The Magic Flute

Singspiel in Two Acts
Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), K. 620
Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder

Act I

INTERMISSION

Act II

Cast
Tamino John Tessier, tenor
Papageno Hadleigh Adams, baritone
Pamina Tess Altiveros, soprano
Queen of the Night Kathryn Lewek, soprano
Sarastro Evan Boyer, bass
Three Ladies Amy Shoremount-Obra, soprano
Deborah Nansteel, mezzo-soprano
Julia Benzing, mezzo-soprano
Monastatos Julius Ahn, tenor
Child Spirits Members of the Southern California Children's Chorus
Papagena Bridgette Gan, soprano
Speaker of the Temple, Priest, Armed Guard, Slave Colin Ramsey, bass
Priest, Armed Guard, Slave David Guzman, tenor

Technical Team
Robin Walsh, puppet designer | Kathy Pryzgoda, lighting designer
Katie Wilson, costume designer | Ora Jewell-Busche, wig and makeup designer
The Magic Flute ("Die Zauberflöte")

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets (both doubling basset horn), 2 bassoons; 2 French horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones; timpani; keyboard; clockenspiel; strings

**Background**

If Mozart's operas had been the only works to survive him, they alone would have been enough to assure his place among the greatest composers of all time. The same could be said about the works he composed just in 1791, the last year of his life—a period of seemingly impossible inspiration and productivity. The two operas he composed in that year are utter opposites: La clemenza di Tito, an opera seria that is solemn and exalted in tone, with moral lessons about personal, religious and political loyalty; and The Magic Flute, a fairy tale of profound, sublime simplicity. Though Mozart actually finished The Magic Flute before La clemenza di Tito, the former actually premiered later—in September. If operas were Mozart's children, this one was his last-born, and the one he called his favorite.

While Mozart excelled in every musical form he attempted, operas really were like his children. Yet this was the one musical genre that even his father Leopold felt the young prodigy should not attempt too soon. True, by age 18 he was writing acknowledged masterpieces. But the next year, in 1787; and Così fans tutte preceded The Magic Flute by just a year, in 1790. By this time, almost 30. His father and everyone else associated with the commission understood the prescribed story for what it was: a pleasant potboiler. But the plot's intricacies and sheer length afforded the young composer a framework upon which to hang an abundance of music, including many arias expressing every conceivable mood.

It's clear that Mozart rose to the challenge of this first major operatic assignment: He began composing the opera in Salzburg in the fall of 1774, leaving for Munich under his father's supervision in December to meet the cast and production team. Preparations went well, and his sister Nannerl followed just before the turn of the year—one of the few times she was able to join her father and brother on one of their professional excursions. Staying through the New Year, she was able to attend the opera's premiere with Leopold and Wolfgang on January 13, 1775. It was a highly successful event, as Wolfgang wrote to his mother:

"Thank God! My opera was staged yesterday ... and was such a success that I cannot possibly describe ... the tumultuous applause. To begin with, the entire theater was so packed that a great many people had to be turned away. After each aria there was great applause and shouts of “Viva maestro.” ... At the end of the opera, during the pause when there is usually quiet until the ballet begins, people kept on shouting “bravo” and clapping. No sooner did the applause die down than it would start up again.

In Mozart years, the gap between this teenage success and his most familiar operatic masterpieces is vast: from age 18, when he won his first ovations for La finta giardiniera, to The Marriage of Figaro, his first collaboration with librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, when he was almost 30. Don Giovanni followed the next year, in 1787; and Così fan tutte preceded The Magic Flute by just a year, in 1790. By this time, Mozart imbued the music of his operas with Shakespearean dramatic expressiveness and psychological sensitivity. They are ravishingly beautiful yet profoundly insightful.

Because of the sublime simplicity of The Magic Flute, we don't always associate such grown-up adjectives with it. This is, after all, a fairy tale. But it is as profoundly mature as the wisest among us, and as meaningful as our hearts allow. Set in an indeterminate fantasy-
NOTES

realm—it could be Egypt by way of an HGTV decorator—the story bears superficial trappings of masonic ritual, which fascinated Mozart for reasons both social and philosophical. But its lessons are older and newer than that, following the archetypal journey of the young Orphic hero who must leave home, face danger and learn crucial life lessons. Our hero, the prince Tamino, follows in the footsteps of Beowulf, Peer Gynt and David Copperfield to learn, in Dickens’ words, that “The best steel must go through the fire.” And his bride, the princess Pamina, is a true heroine—always truthful and never shrinking from danger. Remarkably, unlike Tamino, she never asks for help. Together they learn to face life courageously, respecting the sacred bond of matrimony and the power of truth.

Though much has been written about The Magic Flute, the facts surrounding its creation are hazy. Still, we can surmise much from Mozart’s relationship with Emanuel Schikaneder, the man who first played Papageno and who wrote the opera’s libretto. Schikaneder appears to have been formidably ambitious. Both entrepreneur and performer, the Bavarian Schikaneder was the leader of a 34-member theater troupe that he brought to Mozart’s hometown of Salzburg, Austria in 1780. Mozart would relocate to Vienna the following year, but in the meantime, he and his family regularly attended Schikaneder’s performances, and the two became friends. When Schikaneder transferred operations to Vienna, working as an actor and impresario there, Mozart was an established figure in the city’s cultural scene. And having presented Mozart’s comic opera The Abduction from the Seraglio there, Schikaneder had firsthand knowledge of the composer’s theatrical flair.

