



***THE TURN OF THE SCREW***  
**LYRIC THEATRE @ ILLINOIS**

By Benjamin Britten

Libretto, after the story of Henry James, by Myfanwy Piper

Michael Tilley, conductor

Dawn Harris, director

Tuesday-Tuesday, June 1-15, 2021

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# WELCOME

Dear friends of Lyric Theatre,

Welcome to Lyric Theatre's final production of the 2020-21 season, *The Turn of the Screw*. We feel very fortunate to be part of the University of Illinois School of Music and the resident producer of opera at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts where we are able to develop new ways of making art with our colleagues, particularly those in theatre design, technology, and management. This filmed opera is a new genre—two live performances for the cameras with media projections and cinematography that work

together to explore 21st-century possibilities. Our profound thanks to Dawn Harris, John Boesche, and John Isberg who have made a brilliant visual team; to the production staff at Krannert Center who have understood, supported, and translated this masterpiece of the operatic canon; and to Michael Tilley and the students at the School of Music who have risen to extraordinary heights of music making against formidable headwinds.

We are grateful to you all.

—Julie Gunn, co-director, Lyric Theatre @ Illinois

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# PROGRAM

## **THE TURN OF THE SCREW** **LYRIC THEATRE @ ILLINOIS**

By Benjamin Britten

Libretto, after the story of Henry James, by Myfanwy Piper

Michael Tilley, conductor

Dawn Harris, stage director

Tuesday-Tuesday, June 1-15, 2021

**TIME:** Mid 19th Century

**PLACE:** Bly, a country house in the East of England

### **ACT I: The Prologue**

**Scene 1:** The Journey

**Scene 2:** The Welcome

**Scene 3 :** The Letter

**Scene 4 :** The Tower

**Scene 5 :** The Window

**Scene 6 :** The Lesson

**Scene 7 :** The Lake

**Scene 8 :** At Night

### **ACT II: Scene 1:** Colloquy and Soliloquy

**Scene 2:** The Bells

**Scene 3 :** Miss Jessel

**Scene 4 :** The Bedroom

**Scene 5 :** Quint

**Scene 6 :** The Piano

**Scene 7 :** Flora

**Scene 8 :** Miles

*This production will be presented with no intermission.*

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*Presented by arrangement with Boosey and Hawkes.*

*Lyric Theatre @ Illinois is produced by the University of Illinois School of Music (Jeffrey S. Sposato, director).*

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# ***THE TURN OF THE SCREW***

## **MUSIC DIRECTOR**

Michael Tilley

## **DIRECTOR**

Dawn Harris

## **MEDIA DESIGNER**

John Boesche

## **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

John Isberg

## **SCENIC DESIGNER**

Jose Diaz-Soto

## **COSTUME DESIGNER**

Remy Saymiknha

## **LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Gryffon Cloud

## **SOUND DESIGNER**

Zia Fox

## **PROPERTIES MASTER**

Yu (Wendy) Wu

## **STAGE MANAGER**

Tom Zhang

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# CAST

## **GOVERNESS**

Ru Huang  
Madeleine LaFollette

## **FLORA**

Caroline McKinzie  
Sydney Hoel

## **MRS. GROSE**

Maria Molter  
Thereza Lituma

## **MISS JESSEL**

Abby Benson  
Mina McIntire

## **MILES**

Natalia Łastowiecka  
Anna Lowery

## **THE PROLOGUE/PETER QUINT**

Nicholas Metzger  
Nicholas Koch

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# ORCHESTRA

## **VIOLIN 1**

Jinyou Lee

## **VIOLIN 2**

Rebecca Kasdan

## **VIOLA**

Daniel McCarthy

## **CELLO**

Ethan Schlenker

## **BASS**

Huai-an Tseng

## **FLUTE**

Sarah Castle

## **OBOE**

Steven Stamer

## **CLARINET**

Nathan Balester

## **BASSOON**

Emily Kuhn

## **HORN**

Anna Marshall

## **PERCUSSION**

Lucas Sem

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# SYNOPSIS

## THE PROLOGUE

A male tenor, aptly named Prologue, sings about a young woman he once knew. She took care of two small children in the Bly House, an English countryside home, after being hired by the children's guardian and uncle. Too busy to care for them on his own, he gave her three rules she must follow: never to write to him about the children, never to ask about the family's history, and never to abandon the children.

