recent role was as Miles in Britten's *The Turn of The Screw*. He is very grateful for this chance to perform in another CU Boulder production and is looking forward to continuing to do so in the future. Vinnola studies with Matthew Chellis and John Seesholtz.

NOAH WILLIAMS (Young George Bailey) is a sixth grade student at Blue Mountain Elementary in Longmont, Colorado. Jesters Dinner Theatre: *Oliver Twist* (Oliver), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Mike Teavee), *Jungle Book* (Tabaqui), *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (Huntsman). Rocky Mountain Theatre Kids: *James and the Giant Peach* (Karl Kreator). St. Vrain Shakespeare in the Park: *Romeo and Juliet* (Tybalt). Williams has attended drama classes at Jesters Theatre, Rocky Mountain Theatre Kids and Boulder Dinner Theatre.

PETER DEAN BECK (Set and Lighting Designer) has designed scenery and lighting for Eklund Opera for 25 seasons and for more than 300 productions around North America. Among his opera credits are *Falstaff*, *Turandot*, *Manon*, *Don Giovanni*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Roméo et Juliette* for such companies as Atlanta Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Virginia Opera and Chautauqua Opera. He has designed productions of *Andrea Chenier*, *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, *Macbeth*, *Elektra* and *Tristan and Isolde* for Hawaii Opera Theatre, where he has been principal designer for 32 seasons. In Asia, he designed a double bill of *The Nightingale* and *Cavalleria Rusticana* for Sakai City Opera in Japan and *lit Cav/Pag* in Macau and *Don Carlo* in Hong Kong. His musical theatre credits include *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Music Man*, *Les Misérables*, *The Wizard of Oz* and *Into the Woods* for Skylight Music Theatre. His work for dance includes *The Indigo Girls Project* for Atlanta Ballet and *The Nutcracker* for Ballet Hawaii.

NICHOLAS CARTHY (Music Director/Conductor) is now in his 16th season with Eklund Opera. He studied at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. He served as musical assistant to Bernard Haitink and Sir Georg Solti at the Salzburg Festival and to Daniel Barenboim in Paris, Chicago and Bayreuth. Carthy has conducted opera productions in Vienna, Salzburg, Oslo, Stockholm, Winterthur, Milan, Rome, Naples, Bonn, Eugene and Tel Aviv. He

has conducted orchestras, including the Colorado Symphony, Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, Orchestra RAI di Torino, Orchestra San Carlo di Napoli and the Accademia Filarmonica Roma. As a collaborative pianist he has performed in many of the world's great halls, including Carnegie Hall, Suntory Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Bolshoi Theatre and the Musikverein Vienna. He is music director of the Helgeland Sinfonietta and the Toppen International Summer School in Norway. He is well-known for his public lectures at the University of Colorado and beyond, and is occasionally to be heard on the radio, spreading around his uncurbable enthusiasm for music and history.

BUD COLEMAN (Choreographer) is honored to work again with Eklund Opera, most recently as Frosch in *Die Fledermaus* and directing *Red Hot and Cole*. Other credits include directing the CFI operas for CU NOW (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019), and *A Grand Night for Singing* in the Summer Lyric Opera series. A professor of theatre at the University of Colorado Boulder and former Chair of the Department of Theatre & Dance, Coleman is a former dancer with Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, Fort Worth Ballet, Kinesis, and Ballet Austin. Coleman has directed and choreographed many musicals and operas, including the musical *Company* in Vladivostok, Russia, under the auspices of the U.S. State Department Cultural Envoy program, as well as directing and choreographing the Thai premiere of *Fiddler on the Roof* at Mahidol University. Coleman was selected to be a 2009-10 Fulbright Lecturer at Waseda University and Kyoritsu Women's University in Tokyo.

CHRISTIE CONOVER (Production Assistant) wears many hats, having returned to her alma mater as production assistant for Eklund Opera. In her active solo career she has performed lead roles with Komische Oper Berlin, Minnesota Opera, Opera Colorado and concerts with the Colorado Symphony, Colorado Music Festival, and Colorado Springs Philharmonic, among others. With Margot Crowe, her CU Adopt-a-Student sponsor from years past, she co-founded and runs the Fine Tuned Society of Colorado: a house concert series providing performance opportunities to CU Boulder music alumni and area musicians. Conover fondly remembers her many roles with CU Opera and singing in the inaugural CU NOW.

IAIN COURT (Projection Designer) has lit works in medieval churches, caves, circus tents, on riverbanks and in haunted houses, as well as many theatres. His lighting in dance and other genres has toured Australia, Asia, Europe and North America. He is particularly interested in collaborative new media performance, exploring these areas with Igneous and other companies. He is also a director and performer working with devised performance and musicals. Court has a passion for mentoring new artists. He is currently the director of dance production for the CU Department of Theatre & Dance.