In the spring of 1791, when Mozart began composing The Magic Flute, he had renewed his friendship with Schikaneder and they had been socializing regularly since the previous year. Mozart had always felt burdened by the need to cultivate commissions, especially large ones such as operas. But this circumstance was something quite different, with Schikaneder—a savvy impresario—hoping to cultivate a theatrical success that could benefit both him and Mozart.

Imagine having Mozart set the secondary character of Papageno to music for you! Anecdotes suggest Schikaneder was a gifted comic actor and baritone, and that he successfully pressured Mozart to expand the Papageno’s role in the opera. Wherever the truth lies, the result is one of the Western theater’s great comic creations.

SYNOPSIS: THE MAGIC FLUTE

Act I

In a forbidding landscape of trees and mountains, the young prince Tamino is pursued by a serpent and calls for help. His pleas are immediately answered by three magically empowered ladies, who kill the serpent and gather around the prince. Sizing him up, they are more than pleased with what they see, and bicker over which one of them should stand guard over him while the others report back to their sovereign, the Queen of the Night. Stymied, they decide that all three will return to her together. In their absence, Papageno, the genial bird-catcher, enters and introduces himself with a winning ditty. Accompanying himself on the pitch-pipe hanging about his neck, he explains that he lives by eating, drinking and catching birds for the Queen of the Night. When Tamino awakens, the blustering Papageno takes credit for killing the serpent lying at their feet, but the three ladies soon return and punish him for his baseless boasting, giving him a stone instead of wine and bread, and clamping his mouth shut with a padlock.

Meanwhile, at a chamber in Sarastro’s domain, his subjects discuss the princess Pamina’s escape from the clutches of his evil servant Monostatos. When Monostatos recaptures her, she faints, but then Papageno appears, and the two blowhards terrify each other in a comedy of cowardice. Papageno recovers and becomes acquainted with Pamina in a tender duet that bridges the differences in their social status: Papageno longs for a spouse, and in the tenderness of her understanding, it’s clear that Pamina does, too.

As Tamino progresses through a grove of three holy temples in Sarastro’s realm, he is guided by three boys who urge him to be steadfast, patient and silent. Tamino appeals to Reason and Nature in his quest, but a wise figure appears and warns him that though his motives are worthy, his aims are warped by a woman’s tears, which are not to be trusted; he can prevail in his quest only by earning enlightenment. Despite the gravity of these words and the rigors that await him, Tamino is overjoyed to learn that Pamina is alive, and in playing his magic flute in gratitude, he is greeted by the bells of Papageno’s glockenspiel. For the first time, he meets Pamina, who has proven herself honest and courageous, but—as Sarastro instructs her—must learn that her mother’s pride has blinded her to the ways of virtue, which she must learn from men. As the act ends amid a masonic chorus, Pamina and Tamino look to a future of love and justice ... if they can prevail in the trials that await them.

Act II

In a ceremony of grave solemnity, Sarastro informs his priests that Tamino is to face the ordeals through which he can earn the right to wed Pamina in an enlightened union, vanquishing the forces of the Queen of the Night. The terrified Papageno is also told that facing these ordeals with Tamino is the only way he can earn companionship. Tamino remains stalwart in the face of Papageno’s interfering gags and cowardly shtick. The Queen’s three ladies attempt further interference as well, but Tamino is unaffected. Pamina, for her part, continues to obey, their enchanted instruments will protect them.

In the wake of Sarastro’s nobility, a scene of unexpected tenderness reveals to us that Papageno is more than just a buffoon. He is thirsty ... but, more important, he is lonely. A seemingly old, doddering lady brings him water and reveals that she is 18 (not 80) and has a boyfriend whose name is—we can hear it, though Papageno can’t—Papageno! The three boys again come to Papageno’s aid, bringing wine and food. Tamino plays his flute, bringing Pamina, who at first is overjoyed—though, like Orpheus, the prince must turn silently away from the woman he loves. The uncomprehending Pamina expresses her grief in a heartbreaking aria and longs for death; but before she
can take her own life, the three boys intercede and reunite her with Tamino.

As Tamino and Pamina face their ordeals of enlightenment together, Papagena’s true identity—that of a lovely girl of 18—is unmasked. Amid general rejoicing, she and her Papageno look ahead to a life of simple domestic contentment, while the triumphant Tamino and Pamina face the higher joys and burdens of human enlightenment in the masonic mold. In Sarastro’s word, they are now menschen: “fully human.”

Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and Louisiana Philharmonic, and editor-in-chief for The Santa Fe Opera.

DIRECTOR’S NOTE

The Magic Flute is Mozart’s final opera, and one of his last compositions. It premiered in Vienna in September 1791 and Mozart died a mere two months later. Despite being sick, hungry, broke and altogether miserable, Mozart’s music is some of the most joyous and beautiful he ever wrote.

The piece is technically termed a “singspiel”—meaning that it combines singing and spoken dialogue—and that means that it’s what we today call a musical. While on the surface The Magic Flute and its characters can be considered a bit silly, it is actually an endlessly fascinating work of art.