## ACT I

The Governess enters the Bly House and is greeted by the housekeeper, Mrs. Grose, and the two children, Miles and Flora. The Governess bends down to tell the young boy hello and is taken aback when she makes eye contact with him. She experiences a peculiar feeling of being connected to him somehow. Mrs. Grose promptly shuffles the Governess around and takes her on a tour of the grounds. The Governess becomes much more at ease and becomes less apprehensive about her new position. When they return to the house, the Governess receives a letter from Miles' school telling her that he has been expelled. Without giving a reason as to why, the Governess is unable to determine what actions a sweet little boy would take to warrant expulsion. Mrs. Grose persuades her to disregard the letter.

The following morning, the Governess wakes up feeling delighted about her job, the children, and the Bly House. She nearly forgets about the footsteps and crying she heard outside her door during the night. As she recalls the slightly disturbing occurrence, she peers out of her window and spots a man sitting on one of the home's towers.

Suddenly disappearing, the Governess becomes terribly frightened. Moments later, the children take occupancy in a nearby room, laughing and singing nursery rhymes, and the Governess calms down, passing off the anomaly as an illusion. As the day progresses, the Governess sees the same man looking through a nearby window. In order to assuage her fears, she approaches Mrs. Grose and tells her what she has seen. Mrs. Grose tells the Governess that the man she has described was one of the former menservants that worked in the Bly House. She indirectly states that he, Peter Quint, may have been a pedophile, and he was having an affair with the former Governess, Miss Jessel. She says that Miss Jessel may have been inappropriately close with the children, too. Mrs. Grose never did speak out because she was afraid of Mr. Quint. She tells the Governess that Miss Jessel moved away and died, and Mr. Quint died in a car accident on an icy road near the house just after Miss Jessel passed. Shuddering to think of such awful events, the Governess takes a vow to herself that she will protect the children.

The next day, the Governess and Miles sit at a table as she tutors him in Latin. Out of nowhere, he begins singing a song as if he were in a trance. Later in the afternoon, while sitting next to Flora at the edge of the lake, she asks her to recite all of the world's seas. Flora does so but eerily ends with the Dead Sea. She then begins comparing the Bly House to the Dead Sea, which unnerves the Governess. Suddenly the appearance of a woman on the other side of the lake frightens the Governess—even more so when she discovers it is a ghost. When the ghost, who must be Miss Jessel, begins coming towards them, the Governess takes Flora by the hand and rushes her back to their home.

Late into the night, Miles and Flora sneak out of the house and make their way into the woods. They meet with the ghosts of Miss Jessel and Peter Quint. Meanwhile, the Governess and Mrs. Grose discover the children are missing and rush out of the house to find them. When they get to the woods they find the two spirits trying to take possession of the children's bodies. The women chase the spirits away, and Miles creepily sings about being a bad boy.

## ACT II

Inside the Bly House, the two spirits reappear and argue about not possessing the children quickly enough, while the Governess sits alone fearful of the evil she feels has arrived. The next morning, she takes the children and Mrs. Grose to church. The children sing along to a lovely psalm, and Mrs. Grose reassures the Governess that nothing can be wrong if the children are as sweet as this. But the Governess feels differently. She tells Mrs. Grose of Miles' weird, trance-like song and Flora's odd conversation about the Dead Sea. Mrs. Grose is shocked and tells her she must inform the children's uncle. The Governess is tormented because of his strict rule of not contacting him about the children. She initially decides against it. However, when Miles mentions the ghosts of Miss Jessel and Mr. Quint, she thinks to herself that it would be better for her to leave.

When they return home, the Governess enters the children's school room to gather some of her things. Miss Jessel appears sitting in the teacher's chair and sings a song about her cruel fate.

The Governess takes action and approaches the spirit. Before she can say a word, the ghost vanishes. This mundane encounter sparks confidence in the Governess, and she resolves herself to stay. She writes a letter to the uncle asking him to meet with her. Later, after the sun sets, the Governess passes by Miles and tells him

that she has written to his uncle, telling him about the ghosts. After she leaves, Mr. Quint calls out to him and tells him to steal the letter. Miles complies. He quickly finds the letter and takes it to his room.

In the morning, the Governess and Mrs. Grose watch Miles perform a few piano pieces. Flora takes the opportunity to meet Miss Jessel at the lake and slips out of the house mid-performance. When the Governess and Mrs. Grose realize Flora is missing, they begin searching for her. Finally, they find her at the lakefront. The Governess sees Miss Jessel nearby, but Mrs. Grose does not see her. Flustered, the Governess demands that Flora tells the truth and admit to seeing the ghost. Flora shouts a few curse words at her and denies the ghost exists. Mrs. Grose has enough and believes that the Governess is not in her right mind. She takes Flora back home, leaving the Governess behind.