CHRISTOPHER DENVER (Production Stage Manager), a Colorado native, has called NYC home for 14 years. Selected: *All Roads Lead to the Kurski Station*, *Appointment with Death*, *Babes In Arms*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Bohème*, *Broadway Bares*, *A Chorus Line*, *Circus Couture*, *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, *Dick Pix*, *Don Giovanni*, *Falstaff*, *Fiddler On the Roof*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, *The Merry Widow*, *The Mikado*, *The Music Man*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, *Rusalka*, *The Sound of Music*, *South Pacific*, *Spring Awakening*, *Trial By Jury*, *Die Zauberflöte*. For more information, visit christopherdenver.com.

KELLY GREGSON (Costume Draper) received his BFA in costume design from the University of South Dakota. His professional career began at Juilliard and the Costume Collection in New York City. Some of his television credits include *Saturday Night Live*, *Sex and The City* and *Agents of Shield*. Gregson also served as Production Supervisor for the Principal Ladies Costume Shop at the Metropolitan Opera. His professional theatre credits include Broadway productions of *Fosse*, *The Sound of Music*, Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake*, *Kiss Me Kate* and *Annie Get Your Gun*. He has worked on over 30 feature films, including *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Beautiful Mind*, *Oz the Great and Powerful*, *The Departed*, *Oblivion* and *La La Land*. His work with Bob Mackie includes the concert tours of Cher, Pink, Tina Turner, Mitzi Gaynor, Diana Ross and Barry Manilow. Gregson currently works as the Costume Shop Supervisor at the University of Denver.

LEIGH HOLMAN (Stage Director) balances a teaching and professional stage directing career in the United States and abroad. In recent years, she has made directing debuts at the Pafos Aphrodite Festival in Cyprus, L'Opéra de Montréal and Florida Grand Opera. Recent CU Boulder productions include *West Side Story*, *Eugene Onegin* and *Turn of the Screw*. As well-suited to new operatic works as she is to traditional works, Holman has produced and directed workshops of operas in association with composers and librettists, including Jake Heggie, Gene Scheer, Tom Cipullo, Mark Campbell, Mark Adamo, Colm Toibin, Kirke Mechem, Libby Larsen, Lori Laitman, Herschel Garfein, Robert Aldridge, Daniel Kellogg, Alberto Caruso and Dave Mason. As the founder and artistic/general director of CU Boulder's New Opera Workshop (CU NOW), she continues to passionately promote the creation, collaboration and production of new American works.

JENNIFER MELCHER GALVIN (Scenic Artist/Props Master), MFA, is a local theatre professional. This is her 13th season with CU Boulder as the scenic artist for the Eklund Opera Program and as a stage manager for Macky Auditorium Concert Hall. She is originally from Lenexa, Kansas, where she visits her family often. Galvin's graduate work was a study of scenic design and painting at Illinois State University, during which time she was blessed to intern with Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago. Her hobbies include fiction, needlecraft and hiking. In 2010, Galvin walked 400 miles of an ancient pilgrimage road across Northern Spain called the Camino de Santiago. She thanks her cat Nutmeg and husband Peter for their love and support.

JOHN McKEEVER (Assistant Conductor) is pursuing his Doctor of Musical Arts in orchestral conducting at the University of Colorado Boulder. As a graduate teaching assistant he is the director of the Campus Orchestra. He also serves as an assistant and cover conductor for the Boulder Philharmonic. From 2012-18, McKeever served as the assistant conductor for Piedmont Opera in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In 2018, he made his conducting debut with the company in their production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. In 2016, McKeever shadowed the American Ballet Theatre's spring season at the Metropolitan Opera at the invitation of the company's principal conductor. He earned a Bachelor of Music in double bass

performance and a Master of Music in orchestral conducting at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. A native of Anchorage, Alaska, McKeever is a woodworker who enjoys making batons while listening to “golden-age” musicals.

RON MUELLER (Technical Director) has been with Eklund Opera for 21 seasons. His past Eklund Opera productions include *The Rake's Progress*, *La Traviata*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Dead Man Walking*. His other professional credits include Skylight Opera Theatre, Opera Colorado, Boulder Ensemble Theatre Company, Crested Butte Music Festival, Bravo! Vail Music Festival, Colorado Shakespeare Festival and Boulder's Dinner Theatre.

SARAH ANNETTE OPSTAD DEMMON (Wig and Makeup Designer) returns to CU where she worked under Tom Robbins for 10 years and is honored to follow in his footsteps. Recent works include building and designing Long Beach Ballet's *Cinderella*; designing *Rusalka*, *Frida*, *Hansel and Gretel* for Opera Steamboat; associate wig and makeup coordinator for Opera Colorado's last 16 seasons; assistant designer for *Barber of Seville*; wig mistress and special effects makeup artist for Colorado Ballet's *Don Quixote*, *Nutcracker*, *Wizard of Oz*, and Washington Ballet's *Dracula* at the Kennedy Center. She taught for the Vocal Arts Symposiums at Colorado College and designed *Madama Butterfly* and *Don Giovanni* for Castleton Opera, Virginia. She has worked for the following companies: Central City Opera, Opera Theater of the Rockies, Opera Omaha, Utah Opera, Minnesota Opera, Opera Carolina, Atlanta Opera, Denver Center, Arvada Center, North Carolina Theatre Company, Hartford Stage, South Coast Repertory, CNN, Fox News DC, CW2 Denver and The History Channel.