So many meanings have been attached to this opera: Is it about brotherhood? The meaning of true love? The method for achieving an honorable life? Some feel the work is a philosophical tract about the Age of Enlightenment, some believe it’s a commentary on the French Revolution, some accuse Mozart of purloining Masonic secret rituals. Others argue that it’s a political diatribe aimed against a conservative Austrian government headed by Maria Theresa. There are also theories that the work is inspired by tarot cards or even by the psychosexual beliefs of Carl Jung. (Obviously, the latter is historically impossible.)

Every one of these is fascinating to research, but ultimately one has to tell this story in a way that will speak to modern audiences. We like the idea of approaching this largely as an adult fairy tale but with real characters experiencing real emotions. And one of the great advantages of producing opera with Pacific Symphony is that the orchestra can be given its rightful place as a character in the piece. It really is perhaps the character of the opera. Mozart’s amazing writing not only has the orchestra supporting the singers’ emotions, but it oftentimes tells us things that words can’t express. And without giving away too many secrets, the beauty of Segerstrom Concert Hall gives a fantastic jumping off point to offer a feast for the eyes. And when all is said and done, there always is—and always will be—Mozart’s music. A beautiful hall; a world-class orchestra, cast and conductor; this opera; Mozart. What a privilege for every one of us—performers and listeners alike—to be a part of this!

Bob Neu
The 2017-18 season marks Music Director Carl St.Clair’s 28th year leading Pacific Symphony. He is one of the longest-tenured conductors of the major American orchestras. St.Clair’s lengthy history solidifies the strong relationship he has forged with the musicians and the community. His continuing role also lends stability to the organization and continuity to his vision for the Symphony’s future. Few orchestras can claim such rapid artistic development as Pacific Symphony—the largest orchestra formed in the United States in the last 50 years—due in large part to St.Clair’s leadership.

During his tenure, St.Clair has become widely recognized for his musically distinguished performances, his commitment to building outstanding educational programs and his innovative approaches to programming. In April 2018, St.Clair will lead Pacific Symphony in its Carnegie Hall debut, as the finale to the Hall’s yearlong celebration of pre-eminent composer Philip Glass’ 80th birthday. The following month, he will lead Pacific Symphony on its first tour to China, the orchestra’s first international tour since 2006 touring Europe in 2006. Among St.Clair’s many creative endeavors are the highly acclaimed American Composers Festival, which began in 2010; and the opera initiative, “Symphonic Voices,” which continues for the seventh season in 2017-18 with Mozart’s The Magic Flute, following the concert-opera productions of Aida, Turandot, Carmen, La Traviata, Tosca and La Bohème in previous seasons.

St.Clair’s commitment to the development and performance of new works by composers is evident in the wealth of commissions and recordings by the Symphony. The 2016-17 season featured commissions by pianist/composer Conrad Tao and Composer-in-Residence Narong Prangcharoen, a follow-up to the recent slate of recordings of works commissioned and performed by the Symphony in recent years. These include William Bolcom’s Songs of Lorca and Prometheus (2015-16), Elliot Goldenthal’s Symphony in G-sharp Minor (2014-15), Richard Danielpour’s Toward a Season of Peace (2013-14), Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna (2012-13), and Michael Daugherty’s Mount Rushmore and The Gospel According to Sister Aimee (2012-13). St.Clair has led the orchestra in other critically acclaimed albums including two piano concertos of Lukas Foss; Danielpour’s An American Requiem and Goldenthal’s Fire Water Paper. A Vietnam Oratorio with cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Other commissioned composers include James Newton Howard, Zhou Long, Tobias Picker, Frank Ticheli, Chen Yi, Curt Cacioppo, Stephen Scott, Jim Self (Pacific Symphony’s principal tubist) and Christopher Theofanidis.

In 2006-07, St.Clair led the orchestra’s historic move into its home in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall at Segerstrom Center for the Arts. The move came on the heels of the landmark 2005-06 season that included St.Clair leading the Symphony on its first European tour—nine cities in three countries playing before capacity houses and receiving extraordinary responses and reviews.

From 2008-10, St.Clair was general music director for the Komische Oper in Berlin, where he led successful new productions such as La Traviata (directed by Hans Neuenfels). He also served as general music director and chief conductor of the German National Theater and Staatskapelle (GNTS) in Weimar, Germany, where he led Wagner’s Ring Cycle to critical acclaim. He was the first non-European to hold his position at the GNTS; the role also gave him the distinction of simultaneously leading one of the newest orchestras in America and one of the oldest in Europe.

In 2014, St.Clair became the music director of the National Symphony Orchestra in Costa Rica. His international career also has him conducting abroad several months a year, and he has appeared with orchestras throughout the world. He was the principal guest conductor of the Radio Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart from 1998-2004, where he completed a three-year recording project of the Villa–Lobos symphonies. He has also appeared with orchestras in Israel, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South America, and summer festivals worldwide.

In North America, St.Clair has led the Boston Symphony Orchestra (where he served as assistant conductor for several years), New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the San Francisco, Seattle, Detroit, Atlanta, Houston, Indianapolis, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver symphonies, among many.