Later that evening, Mrs. Grose hears Flora talking wildly about the atrocities she has committed. She agrees with the Governess that something must be done. They decide it would be best if Mrs. Grose takes her away from the Bly House. The Governess then wonders why she hasn't heard back from the uncle. Mrs. Grose tells her it is because the letter she wrote was never delivered. In fact, it was likely Miles' doing. The Governess goes to Miles' room and speaks with him alone. As she questions him about the letter, Mr. Quint tells him not to tell. Conflicted, Miles cannot take it anymore and tells the Governess that he took the letter and hid it. Wanting to know who put him up to the task, Miles cries out Mr. Quint's name. Immediately, the ghost vanishes and Miles falls lifelessly to the floor. The Governess holds his body in her arms, weeping and wondering if she has done the right thing.

— Aaron Green, [liveaboutdotcom](http://liveaboutdotcom)



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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE



I am extremely pleased to bring this unique opera to the Tryon Festival Theatre stage for Lyric Theatre @ Illinois. During this unusual time, bringing live theatre to our audiences has been more than a challenge. Due to strict COVID-19 restrictions, our

production will be filmed. Along with my design team, we have created a safe way to tell this story. We have a minimal, socially distanced set. A large majority of the design will be focusing on projections to add a layer of depth to the interior world of the characters and to add a greater sense of time, place, and circumstance.

Based on a Gothic novella by Henry James, *The Turn of The Screw* is the story of a young Governess who has been hired to care for two children at Bly House, a country house in the East

of England in the middle of the 19th century. She has been hired by the children's uncle and guardian who lived in London and was too busy to care for them. After hiring her, he laid out three stipulations on the Governess: 1) Never to write to him about the children; 2) Never to inquire about the history of Bly House; 3) Never to abandon the children. Soon, troubling visions of spirits/ghosts appear and threaten the wellbeing of the children.

In the opera, the story is seen through the eyes of the Governess. The questions arise: Does the Governess see the ghosts, or are they only in her mind? Is she suffering from extreme paranoia? Is she fantasizing? These are the underlying questions that the audience must determine for themselves. In my staging, it will be unclear as to whether these events are actually happening or if they are the terrified hallucinations of an unstable person.

—Dawn Harris, director

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# CONDUCTOR'S NOTE

## AS THE SCREW TURNS

In 1908, writing 10 years after the initial publication of *The Turn of the Screw* in book form, Henry James described his tale as “. . . piece of ingenuity pure and simple, of cold artistic calculation, an *amusette* to catch those not easily caught (the ‘fun’ of the capture of the merely witless being ever but small), the jaded, the disillusioned, the fastidious.” And indeed, what strange “fun” it is being caught in this story, at turns seductive and horrifying. Just what is the titular “Screw” and who is doing the turning are ambiguities left intentionally unresolved. Certainly, the placing of seemingly innocent children in harm’s way represents one such manifestation, made explicit by James’ narrator (he or she recounting an evening of ghost stories).

“I quite agree—in regard to Griffin’s ghost, or whatever it was—that its appearing first to the little boy, at so tender an age, adds a particular touch . . . If the child gives the effect another turn of the screw, what do you say to two children—?”

“We say, of course,” somebody exclaimed, “that they give two turns! Also, that we want to hear about them.”

Benjamin Britten’s operatic treatment of James’ self-described “shameless pot-boiler” was suggested by Myfanwy Piper in response to a commission from the 1954 Venice Biennale. Britten asked Piper to provide the libretto, and the felicitous pairing would the operas *Owen Wingrave* and *Death in Venice* as well. Work proceeded quickly, starting in February and culminating in the premiere at Venice’s Teatro La Fenice on September 14, 1954.

In March, Britten wrote to her:

“Thank you for your suggestions of titles. I do not feel we have arrived yet, although something to do with Bly is hopeful, I think. I am not worrying about it until forced to, but I must confess that I have a sneaking horrid feeling that the original H.J. title describes the musical plan of the work *exactly!!*”

By May, he was writing to another friend that “the new piece progresses in a *circular* direction.” But how exactly did the image of the screw furnish Britten with his musical material?

This opera comprises an embarrassment of musical riches; I shall only attempt to describe a few aspects of what Britten actually labeled “THEME” in the score, commonly known as the “Screw Theme.” In doing so, I shall lean heavily on figures from Patricia Howard’s essential *The Operas of Benjamin Britten: An Introduction* and Phillip Rupprecht’s magisterial *Britten’s Musical Language*.