ANN PIANO (Costume Designer) is delighted to be working with the Eklund Opera for the first time. She is the costume coordinator for Opera Colorado and is going into her 17th season. This summer Piano coordinated the costumes for Bravo! Vail's production of *Tosca*. She has designed for Opera Steamboat since 2016. Other current professional credits include Lamont School of Music, Benchmark Theater, and Performance Now. In 2012, she won a True West “Best Costume Design” Award for *The Elaborate Entrance Of Chad Deity* at The Curious Theatre Company. In 2009,

she was nominated for an “Outstanding Costume Design” Henry Award for *Enchanted April* at Miner's Alley Playhouse. Piano received a BFA in fashion design from Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri, with a minor in fine art.

JEREMY REGER (Chorus Master and Vocal Coach), international pianist and educator, maintains an active performing and coaching career. He has served on the music staff of Virginia Opera, Eugene Opera, Hawaii Opera Theater, Mill City Opera, Minnesota Opera, Skylark Opera and Aspen Opera Theater. He recently joined the CU Boulder faculty as a vocal coach. Previously, he taught at the Music Academy of the West, at Christopher Newport University in Recife, Brazil, and at Indiana University. He has played in the Virginia Symphony, the Williamsburg Symphonia, the Carmel Symphony and the Terre Haute Symphony. Reger earned a doctorate in collaborative piano from the University of Michigan under Martin Katz.

TERI WAGNER (Projection Designer) is a multi-disciplinary artist and educator. Her work has been shown and she has taught at the university level in the United States, Europe and Australia. She has collaborated with Iain Court and others on many performance design projects, most recently on the CU production of *Hair*. She is currently faculty and program coordinator of the Experience Design MFA at CU Boulder.

Production staff

Assistant Technical Director

Jeff Rusnak

Assistant Stage Managers

Nawledge Brewington

Courtney Williams

Master Carpenter

Ben Smith

Carpenters

Drew Knapp

Andy Koenig

Bryce Taylor

Dan Sjaastad

Supertitles Creator and Operator

Barbie Noyes

Scenic Artist

Jennifer Melcher Galvin

Assistant Scenic Artist

Lelah Radostis

Hand Properties

Jennifer Melcher Galvin

Head Hair Stylist

Sarah Opstad Demmon

Hair and Wig Assistant

Tanner Hubregsen

Wig and Makeup Assistant

Whitney Wolanin

Photoshoot Hair and Makeup Stylist

Sarah Opstad Demmon

Costume Draper

Kelly Gregson

Wardrobe Head

Alison Milan

Costume Assistants

Alie Holden

Sara Rutherford

Costume Stitchers

Julia Deutsch

Alie Holden

Alison Milan

Music staff

Head Vocal Coach

Jeremy Reger

Vocal Coach

Mutsumi Moteki

Rehearsal Pianists

Alaina DeBellvue

Barbie Noyes

Nathália Kato

Macky crew

Production Manager and Master AV Tech

Richard Barrett

Production Manager and ASM (Sound)

Trevor Isetts

Master Electrician

Chris Evans

Rail Operator

Ben Smith

Sound Engineer

Dan Sjaastad

Spot Operators

Lana Pivarnik

JD Rogers

Light Board Operator

Reed Otto

Pit Manager

Scott Wickam

Assistant Director of Production

JP Osnes

CU ★ PRESENTS Upcoming holiday highlights



A Broadway Christmas Carol

A musical created by Kathy Feininger

CU Theatre & Dance

Nov. 15-Dec. 8, University Theatre

What the dickens happened to Scrooge? He sings (show tunes), he dances (time steps and classic Fosse), he turns into a ham (and we're not talking spiral-cut). In an event that's perfect for both the young and young at heart, Charles Dickens' famous festive tale is whipped into a holiday confection, peppered with hilarious parodies of dozens of your favorite Broadway songs. *Starting at \$24*



Holiday Festival

Boulder's beloved holiday tradition

CU College of Music

Dec. 6-8, Macky Auditorium

Delight in the twinkling lights, seasonal greenery and beautiful music at CU Boulder's Holiday Festival, an annual tradition that's enchanting for all ages. The decades-old celebration brings together student choirs, bands and orchestras—along with world-class faculty performers—for a concert of holiday favorites and new surprises. *Starting at \$20*



Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy

A Celtic Family Christmas

Artist Series

Tuesday, Dec. 17, Macky Auditorium

The holidays truly become a family affair when married duo Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy—two of the globe's best and brightest fiddle players—invite their children onstage for an unforgettable night of holiday fun. *Starting at \$22*