A strong advocate of music education for all ages, St.Clair has been essential to the creation and implementation of the Symphony’s education and community engagement programs including Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles, Heartstrings, Sunday Casual Connections, OC Can You Play With Us?, arts-X-press and Class Act.
Known for his “distinctive staging style” and for being “the most inventive opera director in town” (St Paul Pioneer Press), Robert Neu is challenging the norms by becoming a pioneer in the field of semi-staged operas with symphony orchestras. Sought after for his highly theatrical and musically sensitive work, Neu has directed more than 80 productions of opera, musical theater and plays throughout the country. With his vast experience of bringing semi-staged operatic repertoire to symphony orchestra stages, Neu has worked closely with the Minnesota Opera presenting critically acclaimed productions of Candide, Fidelio, Hänsel und Gretel, Tosca, Carmen, Peer Gynt, La bohème, La traviata, Bernstein’s Mass, Die Zauberflöte, Die Fledermaus and Carousel. With the Colorado Symphony, he has directed Tosca and The Music Man. Cincinnati Symphony and Cincinnati Pops audiences have seen his productions of The Music Man, Die Zauberflöte, Peer Gynt and The Sound of Music. Neu teaches masterclasses in audition techniques for the University of Minnesota’s opera department, and he is a resident director at Lyric Arts Theater in Minneapolis. He is a graduate of The Juilliard School.

**ROBERT NEU**

**STAGE DIRECTOR**

On the international stages of opera, concert, and recital, Canadian John Tessier has garnered attention and praise for the beauty and honesty of his voice, for a refined style and creative versatility, and for his handsome, youthful presence in the lyric tenor repertoire. The Juno Award-winning artist has worked with many of the most notable conductors of our day including David Robertson, Leonard Slatkin, Plácido Domingo, John Nelson, Franz Welser-Möst, Emmanuelle Haïm, Charles Dutoit, Donald Runnicles, Robert Spano, Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Bernard Labadie. Highlights of recent opera seasons feature Bellini’s I Puritani and Count Almaviva in Rossini’s Il barbiere di Siviglia, both at the Wiener Staatsoper, Cherubini’s Médée at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, both Les pêcheurs de perles and Maria Stuarda at Seattle Opera and La cenerentola for New Zealand Opera. He has given the world premiere of Robin de Raaff’s Waiting for Miss Monroe at the Netherlands Opera, and has sung Der fliegende Holländer at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Don Giovanni for a South American debut at the Teatro Colón and The Pearl Fishers with the English National Opera.

**JOHN TESSIER**

**TAMINO; TENOR**

New Zealand baritone Hadleigh Adams has been featured in Opera News magazine as a Soundbyte artist and has received international acclaim for his performances on stage and in concert. He is renowned for his dynamic stage presence and ability to draw true, honest characters in his performances. His broad repertoire spans from Baroque and Bel Canto through Britten and to contemporary composition. He has collaborated with some of today’s greatest artists on the concert platform, and on the opera stage. Over the past season, Adams has made his debut performances with some of the United States’ top companies. He has performed with Pittsburgh Opera, London’s Philharmonia Orchestra, Cincinnati Opera, Oakland Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony, Michigan Opera Theatre, the Colorado Symphony and Opera Omaha. In 2015, Adams made his New York debut in RB Schlather’s production of Handel’s Orlando at Whitebox, N.Y. This production won praise from critics for its visceral, modern treatment of the work. The New York Times wrote: “A muscular stud in head-to-toe skin-tight leather ... Overseeing all is the magician Zoroastro, sung by Hadleigh Adams with a dark yet flexible bass and a glowering presence.”

**HADLEIGH ADAMS**

**PAPAGENO; BARITONE**

Raised for “a ripe, sensual lyric soprano” (Opera News) and a “captivating combination of skilled singing and magnetic acting” (Pioneer Press), soprano Tess Altiveros is in high demand on concert and operatic stages alike. The 2016-17 season highlights included Clorinda in Seattle Opera’s critically acclaimed The Combat, Bach’s St. Matthew Passion under Cristian Măcelaru (Colorado Symphony, staged), Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni (Skylark Opera Theatre), Musetta in La bohème under Andrew Litton (Colorado Symphony) and Susanna in The Marriage of Figaro (Angels & Demons Entertainment), a performance described as “utterly captivating” by the Twin Cities Arts Reader. Altiveros began her 2017-18 season touring internationally as Euridice in L’Orfeo under Stephen Stubbs (Pacific MusicWorks), and engagements with Symphony Tacoma and Great Bend Center for Music. Further engagements for the season include Music of Missions and Mystery (San Francisco Early Music Society), Messiah (Bremerton Symphony), Maria in West Side Story (Central City Opera/Boulder Philharmonic), Bach’s Advent Cantatas (Pacific MusicWorks) and the Rossini Messe Solennelle (South Bend Chamber Singers). This is Altiveros’ debut with Pacific Symphony.
MEET