The Theme starts on the note “A” and consists of a series of rising perfect fourths followed by descending minor thirds and repeated until the opening pitch reappears an octave higher. During this procedure, all 12 chromatic notes are sounded; thus, each turn of the screw takes us through the entire musical spectrum. But the parallels do not stop there. Every mechanical screw creates its fastening by aligning its threads with those of the hole it is inserted into. So, there are actually two threads aligned simultaneously. Similarly, this Theme combines its “threads” in distinct and fascinating ways.

First, the first six pitches of the Theme are the first six pitches of A major, the tonality most frequently associated with the Governess. The last six pitches belong to A-flat major, Quint's home key. Also, the Theme can be seen as two whole-tone scales (symmetrical scales with no half-steps or perfect fourths or fifths), the golden age of television composer's go-to for dreamy atmospheres, which suits the spectral material quite nicely.

Britten draws our attention to this Theme directly and immediately. The opera is introduced by a Prologue, a frequent device in his operas, though here notable for his absence at the opera's close. The accompaniment is a solo piano in freely arpeggiated chords. This texture changes to a pianissimo in the bare fourths of the Screw Theme at the Prologue's " . . . she was to do everything, be responsible for everything, not to worry him at all, no, not to write . . . ," which focuses our attention on her predicament, specifically the prohibition on correspondence, which will act as a screw upon the Governess' composure. At the close of the Prologue—"At last, 'I will,' she said."—the orchestra joins the piano and states the Theme (with the double-dotted rhythms of the French overture).

The Screw Theme provides more than just foreground structure, though. The entire tonal plan of the opera unfolds another turn of Britten's musical screw. Act One ascends the thread in A minor (thwarted at the top by a final destination of A flat! Peter Quint!), and then Act Two descends from the A flat down the A-flat (dominant) scale to close with a less than comforting return to A major.

The Screw Theme has still another double. Implicit in its content is the presence of its inversion. If a mirror were placed below the Screw Theme, we would descend by a perfect fourth

and then ascend a minor third. This is, indeed, the collection of pitches characteristic of the Governess' frantic response to the presence of the ghosts.

But wait, there's more! The inversion of the Screw Theme, when filled in with stepwise intervals, presents another mirror image, sometimes called the "Dramatic" or "Thread" Theme. Almost every character sings a version of it, but it is presented most fully by the Governess and Quint whose musical parallels suggest much about the pair without making it explicit. Quint definitely seems to be having more fun with it . . . The Thread Theme, like the Screw Theme, can also appear as an accompaniment.

So much more remains to be said (and better than that, seen and heard!) about the fascinating structure of this opera. But hopefully, some familiarity with this basic thematic material will give those of you who are "not easily caught" as James says, a more thorough perspective on what Piper called Britten's "fabric of sound and of echoes and memories of sound." Rupprecht summarizes the composer's musical accomplishment perfectly:

"It is the force of this mysterious, untexted thematic principle that presses so fatally on the musical interiority of the children. The central expressive coup . . . was to make the Screw theme more ghostly than either Quint or Miss Jessel; to establish, in its incessant turning, a wordless supernatural force, controlling, threatening, and finally overpowering the operatic performance of innocence."

—Michael Tilley, conductor

# PROFILES



**Abby Benson** (Miss Jessel) is a first-year graduate student pursuing her Master of Music in vocal performance and literature at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign under Yvonne Redman. She received her Bachelor of Music in vocal performance in 2020

from Webster University, located in her hometown, St. Louis, Missouri. Most recently, Benson performed the roles of Susanna from *Le Nozze di Figaro* by Mozart in Lyric Theatre @ Illinois' Tryon Festival Scenes; the First Lady in scenes from *Die Zauberflöte* by Mozart in Lyric Theatre @ Illinois' *Lyric Under the Stars* at Allerton Park and Retreat Center; Marzelline in scenes from *Fidelio* by Beethoven; and Gretel in scenes from *Hänsel und Gretel* by Engelbert Humperdinck. She also has a passion for teaching voice and piano to students of all experience levels.



**Sydney Hoel** (Flora) is a junior at the University of Illinois studying vocal performance under Sylvia Stone. Past roles with Lyric Theatre @ Illinois include Fox Cub/Chick in *The Adventures of Little Sharp-Ears* and chorus member in *H.M.S. Pinafore* (Sinfonia da Camera).