Soprano Kathryn Lewek has established herself as one of opera’s strongest coloratura sopranos of this generation and is now expanding her resume with some of the most vocally challenging roles in the soprano repertoire. This summer she reprised her signature role as Queen of the Night in Die Zauberflöte with The Deutsche Oper Berlin, and performed the Queen of the Night aria as one of the 10 pieces in “Sir Henry’s Magnificent Musical Inspirations” concert with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at BBC Proms Classical Music Festival. This season, she will return to Washington National Opera as Cuneogone in their production of Candide and reprise her role as the reigning Queen of the Night with The Metropolitan Opera, Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Dutch National Opera, Pacific Symphony and Indianapolis Symphony. In concert, Lewek will perform the soprano solo in Händel’s Messiah with Music Sacra and Oratorio Society of New York, sing at galas for The Opera Foundation and Toledo Opera, and perform a recital with Rockefeller University and a recital and masterclass with Messiah College. Upcoming seasons include a role debut as the three Heroines in Les contes d’Hoffmann and a return to The Gran Teatre del Liceu as well as multiple returns to The Metropolitan Opera. Lewek’s interpretation of her signature role, a quintessential Mozart villain, Queen of the Night, has garnered international critical acclaim: “Kathryn Lewek, a favorite Queen of the Night these days, nailed her otherworldly coloratura arpeggios to the wall in her ‘Vengeance’ aria, but more impressive to me was the pathos with which she quickly conveyed, in Act 1, the full suffering of a mother whose child has been kidnapped.” She performed the role in productions of Die Zauberflöte in debuts with The Metropolitan Opera, The Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bregenzer Festspiele, Houston Grand Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, Wiener Straatsoper, Teatro Real in Madrid, Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Opera Leipzig, Opera de Toulon, English National Opera, Nashville Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Welsh National Opera and The Royal Danish Opera.

Bass Evan Boyer, who hails from Louisville, KY, has been heard on concert and opera stages around the world. A graduate of Lyric Opera of Chicago’s prestigious Ryan Opera Center, during three seasons with the company he was heard in over a dozen productions including La bohème, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Aida, Carmen, Lohengrin, Macbeth and Rigoletto, among others. Since departing the program, he has already returned as Lodovico in Otello and the company’s annual concert at Millennium Park. In the 2017-18 season, Boyer makes his debut with Kentucky Opera as Truffaldino in The Rake’s Progress, and in the 2018-19 season he makes his debut with Temple Opera as Colline in La bohème. His upcoming engagements include performances with the Phoenix Symphony, the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, and The Dallas Opera. This summer he performed the role of Don Alfonso in Così fan tutte with the Festival d’Aix-en-Provence. In recent seasons he has returned for performances with both the Pittsburgh Opera and Teatro Real, Madrid. In his most recent engagements, he performed the role of Masetto in Don Giovanni for his Palm Beach Opera debut, and was heard as the Armchair/Tree in L’enfant et les Sortilèges with Seiji Ozawa’s Music Academy of the West. He studied at The Connecticut College Opera Center, during three seasons with the company he was heard in over a dozen productions including La bohème, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Aida, Carmen, Lohengrin, Macbeth and Rigoletto, among others. Since departing the program, he has already returned as Lodovico in Otello and the company’s annual concert at Millennium Park. In the 2017-18 season, Boyer makes his debut with Kentucky Opera as Truffaldino in The Rake’s Progress, and in the 2018-19 season he makes his debut with Temple Opera as Colline in La bohème. His upcoming engagements include performances with the Phoenix Symphony, the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, and The Dallas Opera. This summer he performed the role of Don Alfonso in Così fan tutte with the Festival d’Aix-en-Provence. In recent seasons he has returned for performances with both the Pittsburgh Opera and Teatro Real, Madrid. In his most recent engagements, he performed the role of Masetto in Don Giovanni for his Palm Beach Opera debut, and was heard as the Armchair/Tree in L’enfant et les Sortilèges with Seiji Ozawa’s Music Academy of the West.

Amy Shoremount-Obra was recently hailed as “Incredible! Another vocal highlight of the evening. She performed with a tone steeped in longevity, endurance, and agility ... This is a voice of true substance” (Boston Music Intelligencer). She made her Metropolitan Opera début as First Lady in Julie Taymor’s acclaimed production of Die Zauberflöte. Since, she returned for productions of Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District, Norma, Nabucco and Don Giovanni. She returns this season to reprise her role as First Lady in Die Zauberflöte. She also sings the soprano solo in Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 and Vaughan Williams’ Serenade to Music with National Chorale. Following her “electrifying” portrayal of Donna Anna in Don Giovanni with Venture Opera, she was featured in the Sound Bites article of the May 2016 issue of Opera News, where they hailed: “Shoremount-Obra’s shining, healthy soprano had all the power and glory required for ‘Or sai chi l’onore,’ demonstrating agility, accuracy and beauty as well as gale-force temperament.” Shoremount-Obra has performed in several prominent venues throughout the world including Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, David H. Koch Theater, the Oslo Konserthus and the Oslo National Gallery in Norway, the Tanglewood Institute and The Sheldon in St. Louis.
A formidable display of vocal power and dramatic assurance,” mezzo-soprano Deborah Nansteel recently made a number of outstanding debuts at esteemed venues throughout the country, including Lyric Opera of Chicago as Gertrude in Roméo et Juliette and the cover for Fenena in Nabucco, Carnegie Hall for Mozart’s Coronation Mass, and with New York Philharmonic alongside Eric Owens in In Their Footsteps: Great African American Singers and Their Legacy. Other notable recent engagements include Nettie Fowler in Carousel and Elvira Griffiths in The Rape of Lucretia with New York Philharmonic alongside Eric Owens in In Their Footsteps: Great African American Singers and Their Legacy.