Other favorite roles include Maria von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*, Laurey in *Oklahoma!*, and Cinderella in *Into the Woods*. At the University of Illinois, Hoel is a Chancellor's Scholar, an FAA James Scholar, and a member of the Women's Glee Club. She was the 2019 recipient of the School of Music Achievement Award in Voice, an honorable mention in the 2020 NATS Central

Region Collegiate Treble Upper Division, and the 2021 recipient of the Sigma Alpha Iota Mary Payne Music Award and the M. Josephine O'Neil Arts Award.



**Ru Huang** (Governess) is currently a first-year doctoral student in vocal performance and literature at the University of Illinois. She just finished her master's degree at the University of Southern California (USC) Thornton School of Music. *The Turn of*

*the Screw* is her debut performance with Lyric Theatre @ Illinois. She has performed as Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro* in the USC production and in the summer 2019 Aspen Music Festival as a full-scholarship Opera Fellow. Huang is the first-place winner of the Central Region 2021 NATS competition and advanced the 2021 Central Region Dorothy Lincoln-Smith Competition. Besides singing, she loves working out in the gym, swimming, hiking, jazz, and belly dance. As a leader, she founded the contemporary Eastern Ensemble at USC, which includes voice, Chinese instruments, and contemporary composition soundtracks and performed around the Southern California area.



**Nicholas Koch** (The Prologue/ Peter Quint) is a senior lyric theatre major and has been under the tutelage of Sarah Wigley and Dawn Harris. He is a member of the University of Illinois Chamber Singers and, along with lyric theatre, is simultaneously pursuing an

education in French language. Koch plans to move to Chicago after graduation this spring and continue his pursuit of artistic performance and singing. Past performance credits with the University of Illinois include *The Adventures of Little Sharp-Ears* (Mosquito/Innkeeper), *Songs for a New World* (Man 3), *Crazy for You* (Moose/Bobby Cover), *La Bohème* (Ensemble), *The Pirates of Penzance* (Policeman), *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Male Swing), *Take Flight* workshop (Minister/Angry Italian Man), *She Loves Me* (Arpad Cover/Ensemble), and *Don Giovanni* (Ensemble).



**Madeleine LaFollette**

(Governess) is a first-year graduate student at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign where she is pursuing her Master of Music in vocal performance and literature. Originally from Fairmont, West Virginia, she

received her Bachelor of Music in vocal performance from West Liberty University where she was a member of Hilltop Opera and West Liberty University Choirs. LaFollette has also performed with the Voces Solis Chamber Choir in Pittsburgh. At the University of Illinois, she has performed with Lyric Theatre @ Illinois in *Die Zauberflöte* scenes (Second Lady) and *Così fan tutte* scenes (Fiordiligi).



**Natalia Łastowiecka** (Miles) is a junior at the University of Illinois studying voice performance under Yichen Li and Ollie Watts Davis. This is her first role with Lyric Theatre, and she is very excited to be a part of this season at Krannert Center. Most recently,

Łastowiecka spent the summer in Shreveport, Louisiana, performing as part of Spotlight on

Opera's 13th season in *Così fan tutte* and *Aida*. There, she also sang the roles of Susanna, Yvette, and Sister Felicity in excerpts from *Le nozze di Figaro*, *La Rondine*, and *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Łastowiecka discovered a great interest in the scientific and medical aspects of voice production and is now also pursuing a degree in speech and hearing sciences with a concentration in speech language pathology.



**Thereza Lituma** (Mrs. Grose) is currently pursuing a Master of Music in vocal performance and literature at the University of Illinois under the tutelage of Sylvia Stone. Her past opera credits include Lucretia (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Ježibaba/Third Wood Sprite (*Rusalka*),

Agent Reyes (*The Last American Hammer*), the Owl (*The Adventures of Little Sharp-Ears*), and Albanact (*King Arthur*). Lituma was a recipient of the 2019 Project Inclusion Voice Fellowship with Grant Park Music Festival and was a winner of the T. J. Smith Scholarship Competition. For more information, visit [therezalituma.com](http://therezalituma.com).



**Anna Lowery** (Miles) is a senior pursuing her Bachelor of Music in vocal performance under the instruction of Sylvia Stone. Her previous performances with Krannert Center include *The Adventures of Little Sharp-Ears* as Dragonfly/Chick, *The Pirates of*

*Penzance* in the ensemble, and the *Take Flight* workshop, also in the ensemble. She is currently preparing an hour-long senior recital that will be the culmination of her college career.



**Mina McIntire** (Miss Jessel) is a soprano from Peoria, Illinois. She received her Bachelor of Music in vocal performance from Illinois Wesleyan University. Currently, she is pursuing her Master of Music in vocal performance and literature at the University of

Illinois Urbana-Champaign. McIntire has performed the roles of La Fée in *Cendrillon* by Massenet at Illinois Wesleyan University, Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance* at Peoria Players, Demeter in *CATS!* at Eastlight Theatre (East Peoria, Illinois), and Johanna in *Sweeney Todd* at Eureka College. In her free time, she holds a teaching assistantship as a vocal instructor at Unit One/Allen Hall at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.



**Caroline McKinzie** (Flora) is a senior lyric theatre major. At the University of Illinois, she has performed as Logainne in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and Patsy in *Crazy For You* (Lyric Theatre at Illinois), Catherine in *Pippin* (Illini Student Musicals), and in

the ensembles of Lyric Theatre's *She Loves Me*, *Take Flight*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Cabaret*, and *The Adventures of Little Sharp-Ears*. This summer, McKinzie is playing Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Dunes Summer Theatre in Indiana.



**Nicholas Metzger** (The Prologue/Peter Quint) is currently a first-year graduate student pursuing an MA in vocal performance and literature at the University of Illinois. Originally from Elgin, Illinois, he received his BM in voice performance from

Roosevelt University in Chicago. Previous roles include *The Pirates of Penzance* (Frederic) and *Thespis* (Cymon) with Evanston's Savoyaires, the premier of Francis Lynch's *For Those in Peril* (Howell/Whiteside) with the Evanston Chamber Opera Company, *Gianni Schicchi* (Gherardo) with the Salt Creek Chamber Orchestra, and Offenbach's *A Musicale at Mr. Cauliflower's* (Chrysodule Babyas) at the Chicago College of Performing Arts. Metzger is also passionate about art song and recital. With mezzo-soprano Melissa Piantedosi, he recently presented an original recital program *Liebesgarten*, which told the story of Robert and Clara Schumann and was supported with a grant from the Elgin Cultural Arts Commission. In addition to performing, he also teaches private voice and piano lessons.



**Maria Molter** (Mrs.Grose) Maria Molter is a first-year master's student at the University of Illinois studying vocal performance and literature. She attended Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan, for her bachelor's degree where

she discovered her love of opera and performed in Western's production of Puccini's *Suor Angelica* as La Zia Principessa. In her first semester at Illinois, she performed the role of Octavian from Strauss' *Rosenkavalier* in Lyric Theatre's Tryon Scenes at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. This spring, she had the opportunity to sing in a live, socially distanced concert of Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* as the Baroness.



**Dawn Harris** (Director) is a resident director for Lyric Theatre @ Illinois. She has directed scenes from the standard and contemporary opera repertoire and won first place in the Graduate Division for the National Opera Association Collegiate Opera Scenes Competition for her staging of scenes from Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*. Known for her expertise in the style of Gilbert and Sullivan, Harris has directed and choreographed nearly all of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas for opera companies, theatres, and symphony orchestras nationally. Additional directing and choreography credits include *The Magic Flute*, *Suor Angelica*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *La Perichole*, and currently, *The Turn of the Screw*. As a musical theatre director, Harris has directed full productions of *Man of La Mancha*, *South Pacific*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Oh, Coward*, and *The Light in the Piazza* for Lyric Theatre @ Illinois.

**Michael Tilley** (Music Director/Conductor) spent six years as musical director for Franc D'Ambrosio's national tours before joining the faculty of Lyric Theatre @ Illinois. As a conductor, he has led ensembles from Central City Opera, Opera Colorado, Emerald City Opera, and Boulder Opera. He has been a featured performer with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra and other regional orchestras as well as with the Martha Graham Dance Company at the Vail International Dance Festival. Tilley's orchestrations and arrangements, from solo piano to full symphony to rock opera, have been heard across the country and abroad. He has also composed music for the stage and a feature-length soundtrack. He plays, sings, and writes for the Argentine Tango groups Extasis and Orquesta Tipica di Natural Tango. In addition to his duties at the University of Illinois, he is currently assistant musical director for The Four Phantoms.

**John Isberg** (Director of Photography) is a writer/director/editor and cinematographer from Champaign, Illinois. He has worked on multiple indie feature films in camera and grip departments and feature documentaries on Netflix. He's shot over 50 music videos, worked with artists such as The Smashing Pumpkins, and his work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Rolling Stone*, *NME*, *The Tonight Show* with Jimmy Fallon, NPR's *All Things Considered* and many other prominent blogs.