Other notable recent engagements include Nettie Fowler in Carousel and Elvira Griffiths in An American Tragedy with Glimmerglass Opera Festival and Berta in Rossini’s Il barbiere di Siviglia with San Francisco Opera’s Merola Opera Program. Other roles in her repertoire include Adalgisa in Norma, Santuzza in Cavalleria Rusticana, Eboli in Don Carlo, Amneris in Aïda, and Brangäne in Tristan und Isolde. Nansteel is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) where she earned an artist diploma in opera and a master of music in voice. At CCM, she performed the roles of Berta in Il barbiere di Siviglia, Mother Marie in Dialogues des Carmélites, Bianca in The Rake's Progress.

Hailed by the International Herald Tribune for her “luscious mezzo” and Der Tagesspiegel for “her impressive, metallic dramatic soprano”, American mezzo-soprano Julia Benzinger is enjoying a career in both opera and concert throughout Europe and the United States. Benzinger opened the 2017-18 season with Seattle Art Song Society in a recital celebrating the works of beloved Seattle composer Bern Herbolsheimer. Further engagements for the season include Seattle Metropolitan Chamber Orchestra and Choral Arts Northwest, where she will perform Joseph Haydn’s Missa in Angustiis (“Nelson Mass”). Benzinger was a soloist with the Deutsche Oper Berlin from 2007-14, during which time she performed a large and varied repertoire, highlights of which include Der Komponist (Ariadne auf Naxos), Flosshilde (Das Rheingold), the title role in Gluck’s Iphigénie en Aulis, Hänsel (Hänsel und Gretel), Olga (Eugene Onegin), The Fox (The Cunning Little Vixen), Anna (Der Rosenkavalier), Der Page (Salome), Bersi (Andrea Chenier) and Marcellina (Le nozze di Figaro).

Versatile tenor Julius Ahn delights audiences around the world with his unique interpretations. Of his signature role, Goro in Madama Butterfly, critics hail “As the marriage broker Goro, tenor Julius Ahn was in his element, delivering the wickedness of his character with gusto.” Ahn recently performed the role in his debut at San Francisco Opera as well as with Canadian Opera Company, Palm Beach Opera, Vancouver Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, and at the Royal Albert Hall in London. This season, Ahn will perform Bardolfo in Falstaff with Omaha Opera and reprise the role of Pang in Turandot, another signature role, with San Francisco Opera, Vancouver Opera and Tulsa Opera. In recent seasons, Ahn grabbed the attention of operagoers as he joined the roster of the Metropolitan Opera for performances of The Nose, Turandot and Die Fledermaus and made his main stage debut as the Second Priest in Die Zauberflöte. He later performed in Rigoletto with the esteemed opera house. He also performed the role of Pang in Turandot with Michigan Opera Theatre, Utah Symphony & Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Pittsburgh Opera, Atlanta Opera and in his debuts with Seattle Opera and Cincinnati Opera; reprised the role of Goro in Puccini’s Madama Butterfly at Opera Carolina, Nashville Opera, San Francisco Opera and the Northern Lights Music Festival. Ahn attended the New England Conservatory of Music, where he studied with the world-renowned tenor Vinson Cole and performed a wide range of operatic roles.
Praised by the *Washington Post* for her “gorgeous singing,” soprano Bridgette Gan is quickly establishing herself as a vibrant interpreter in the musical realms of opera, concert and crossover works. Recently, Gan made an acclaimed last-minute debut as Marie in Palm Beach Opera’s production of *La fille du Régiment* in which she successfully sang the company’s matiney youth performance followed by the mainstage performance within the same day. Critics called her portrayal “a tour de-force ... vocally beautiful and consistent with a rich tone and sparkling high notes ... a great star turn for a young singer who has a world of potential in front of her.” Gan’s 2016-2017 season included a return to Opera Orlando for her role debut of Norina in *Don Pasquale*, as well as her company and role debut with St. Petersburg Opera as Adina in *L’Elisir d’Amore*. In concert she returns to the South Florida Symphony, and was featured at the Newport Music Festival during the summer of 2016. In 2017-18, Gan looks forward to returning to Opera Orlando as both Musetta in *La Bohème* and as a guest artist for their 2018 gala, and her debut with Pacific Symphony as Papagena in *The Magic Flute*.

Since making his operatic debut as Sparafucile in Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, Colin Ramsey’s “majestic, orotund, ravishing bass” (*Opera Today*) has been heard in repertoire spanning continents and centuries. In the 2016-17 season, Ramsey made his company debut at Opera San Jose as Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He continues his residence in San Jose reprising Colline in *La Bohème* and Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. He also made his role debut as Father Palmer in the West Coast premiere of Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *Silent Night*. Ramsey’s past performances have brought him to the stages of Seattle Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Wolf Trap Opera, Austin Opera, Sarasota Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic. He has been featured as Alidoro in Rossini’s *La Cenerentola*, Collatinus in Britten’s *The Rape of Lucretia*, Seneca in Monteverdi’s *L’incontro di Poppea*, Mr. Kofner in Menotti’s *The Consul*, Frate in Verdi’s *Don Carlos*, Angelotti in Tosco, the Sprecher in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*, Giorgio in the U.S. premiere of Paisiello’s rarely performed *Nina*, and as a “sonorous” (*Classical King Seattle*) Cadmus and Somnus in Handel’s *Semele*. He is an alumnus of The Manhattan School of Music where he attended as a presidential scholar and Theodore Presser Foundation scholar. Upon graduating, he was honored with the Hugh Ross Award, given annually to a “singer of unusual promise.”