**Aaron Ames** (Coaching Staff/Accompanist) is a second-year DMA candidate in vocal coaching and accompanying at the University of Illinois. His previous work with Lyric Theatre includes musical coaching for *The Adventures of Little Sharp-Ears* and *Cabaret*. He has previously served as an adjunct staff accompanist at Appalachian State University where he received his Master of Music. Presently, Ames is the music director for the upcoming Lyric Theatre @ Illinois production of *The Last American Hammer*.

**Michael N. McAndrew** (Coaching Staff/Accompanist) maintains an active schedule as a collaborative pianist and vocal coach, currently as music staff with Lyric Theatre @ Illinois, coaching staff for *Songes d'été en musique* in Québec, Canada, pianist for Central Illinois Youth Chorus, and DuoMotive with flutist Michelle Li. While at the University of Illinois, McAndrew was assistant conductor for *The Rape of Lucretia* and music-directed Jason Robert Brown's *Songs for a New World* at the Allerton Barn, which saw a repeat performance in January of 2020 after much acclaim. As music staff, he has also taken part in productions of *La Bohème*, *Crazy for You*, *The Adventures of Little Sharp-Ears*, *Cabaret*, *A Little Night Music*, *Vanessa*, and *The Last American Hammer*. He was also chorus master for Sinfonia da Camera's performance of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. McAndrew was a 2020 Young Artist with Opera

Saratoga, and recently defended his DMA thesis "From Obscurity to New Relevancy: A More Accessible Approach to Samuel Barber's *Vanessa*," thus satisfying all requirements for his doctorate in vocal coaching and accompanying. In his free time, he is director of contemporary music, pianist/organist, and recital coordinator for Faith United Methodist Church in Champaign, Illinois.

**Nicholas Pothier** (Coaching Staff/Accompanist) is a first year DMA student studying vocal coaching and accompanying at the University of Illinois. This year, he has been seen with Lyric Theatre's Allerton and Tryon scenes programs, as well as music-directing and performing Barber's *A Hand of Bridge* and serving as répétiteur and coach for Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*. He has worked with numerous other opera and musical theatre organizations such as: Opera Saratoga, Opera NEO, Opera Breve, Russian Opera Workshop, The Winnepesaukee Playhouse, The Anselmian Abbey Players, and the Prescott Park Arts Festival (New Hampshire). Pothier has served on the faculties of Peabody Institute Preparatory, Plymouth State University, and Saint Anselm College. He has performed with choirs, symphony and pit orchestras, as well as working as a church music director and musician. He holds degrees from the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University and the University of New Hampshire.

**John Boesche** (Media Designer) has created media and scenic designs for more than 150 professional theatre, opera, and dance productions. He previously designed the projected scenery and effects for the Lyric Theatre @ Illinois production of *Poppea* in 2016. His work for opera has been seen at Lyric Opera of Chicago in Tannhäuser, The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe, Lulu and The Damnation of Faust. Other designs for opera have been seen at Austin Lyric Opera, Barbican Theatre Centre (London), Brooklyn Academy of Music, Canadian Opera

Company (Toronto), Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Carolina, Opera Lyon, Opéra de Montréal, Opera Lyra Ottawa, Opera Pacifica, Opera Theatre of St Louis, Portland Opera, Salt Lake Opera, San Francisco Opera, Theatre de la Monnaie (Brussels), Washington National Opera (D.C.), and Vancouver Opera, among others. Boesche's design work has been recognized with three Joseph Jefferson Awards, the Merritt Award For Excellence In Design And Collaboration, a Metro DC Dance Award, and a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award, among others. He is chair of digital media for live performance at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. [boeschedesign.com](http://boeschedesign.com)

**Gryffon Cloud** (Lighting Designer) is a senior working towards his BFA in lighting design and technology. He has previously designed for November Dance 2020. Cloud will graduate this year and plans to return to the Chicago area.

**Jose Diaz-Soto** (Scenic Designer), a native of Bayamón, Puerto Rico, holds a BA in fine arts from the University of the Sacred Heart and credits in drama from the University of Puerto Rico. In May 2016, he completed his MFA in scenic design with a departmental distinction at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Diaz-Soto has been designing for drama, musical theatre, film, and television. Recently completed projects include *Titus Andronicus*, *Time Is on Our Side*, *The Explorer's Club* (Jeff Award Nominee), *The Madres*, *Polaroid Stories*, and *RED*. Musical theatre and opera credits include *Don Giovanni*, *Evita*, *Into the Woods*, *Godspell*, *The Sound of Music*, *Les Misérables*, *Man of La Mancha*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Kiss Me Kate*. TV and film credits include *23 Hours*, *Prótesis*, *Parece que fue ayer*, *Contraseña*, *El color de la guayaba*, *Demasiada Tita*, and *Las combatientes*. Diaz-Soto is on faculty at Illinois Theatre as a scenic design professor. [www.josemanueldiaz.carbonmade.com](http://www.josemanueldiaz.carbonmade.com)



**Zia Fox** (Sound Designer and Mixer) is a third-year MFA candidate for theatre sound design and technology, graduating May 2021. Their Krannert Center show credits include roles as sound designer, audio engineer, media designer, camera director, and integration engineer. Immediately after graduation, Fox will be working at Trollwood Performing Arts School as the sound technician for *Cinderella* (Rodgers and Hammerstein). They plan to relocate later this year and work remotely as a video game sound designer

**Remy Saymikhna** (Costume Designer) is a senior pursuing his BFA in costume design and technology at the University Of Illinois after receiving his associate degree in art, general at Parkland College. His credits at Krannert Center include *Why Did Desdemona Love The Moor* (Costume Designer), *Lysistrata* (Co-Assistant Costume Designer), *Cabaret* (Wardrobe Crew), *The Wolves* (Stitcher), *Titus Andronicus* (Stitcher), and *Gem of The Ocean* (Stitcher). Saymikhna also worked in theatre in the Champaign-Urbana community including Parkland College's *Come Blow Your Horn* (Costume Designer), *Only You* (Costume Designer), and Champaign Urbana Theatre Company's *Beauty and The Beast* (Assistant Costume Designer). Along with costume work, he likes to be involved on stage as well. He was recently filmed for *Gay Card* (Ensemble) directed by Jordan Ratliff, has performed in *Carrie* (Featured Dancer) with Illini Student Musicals, *Mamma Mia* (Pepper) at Station Theatre, and *Young Frankenstein* (Featured Dancer) and *Memphis* (Ensemble) at Parkland College.

**Yu (Wendy) Wu** (Properties Master) is pursuing her MFA in properties design and management at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Originally from Suzhou, China, she went to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago to seek a BFA degree in Fine Arts. During her undergraduate education, she got interested

in theatre and theatre production. She started interning at Porchlight Theatre and Chicago Shakespeare Theater in Chicago after graduation. She was the props apprentice for *Gypsy* and *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* at Porchlight Theatre. When she worked at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, she assisted the props department on *Nell Gwyn*, *A Q Brothers' Christmas Carol*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Macbeth*.

**Tom Zhang** (Stage Manager) is currently a second-year MFA student in stage management at the University of Illinois. *The Turn of the Screw* is his first experience of stage-managing an opera. His stage management credits include *Pshitter! A Drinking Song for the Year of Our Lord 2020* (Illinois Theatre), *Avenue Q* (ZJU Musial Group), and *Macbeth* (Department of Foreign Language, PKU). His assistant stage management credits include *The Adventures of Little Sharp-Ears* (Lyric @ Illinois) and *Man of La Mancha* (ZJU Musical Group). His dream is to work in a *Les Misérables* production in his career life.

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Colin Grice

## HAIR/MAKEUP SUPERVISOR

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## AUDIO ENGINEER

Sarah Calvert

## LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR

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## PROJECTION OPERATOR

Adam Soper

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Lyric Theatre @ Illinois acknowledges with gratitude the cooperation of the voice and accompanying faculties of the University of Illinois School of Music in supporting the talented students in its productions.*

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## **Land Acknowledgement**

The University of Illinois System carries out its mission in its namesake state, which includes the traditional territory of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Menominee, Ho-Chunk, and Chickasaw Nations. These lands continue to carry the stories of these Nations and their struggles for survival and identity.

As a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois has a particular responsibility to acknowledge the peoples of these lands, as well as the histories of dispossession that have allowed for the growth of this institution for the past 150 years. We are also obligated to reflect on and actively address these histories and the role that this university has played in shaping them. This acknowledgement and the centering of Native peoples is a start as we move forward for the next 150 years.

Krannert Center affirms the commitment by the university to move beyond these statements, toward building deeper relationships and taking actions that uphold and preserve Indigenous rights and cultural equity.

As we gather to experience this performance, we have an opportunity to reflect on the ways that systems of oppression have shaped our society. We can work together to create systems that support human dignity, establish equity, strengthen cross-cultural relationships, and draw upon the creative capacity of all people that make up this community, state, nation, and world.

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