Rising star Colombian tenor David Guzman is known for his exquisite tone and impeccable musicianship. He has been praised for his “impressive tenor, singing with force and ease throughout his range, with ringing tone at full voice, thoughtful in quieter moments” (*Houston Chronicle*). Guzman began the 2017-2018 season as Orpheus in *Orpheus in the Underworld* in a return engagement with Western Plains Opera and then performs as Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Sarasota Opera. During the 2016-17 season, as Ramiro in La Cenerentola with Opera Tampa, he was singled out for his “bright and powerful tenor that hits a bull’s-eye on distant targets ... Guzman remains one to watch. It would not be surprising at all if he ascends to significant heights” (*Tampa Bay Times*). During the previous season, he performed as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Heartbeat Opera, and covered the role of Aureliano in Rossini’s *Aureliano in Palmira* at the Caramoor Center for Music and Arts. Guzman made his Carnegie Hall debut as a soloist in Gonzalez’s *Miso Azteca* with Mid-America Productions followed by performances of Mozart’s *Coronation Mass* at Alice Tully Hall and Mozart’s *Vespers* at Avery Fisher Hall with DCINY in New York City. Additional performances of note include The Duke in *Rigoletto* with North Shore Opera Festival in New York, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with Opera in the Heights in Houston, Don Jose in *Carmen* with Long Island Opera, Nemorino in *L’Elisir d’Amore* with Divaria Productions, Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Bronx Opera. Rinnocuo in *Gianni Schicchi* with Salt Marsh Opera and Edgardo in Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Stony Brook Opera.

Dr. Robert Istad became the artistic director of Pacific Chorale in the 2017-2018 50th season, after serving as assistant conductor since 2004. He has conducted Pacific Chorale and Pacific Symphony in performance and has prepared choruses for a number of America’s finest conductors and orchestras, including: Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Carl St.Clair and Pacific Symphony, Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Nicholas McGegan and the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, as well as conductors Vasily Sinaisky, Sir Andrew Davis, Bramwell Tovey, Thomas Wilkins, John Williams, Eugene Kohn, Steven Mercurio, Richard Kaufman, Eric Whitacre, William Lacey, Giancarlo Guerrero, Marin Alsop, George Fenton, Case Scaglione, Robert Moody, John Alexander, William Dehning and David Lockington. Istad also serves as professor of music and director of choral studies at California State University, Fullerton, where he conducts the University Singers and Women’s Choir, in addition to teaching courses in conducting, advanced interpretation and literature. He and his singers were featured
at the 2013 ACDA National Conference in Dallas, Tex. and the 2012 ACDA Western Division Conference in Reno, Nev. Istad’s University Singers also performed for the 2013 National Collegiate Choral Organization National Conference in Charleston, S.C. Istad and the CSUF University Singers have performed all over the world, including a 2015 residency and performances in Paris, France, engagements at the 2012 Ottobeuern Festival of Music in Germany, the 2012 Eingeb Festival of music in Germany, a 2010 performance for UNESCO in Pisa, Italy, and in 2008 at the world-famous Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, Hungary. Istad received his bachelor of arts degree in music from Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill., his master of music degree in choral conducting from California State University, Fullerton, and his doctor of musical arts degree in choral music at the University of Southern California. He studied conducting with Dr. William Dehning, John Alexander and Dr. Jon Hurty. Istad is president of the California Choral Directors Association and is in demand as an adjudicator, guest conductor, speaker and clinician throughout the nation.

**KATHRYN WILSON, COSTUME DESIGNER**

Kathryn Wilson is a freelance costume designer working in Orange County for the past 11 years. She has designed for dance, opera, theater and photography across the nation and internationally. Her recent works include projects for Pacific Symphony (*La Traviata*), Shakespeare Orange County (seven consecutive seasons), The New Swan Theater (three seasons), Prague Shakespeare Festival (2012), South Coast Repertory, Chapman University dance, drama and opera departments, UC Irvine dance and opera department, The Chance Theater and Orange County School of the Arts (2006). Wilson received the LA Weekly award for her costume design of *Machiavelli* (2006). She is currently adjunct faculty at Chapman University in costume and makeup design. In addition, Wilson works as an accomplished dye/painter and crafts artist for the performance arts.

**ORA JEWELL-BUSCHE, WIG AND MAKE-UP DESIGNER**

Ora Jewell-Busche is an LA-based wig, make-up and costume designer with more than a decade of working in the field of opera, theater and film. She has worked extensively with companies ranging from The Lyric Opera of Chicago, Lookingglass Theater, Chicago Shakespeare, The Steppenwolf, The Goodman Theater, Pacific Symphony, Shattered Globe, Sans Culottes, Lyric Opera of the North and many more. Recent projects include: *Turandot* (Pacific Symphony), *Barber of Seville* (Lyric Opera of the North), *Carmen* (Pacific Symphony) and *Il Trovatore* (Hawaii Opera Theater). Film and television credits include *Were the World Mine*, *Chicago Overcoat*, *Sound of Music Live!, Prison Break* and *Batman v. Superman*. Jewell-Busche received a BFA in costume design from DePaul University and apprenticed under Melissa Veal (originally of the Stratford Festival of Canada) as a wigmaker. As well as maintaining a busy design schedule, she also teaches theatrical make-up at Make-up First School in Chicago.

**ROBIN WALSH, PUPPET DESIGNER**

Puppetry is an ancient art that has a deep-seated appeal to audiences of all ages. Following in the footsteps of master puppeteer Albrecht Roser, Walsh seeks to take puppetry beyond the realm of children’s entertainment and return it to the multi-faceted, modern audiences of today. She’s been in puppetry for over 20 years and has built, designed and performed around the world, from New York City, to L.A., Germany and China. For her, the greatest joy is experiencing that moment when bits of cloth, wood and string truly come to life for an audience. She is glad to have a chance to share that magical moment whenever she can. She has performed her work at the O’Neill Theatre Center and the Henson Carriage House. She also designed, directed and performed two original, large-scale, puppet ballets with the Stanford University Orchestra, Stravinsky’s *Firebird* and Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as Rebel’s *The Elements* with the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado. Her many studies with world renowned puppeteer Albrecht Roser have opened up a whole new way of looking at and working with puppets, and is happy to join his constant search for Puppet Zen. Currently she is the Puppetry Consultant for the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

**KATHY PRYZGODA, LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Kathy Pryzgoda has been a lighting designer for the past 25 years. Her diverse background includes lighting design for large commercial lighting projects, architectural lighting, residential, theatre, event and TV lighting design. Pryzgoda received a bachelor of arts degree in theatre from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She has designed lighting for such companies as Long Beach Opera, Los Angeles Classical Ballet and the Jazz Tap Ensemble. Pryzgoda has received several awards in lighting design including a Dramalogue Award for outstanding achievement in theatre. In addition to theatre, Pryzgoda has experience with lighting designs for television. She was lighting designer/lighting director for Channel One News between 1992 and 2002. During that time, Pryzgoda received three Broadcast Design International Gold Awards for her lighting design at Channel One News. Other notable projects include the lighting design for *World News Tonight* with Peter Jennings on ABC and production design consultant for CNN’s *American Morning* with Paula Zahn.
Currently celebrating its 50th season, Pacific Chorale is internationally recognized for exceptional artistic expression, stimulating American-focused programming and influential education programs. Pacific Chorale presents its own performance season at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, and is sought regularly to perform with the nation’s leading symphonies. Pacific Chorale has infused an Old World art form with California’s hallmark innovation and cultural independence, developing innovative new concepts in programming, and expanding the traditional concepts of choral repertoire and performance.

Pacific Chorale comprises 140 professional and volunteer singers. In addition to its long-standing partnership with Pacific Symphony, the Chorale has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the National Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Musica Angelica. Pacific Chorale has toured extensively in Europe, South America and Asia, performing in London, Paris, Vienna, Budapest, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Russia, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, China, and Hong Kong, and collaborating with the London Symphony, Munich Symphony, L’Orchestre Lamoureux and L’Orchestre de St-Louis-en-l’Île of Paris, the National Orchestra of Belgium, China National Symphony, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Estonian National Symphony and the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Argentina.

Education programs are central to Pacific Chorale’s vision of inspiring love of choral music and lifelong learning. These innovative educational initiatives open the door to the choral art and the magic of the creative process for thousands of students and adults annually. Programs include a Choral Academy for elementary school students modeled on the El Sistema movement; a Choral Camp for high school students presented in association with California State University, Fullerton; a Choral Festival uniting 400 community members in a free community performance; partnerships with local social service organizations and high school choral directors that allow students, at-risk youth, and low-income families to attend performances free of charge; a Young Composers Competition; Concert Previews providing insight into the Chorale’s repertoire; and the Elliot and Kathleen Alexander Memorial Scholarship, awarded to an outstanding choral conducting student at California State University, Fullerton.

Pacific Chorale’s awards from Chorus America, the service organization for North American choral groups, include the prestigious “Margaret Hillis Achievement Award for Choral Excellence,” the first national “Educational Outreach Award,” the 2005 ASCAP Chorus America Alice Parker Award for adventurous programming, and the 2015 “Education and Community Engagement Award.” Pacific Chorale can be heard on numerous recordings, including American Voices, a collection of American choral works; Songs of Eternity by James Hopkins and Voices by Stephen Paulus; a holiday recording, Christmas Time Is Here; a live concert recording of Rachmaninov’s Vespers; the world premiere recording of Frank Ticheli’s The Shore for chorus and orchestra; and the world premiere recording of Jake Heggie’s choral opera The Radio Hour. Pacific Chorale also appears on six recordings released by Pacific Symphony: Elliot Goldenthal’s Fire, Water, Paper: A Vietnam Oratorio, Richard Danielpour’s An American Requiem, Philip Glass’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s Mount Rushmore, Richard Danielpour’s Toward a Season of Peace and William Bolcom’s Prometeus.